


Chapter 5

Mentoring Bridging the Gap for African American Male Student Success

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze college readiness for African American males. The study seeks to help nurture discussion to develop strategies that can support African American males entering college. Self-efficacy, resilience, and mentorship are factors that positively influence African American male student success. Mentorship experiences and its effects have long been proven to have a significant impact on the development of students of all ages. The goal is to examine articles and research in relation to college readiness towards African American males as well as to discuss the influences of critical race theory and educational policies to theorize why there is a statistically disproportionate phenomenon.

INTRODUCTION

The United States' educational system has struggled with equality in education for all students regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status since the 1950s when desegregation began. Specifically, for Black and other minorities, Ladson-

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Billings (2013) asserts that there is empirical evidence that Black and other minority students perform significantly lower than their white counterparts. Ladson-Billings continues to write that “The long-term failure to produce equitable conditions to address these deficits creates the education debt”. School systems should be more proactive when dealing with student learning outcomes and more involved in student retention. Educating African American males has become a nationwide epidemic that involves many social and economic issues that play significant roles in the overall success and failure of the student.

Education has been influenced by many social factors beyond the control of administrators of schools. However, due to a lack of knowledge, administrators are not prepared to grasp how to educate and mentor African American males. When thinking of what it takes to become a factor in today’s 21st-century workforce or society as African American male students need to make a change and or difference in society. Educating males to take on a culture of its own due to the male processing information and maturing at slower rates than females, but educating the African American male is an entirely different monster that has caught the wisest of educators and administrators by surprise (West & Smiley, 2012).

School administrators should provide students with vital mentoring programs, family involvement activities, and activities that build strong relationships with the parents and teachers of the students. Morales (2010) suggests that factors such as under-preparedness, health disparities, and racial identity all contribute. African American males are among the most underrepresented student populations on college campuses. Cuyjet (2006) suggests that many factors hinder African American males’ success at the college level, such as their predisposition to college, academic achievement, and interpersonal relationships. African American males’ success in the classroom is crucial to college or university and important in student sports.

Self-efficacy, resilience, and mentorship are all factors that positively influence black male student success. Mentorship has the potential to help African American males build upon their character and enhance their skills. Scholars Lavant et al. (1997) state that the mentorship process can be used as an “intervention strategy.” Effective mentoring has been proven to have a significant impact on student success.

BACKGROUND

Educating African American males has become a nationwide epidemic that involves many social and economic issues that play significant roles in the overall success and failure of the student. Many African American males are born into low socioeconomic environments and lack the structure needed for educational, personal, and social growth. Education is impacted by many social factors beyond

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