

Reappointment Narrative Statement

A commitment to problem solving on the issue of providing high quality schooling experiences for diverse learners informs my teaching, service, and research activities. My research program has two lines. First is the empirical examination of student-teacher interactions with young Black men and boys in urban school settings, and the other line centers on these young men's firsthand accounts of the various factors they perceive bolster their academic success and inclusion. My orientation towards scholar-activism includes translating what I learn from this research and my service work to drive my instructional priorities and practice, which includes emphasizing the significance of human relationships for improving student outcomes. I practice attending to student evaluation feedback to improve course instruction, and my teaching rigorously applies knowledge of the contemporary challenges in the field of (urban) education. Finally, my national service, university and department service, service in the local community, and my engagement with education practitioners around the country continue to ground the practical and theoretical implications of my teaching and research. It is my aim to use this narrative and the accompanying materials to underscore my productivity in the two years since joining the faculty in fall 2014.

Research Scholarship

I have an enduring concern for the schooling experiences of young Black men and boys. I am especially interested in understanding the factors that determine positive schooling outcomes for Black male students growing up in large urban environments characterized by racial segregation, economic disenfranchisement, few neighborhood institutional assets, and the lack of access to basic human services. Much research evidence suggests contemporary public schools are failing to adequately educate Black male students in PreK-12 and postsecondary school settings (██████████), especially those attending urban schools. Furthermore, too little Black male school achievement research takes an explicitly anti-deficit approach to research design, analysis, and reporting. There is also a tendency for this research to underscore the conditions that lead to young Black men and boys' school failure, rather than spotlight the school practices, approaches, and circumstances that bolster their high academic success. My research scholarship responds to these gaps in the knowledge base by focusing explicitly on the pedagogical moves, teacher beliefs, professional practices, and organizational structures likely to improve an educator's effectiveness with this historically underserved student population.

The first line of my research program focuses on the investigation of empathy in student-teacher interactions with young Black men and boys attending urban schools. *Empathy* is a human capacity theorized to improve the quality of an individual's reaction or response to the needs of others in social interactions. The expression of empathy includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes. The application of empathy relies most heavily on the act of *perspective taking*, or the ability to adopt or imagine another person's psychological point of view (██████████). There is compelling research evidence in other "helping professions" such as nursing, social work, and counseling that the application of empathy improves client outcomes. The empirical study of empathy's expression in the professional teaching context, and its significance for improving student outcomes for youth of color is scant. Thus, my research has centered on operationalizing the application of empathy in cross cultural and cross racial student-teacher interactions. I have done this work with the aim of documenting the instructional approaches/strategies, teacher behaviors, beliefs, skills, and knowledge necessary to produce evidence of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). My study of empathy in multicultural classrooms received the 2014 "Outstanding Dissertation Award" from the American Association of College for Teacher Education (AACTE). This line of research has added significantly to what we know about dispositions that enable teachers to better communicate with, and respond to the needs of diverse students *across* cultural and racial difference.

This line of research has focused primarily on the cross cultural student-teacher interactions of white women elementary, middle, and high school teachers. I first examined white women

Reappointment Narrative Statement

fulfill the land-grant mission of MSU. I am conducting research aimed at improving the schooling experiences of diverse youth in the state of Michigan. Finally, this fall I will administer a revised version of the Scale of Teacher Empathy for African American Males (S-TEAAM) () with plans to conduct quantitative analyses of the relationship between teacher beliefs that manifest as opportunity gaps, and the application of empathy with young Black men and boys.

Teaching and Mentorship

Since joining the faculty at MSU, I have greatly enjoyed getting to know many students across the college and university through my teaching and mentorship. I teach courses distributed across a range of programs offered in the Department of Teacher Education. I have taught “elementary mathematics methods for diverse learners” (TE 406), a required course for the elementary teacher preparation program. Each year I teach “professional roles and teaching practice I & II” (TE 801 & 803), two required internship-year courses for the secondary teacher preparation program. Finally, last spring I taught a doctoral course in urban politics, education, and school reform (TE 961). I revised this course to foreground the intersections of race and place in evaluating the likelihood for effective, sustainable school reform(s) in urban communities. Through this course, I mentored 6 doctoral students to craft a research proposal to Kellogg Foundation for \$225,261.00. Even though our proposal was not selected, favorable feedback from reviewers led to an award of \$50,000 to conduct one specific aspect of our original proposal.

I rely heavily on formative and cumulative student feedback for course improvement, which has included for example, the need for me to be more explicit about my expectations for completion of course assignments. In the last two years I have steadily worked to align learning activities to specific course objectives and standards for teacher preparation program accreditation. Moreover, I teach the urban-focused sections of TE 406, 801, and 803. I utilize my learning about the ways racial difference mediate student-teacher interactions, learning acquired through my own research studies, to design course activities and select developmentally appropriate readings for my students. My command of the urban education research literature and my experience as an urban (math) teacher and K-8 instructional leader in Chicago inform my pedagogical approach, and my selection of relevant real-life examples intended to bring abstract course concepts to life.

TE 801 and 803 are my most familiar courses. Struggles to collaboratively define both what interns should be learning and the most appropriate classroom activities to ensure interns’ academic efficacy has been an ongoing concern for instructors of this course sequence. Student evaluations and discussions with the instructional team led me to take a strong stance about course reading materials and the order of assignments. One important move I made was to adopt a new text for 801 and 803 that is now being used across all sections (i.e. *Make Me! Understanding and Engaging Student Resistance*). I have mentored instructors of 801 and 803 on how to best use the text to improve interns’ confidence with effectively negotiating student resistance. This course has also allowed me to think more deeply about teacher empathy, and how to cultivate it as a teaching disposition in preservice teacher education. To that end, teaching 801 and 803 has helped me think about and author a conceptual article that attempts to make the connections between perspective taking or the *application of empathy* and preservice teacher dispositions ().

Improving the quality of my teaching has been paralleled by great investments in student mentorship, at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I believe strongly that my effectiveness as a faculty member is tied to my level of active engagement in the college and campus intellectual community. I was sought out by () to be one of his advisors during my second semester on the job. I was then assigned an additional student beginning Fall 2015, and another new doctoral advisee beginning fall 2016 who will co-teach TE 801 and 803 with me this year. I have co-authored a book review with my research assistant in *Teachers College Record* () and written a book chapter with my current advisee (). These

Reappointment Narrative Statement

experiences have facilitated my learning about the important role I play in shaping graduate students' professional trajectories. Additionally, I am co-chairing [REDACTED] dissertation committee with [REDACTED], which has been a nice introduction to the art of helping students craft a high quality research study. Additionally, these experiences alongside teaching my first doctoral seminar last spring (i.e. TE 961), have provided me practice offering critical feedback to doctoral students that is both affirming and constructive. I have interacted with at least 50 other doctoral students in our college and across campus through my work with the Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA), campus talks, and other service opportunities I have undertaken since joining the faculty. These interactions have made me aware of how much of a role model I am for doctoral students, especially Black graduate students across disciplines. This became most apparent to me after I was selected as a 2015 BGSA award honoree for my contributions to improving Black graduate student life at MSU, awarded after only one year of being on the faculty.

My citizenship in the MSU community also compels me to make time to be engaged with various undergraduate activities inside and outside of our college. My mentorship includes volunteering to meet several times a year with Black male undergraduate students in our teacher education program. This sort of engagement has also led to an invitation by undergraduates to keynote their 2016 Black Student Celebratory; an event modeled after the university commencement that celebrates MSU's Black graduating seniors. I regularly consult with Black student leaders to develop programs intended to improve campus climate for students of color. Additionally, I have had an international impact through my teaching and mentorship. I co-led an excursion of 16 doctoral students to Indonesia to study diversity in the country's education system through the college's Fellowship for Enhanced Global Understanding. Not only did I give several lectures and respond to questions from Indonesia's leaders in education governance, my expertise on race and racism were activated in response to an incident at one of our host universities. Certain university faculty members were unwilling to host our Black graduate students in their homes during our visit. I, along with the other program faculty leaders, attended meetings with university campus-level administration to educate them about the offensive nature of the faculty's actions. My research expertise was pivotal to navigating tense relations between faculty at the host institution, the MSU faculty leaders, and our student participants in the aftermath of the incident. This experience has helped me recognize the significant role my research and service activities play for improving diversity and inclusion at MSU and education institutions abroad.

Service

Beyond a strong publication record and good teaching is an active service commitment that undergirds my intellectual mission to establish more inclusive schooling environments for culturally diverse students. Opportunities to serve on departmental committees such as the TPC, RPTE, and bylaws taskforce committees have broadened my knowledge of our department's commitment to racial equity and the value placed on high quality research and teaching. Furthermore, being new to MSU has allowed me to bring a fresh pair of eyes and ears to various conversations in the department, such as whether junior faculty should serve on RPTE. I posed questions that I believe helped expedite conversations about how to contemporize department policies and practices. I have attended at least 25 talks in our department and on campus in the last two years, which has helped me to get to know a number of colleagues and administrators across campus. I co-coordinated discussions and movie screenings such as "From Fruitvale to Ferguson" with [REDACTED] in fall 2014. Later in the same semester I was invited to moderate a campus-wide townhall titled "After Ferguson" by colleagues in MSU's Department of Residence Education to discuss the events of Ferguson, protest, civil unrest, justice, trends in state violence against Black men, and subsequent impacts on the MSU community. The "After Ferguson" townhall attracted at least 150

Reappointment Narrative Statement

people, all packed into the Brody Hall auditorium, and I was elected last spring to represent the College of Education on the faculty senate beginning fall 2016.

The most exciting service I have engaged in locally has been planning and co-convening *Making Relationships Work: A Summit on Black Male Academic Success and Inclusion*. This day conference brought together over 150 K-12 educators, university faculty, professional staff, students, and community stakeholders to learn about the significance of interpersonal relationships for improving Black male academic success and inclusion across the P-20 education pipeline. I gathered financial support from multiple units on campus including the provost, the vice president of student affairs, and residence education and housing services. Almost \$20,000 was spent to convene the day conference. I was Co-PI on a research project with [REDACTED] to examine young Black men and boys' perceptions of the factors necessary for establishing and maintaining strong relationships with school stakeholders. We presented the findings of this research at the Summit through a set of video-recorded focus groups. Analysis of our conference evaluations indicated that the student panels and video presentations of student focus groups were the most compelling aspects of the convening. We have plans to convene the summit again next year and expand its reach. This experience has allowed me to collaborate with numerous campus and college colleagues, and the study we completed has helped expand my research repertoire.

In addition to my work on campus, I have participated in a number of local community service projects that include a monthly Lansing mobile food pantry on the third Saturday of each month. In the spring of 2015 I co-coordinated and mentored a group of undergraduate young Black men to put on a campus program focused on Black male retention at MSU. Over 100 students attended the event held in the [REDACTED]. I have also worked with my departmental faculty mentor [REDACTED] to consult with East Lansing school district superintendent and a local middle school principal to address issues of Black male students' sense of belonging and academic success. Most recently, I began a partnership with the Lansing School District's Office of School Culture to provide racial equity professional development to teachers and school leaders.

My national service over the last two years includes numerous article reviews for peer-reviewed journals, and the publication of reference materials accessible to a wider audience around matters of race and racism in education ([REDACTED]). I am on the editorial boards of three high impact peer-review journals. I was also a member of the team that wrote the proposal that resulted in MSU's editorship of the *Journal of Teacher Education* (JTE). The editorial structure is such that I will serve as a member of the editorial board during the journal's tenure at MSU and act in the capacity of Assistant Editor for one year beginning in 2017. Lastly, I just began my term as president of the leading national association for the study of race and education after a year as vice president of program chair. The Critical Race Studies in Education Association has international visibility serving colleagues in the US and the UK.

Conclusion

I take serious MSU's land grant mission to engage in research, teaching, and service that contribute to the public good. I situate myself as an urban education scholar broadly. My publication record, which includes papers in each of the top urban education journals, my teaching, mentorship of students, and service activities represent my commitments to racial equity and humanizing the education profession. My research is receiving national attention for its importance to erasing deficit perspectives of young Black men and boys, foregrounding practices to mitigate their academic vulnerability, and providing more empirical examples of CRP. My teaching and mentorship have led to research opportunities for doctoral students and strengthened the pedagogical quality of department courses offerings. My service demonstrates the trust and respect of colleagues locally and internationally. I look forward to a long, distinguished career in the Department of Teacher Education doing my part to further our standing as a leader in the field of education.

Reappointment Narrative Statement

References to My Scholarship

██████████ Talking taboo: Discussing race and racism in classrooms. *New Educator*, Fall, 26 – 27.

██████████ (Under Review). White women, symbolic violence, and empathy: Charting a path towards improved schooling outcomes for young Black men and boys. ██████████ (Eds.) *White women's guide to teaching Black boys*.

██████████ (Eds.) (in press). *White women's work: Examining the intersectionality of teaching, identity, and race*. Charlotte, NC. Information Age Publishing.

██████████ (2014). *Succeeding in the city: A report from the New York City Black and Latino Male High School Achievement Study*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education. Report can be retrieved at ██████████

██████████. (2016). The evidence of things *not* seen? Race, pedagogies of discipline, and White women teachers. ██████████ (Eds.). *White women's work: Examining the intersectionality of teaching, identity, and race*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

██████████ (In Press-B). Critical race theory in education. *Oxford Bibliographies of Education Online*. Oxford University Press.

██████████ (2014a). Towards a pedagogy for the application of empathy in culturally diverse classrooms. *The Urban Review*, 46(3), 395 – 419.

██████████. (2014b). Perspective divergence and the miseducation of Black boys...Like me. *Journal of African American Males in Education*, 5(2), 134 – 149.

██████████ (2015a). Conflicts and contradictions: Conceptions of empathy an the work of good-intentioned White female teachers. *Urban Education*, 50(5), 572-600.

██████████ (2015b). Scale of Teacher Empathy for African American Males (S-TEAAM): Measuring teacher conceptions and the application of empathy in multicultural classroom settings. *Journal of Negro Education*.

██████████ (2015c). Making relationships work: Elementary-age Black males and the schools that serve them. ██████████ (Eds.) *Advancing Black male student success from preschool through Ph.D.* (pp. 21-43). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

██████████ (2015d). "I get angry": The quandary of being postracial. ██████████ (Eds.) *The assault on communities of color: Exploring the realities of race-based violence* (pp. 29-32). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

██████████ (2016). "We learn though our struggles": Nuancing notions of urban Black male academic preparation for postsecondary success. *Teachers College Record*. 118(6). 1-38.

██████████ (under review). The application of empathy to cultivate dispositions for culturally

[REDACTED]
Reappointment Narrative Statement

responsive pedagogy. *Journal of Teacher Education*.

[REDACTED]. (Under Contract). *Urban preparation: Black males moving from the south side to success in higher education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

[REDACTED] (In Press). Erasing the deficits: “My brother’s keeper” and contemporary perspectives on Black male school achievement. Special Issue of *Teachers College Record*. 118(6).

[REDACTED] (2015). Teacher education and the enduring significance of “false empathy”. *The Urban Review*, 47(2), 266-292.

[REDACTED] “Who has family business?” Exploring the role of empathy in student-teacher interactions. *Perspectives on Urban Education*, 11(2), 122 – 131.

[REDACTED] Resilience Begins with Beliefs written by Sara Truebridge. *Teachers College Record*.

[REDACTED] “Nice White Ladies”: Race, whiteness, and the preparation of White female teachers to be culturally responsive educators. [REDACTED] *White women’s work: Examining the intersectionality of teaching, identity, and race*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Other references

[REDACTED] (January, 2002). Teachers are failing Black boys. *The Guardian* Retrieved from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Teaching to and through cultural diversity. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43(1), 48 – 70.

[REDACTED]). How does it feel to be a problem? Black male students, schools, and learning in enhancing the knowledge base to disrupt deficit frameworks. *Review of Research in Education*, 37(1), 54-86.

[REDACTED]). *Black male(d): Peril and promise in the education of African American males*. New York: Teachers College Record.

[REDACTED]. *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco: [REDACTED]