

**The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin**  
**International Journal for Professional Educators**

2020 • Volume 86-5

**The Evolving Nature  
of Schooling**

## The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin

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The *Bulletin*, an official publication of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, promotes professional and personal growth of members through publication of their writings. Three online issues per year, subtitled *International Journal for Professional Educators*, focus on research-based and documented works—applied and data-based research, position papers, program descriptions, reviews of literature, and other articles on announced themes or other topics of interests to educators. Two print issues, subtitled *Collegial Exchange*, focus on articles based on practice and experience related to education, the Society, women, and children, as well as personal reflections and creative works. All five issues include book and technology reviews and letters to the editor.

Submissions to the *Bulletin*, a refereed publication, are reviewed by the Editorial Board and the Society editorial staff. Selection is based on relevance of the topics addressed, accuracy and validity, contribution to the professional literature, originality, quality of writing, and adherence to Submission Guidelines (see [www.dkg.org](http://www.dkg.org)). Editorial Board members evaluate each submission's focus, organization, development, readability, and relevance to the general audience of *Bulletin* readers. Due to the diversity of the *Bulletin* audience, material that expresses a gender, religious, political, or patriotic bias is not suitable for publication.

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## International Journal for Professional Educators

2020 • Volume 86-5

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*The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International  
promotes professional and personal growth of women  
educators and excellence in education.*

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## Call for Submissions

Members are encouraged to submit manuscripts for consideration by the *Bulletin* Editorial Board. The Delta Kappa Gamma *Bulletin: Journal* accepts research-based articles including Action/Classroom Research, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, Reviews of Literature, Program Descriptions, Position Papers, and Book/Technology Reviews. The Delta Kappa Gamma *Bulletin: Collegial Exchange* accepts articles of a more practical, personal nature, including Classroom and DKG Practices/Programs, Viewpoints on Current Issues, Personal Reflections or Anecdotes, Inspirational Pieces, Biographies and Interviews, Book and Technology Reviews, and Creative Writing.

Submissions should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise, and appropriate for *Bulletin* readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable, and free from gender, political, patriotic, or religious bias. For more detailed information, please refer to the Submission Guidelines on page 63 and the Submission Grids on page 64.

Listed below are the deadlines and, where appropriate, themes. Although there is a suggested theme for each issue of the *Bulletin: Journal*, manuscripts on all topics are welcome. The *Bulletin: Collegial Exchange* is not theme-based.

**Collegial Exchange (87-2; Print)**  
(Postmark deadline is August 1, 2020)

No designated theme

**Journal: Educators' Choice (87-3; Online)**  
(Postmark deadline is October 1, 2020)

Open Submission: Topic of author's choice related to education.

**Collegial Exchange (87-4; Print)**  
(Postmark deadline is December 15, 2020)

No designated theme

**Journal: Global Education (87-5; Online)**  
(Postmark deadline is March 1, 2021)

How is education implemented in various settings/countries?

What are the common educational issues among countries?

How do educators develop intercultural understanding and multiculturalism?

How are educators prepared in various countries?

What does a global perspective of education mean?

Why is a global perspective important in education?

Submit all materials to:

***Bulletin* Editorial Staff**

**bulletin@dkg.org**

Full Submission Guidelines and other resources are available at the

**Apply/Submit** tab on [www.dkg.org](http://www.dkg.org).

## From the Editor

As I write the introduction to this issue devoted to exploring *The Evolving Nature of Schooling*, I am struck by the irony of children’s voices that distract from my task. It is a “school day” in late April 2020, and the four young boys who live next door are in their backyard, whooping and laughing as they take turns on a trampoline—the activity their parents have chosen as their “physical education” for the day. They have been released temporarily from their studies inside—from the efforts of their parents to provide an education while they shelter in place from the COVID-19 pandemic. When not outside, the boys take turns at various “stations” organized within their home: a table with workbooks for practicing math skills; a comfy chair with books for reading; a computer for exploring the geography and cultures of the world and for writing in a daily journal; a kitchen converted to a small-scale science lab. In what many have called the crisis of a lifetime, schooling has evolved for them and their parents to a DIY scenario that both challenges and unites.

My writing is interrupted again by a video call from my daughter-in-law, a science teacher at the local high school, which is also closed due to COVID-19. She has checked in to her school virtually and is pursuing a day filled with development of resources for her Google Classroom efforts with her students. She keeps in touch with them via email, offering encouragement and insight as best she can, but it is clear to me she misses the personal interaction and energy of the “normal” classroom. She connects with colleagues on a regular basis via Zoom meetings and, because she has always used technology during her 12-years-thus-far career, seems fairly comfortable with the new demands of the profession. She tells me she has shared resources with my niece, an early-career elementary and special ed teacher who lives 3,000 miles away across the country and has become a tech leader in her school, where she is helping veteran teachers make the sometimes-sizable leap to online instruction. Although their subject matters and grade levels are different, these two young educators know and use many of the same tools to do their work in a radically changed and changing environment.

Clearly, the theme of this issue is exceptionally timely as the pandemic has wrought not just an evolution but, in many ways, a revolution in schooling. Some components of this radical change are captured in the first article, contributed by editorial board member Pálsdóttir. Although she writes of experiences in her native Iceland, the analysis is appropriate for all members of our international Society. As she notes, events of the past several months have “confirmed that the educational system can adjust and react to a transformative societal change in a remarkably short time.” Her call for strengthening of the key competencies that have helped educators, students, and parents weather the change is on target, as is her focus on enhanced research to understand and cope with long-term educational impacts of COVID-19.

Of course, the editorial board members who proposed and selected this issue’s theme at the beginning of the biennium had no way of knowing that a pandemic in 2020 would steepen the evolutionary curve for schooling in unprecedented ways... and authors were submitting proposed pieces well before COVID-19 became well known. Interestingly, however, their articles in many ways capture the issues that have been highlighted during the pandemic. For example, Edmonds-Behrend, Stringfellow,

and Woodley discuss necessary changes in teacher-preparation programs and the role that organizations such as DKG can play in providing “support, guidance, and a vision for education.” Although they focus on the impact of legislation, the areas they discuss—critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation, evidence-based practices, multi-tiered systems of support, STEM/STEAM, and social-emotional learning—have indeed required new attention as a result of the crisis.

Articles by Sekulich and by Mahaffey, Kinard, and Daughrity provide further detail about the use of technology in education—again, an area that has boomed during the pandemic. Truly, the “surge in online teaching and learning” mentioned by Sekulich—definitely an important evolution in schooling—has become a tidal wave in recent months, and her suggestions for ways to ensure the sense of community within an online environment are important for educators at all levels. Exploring a specific software for use with a specific group of learners, Mahaffey et al. not only provide insight into a tool that is useful at all levels but also underscore the importance of research into the effectiveness of selected software and technological methodology.

Moving from the technical side of education, Tussey and Haas discuss supporting social-emotional learning, in this case via use of text sets in the elementary classroom. Given the context of the pandemic, certainly students of all ages need and will continue to need assistance in dealing with emotional and interpersonal challenges, not the least of which may be developing the sense of community referenced by Sekulich! Furthermore, attention to social-emotional needs may indeed be key to disciplinary issues when schooling returns to “normal,” and Arnold’s review of Shalaby’s book on student behavior provides considerable food for thought in this area.

Finally, as schooling has evolved during the course of the pandemic, the resource gap has become painfully evident as not all students have been able to access online classes or interaction with peers and instructors, a fact that has brought new light to the issue of socioeconomic impact on education. In this context, the discussion of culturally relevant pedagogy by Hawkins-Jones and Reeves takes on special poignance, as does the historical commentary provided by Schaffer, Viator, and White. Both articles suggest that schooling has evolved very differently—both before and during the pandemic—for varied segments of our populations. Looking largely to the past, these two articles importantly set a challenge for the path forward.

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The children next door are back to their studies as I complete this introduction, and my daughter-in-law and niece are back to their educational planning, Zooming, and Google worlds. I am left with both distress and satisfaction that the theme of this issue has been prescient: distress because the current evolution in schooling has been at the hands of a pandemic; and satisfaction because the articles in this particular issue illuminate important areas of concern that have been highlighted by this global challenge. Clearly, whether involved in the evolution of schooling—or in the revolution of schooling—members of DKG are indeed leading women educators impacting education worldwide.

**Judith R. Merz, EdD**  
Editor

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# Lessons from a Pandemic: The Educational System Evolving in the Time of COVID-19

By Kolbrún Þ. Pálsdóttir

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*This article continues a series initiated by members of the Bulletin's editorial board. The goal of the series is to provide insight on a topic or work related to the theme of the issue. Here, editorial board member Pálsdóttir of Iceland offers a reflection and analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education. Her comments were written in late April 2020 as various international governments were coming to grips with the impact of the pandemic and the proper steps for moving forward post-pandemic.*

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We have gained a valuable insight into the strength and flexibility of the educational system in Iceland during the past weeks. Education systems are often criticized for being too conservative and slow to react to societal changes. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the incredible opportunities and innovative approaches that exist within the education system. School and leisure work in Iceland, as well as in any other country, was turned upside down with little or no warning. Distance learning and homeschooling became the reality for most parents and virtually all children. Upper secondary and university students studied entirely online, and pre- and compulsory schools reorganized daily work to secure the well-being of children and youth.

We need more educational research to fully assess the success of these transformations, but the first indications are promising. We stand before a changed worldview and enormous challenges, and the nations that enjoy powerful educational systems will be better equipped to face them. The COVID-19 pandemic that has struck all societies clearly underlines the significance of education and the core competences we need to foster, such as collaboration skills, innovation and ingenuity, and critical and ethical thinking.

## **Collaboration is Crucial**

Behind the revolution within the educational system that we have witnessed in the past weeks lies powerful collaboration of many. Teachers, school managers, and other staff in schools have tirelessly worked to sustain the functions of the schools and to find new ways and solutions. I also want to mention educare-personnel in out-of-school programs, social pedagogues, school counsellors, educational specialists, and learning support assistants, who are important allies, spokesmen, and counsellors of children and youth. The work of all of these people is invaluable and matters greatly for society.

There is also a valid reason to worry about those who are in a weaker position, for example, due to disability, poverty, or other social circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic shows the weaknesses in our societies when it comes to social justice, such as unequal access to health care and welfare services. Let's not forget that there are parents who are unable to support their children's education or welfare as needed. A strong social support system that catches, supports, and inspires the vulnerable relies on the collaboration of different systems of the society, not the least of the welfare, educational, and health systems.

### Creative Solutions and Flexibility

We will be able to learn many lessons from this unbelievable change that has taken place in the daily work of all school levels. The school system has reorganized preferences and put previous plans aside. It has been awesome to observe all the new methods, tools, and ideas that professionals in the field of education have initiated

and utilized to support the activity and welfare of children and youth. It is also crucial that we take good notice of the voices of young people: What is their experience of the past weeks? What is and will be their reality? What are their priority objectives?

We need to solve all major tasks of the society under new and unexpected circumstances. Now as never before it is necessary to support innovation and to activate inventiveness in order to support work and economic life and to strengthen the fabric of the society.

*“The COVID-19 pandemic that has struck all societies clearly underlines the significance of education and the core competences we need to foster, such as collaboration skills, innovation and ingenuity, and critical and ethical thinking.”*

In Iceland, for example, that is the reason the measures of the government due to the COVID-19 pandemic include a substantial boost for research and science. Research about education and the educational system is essential for the future of societies. Ultimately, deeper understanding and a keen vision about the development of education will render success in all spheres of society.

### Critical and Ethical Thinking

It has been pointed out that another kind of pandemic is raging at this time, an *infodemic*, which means that wrong information about COVID-19 travels faster than the virus itself. False news undermines the pillars of a society; it encourages

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mistrust and can damage both individuals and the society as a whole. Under these circumstances, we are exceedingly reminded about the elementary goal of education: to promote literacy, including media literacy, and also critical and ethical thinking of children and youth. Critical thinking entails careful evaluation of evidence and challenges us to reflect on our own convictions and to listen to counter-arguments. Ethical thinking involves developing judgement and should shape our actions because it helps us to decide which direction to choose and what genuinely matters in life. The main message here is that real education hinges on both: sharp thinking and an understanding heart.

### **We Live and Learn in a New Way**

If we look back on the past weeks, no one could have envisioned the power that is inherent in the school community, the youth and out-of-school community, and our welfare system. It has been confirmed that the educational system can adjust and react to a transformative societal change in a remarkably short time. We have certainly not seen the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges it brings. It will matter a great deal that we succeed in strengthening the key competencies that enable us to tackle complex tasks, both as individuals and as a society. We are now learning to live together in a different way than before. The education and the insights that are gained are tremendous. By investing in education, we will strengthen our communities for the future.

# Preparing Future Educators in an Era of Public Education Change

By Christina R. Edmonds-Behrend, Jennifer L. Stringfellow, and Stephanie Woodley

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*From federal law to population changes, teacher preparation programs must not only respond to current trends but also reach out to develop educational partnerships with P-12 teachers and administrators. A review of recent educational changes prompted this viewpoint on how professional organizations like Delta Kappa Gamma can provide support, guidance, and a vision for education and, thus, for the preparation of teacher educators. Implications for teacher education as well as resources for teachers, families, and teacher educators are provided.*

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Turn on the television, read the news, or check social media—any of these methods of “tuning in” will likely reveal comments regarding the state of public education in America. International rankings are examined, decreased funding and charter school enrollments are reported, and teacher strikes often dominate the headlines. News regarding rural and urban education as well as poverty’s toll on today’s youth (and thus, on their achievement) is announced. To address these issues, policymakers have reacted. For example, No Child Left Behind (P.L. 107-110, originally The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1964), was recently reauthorized to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, P.L. 114-95), swinging the pendulum away from high-stakes assessment to strategies such as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).

As public education changes, teacher preparation programs (TPP) must follow suit. In this article, we outline how trends impact pre-teacher training. We also provide insight on how DKG can support and guide pre-teachers and current teachers with the changes.

## Changes in Education

In 2015, President Obama signed ESSA. This reauthorization impacted mandates regarding standardized testing, school accountability and student achievement, and requirements for teachers (Adler-Greene, 2019). Klein (2019) noted that, although ESSA has been law for years, local districts have yet to feel its impact. Per the new federal mandates, high-stakes testing labeling districts (and teachers) as “failing” when Adequate Yearly Progress was not reached have been eliminated (Long, 2016; O’Brien, 2016). Instead, ESSA opened the doors for multiple assessment measures, with districts and states in more control (Long, 2016). Focus is now on improving achievement of historically lower-achieving subgroups such as English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities and on school-quality factors such as attendance and college-career readiness (Adler-Green, 2019; Klein, 2019). Adler-Green (2019) further noted ESSA’s emphasis on support for teachers, which includes

training. With access to grants and more monetary freedom, districts are investing in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) education, social-emotional learning, and school safety—all of which have an impact on the education of students and training of educational professionals. The Table provides an overview of web resources for understanding the educational terms and concepts that are key in education today.

### Table

#### *Web Resources for Key Educational Terms and Topics*

| Key Educational Terms  | Abbreviation  | Useful Websites  |
|--|---------------|--|
| Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving; Communication; Collaboration; Creativity & Innovation (see National Education Association, 2019). | “4-C’s”       | National Education Association:<br><a href="http://www.nea.org/tools/52217.htm">http://www.nea.org/tools/52217.htm</a>   |
| Elementary and Secondary Education Act   | ESSA          | Center for Parent Information & Resources: <a href="https://www.parentcenterhub.org/essa-reauth/">https://www.parentcenterhub.org/essa-reauth/</a><br>National Association of Secondary School Principals: <a href="https://www.nassp.org/policy-advocacy-center/resources/essa-toolkit/essa-fact-sheets/">https://www.nassp.org/policy-advocacy-center/resources/essa-toolkit/essa-fact-sheets/</a>   |
| Evidence-Based Practices   | EBP           | What Works Clearinghouse:<br><a href="https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/">https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/</a>   |
| Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports/ Response to Intervention   | MTSS/ RtI     | Intervention Central:<br><a href="https://www.interventioncentral.org/">https://www.interventioncentral.org/</a>   |
| Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics<br>*Arts   | STEM<br>STEAM | U.S. Department of Education:<br><a href="https://www.ed.gov/Stem">https://www.ed.gov/Stem</a><br>STEAM Powered Family:<br><a href="https://www.steampoweredfamily.com/education/what-is-stem/">https://www.steampoweredfamily.com/education/what-is-stem/</a><br>Florida Association of Teacher Educators Journal – article by D. White (2014)<br><a href="http://www.fate1.org/journals/2014/white.pdf">http://www.fate1.org/journals/2014/white.pdf</a> |
| Social-Emotional Learning  | SEL           | Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL):<br><a href="https://casel.org/">https://casel.org/</a><br>US News and World Report:<br><a href="https://health.usnews.com/wellness/for-parents/articles/2017-08-10/why-we-need-social-and-emotional-learning-in-schools">https://health.usnews.com/wellness/for-parents/articles/2017-08-10/why-we-need-social-and-emotional-learning-in-schools</a>                                   |

Another current focus brought about by ESSA is on the achievement gap—the lower performance rates of P-12 students from traditional minority groups (i.e., racial, ELL, low-income, and students with disabilities). Bryant et al.’s (2017) analysis of a changing 21st-century student population was powerful. These authors noted that,

if data trends from 2000 to 2010 hold true, P-12 educational environments will look quite different in midcentury America. Most states reported an increase of 7% to 433% in the number of Hispanic/Latino students, while 30 reported a slight increase in the Black student population. Simultaneously, states reported a 10% decrease in

the White student population. Bryant et al. (2017) called attention to the mismatch of the racial and ethnic backgrounds of teachers and those of their students. With most of the teaching population still identifying as White females, the authors discussed how stereotypes, prejudice, and, eventually, negative academic outcomes for American students may be a product of the continuation and deepening of such

“*As public education changes, teacher preparation programs (TPP) must follow suit.*”

mismatches between teachers’ and students’ backgrounds.

Federal changes have also led to more widespread use of MTSS: e.g., Response to Intervention and Positive Behavior Supports. Teachers must access and use multiple evidence-based instructional strategies. These evidence-based practices are key for teachers to understand and to use as requirements within these frameworks. Importantly, through all these changes, collaboration is key. Many P-12 teachers find themselves in co-teaching situations and often serve on several student-based, school-wide, and/or district-wide teams. Effective collaboration and communication are necessary professional dispositions.

### **What Do These Changes Mean for Higher Education?**

Such changes to mandates, policies, and practices have left an impact on TPPs. We would like to think that those in higher education realize that it is important to prepare pre-teachers to take active roles in a variety of educational partnerships while demonstrating respect for different disciplines (e.g., elementary/special education, content specialties) because the next generation of teachers must master such skills early in their time on campus. The preparation of teachers is imperative to meet the needs and demands of students, colleagues, and community.

Simply put, for teacher education, changes in ESSA mean changing requirements for preservice teachers. As higher education faculty, we must understand the philosophy and research to support general education initiatives such as MTSS while also knowing how schools are implementing such educational changes. In our own work preparing new teachers, we have actively sought out “model” districts and cooperating professionals. However, at each turn, faculty and pre-teachers are reminded that, as reported by administrators and cooperating professionals, MTSS is an evolving system in which general and special educators continue to redefine

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their roles. Abell et al. (2005) addressed such role changes, which are still occurring, and reported the need for preservice general and special education teachers to discuss curriculum and instruction to support not only their development of content knowledge but also their awareness of remedial practices. The P-12 focus on college-career readiness and social-emotional learning has faculty also investigating how to incorporate new skills: critical thinking and problem solving; communication; collaboration; and creativity and innovation (National Education Association, 2019). Although teaching the theory behind each initiative is important, practicing in the schools provides the time for pre-teachers to demonstrate their abilities.

Another focus must be on the changing student landscape. Student diversity means actively recruiting diverse pre-teachers and further supporting them in TPPs. Teaching and practicing the use and selection of evidence-based practices is imperative and further supports MTSS frameworks. An updated standard for demonstrating progress for students with disabilities was established in a recent Supreme Court ruling (*Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, 2017). Teachers will need data to show not only progress but also that high expectations and appropriate challenges are set for *all* students. This will affect the way students with disabilities participate in instruction and learning in all settings. Faculty in TPPs must recognize that access to general education is insufficient as a standard alone. Creating an accepting and supportive classroom culture for students, parents, and colleagues is a necessity. Both general and special education teachers need to learn and practice these expectations in their TPPs prior to graduation (Sayeski et al., 2019).

### **Three *Ships* of Opportunity**

In reality, TPPs cannot prepare a teacher for what he or she would know with classroom experience; practicing and retired teachers, higher educators, and administrators can recognize that. What educators can do is (a) provide pre-teachers a solid foundation from which to grow, (b) provide them with knowledge of support systems available, and (c) encourage active involvement in professional organizations. Accordingly, we suggest DKG provide all collegiate and early-career educators with three *ships* of opportunity: leadership, scholarship, and fellowship.

Leadership development in early-career educators must include supporting the learning of skills and behaviors that are not easily covered in a TPP and may be school- or district-specific. According to Jones et al. (2013), beginning teachers, especially special education teachers, thrive and remain more firmly committed to teaching when they feel supported by their colleagues and administrators. All teachers can flourish with common learning goals, instructional collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning. Orphanos and Orr (2014) found that teachers—general/special education, early-career educators, and veteran teachers—experience greater job satisfaction when they are included in leadership opportunities, have

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access to professional development, and are supported by parents. DKG can provide these kinds of opportunities by welcoming both collegiate and practicing members to chapter meetings that include professional development. DKG members have a wealth of information from years of practice to help new members build their own

“toolbox” of strategies for increased student achievement and parental involvement. Inviting new members and supporting their travel to state or international DKG conferences and conventions would also be of benefit. Mentoring or being a co-officer with a new member is a direct way to encourage more leadership skill development.

New leadership strategies may help new teachers develop commitment to the profession and, possibly, to the school in which they teach. Developing commitment may help keep novice teachers in the profession longer.

“*DKG must be a part of the conversation and collaboration that provides support to all learners, their families, and communities.*”

When one feels included and valued, he or she tends to develop a commitment that persists when teaching can be difficult, especially in those beginning years. DKG members can provide support for this kind of commitment by offering anecdotes from their own teaching experiences through stories shared at meetings or via a chapter newsletter. DKG builds a network of women educators that begins at the local level. Through grants, such as those in the Supporting Early-Career Educators project, beginning teachers can be encouraged to use innovative and research-based materials or strategies within their classrooms. Sharing their successes and lessons learned at chapter meetings can be key for some to build a commitment to the profession.

DKG now provides for collegiate membership at all levels—international, state, and chapter. Offering young women the opportunity of membership in a professional organization provides support in the transition from school to work as a teacher. Developing the mentoring and friendly relationships while still learning supports moving into teaching and can help soften the learning curve of beginning teachers. Additionally, collegiate membership is a means of assuring that more experienced teachers remain current on issues and practices in teaching in order to help meet the needs of students and their families in the schools.

Service learning can be a positive way to develop the scholarship of novice teachers and their students. For pre-teachers, projects such as volunteering at school celebration days or providing review instruction on a weekly basis with one group of students can foster a connection with the school and local community. Learning by doing is beneficial for those in TPPs and can form a bridge from preparation to beginning teaching. These activities can lead to grant opportunities for further

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study and projects to support learning (Jenkins & Sheehy, 2009). DKG provides scholarships and grants that support individuals in completing college programs, attaining advanced degrees, and implementing other programs that assist students.

Professional organizations also support fellowship within teaching. When provided the opportunity to join and be actively involved with organizations, pre-teachers learn to work with others to accomplish tasks. They engage in leadership development through meaningful activity implementation, and they learn to support others. These opportunities may, in turn, provide practice that will help in their new and early careers as teachers. Additionally, they meet others engaged in similar pursuits and can develop supportive friendships. DKG can provide fellowship that spans past monthly professional meetings to supporting colleagues through personal celebrations and heartaches. Collegiate membership in DKG for pre-teachers is a bridge from teacher preparation into the profession that offers the needed mentoring, sharing, and leadership for new teachers and has the potential to ensure they remain in the profession.

### Conclusion

Education does not always have directional clarity; however, TPPs must have vision. DKG should be a vital piece of this dialog about change in public education and in teacher preparation. Through DKG's opportunities for leadership, scholarship, and fellowship, veteran and beginning teachers can feel supported and valued. With DKG now accepting collegiate members, this support and value for excellence in teaching can start even earlier when future educators are developing their knowledge and skills. Additionally, DKG must be a part of the conversation and collaboration that provides support to all learners, their families, and communities. We hope this viewpoint and the sources provided serve as a platform for meaningful conversations at chapter, state, and international levels.

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# Developing an Online Community of Learners

By Kim M. Sekulich

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*A surge in online teaching and learning is occurring as universities have transitioned to fully online instructional delivery models during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, graduate instructors and students need to remain compassionate and connected while moving the educational process forward. Online instructional delivery models require more student ownership and self-direction than face-to-face delivery models. As a result, graduate instructors and students may have different perceptions about their responsibilities in online courses. The author of this position article contends that graduate instructors need to be actively involved with providing direction and support to enhance student learning in online courses. At the same time, responsibility for knowledge and skill development also rests with the students. Because perceptions differ, clearly defined responsibilities are necessary. The author maintains that online instructors and students must work together to fulfill responsibilities in the areas of collaboration and interaction, organization and communication, technology, learning-style differentiation, critical thinking, and feedback.*

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As the digital influence within educational systems continues to evolve, educators must accept the reality that online aspects will be integrated into almost every instructional program. During the COVID-19 pandemic, realities look different with each day and, sometimes, with each hour. Universities have transitioned to fully online instructional delivery models to address social-distancing requirements and other precautionary measures during the pandemic. For some graduate instructors and students, online instruction may be familiar. For others, this delivery model may be entirely new as they have been accustomed to face-to-face delivery models. Online instructional models require more self-directed student ownership. Graduate instructors and students may have different perceptions about their responsibilities in an online learning environment, which is an issue. My position is that instructors need to take an active role to provide direction and support for students in online courses. In addition, graduate instructors and students must work together to fulfill clearly defined responsibilities in collaboration and interaction, organization and communication, technology, learning-style differentiation, critical thinking, and feedback.

### **Perceptions of Responsibilities**

Instructors' perceptions of their responsibilities in online courses may be influenced by many factors, including teaching philosophies, professional preparation for online teaching, and amount of experience with online teaching. Students' perceptions of their responsibilities may also be influenced by many factors, including learning-style preferences and amount of experience with online courses. As a result, graduate instructors and students may have different perceptions about their responsibilities in online courses.

Bork and Rucks-Ahidiana (2013) conducted a study to "examine how expectations about the roles of online student and online instructor differ among students and instructors" (Abstract section). The data were obtained from instructors and students at two community colleges. In the area of responsibility, Bork and Rucks-Ahidiana (2013) reported the following:

[M]ost instructors suggested that the onus was on students to be responsible for their own learning and that instructors did not have a role to play in fostering this student characteristic. This was in clear contrast to students, who felt that instructors should help students understand and meet their responsibilities.

While instructors consistently spoke about the need for students to take responsibility for completing their coursework, they rarely discussed strategies they used to help students exercise responsibility. (p. 13)

The viewpoint that instructors do not have a role to play in fostering students' responsibility in online courses is in opposition to my viewpoint. In this position article, I maintain that instructors need to provide direction and support for students to help them demonstrate responsibility in their courses and that instructors and students have specific responsibilities to fulfill. When identifying perceptions that online instructors may have, Darby (n.d.) stated, "[M]any academics seem to believe that students should be able to walk themselves through an online course without much active guidance from the instructor. That is a recipe for disaster" (Common Misperceptions section). Within the next sections of this article, I identify behaviors that provide a roadmap for more effective collaborative teaching and learning between and among online instructors and students.

### **Collaboration and Interaction**

#### **Instructors**

Send a welcoming email about the course and introduce yourself. Be involved during the course through modeling, providing examples, asking questions, challenging students' thinking, providing feedback, answering questions, and providing resources. Your interactions form the foundation for this learning community.

The interaction among learners and between the instructor and learner determines to a large extent the quality and outcomes of online learning, and ultimately the learner's ability to master course content and improve critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, the hallmarks of higher education. (Association of American Colleges & Universities [AAC&U], 2013, 2015, as cited in Andrade, 2015, p. 2)

#### **Students**

As you are replying to your classmates' discussion board posts, make connections to course readings and professional experiences. Be positive and encouraging. Ask

classmates questions to encourage further reflection. These interactions with your classmates enhance collaboration within the online learning community.

### **Organization and Communication**

#### **Instructors**

Prepare course materials that are well-organized, clear, and consistent. “Strive for a course organization that is clear, methodical, and intuitive” (Darby, n.d., Organize Course Content Intuitively section). Determine when and where you post content so students are informed each week. Communicate assignment due dates and requirements clearly. Explain how students should contact you if they have questions. Well-organized and clear communication provides direction and helps establish a learning community.

#### **Students**

Read the information your instructor posts. Ask questions for clarification, if needed. Organize course materials as you progress through the course. Commit to devoting the time needed for your coursework. Make sure you understand and keep track of the due dates for all coursework. Some coursework may take longer to complete than you anticipate. Manage your time, and do not procrastinate with work completion. Doing your part to be informed and organized contributes to the development of the learning community.

### **Technology**

#### **Instructors**

Continue to expand your knowledge of the learning management system and incorporation of multimedia to enhance student learning. Provide instructions so students who are new to the online learning environment know where and how to access information.

Andrade (2015) emphasized the following regarding instructors’ knowledge base: They must have “not only familiarity with the delivery platform and technological tools in a course, but strategies for teacher response (Andrade, 2014), for teaching through response, and knowledge of theories designed for effective learning” (pp. 7-8). Applying learning theories and utilizing feedback strategies to enhance student learning are discussed in a subsequent section of this position article.

#### **Students**

Familiarize yourself with the learning management system. Identify the technology skills necessary to navigate the learning management system successfully for tasks such as accessing announcements, completing course readings, and submitting discussion board posts and assignments.

### **Learning-style Differentiation**

#### **Instructors**

Identify a learning-style theory that informs your practice. For example, Gregorc (1984) discussed thinking/learning style related to how information is processed (concrete or abstract) and ordered (sequential or random). Gregorc identified four preferences: concrete and sequential (CS), abstract and sequential (AS), concrete and random (CR), and abstract and random (AR). Some examples of methods an instructor can use to address each learning style include the following:

Concrete sequential: Explain assignments in a step-by-step manner.

Abstract sequential: Require analysis of course readings.

Concrete random: Involve students in practical application of content, problem-solving activities, and projects.

Abstract random: Provide discussion prompts that encourage engaging online discussions.

Differentiate the learning activities you plan so they address students' learning-style preferences. According to Warwick (2015),

The learning environment needs to address each student [learning] style so new information is presented in a manner receptive to the student. Students should not only learn knowledge in their primary style, but they should also be required to experience different styles of learning. (p. 88)

Butler and Pinto-Zipp (2005-2006) conducted a study to determine if a relationship exists between graduate students' learning-style preferences and their instructional-method preferences in online courses.

While the CS and CR learning styles emerged as the most frequent single learning style, the CR/AR and CS/AS dual learning styles were the dominant learning style, and ... there were strong preferences concerning instructional methods, such as threaded discussions and individual assignments respectively. (Butler & Pinto-Zipp, 2005-2006, p. 217)

## Students

Identify how you learn best in online courses. For example, is it through step-by-step instruction (CS), reading and writing (AS), projects (CR), and/or discussion (AR)? Think about how you can expand your learning-style preferences as you approach varied tasks in online courses.

## Critical Thinking

### Instructors

Incorporate higher levels of critical thinking within questions, activities, and assignments. For example, I use Bloom's taxonomy to extend student learning. The following is an explanation of the thinking required at the six levels of Bloom's revised taxonomy:

Remember: Recall previously learned material.

Understand: Explain the meaning of information.

Apply: Use previously learned material in new situations.

Analyze: Break down material into its parts and understand the relationships among the parts.

Evaluate: Make judgments based on criteria.

Create: Integrate elements to form a new whole. (Gareis & Grant, 2015)

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Alignment of curricular objectives, instructional delivery methods, student learning activities, and assessments with higher levels of critical thinking is essential. According to Stanny (2016), “Since its publication, teachers have relied on Bloom’s taxonomy to guide how they write learning outcomes, structure learning activities, and assess student learning” (p. 1).

When planning questions, activities, and assignments, think about what level of thinking you have required of students and what you did to support them. For example, if you want to encourage students to apply content to new situations, did you provide new situations and present problems to be solved within new situations as you replied to students’ discussion board posts? According to Sousa (2006), “Our students would make a quantum leap to higher-order thinking if every teacher in every classroom correctly and regularly used a model such as Bloom’s revised taxonomy” (p. 259).

*“Instructors need to provide direction and support for students to help them demonstrate responsibility in their courses and ... instructors and students have specific responsibilities to fulfill.”*

### **Students**

Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize reading material. Note questions that come to mind as you are reading. Make connections to course concepts and to your professional experiences. Justify your ideas with evidence from course readings. Create themes after reading multiple sources on a topic. Engaging in the higher levels of critical thinking is an excellent characteristic of a learning community.

### **Feedback**

#### **Instructors**

Communicate evaluation criteria to students before assignments are due. When you are grading students’ work, provide specific and timely feedback related to the criteria. “To make the most of feedback, teachers and students must understand what success looks like” (Hattie et al., 2016, p. 17). The feedback should provide direction and support to prepare the students for the next steps in their learning. One way this can be accomplished is by incorporating the following characteristics of effective feedback identified by Wiggins (2012): “goal-referenced; tangible and transparent; actionable; user-friendly (specific and personalized); timely; ongoing; and consistent” (p. 13).

#### **Students**

Address feedback from your instructor and classmates by responding to how it caused you to rethink a position and a concept. When providing feedback about your classmates’ work, incorporate the characteristics of effective feedback (Wiggins, 2012) to encourage further reflection.

### **Conclusion**

Creating a community of learners within an online environment takes dedication and skill. The direction and support provided by the instructor are needed to

maximize student learning and form the foundation for the learning community. As the instructor and graduate students work together to fulfill defined responsibilities in the areas of collaboration and interaction, organization and communication, technology, learning-style differentiation, critical thinking, and feedback, the online

learning community is enhanced. Each of these areas of responsibility also helps develop connections among instructors and students. As social-distancing requirements are experienced during the pandemic, online connections are important—now more than ever. In addition to sending wishes for good health, I hope that the ideas shared create rewarding and successful online courses.

“Creating a community of learners within an online environment takes dedication and skill.”

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# Google Docs in Elementary Gifted Education

By Frances Dendy Mahaffey, Widad Kinard, and LeaAnne Daugherty

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*A review of current literature regarding benefits of using Google Docs with elementary gifted students yielded limited results. The authors contend that this is problematic considering the ever-expanding use of Google in education and the fact that Google holds the majority of mobile devices entering public education (Singer, 2017). Although many practitioners tout the usefulness of Google Docs in education (Nithya & Selvi, 2017; Oxnevad, 2013; Yang, 2010), and some promising empirical evidence for its use at the elementary level exists (Abell, 2013; Gierhart & Brown, 2018), the authors argue that there is not yet enough evidence to measure the impact of Google Docs on elementary writing instruction and, more specifically, its effects in meeting the needs of elementary gifted students.*

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Students in the United States today live in a world where technology is ubiquitous and integrated into every aspect of their lives (Black, 2010). This includes integration into sleep, as a 2019 survey found that 68% of teenagers keep their phones close at hand overnight and almost a third of students sleep with them (Johnson, 2019). The presence of literal 24-hour access to mobile devices has resulted in technology that is convenient and can provide instant access to a wealth of information with little effort. However, the way students utilize technology in schools depends heavily on their teacher's willingness to adapt and to ensure that the students are the ones using the technology rather than the teacher alone (Regan et al., 2019). District personnel are handling the issue in different ways, with some promoting the guided use of personal technology and others banning its use altogether (Klein, 2019). Reilly (2012) pointed out that teachers need to understand their students and "adopt teaching strategies that respond to their academic needs" (p. 10), and, for students in the United States, this is often addressed in the integration of technology into the curriculum.

Writing is a deliberate process that requires students to display effort, patience, and openness to receiving constructive feedback to improve their craft. The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance recognized this, noting that the writing process is complex and involved, requiring a multitude of independent skills, including a deep understanding of purpose and audience and skills to plan and execute a final product (NCEE, 2012). Writing is a laborious effort that requires time, attention to detail, and balancing of the multiple skills described. In addition to handling the complex issues involved in the teaching of specific writing skills, instructors may also find it difficult to keep students motivated, challenged, and engaged in writing if they lack the stamina needed to complete handwritten assignments. Some educators argue that writing instruction needs to evolve to integrate technology tools to ensure

that writing stays meaningful and relevant for students (Oxnevad, 2013), but it is only in recent years that the shift to digital tools has become mainstream in the writing curriculum (Akbar et al., 2017; Ene & Upton, 2018; Zheng et al., 2018). In response to this challenge of integrating technology into writing instruction, many schools use Google Docs.

*“Google Docs may be used to address these needs of gifted students: It allows for easy and efficient revision, avoids the potentially upsetting visual of “red ink,” and promotes private feedback through the use of comments or shared documents.”*

The authors conducted a literature review to determine the research-based evidence for the use of Google Docs for the teaching of writing at the elementary level, with a particular interest in its use for meeting the needs of gifted students. Surprisingly, we found many articles about how to use Google Docs in the classroom but not much actual peer-reviewed research on the effectiveness of such use. It is our view that this discrepancy is an issue that needs to be addressed in future research.

### The Use of Google in the Classroom

Google is now in widespread use in K-12 districts. As of 2016, Google Chromebooks comprised the majority (58%) of mobile devices rolled out to schools in the United States (Singer, 2017). The industry giant “boasts a footprint of 80 million educators and students using its G Suite for Education tools, and 40 million users using its Classroom app” (Millward, 2019, para. 1). Of the millions of educators using Google Apps for Education, more than 33,500 teachers paid to take exams through Google to become Google Certified Educators (Sowash, 2018).

A teacher-training industry beyond Google’s Teacher Center resource site has been built around offering preparation for the exams—from universities offering continuing education courses (Fresno Pacific Staff, 2019) to teacher leaders and trainers creating Google Certification training. Some of these training sessions can be accessed for free online (Sowash, 2018), while others cost more than \$300 for a course (Bell, 2020). The “Googleplex” publishes a variety of websites for teachers with ideas for instruction and training for using Google apps. These sites include the official Google Education Blog (<https://www.blog.google/outreach-initiatives/education/>), the Google for Education website (<https://edu.google.com/>), and Google’s Teacher

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Center for training and certification (<https://teachercenter.withgoogle.com/>). Each of these websites is vast, with a multitude of pages providing information for teachers.

Educators also share the benefits of using Google tools with each other through websites, blogs, and podcasts, such as the weekly Google Teacher Podcast (<https://googleteacherpodcast.com/>). Oxnevad (2013), an educator and ed-tech consultant, blogged about the features of Google Docs. This blog described the way Google Docs is designed to support collaborative writing, both synchronously and asynchronously, with tools to help with sentence mechanics (such as grammar and spell check) and word choice (such as the built-in thesaurus and dictionary; Oxnevad, 2013).

Proponents claim that Google Docs simplifies the writing process for its users and removes challenges that may hinder writing by offering integrated reference tools that support multiple languages. According to Yang (2010), “It is the collaborative editing tool that makes Google Docs a powerful program that can facilitate collaborative writing in the language classroom” (p. 2). Additionally, Nithya and Selvi (2017) pointed out that Google Docs can help students with collaboration and problem-solving, which are essential 21st-century skills.

### Google and the Needs of Elementary Gifted Students

Gifted students have specific, unique needs, both academically and emotionally, yet teachers and counselors are not always provided with adequate training to meet these needs (Pandina Scot et al., 2009; Peterson, 2006). Some of these characteristics include “sensitivity, intensity, and psychomotor, intellectual, sensual, emotional, and imaginal overexcitabilities” (Peterson, 2009, p. 280). Perfectionism can be another characteristic of the gifted student (Adderholdt & Goldberg, 1999) and may interfere with academic risk-taking, as “perfectionists live in a constant state of anxiety about making errors. They have extremely high standards and perceive excessive expectations and negative criticisms from others, including parents” (p. 4).

This perfectionism has implications for the English language arts classroom and the teaching of writing. Master (1983) wrote of the importance of creating a quality writing program to meet the needs of gifted students, with an awareness of these unique characteristics. In the teaching of writing, the concept of feedback can be especially problematic, as many gifted students “find any criticism, even [of] the most gentle and constructive nature, very difficult to accept” (p. 164), and “they [gifted students] are so accustomed to being the best in their group that they feel their drafts are perfect” (p. 164). The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, in their practice guide for teaching writing (NCEE, 2012), also considered these needs of gifted students when they recommended that teachers of gifted students “remove obstacles that may hinder students’ writing” (Kinard et al., 2019, p. 658) and recommended the use of technology to mitigate student frustration. This was in alignment with the recommendation of Dixon et al. (2005), who wrote

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that using a word processing program “improves the writing process by removing barriers in revision that previously existed when paper and pencil were the only available tools to compose” (pp. 181–182).

Proponents of the use of Google apps for education point to features of Google Docs that may be used to address these needs of gifted students: It allows for easy and efficient revision, avoids the potentially upsetting visual of “red ink,” and promotes private feedback through the use of comments or shared documents. Hertzog and Klein (2005) noted that this use of technology could make the learning visible and encourage both critical thinking and creativity. From the point of view of practitioners becoming researchers, however, the authors decided it was important to review the available research on the true effectiveness of Google Docs in the classroom, specifically for gifted students.

### **Current Research on Google Docs in the Classroom**

The authors combined multiple sources of education-oriented reference databases to locate empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals. Studies were selected to focus on the ways Google Docs are being used for writing, collaboration, and feedback in writing instruction. Many of the articles found were less research-based and more efforts by practitioners sharing ideas for using the tools in the classroom. The empirical research studies that were found on the topic tended to focus on secondary or college education as opposed to elementary grades. This scarcity of research studies on the effectiveness of the use of Google Docs in education prompted our conclusions regarding the need for additional research in this area.

### **Studies on the Use of Google Docs in Secondary/Higher Education**

While combing through the empirical research on the effectiveness of Google Docs in education, we found few studies that addressed the usefulness of collaborative programs such as Google Docs in secondary education. Studies of junior high students (Zheng et al., 2015) found that the participants preferred using Google Docs, especially for “organizing, writing, and giving and receiving feedback” (p. 21). Woodrich and Fan (2017) discovered that second-language learners were motivated to use Google Docs and were more likely to participate in this medium. However, their study did not find correlations to any improvements of standardized scores in writing, and the authors therefore concluded that “anonymous collaborative writing via Google Docs does not lead to more successful writing products” (Woodrich & Fan, 2017, p. 403).

More studies were found when including those addressing the college level. At this level, Google Docs was found to be an effective tool for empowering students, fostering collaboration, and providing feedback (Alexander & Alexander, 2011; Lin & Yang, 2013; Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014; Zhou et al., 2012). One study found that the collaborative use of Google Docs increased students’ confidence and allowed

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them to take “ownership of their material and think critically about related issues when they work as a team” (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014, p. 148). One negative student perspective was the “heavy reliance on the online environment and internet” (Alexander & Alexander, 2011, p. 2).

### Studies on the Use of Google Docs in Elementary Education

The authors, with our specific interest in the use of Google Docs for elementary students, were unable to find many studies on the topic. Fourth grade students using Google Docs in collaboration with adult writing coaches were “motivated and engaged” with their writing when Google Docs were utilized (Abell, 2013, p. 32), and “using Google Docs helped develop an immediate and ongoing relationship between students and coaches....When students understood that they had a specific audience excited to read their revisions, it motivated them to want to write better” (p. 34). Third graders displayed similar benefits and showed a preference for the digital communication app (Gierhart & Brown, 2018), although those researchers noted that students altering or deleting the work of other students was a challenge. Although these findings are encouraging, it must be noted that these were the only two studies found regarding elementary students.

“Additional research is needed to ascertain whether the use of Google Docs is, in fact, an effective writing tool for the learner.”

### Conclusion

Practitioners in education are using Google Docs in ever-increasing numbers. Many arguments exist for the use of this tool to make student writing more meaningful and efficient and to encourage collaboration, revision, and writing for an authentic audience. The authors, however, were unable to find much empirical research to substantiate these claims. As advocates for gifted learners, we want our students to strengthen their communication skills and invest time and effort to create quality products. Additional research is needed to ascertain whether the use of Google Docs is, in fact, an effective writing tool for the learner.

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# Supporting Social-Emotional Learning with Text Sets in the Elementary Classroom

By Jill T. Tussey and Leslie Haas

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*Stakeholders from all areas of society are challenged with the social-emotional learning (SEL) of today's youth. Although there are many in-school and out-of-school professionals, programs, and supporters of SEL, these services and opportunities are not always readily available to all children. Therefore, SEL has become an area in which educators in K-12 settings must develop skills and strategies. One specific way educators can support the social and emotional needs of students is through the development of text sets focused on SEL. Text sets can be utilized during literacy instruction and can be differentiated based on the unique needs of individual children. The author explores the importance of SEL and how text sets can provide one avenue of support.*

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## Setting the Challenge

Social-emotional learning (SEL) continues to be a growing area of focus for educators, administrators, and parents. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; 2019), social and emotional learning is the “process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (para. 1). CASEL (2019) provides five areas of focus with SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Other scholars (Jones et al., 2017) purport that SEL skills linked to student outcomes can be broken down into cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and other. The area of *other*, in this context, refers to character and mindset.

The media have provided many examples of how students are struggling socially and emotionally, and the results can be devastating. Students face many SEL issues and challenges related to gender, race, and socioeconomic status. Horowitz and Graf (2019) shared that students rank anxiety, depression, bullying, addiction, and poverty as major problems in their lives; furthermore, “61 percent of teens say they feel a lot of pressure to get good grades” (para. 3). These issues can simply no longer be ignored. Educators are now charged with the task of embedding SEL into their classroom environments and lessons.

When schools have adopted a social-emotional focus, many positive results have been reported. According to Durlak and Mahoney (2019), “27% of students have improved academic performance, 24% have improved social behaviors and lower levels of distress, and 22% showed fewer conduct problems” (p. 2). Implementing social-emotional programs thus benefits students academically while improving

attitudes and positive classroom experiences.

Although schools are increasing their attention on caring for the whole child rather than concentrating solely on academics, educators alone cannot be responsible for the social-emotional development and health of students. Tate (2019) shared that schools are hiring social workers, therapists, and other mental health professionals to support students. However, in order to ensure that SEL stays on the radar of educators and parents, more must be done. Kendziora and Yoder (2016) purported that, by creating policies related to SEL, “state and district leaders build a vision—with the input of educators and families—about the social and emotional skills and competencies that the state or districts want students to develop in school and benefit from for a lifetime” (p. 12). These policies could focus on a variety of areas; however, developing an environment that promotes SEL is a good starting point. A healthy social-emotional environment allows students to feel safe and supported without removing all challenges.

Community groups and organizations such as after-school, library, and community center programs, which could include 4H and Clover Kids (see <https://4-h.org/>), provide SEL support to children of all ages. Programs happening outside the school setting that support the social and emotional needs of students have four common areas of focus (Jones et al., 2017):

1. programs provide a safe and positive environment for children and adults;
2. programs support the development of high-quality relationships between children and adults;
3. programs are developmentally appropriate, relevant, and engaging for children; and
4. programs provide opportunities for direct skill building. (pp. 27-28)

Community groups and organizations can work together in order to provide a variety of programs with the focus on social-emotional support. Children and their families can attend these programs after school as well as on nights and weekends. While the theme and specific focus of each program may differ, the overarching aim is to provide children and adults opportunities to build strong relationships with their families and others in their community.

### **School-based Interventions**

Although other mental health professionals are now actively involved in supporting SEL, educators still have opportunities throughout the day to model decision-making with explicit instruction and ways to interact positively and can seamlessly embed social-emotional activities into the day in a variety of ways. Educators should be mindful to find time to teach students explicitly how to deal with challenges and frustrations; however, such stand-alone lessons are not enough. Throughout all areas of instruction, teachers can embed opportunities for students to collaborate to solve problems and work through challenges. Opening activities are powerful, as challenges and emotions are acknowledged at the beginning of the day or class session. Examples of opening activities include mindful meditation, in which students focus on self-awareness through breathing, and emotional vocabulary lists, in which educators and students discuss emotional vocabulary words and how these words make them feel at different times (Waterford.org, 2018). Similarly, closing activities can be utilized to support a positive learning environment because students can leave class with a sense of calm and closure. Some educators find group sharing to be another valuable

use of time to support SEL in the classroom. The key to this success is first to build a sense of community and structure among students and teachers. Although students may still face challenges, this classroom community support provides them with the skills and foundation to work through challenges because students are given a voice in their environment.

### Text Sets as One Approach to SEL

Evidence-based, quality SEL instructional practices are multimodal and involve creativity, movement, and reflection. Most can be incorporated into the development of SEL text sets that support classroom learning (Jones et al., 2017). Text sets are “collections of resources from different genre, media, and levels of reading difficulty that are designed to be supportive of the learning of readers with a range of experiences and interests” (Read Write, 2004, para. 1). Specific SEL resources in text sets include books/stories, vocabulary lists, SEL tools/handouts, visual displays, videos, songs, games, teacher’s choices, and other. Additional instructional practices supporting quality text sets include discussion, didactic teaching, writing, drawing, art/creative projects, skill practice, role-play, and kinesthetic activities.

Although educators can structure social-emotional instruction in a variety of ways, developing and utilizing text sets is a literacy practice that can be easily embedded. Educators can use the resources for read alouds, partner reads, or independent reads. The online resources include a variety of apps, games, songs, and videos that can be utilized in the whole class or in small groups. As students have different social-emotional needs and varying academic reading abilities, these resources are provided at a variety of elementary grade levels.

The sample text sets detailed in Table 1 address the following areas of social-emotional learning: self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Online resources to supplement the texts are shown in Table 2.

**Table 1**

*Text Sets for SEL*

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Books: Self-Awareness</b></p> | <p><i>My Magical Choices</i>   Cummings, B., 2019.</p> <p><i>My Magical Words</i>   Cummings, B., 2019.</p> <p><i>My Magical Dreams</i>   Cummings, B., 2019.</p> <p><i>My Strong Mind: A Story about Developing Mental Strength</i>   Van Hove, N., 2017.</p> <p><i>I Can Handle It</i>   Wright, L., 2016.</p> <p><i>Worry Says What?</i>   Edwards, A., 2018.</p> |
|-------------------------------------|--|

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Books: Self-Management</b></p>  | <p><i>What if Everybody Did That?</i>   Javernick, E., 2010.</p> <p><i>What if Everybody Said That?</i>   Javernick, E., 2018.</p> <p><i>What if Everybody Thought That?</i>   Javernick, E., 2019.</p> <p><i>Positive Ninja: A Children's Book About Mindfulness and Managing Negative Emotions and Feelings</i>   Nhin, M., 2019.</p> <p><i>Anxious Ninja: A Children's Book About Managing Anxiety and Difficult Emotions</i>   Nhin, M., 2019.</p> <p><i>I Can Do Hard Things: Mindful Affirmations for Kids</i>   Garcia, G., 2018.</p> <p><i>I Can't Do That, YET: Growth Mindset</i>   Cordova, E., 2017.</p> <p><i>Perfect Ninja: A Children's Book About Developing a Growth Mindset</i>   Nhin, M., 2019.</p> <p><i>What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety</i>   Huebner, D., 2005.</p> <p><i>Mindfulness for Kids Who Worry: Calming Exercises to Overcome Anxiety</i>   Austin, K., 2019.</p> <p><i>Great and the Dark Cloud: A Story about Overcoming Fear and Anxiety for Kids</i>   Simkins, L., 2019.</p> <p><i>Help Your Dragon Deal with Anxiety: Train Your Dragon to Overcome Anxiety</i>   Herman, S., 2018.</p> <p><i>Lying Up a Storm</i>   Cook, J., 2015.</p> |
| <p><b>Books: Social Awareness</b></p> | <p><i>Some Days I Flip My Lid: Learning to be a Calm, Cool Kid</i>   Bailey, K., 2019.</p> <p><i>My Strong Mind II: The Power of Positive Thinking</i>   Van Hove, N., 2019.</p>  |

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|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Books:<br/>Relationship<br/>Skills</b> | <i>Kindness Starts with You – At School</i>   Stagg, J., 2018.<br><br><i>A Little SPOT of Kindness!</i>   Alber, D., 2019.<br><br><i>The Monster Who Wanted It All</i>   Green, A., 2015.<br><br><i>Seeds and Trees: A Children’s Book about the Power of Words</i>   Walden, B., 2018.<br><br><i>Grumpy Monkey</i>   Lang, S., 2018.<br><br><i>The Day the Crayons Quit</i>   Daywait, D., 2013.<br><br><i>I’m Stretched</i>   Cook, J., 2019.<br><br><i>The Great Compromise</i>   Cook, J., 2019.<br><br><i>Rumor Has It...(Building Relationships)</i>   Cook, J., 2019. |
| <b>Books:<br/>Decision-<br/>Making</b>    | <i>That Rule Doesn’t Apply to Me! (Responsible Me!)</i>   Cook, J., 2016.<br><br><i>What Should Darla Do? Featuring the Power to Choose</i>   Levy, A., 2019.<br><br><i>What Were You Thinking?</i>   Smith, B., 2016.   |

**Table 2**

Online Resources for SEL

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>Apps</b> | Daniel Tiger’s Grr-fific Feelings<br>Bouncy the People Trainer<br>Peekapak<br>QuaverSEL<br>Social Adventures<br>SuperBetter<br>The Social Express<br>Smiling Mind<br>Calm<br>Pairin<br>Positive Penguins<br>Touch and Learn – Emotions<br>Peekapak<br>Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame<br>Mind Yet |
|-------------|--|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Activities/<br/>Games</b>                                       | Feelings Games   <a href="https://pbskids.org/games/feelings/">https://pbskids.org/games/feelings/</a><br><br>Zoo U   <a href="https://www.centervention.com/social-skills-game/">https://www.centervention.com/social-skills-game/</a>   |
| <b>Websites and<br/>Blogs with<br/>Resources and/<br/>or Games</b> | <p><i>21 Simple Ways to Integrate Social-Emotional Learning Throughout the Day</i>   We are Teachers   <a href="https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/">https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/</a></p> <p><i>Educator Toolkit: Social &amp; Emotional Learning</i>   Common Sense Education   <a href="https://www.common sense.org/education/toolkit/social-emotional-learning">https://www.common sense.org/education/toolkit/social-emotional-learning</a></p> <p><i>Proud to be Primary</i>   <a href="https://proudtobeprimary.com/social-skills-games/">https://proudtobeprimary.com/social-skills-games/</a></p> <p><i>Social &amp; Emotional Learning</i>   <a href="https://www.flocabulary.com/topics/social-and-emotional-learning/">https://www.flocabulary.com/topics/social-and-emotional-learning/</a></p> |
| <b>Videos and<br/>Songs</b>  | <p><i>Garden Theater – Casey Caterpillar Feels Left Out</i>   <a href="https://youtu.be/8_5Ngu_mdhM">https://youtu.be/8_5Ngu_mdhM</a></p> <p><i>Friendship Soup Recipe</i>   <a href="https://youtu.be/H7w7yXkJTu0">https://youtu.be/H7w7yXkJTu0</a></p> <p><i>Inside Out – Emotional Intelligence</i>   <a href="https://youtu.be/kdhjztWMnVw">https://youtu.be/kdhjztWMnVw</a></p> <p><i>My Walrus Doesn't Want to Wait! Social Skills Songs for Kids, Learning Songs for Kids from PlayKids</i>   <a href="https://youtu.be/-2IGE_5kOAY">https://youtu.be/-2IGE_5kOAY</a></p> <p><i>For the Birds – Think Before you Act</i>   <a href="https://youtu.be/LI92DLRdKYE">https://youtu.be/LI92DLRdKYE</a></p> <p><i>The Meanest Girl in Second Grade</i>   <a href="https://youtu.be/QFWfFCmjH_s">https://youtu.be/QFWfFCmjH_s</a></p>  |

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### Conclusion

Text sets are one avenue through which educators can respond to the myriad of social issues in K-12 settings, as these tools can provide opportunities to discuss uncomfortable topics. Additionally, they can act as guides for dealing with difficult issues, as well as offer comfort in knowing specific situations are not isolated or unique. By utilizing components of text sets, educators provide students with opportunities to engage with materials at their academic level that focus on a specific social-emotional area of need. Stakeholders should not be solely focused on supporting the overarching social-emotional needs of all students but rather on how best to support each student's unique needs.

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# Reframing Misbehavior: A Review of Carla Shalaby's *Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School*

by Kelly White Arnold

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*Student behavior is an ongoing interest in schools. The author reviews a book that takes a fresh look at the issue, offering a unique perspective that may help educators and schools evolve to new insights and practices.*

Shalaby, C. (2017). *Troublemakers: Lessons in freedom from young children at school*. The New Press. ISBN-13: 978-1620972366. 240 pages.

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How many times have they sat at the back of your classroom—loud, defiant, unfocused? How many times has a troublemaker disrupted your carefully crafted lesson, much to your disappointment and frustration? How many times have you thrown your hands in the air and thought, “What am I going to do about this kid?” Carla Shalaby’s book *Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School* (The New Press, 2017) invites educators to reconsider the way we view our most challenging students. Shalaby’s argument centers on the belief that troublemakers disrupt lessons for good reason: that their behaviors and attitudes toward school often signal the need for a paradigm shift in education as an institution.

Shalaby’s background as a veteran teacher and as director of teacher education programs at both Brown University and Wellesley College affords her a unique perspective on American public education. Having observed in hundreds of classrooms, she found herself intrigued by the ways schools respond to students whose behavior does not conform. When conducting research during her doctoral studies at Harvard School of Education, Shalaby found herself drawn to these nonconformists and wanted to examine closely the roots of their refusal.

## At the Core

Shalaby’s central argument is that troublemakers are simply the canaries in the mine of education. These children are not rebelling against order and discipline; they are uniquely sensitive and attuned harbingers of an educational system that is toxic for *all* children. *Troublemakers* follows four children who were identified by their teachers as problematic in their elementary school classrooms. Her detailed, empathetic portraiture of these children captures their behaviors in school and at home while also examining the context that surrounds them daily over a 2-year period. She creates detailed depictions of children like Zora, from a home that prizes artistry and creativity. Shalaby observes Zora’s experiences as she encounters a classroom that seeks to shape and control self-expression. Without casting aspersions on either Zora

or her teacher, Shalaby looks at the ways Zora's personhood comes into conflict with the institution of school itself, inviting readers to question whether the framework of early childhood education is one that suppresses children or causes them to be less fundamentally free. She invites the reader to question whether Zora's verbal outbursts are intentional disruptions or an expression of a desire to be heard and understood by those around her.

By capturing the children's behavior at home and at school, Shalaby illustrates for readers how the two institutions may come into conflict. For examples, Zora's home, where the walls and staircases are vividly painted and embellished, stands as both a literal and symbolic contrast to traditional school cultures that value uniformity and compliance. Shalaby looks at the ways misbehavior like Zora's often stems from school cultures that value compliance and order over creativity and energy. She argues that students' most ardent and visible misbehaviors are often cries to be seen and valued by an educational institution that does not honor the individual.

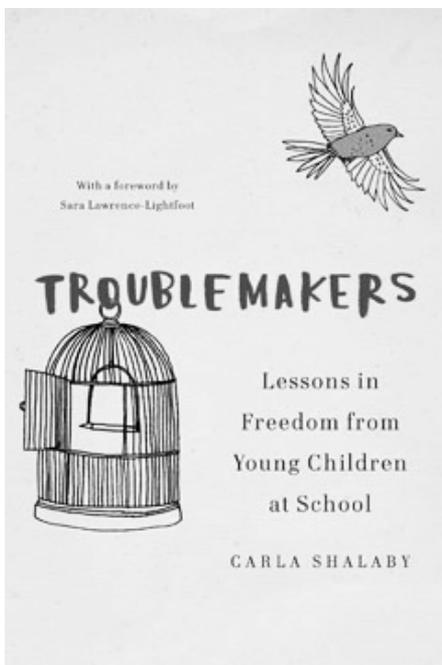
### Implications

The implications of this argument are immense. If Shalaby is correct, then our troublemakers are not trouble—our educational systems are. The argument that our schools have become places that stifle freedom and ignore the needs of the individual resonated with me, a classroom teacher, more than I cared to admit initially. How often do our educational systems privilege what is easier for the teacher over what is better for the students? How many of our classroom tasks and procedures value compliance over insight and docility over mastery?

These are questions that every classroom teacher must pause to consider. If we are in this business for the betterment of students, then we have a moral obligation to hearken to the cries of the canaries in our own classroom mines. When we stop to consider troublemakers not as deviants but as students using the resources they have to call attention to practices that damage everyone, the dialogue around their behaviors shifts. Instead of looking for ways to change our "troublesome" kids, we as educators are called to examine what oppressive practices may be triggering these undesirable

behaviors. Further, we are called to evaluate whether these behaviors are actually undesirable and not indicative of learning...or if they are ways of expressing mastery that we have traditionally stifled in systems that value order and homogeneity over learning as exploration and discovery.

*Troublemakers* calls readers to imagine what school would look like if we prepared children for the world we want instead of the world as it is. Although this is a beautiful sentiment, the text does fall short in its ability to address the myriad competing interests that exist in the everyday public-school classroom. Today's educator must prepare children for the world we want to see while simultaneously balancing the interests and demands of district mandates, state and national assessments, and the needs of an entire classroom full of individuals who all deserve to have their voices heard. One of the key weaknesses of this book is its inadequate consideration of how classroom teachers should balance the often competing needs of the individuals who comprise their



classroom and whether sometimes, for the sake of safety and unity, the needs of the group should outweigh the individual. Does compliance have an appropriate time and place in the classroom?

Shalaby's book is a compelling look at the nature of classroom disruption, one that casts misbehavior as a call to reform, a cry for freedom from our young people. The ideas in it have transformed the way I view student behavior in my class. I find myself seeking opportunities to value student voice and agency instead of suppressing the freedom of the individual by over-valuing obedience and order. Instead of something to be controlled or contained, children's spirits are to be set free and empowered. When we grant freedom, mercy, and empowerment to our most vulnerable, we, by extension, uplift everyone in our rooms. This cry for liberty is at the heart of *Troublemakers*, and it is one of the reasons this book has powerful implications for educators everywhere.

“*These children are not rebelling against order and discipline; they are uniquely sensitive and attuned harbingers of an educational system that is toxic for all children.*”

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# Unveiled: What Is Keeping Black Male Students from Success?

By Jo Hawkins-Jones and Stacy Reeves

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*Although it may appear that Black males do not value education due to mediocre scores in academics, the truth is far more nuanced. The lack of culturally relevant learning experiences with culturally competent teachers, academic disconnection, and stereotypical labeling account for a preponderance of their negative self-image and poor academic performance. Culturally relevant pedagogy reveals that students' educational experiences are often the factors that influence their academic achievement and self-regulation. This article presents research into the educational experiences of Black male students. The authors cite relevant literature and offer suggestions to improve Black male students' success based on direct observation and experience derived from nearly 10 years of working with Black male students.*

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The history of the African American male has been one of strife, longing to attain self-conscious manhood, and fighting for acceptance and independence among peer groups and in society (Alexander, 2015; DuBois, 1903). Labels such as “criminal,” “aggressive,” “anti-school,” and “hardcore” hover over Black male students' heads like crop dusters, spraying exclusion, oppression, and iniquitous discipline practices the very moment many enter the doors of American schools (Alexander, 2015; Ross & Stevenson, 2018). Stereotypes such as these place African American male students at a disadvantage and hinder them from flourishing in the classroom. These stereotypes support the notion that they do not value education; however, this is far from the truth. The truth is that a lack of culturally relevant learning experiences with culturally competent teachers, as well as academic disconnection and stereotypes, help account for their negative self-image and poor academic performance (Banks, 2017; Harper & Davis, 2012; Hucks, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Tatum, 2006).

## **Educational Experiences**

Schools are challenged by the intricacy of where Black boys come from and their real experiences of being Black and male in United States public schools (Davis, 2003; Smith et al., 2011). Many Black boys come from environments shaped by drugs, crime, and academic failure, which places them at risk for an array of negative consequences in school and society (Alexander, 2015; Fries-Britt, 1997; Kunjufu, 2005; Polite & Davis, 1999). Their grim experiences lead to negative teacher perceptions that are rooted in stereotypes, especially for educators who lack cultural competence (Alexander, 2011; Ross & Stevenson, 2018; Steele, 1997). Most teachers in schools throughout the United States are White, middle-class females with limited experience in interacting with students from different social-cultural backgrounds

(Chambers & Lavery, 2017). This is not to say that all White, middle-class teachers lack cultural competency, because the same can be true for teachers of color whose lived experiences differ from those of their students. The truth is, it is imperative that teachers first understand their own cultural identity, attitudes, and beliefs about individuals' differences before they can further develop their knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse students and families.

Having teachers with limited cultural competence begets discipline disparities for boys of color (Alexander, 2015; Ross & Stevenson, 2018). Black male students have often been reprimanded for culturally expressive behavior, namely rapping, strutting, using slang, and wearing hats, expressive clothing, and pants with loosened belts. Such behaviors are perceived by most teachers as “negative, rude, arrogant, intimidating, and threatening—and therefore not conducive to learning” (Major & Billson, 1992, p. 14) when, counterintuitively, it is how Black males engage in their masculinity and maintain self-confidence (Hall, 2009; Major & Billson, 1992). This lack of congruence between Black students and their teachers may make them feel uncomfortable and out-of-place, adversely affecting their self-confidence and educational attainment.

### **Culturally Relevant Practices**

The success of boys of color has become an increasingly researched topic for strategic planning in schools; yet and still, Black male students are not achieving academic success as they should (Lopez, 2011; National Education Association, 2011). A sense of urgency for progressive change in educational reform is needed. Research shows that schools with the highest academic success focus on students' lives, academics, and social and emotional well-being (Brooms, 2019; National Education Association, 2011). Black male students need culturally relevant learning experiences to improve their confidence and educational attainment.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is an instructional approach that can be used to foster students' conceptual understanding and promotes academic growth by connecting students' lifestyles and cultural traditions with their learning experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Students are also encouraged to develop a “broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162). Culturally relevant pedagogy requires teachers to have high expectations of students and attend to their needs by exposing students to curricula that build on their prior knowledge and cultural experiences, enhance their conceptual understanding, and promote academic growth (Broom, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995). For example, teachers can use musical lyrics to support students' understanding of figurative language and enhance their classroom experience (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Integrating students' culture into the curriculum and classroom instruction enhances their perception of the school culture, improves their learning experiences, and prepares students to be lifelong learners, ultimately increasing their academic success (Broom, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lopez, 2011).

### **Academic Disconnection**

Academic disconnection, a lack of connection with learning, critically hurts Black male students' academic performance and causes withdrawal from school, dropping out, or delinquency (Barad & Vaughan, 2014; Osborne, 1999). African American

students—boys, in particular—experience higher levels of academic disconnection, which has been proven to cause or contribute to low performance (Osborne, 1999). For example, over the last decade, the results of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP; National Center for Education Statistics, 2020) have continually illustrated achievement gaps in math and reading between African American male students and males from other ethnic groups.

Black male students may feel out of place in a general education program due to a disconnection with the curriculum, a lack of culturally appropriate instruction, invalid assessments, and negative identification labels (Obiakor & Beachum, 2005; Tatum, 2006). Resultantly, many of them start to experience a disconnection with academics around Grade 4, when learning becomes departmentalized and class environments become less nurturing (Harper & Davis, 2012; Kujufu, 2005). Concurrently, teachers discontinue promoting achievement, which results in “apathy and disengagement” among those students (Harper & Davis, 2012, p.104). When Black male students are deprived of relevant, meaningful learning opportunities or lack content knowledge, they tend to disconnect from instruction and act cool to appear stoic and in control. This response is commonly perceived by teachers as unconcerned, unmotivated, devaluing education, and having a bad attitude (Major & Billson, 1992; Obiakor & Beachum, 2005).

Black males tend to be very self-conscious and long to be accepted by their teachers and peers, which explains the need for incessant nurturing and ongoing motivational reinforcement (Harper & Davis, 2012; Kujufu, 2005). Black male students who are engaged in academics are more motivated to succeed and resilient because their self-efficacy is driven by academic performance (Brooms, 2019; Osborne, 1999). Osborne (1999) suggested that for students of color to facilitate a personal connection with learning, schools must adopt multicultural curricula that promote Black self-interest and recognize the contribution of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. African American males who confidently connect with learning demonstrate growth in academic achievement (Brooms; 2019; Osborne, 1999).

### **Stereotypical Labels**

Prior to entering a classroom, students of color, especially males, are already at a disadvantage, and many struggle with interpersonal conflict that prohibits them from flourishing (Jenkins, 2006). Jenkins (2006) claimed,

He brings with him... a life of poverty or some form of economic struggle... a generation enraged by inadequately educated parents and elders, and the beginnings of deep psychological and esteem issues that take root with his first engagement in society. (p. 144)

In addition to coping with interpersonal conflicts, Black male students are also challenged by stigma and stereotype threats in society and school. Distorted images

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of boys of color have become potent mouthpieces “for the transmission of racial meanings that reproduce relations of difference, of division, and of power” (Ferguson, 2001, p.78). In society, Black males are depicted as predators, a “threat to personal safety” (Ferguson, 200, p. 78), which is not poles apart from how they are perceived in school. Black male learners are labeled as “bad boys who are underachievers and academic failures bound for prison” (Ross & Stevenson, 2018, p. 96). These negative stereotypes trouble Black male students and may cause them to question who they are as individuals and their capabilities. Steele (1997) asserted that individuals who are negatively labeled for an extended period develop long-term feelings of inadequacy, and these feelings prevent them from achieving success.

“ *In addition to coping with interpersonal conflicts, Black male students are also challenged by stigma and stereotype threats in society and school.* ”

### **Educational Experiences That Lead to Success for Students**

School failure and exclusion are strong predictors of poor life outcomes and the mass imprisonment of boys of color (Western, 2004; Wilson, 2014). Given this reality, there is a need for proactive strategies to improve Black males’ academic success and increase their preparedness to compete in postsecondary institutions and the job market (Brooms, 2017; Cokley et al., 2012). For Black male students to experience academic success, they need exposure to culturally relevant learning experiences that involve active inquiry, are pertinent to their daily lives, and provide opportunities for them to impart their cultural knowledge in class (Ladson-Billson, 1994; Lopez, 2011). Although culturally relevant practices increase the self-confidence and proficiency of male students of color, the challenges extend from school leaders and teachers connecting with students whose racial and socioeconomic backgrounds differ from their own and then to integrating students’ cultures in all aspects of schooling (Dunbar et al., 2019).

School administrators and teachers would benefit from engaging in cultural immersion experiences. School leaders and teachers can be impacted in their culturally relevant pedagogical practices as well as in attitudes and perceptions regarding connecting with culturally diverse students (Dunbar et al., 2019). Such experiences and knowledge can thus be used to drive instruction and student success (Milner, 2016; Osbourne, 1999).

### **Service-Learning**

Service-learning, as defined by Jacoby (2014), is “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (p. 21). Service-learning can be an empowering experience for both teachers and students. Through service-learning, teachers can build relationships with students and the community in which they serve and, simultaneously, provide Black male students opportunities to express themselves, bridge their home and school experiences, and engage with intercultural community partners. Service-learning offers Black male students an ideal learning experience,

including culturally relevant pedagogy, positive learning experiences with adults, and buy-in to their education. Black male students are provided opportunities to work along with their teacher and community partner to design projects that best address a need expressed by the community partner. From the beginning to the end of the project, students take responsibility for their learning as they actively engage in activities. Service-learning requires students to think critically about their learning and connect classroom content with their service-learning experience (Jacoby, 2014; Witmer & Anderson, 1994). Moreover, service-learning helps develop patterns of lifelong learning and academic excellence for Black male students (Chambers & Lavery, 2017; Witmer & Anderson, 1994).

Firsthand experiences gained through service-learning provide Black male students with exposure to diversified learning opportunities, well-informed adults outside their families, and positive learning activities with their teachers, which can all result in academic success. As for teachers, there is no automatic start button for cultural proficiency and strong relationships with students. However, immersing in service-learning experiences can transform teachers' feelings of apprehension and disconnection with culturally diverse students into empowering, culturally relevant learning experiences that promote teachers' cultural competence and student success.

### **Shifting the Culture**

Improving Black male students' success necessitates a school milieu where they experience inviting and supportive learning environments. Accordingly, school leaders must be intentional about cultivating learning environments that are centered around students' lived experiences and that promote a sense of belonging and self-confidence (Brooms, 2019; Lopez, 2011).

One way to do this is for schools to conduct home visits to engage with students and families in their natural environments. The resulting knowledge helps school leaders and teachers to create inclusive learning cultures that embrace student, family, and community involvement to support student achievement (Walker et al., 2012). More importantly, home visits can reframe how educators perceive students and their families, which can break barriers and lead to stronger relationships between the school and families (Yoon, 2016).

School culture is also a leverage point for nurturing academic success. A positive school culture promotes positive shifts in confidence, enhanced motivation, and robust academic identities for young Black men (Brooms, 2019). African American males' experiences—namely poverty, neglect, and lack of family structure—impair their emotional development; lead to feelings of grief, anger, and depression; and cause them to be hypersensitive to insults and irritability in social situations, all of which have some bearing on their self-confidence and educational attainment (Barbarin, 2012). Improving the educational experiences of Black male students entails school

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leaders working collaboratively with teachers to create a school culture that is not only centered on students' lives and interests but also recognizes and celebrates their accomplishments. Schools can show that they value students by displaying cultural referents and pictures of famous individuals with whom students identify, playing music in the hallways and cafeteria, and allowing students to showcase their talents and highlight their significant accomplishments during the morning announcements. Culturally inclusive environments provide Black male students an accumulation of positive educational experiences.

### Conclusion

Lackluster scores in academics may suggest that Black males do not value education; however, the truth is far more nuanced. In actuality, the lack of culturally relevant pedagogy provided by culturally competent teachers; academic incongruence; and stereotypical labeling account for a preponderance of their negative self-image and poor academic performance. Culturally relevant pedagogy reveals that students' educational experiences are often the factors that influence their academic achievement and self-regulating. Establishing culturally inclusive learning environments where Black male students feel confident and have positive relationships with peers and adults improves their self-perception and schooling experiences (Brooms, 2019). Additionally, shifting perceptions by school administrators and teachers through engaging in cultural immersion experiences can help change adults' attitudes and beliefs. Black boys need champion educational experiences where they can create their own achievement, feel culturally and academically connected, and can attain academic success (Brooms, 2019; National Education Association, 2011; Walker et al., 2012).

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# The Legacy of William Frantz Public School: Commemoration vs. Celebration

By Connie L. Schaffer, Martha Graham Viator, and Meg White

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*Sixty years ago, Ruby Bridges, a Black first-grade student, entered the all-White William Frantz Public School (WFPS). Her entry into WFPS represented a massive transformation in public education in the United States and embedded the school in the U.S. civil rights movement. Fifteen years ago, following Hurricane Katrina, the rapid increase in charter schools in New Orleans centered WFPS in a second transformation, the movement to reform public education. In addition to these two seminal events, a more complete history of WFPS provides justification that these landmark transformations be commemorated rather than celebrated.*

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Anniversaries prompt reexamination of significant moments in the past as well as what transpired in the years following the original events. In 2020, two important anniversaries of transformation coincide for William Frantz Public School (WFPS), a school nestled in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans. These anniversaries call for more than the typical nostalgic celebrations associated with historic milestones in which individuals or communities overcame obstacles. They call for commemorations that include remembering the complexities of events.

## School Desegregation and Hurricane Katrina

Twice since opening in 1938, WFPS epitomized substantial changes within public education. First, in November 1960, 6-year-old Ruby Bridges walked up the steps of WFPS. Bridges, the first Black student to attend the formerly segregated, all-White school, encountered jeering crowds of protestors every day as she entered the building. WFPS became a focal point in the post-Brown v. Topeka<sup>1</sup> evolution of American public education as front-page photographs, television coverage, and eventually the art of Norman Rockwell published in *Look Magazine* (Rockwell, 1964) brought images of Bridges, WFPS, and school desegregation into millions of American homes. To many, WFPS symbolized a critical chapter in American public education. In fact, the National Register of Historic Places (2005) acknowledged the importance of WFPS, including it on its list of significant historic locations in the United States.

Fifteen years ago, WFPS experienced a second transformation. In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and heavily damaged nearly every public school in the city, including WFPS. Fortunately, the National Registry designation spared WFPS from being demolished, and the building was eventually restored. As part of the recovery from Katrina, WFPS transformed to a charter school.<sup>2</sup>

### The Case for Commemoration

Events at WFPS in 1960 are often viewed as the embodiment of the U.S. civil rights movement. For much of the school year, Bridges and her family, the students and teachers at WFPS, and officials from New Orleans Public Schools endured the difficult and at times dangerous day-to-day life involved in desegregation. Throughout the years, and particularly on landmark anniversaries, news outlets published retrospectives on these events (Bridges Hall, 2000; Dequine, 2010; Jerome & Ridenour, 1995; Reckdahl, 2010). In children's books published by Bridges (1999) and by a psychiatrist who supported her (Coles & Ford, 1995), as well as in a Disney movie (Hopkins, 1998), accounts celebrated the bravery and accomplishments of Bridges, her parents, and her teacher. It is common to view these stories as sufficient reminders of the past and evidence of progress toward racial equality in the United States (Cashion, 2019; Hall, 2005).

However, framing these recollections from only a celebratory perspective truncates a complete examination of school desegregation and masks evidence of pervading systemic racism. Americans can ill afford such naivete and must examine the complexity of numerous evolving educational challenges in the decades following Bridges's entry into WFPS (Schaffer et al., 2018).

Stories of Bridges's courage and that of her family and others supporting school desegregation primarily focus on the noteworthy bravery of a few individuals and less on the vitriol of many White parents, community leaders, and ardent segregationists.<sup>3</sup> However, the level of hatred publicly exhibited outside WFPS each day before and after school, as well as the intimidation that occurred under the cover of night, revealed deeply-embedded racism that also deserves attention (Jeansonne, 1977; Louisiana State Advisory Committee [LSAC] to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1961; Wieder, 1983–1984, 1985, 1988).

This racism seeped into every level of government. Ample sources document the political and legal maneuvers of local and state officials hoping to keep schools in New Orleans segregated and to perpetuate the legacy of systemic racism in education (Baker, 1996; DeVore & Logsdon, 1991; Louis et al., 1971; LSAC, 1961). Even after the court-ordered desegregation of 1960, it would take an additional 7 years before New Orleans Public Schools moved to desegregate high schools (Stern, 2016) and over 10 years before district teachers were desegregated (Cortez, 1996). Ignoring the indomitably ingrained social and political forces that not only tolerated but affirmed White supremacy minimizes the oppression of those who were targeted.

Like government officials, White parents also attempted to keep White and Black students apart. White parents withdrew their children from WFPS and enrolled them in state-subsidized private schools within hours of Bridges's arrival at the school. Following this immediate exodus, a more turbid, long-lasting reaction eventually resegregated New Orleans's public schools as increasing numbers of White parents enrolled their

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children in private schools. White families also moved out of New Orleans, shifting the racial demographics of the city and accelerating the resegregation of WFPS and other public schools (Baker, 1996; Matsumaru, 2011; Wieder, 1985, 1988).

“...framing these recollections from only a celebratory perspective truncates a complete examination of school desegregation and masks evidence of pervading systemic racism.”

During the 1970s, loss of key industries in New Orleans and the geographic isolation caused by the new interstate system that severed the Ninth Ward from other parts of the city dramatically impacted the neighborhood surrounding WFPS. As a result, Black middle-class families migrated out of the area to be closer to employment opportunities. At the same time, unemployment, crime, and drugs crept into the community. As the neighborhood changed, WFPS faced enormous challenges to educate increasing numbers of poor students living within a very difficult environment (BondGraham, 2007; Campanella, 2010; Landphair, 2007; Matsumaru, 2011; Stern, 2016).

New variances of systemic racism impacted students as school district records revealed Black students as overrepresented in disciplinary actions and underrepresented in elite academic magnet programs (Committee to Study the Status of The Black Male in New Orleans Public Schools, 1988; Garibaldi, 1992, 2007). Despite an extensive review of concerns and recommendations for change in the early 1980s, racialized discipline practices persisted for decades, and Black students continued to be suspended more often and for longer periods of time than White students (Barrett et al., 2018; Tuzzolo & Hewitt, 2006-2007). Other racist policies and practices created barriers that prevented Black students from enrolling in magnet schools—schools the press referred to as “glamour schools” (Kelso, 1992; Nabonne, 1998a, 1998b).

As accountability movements swept across the United States at the beginning of the 21st century, the State of Louisiana began issuing school report cards. The report cards for WFPS included demoralizing labels such as “Academically Unacceptable” and “School in Decline.” Louisiana assigned these labels based on an accountability formula weighted almost solely on test scores and with no account for the tremendous social challenges confronting the students who attended WFPS (Louisiana Department of Education, Louisiana Believes, 1997–2005).

The inflammatory labeling of schools along with leadership instability and district-wide corruption eroded public trust in WFPS and other schools in New Orleans. In 2003, the Louisiana Department of Education created the Recovery School District.

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Seen by some as the only means to reform education, the new governance system created a bureaucratic infrastructure to support the expansion of charter schools and specifically targeted schools in New Orleans (Boselovic, 2014; Garda, 2011).

Based on low test scores, district officials decided to close WFPS in 2005. The closure came just months after the school's recognition on the National Register and only weeks before Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. Following Katrina, the New Orleans Public School Board relinquished control of nearly all its schools to the Recovery School District, which immediately moved to increase the number of charter schools and set a long-term goal to create an all-charter model of public education in the city (Goff, 2009; Scott S. Cowen Institute for Public Education, 2008; United Teachers of New Orleans [UTNO], Louisiana Federation of Teachers, and the American Federation of Teachers, 2006).

High-ranking officials purported that Katrina provided an ideal opportunity to reform public education in New Orleans and granted the Recovery School District unprecedented authority to transform public education within the city (Anderson, 2010; Gewertz, 2005; Nagin, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2005). In reality, the concept of this model was well-established before the hurricane. Katrina simply allowed opportunists to create a market-driven model of education quickly in New Orleans and then proclaim it as a model for public education in other locations (Au et al., 2006; UTNO, 2006).

After converting every P-12 school into a charter school, the Recovery School District transitioned authority back to the New Orleans Public School Board in 2018. By this time, the WFPS building had been restored, and Akili Academy, a charter school, occupied the building. A private board of directors now sets admission policies, makes educational decisions regarding the curriculum, hires teachers, and carefully monitors test scores (Jabbar, 2015; Williams, 2013). The wording "William Frantz Public School" that appears over the famed doorway Bridges entered is protected by the building's historic designation. However, the door no longer serves as the focal point for those who enter the school. Rather, students and visitors use a new entrance that provides no indication the building is a public school.

### Conclusion

Ironically, at one of America's most celebrated public schools, the concept of *public* education is now difficult to discern. Yes, significant events—school desegregation in 1960 and the recovery following Hurricane Katrina in 2005—that impacted WFPS

*“Ironically, at one of America's most celebrated public schools, the concept of public education is now difficult to discern.”*

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should be commemorated. Yet a more complete history of WFPS provides sobering reminders of evolving challenges within public education and gives cause to temper any celebration.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In the landmark 1954 *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled racial segregation of public schools unconstitutional.

<sup>2</sup> In the United States, the structure of charter schools varies by state. In the State of Louisiana, charter schools are independent schools that receive public funding, but school finances, operations, and administration are governed by private boards of directors.

<sup>3</sup> Widespread reports and documentation of racial epithets and threats directed at Bridges and others can be found in newspapers and public statements made by individuals, many of whom were considered to be community leaders. A White mother protesting outside of WFPS daily told Bridges she planned to poison her (Bridges, 1999; Coles, 1995). At public gatherings, speakers referred to desegregation as the mongrelizing of races and urged White parents to demand the continuation of racially segregated school in order to avoid their daughters being “raped by these Congolese” (*Times-Picayune*, 1960).

# Bulletin Submission Guidelines

Submissions from members will be accepted for review provided that:

- The submission is not being considered concurrently in whole or substantial part by another publisher.
- The *Bulletin* has exclusive option of possible publication for a period of 6 months following receipt of the submission.
- The author assumes responsibility for publication clearance in the event the submission was presented at a professional meeting or is the direct product of a project financed by a funding agency.
- Authors are responsible for accurately citing all quoted and bibliographic materials and for obtaining permission from the original source for quotations in excess of 150 words or for tables or figures reproduced from published works.
- Co-authors are permitted. At least one author must be a Delta Kappa Gamma member.

## Manuscript Preparation

- Although there is a suggested theme for each issue of the *Journal*, manuscripts on all topics are welcome. The *Collegial Exchange* is not theme-based.
- Manuscripts should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise, and appropriate for *Bulletin* readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable, and free from gender, political, patriotic, or religious bias. Topic headings should be inserted where appropriate.
- Please see Submission Grid on the following page for specific requirements of the types of manuscripts appropriate for publication.
- Use *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, current edition, for manuscript preparation. Visit the APA Style website at [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org).
- Double space the entire manuscript, including quotations, references, and tables. Print should be clear, dark, and legible. Pages must be numbered.
- References should refer only to materials cited within the text. Nonretrievable material, such as papers, reports of limited circulation, unpublished works, and personal communications, should be restricted to works absolutely essential to the manuscript.
- Abbreviations should be explained at their first appearance in the text. Educational jargon (e.g., preservice, K–10, etc.) should be defined as it occurs in the text.
- Place tables and figures on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. Use Arabic numerals and indicate approximate placement in the text.
- Photos, graphics, charts, etc. that may enhance the presentation of the manuscript may be included. Contact the editorial staff ([bulletin@dkg.org](mailto:bulletin@dkg.org)) for information regarding the use of photos.

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- One submission per author per issue.
- Submit electronically, in Microsoft Word format, to [bulletin@dkg.org](mailto:bulletin@dkg.org). Do not submit PDF files. For a manuscript, include definitive abstract, photo of author(s) [see below], and biographical information. Biographical information must include author(s) name(s), occupational position(s), Society and professional affiliations (list offices held), address(es), phone number(s) and e-mail address(es).
- Electronic/digital photo files must be saved in JPG or TIFF format and must be a minimum of 1.5” x 1.5” with a 300 dpi resolution. For photos submitted to enhance text, include caption/identification information.
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## Bulletin Submission Grid

| Publication                          | Submission Type and Description  | Word Length | Requirements                            |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------|---|
| <i>Journal</i>                       | Action/Classroom Research: Organized, systematic, and reflective analysis of classroom practice with implications for future practice in teaching and learning.  | 1,500-4,000 | Abstract; documentation; bio; photo     |
| <i>Journal</i>                       | Qualitative/Quantitative/Mixed Methods Research: Essentially narrative with nonstatistical approaches and a focus on how individuals and groups view and understand the world and construct meanings from their experiences (Qual)/Gathers and analyzes measurable data to support or refute a hypothesis or theory through numbers and statistics (Quan)/ Utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data to explore a research question (Mixed). | 1,500-4,000 | Abstract; documentation; bio; photo     |
| <i>Journal</i>                       | Position Paper/Viewpoint: Defines an issue; asserts clear and unequivocal position on that issue, provides data and references that inform that position, and argues directly in its favor.  | 1,000-1,500 | Abstract; documentation; bio; photo     |
| <i>Journal</i>                       | Review of Literature: Presents supporting and nonsupporting evidence to clarify a topic and/or problem of interest and value to educators; synthesizes and critiques the literature; draws conclusions; mentions procedures for selecting and reviewing literature; may include narrative review, best evidence synthesis, or meta-analysis.   | 1,500-3,000 | Abstract; documentation; bio; photo     |
| <i>Journal</i>                       | Program Description: Provides an overview and details of a single program in an educational setting. Goals, resources, and outcomes are included. No marketing or promotion of a program is allowed.   | 1,500-2,000 | Abstract; documentation; bio; photo     |
| <i>Journal</i>                       | Book/Technology Review: Combines summary and personal critique of a book, Web site, or app on an educational topic or with educational relevance.  | 400-700     | Introduction; documentation; bio; photo |
| <i>Collegial Exchange</i>            | Classroom Practice/Program: Describes practice or initiative used in a classroom to advance educational excellence.  | 700-1,200   | Bio; photo                              |
| <i>Collegial Exchange</i>            | DKG Chapter/State Organization Practice/Program: Describes a practice or initiative used by a chapter or state organization to advance the purposes of DKG.  | 700-1,200   | Bio; photo                              |
| <i>Collegial Exchange</i>            | Viewpoint on Current Issue: Defines and addresses an issue related to education, women, children, or DKG.  | 700-1,200   | Bio; photo                              |
| <i>Collegial Exchange</i>            | Personal Reflection or Anecdote: Shares a personal experience that provides insight to the human condition, particularly related to educators and women.   | 500-700     | Bio; photo                              |
| <i>Collegial Exchange</i>            | Inspirational Piece: Provides transcript of speech delivered at chapter, state, or international events.   | 700-1,200   | Bio; photo                              |
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| <i>Collegial Exchange</i>            | Book Review: Combines a summary and personal critique of a textbook, resource, or book (fiction or nonfiction) related to education or to women and children.  | 400-700     | Bio; photo                              |
| <i>Collegial Exchange</i>            | Technology Review: Combines a summary and personal critique of an educational application, program, or piece of hardware that is useful in the classroom or that is useful in the life of an educator.   | 400-700     | Bio; photo                              |
| <i>Journal or Collegial Exchange</i> | Letter to the Editor: Responds to items previously published in the <i>Bulletin</i> .  | 200-300     | Author's name; chapter/state            |
| <i>Journal or Collegial Exchange</i> | Poetry/Creative Work: Original expressions in any creative format  | NA          | Bio; photo                              |

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