

International perspectives of black male teachers, teacher leaders and school leaders

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Introduction

International perspectives of black male teachers, teacher leaders and school leaders builds on the extant black male teacher and school leader scholarship by situating the discussion over the recruitment and retention of black male teachers and school leaders in educator preparation programs and the profession within an international context. In the field of education, this special issue helps to bridge the research, theory and practice gap by bringing together junior and veteran researchers, policymakers and practitioners from all over the world to shed light on black male teachers, teacher leaders and school leaders who are immigrants, refugees and from varying international contexts. Most research on black male teachers has been US-based, led by former black male teachers who have advanced to faculty and administrative positions in higher education (Bristol, 2017; Brockenbrough, 2015; Brown, 2009; Lewis and Toldson, 2013; Lynn, 2006). There is a much smaller body of research focused on black male teachers in the international contexts of Canada, Australia, Jamaica and the Caribbean (James, 2002; Martino and Rezai-Rashti, 2010; Martino and Rezai-Rashti, 2012; Miller, 1986; Rezai-Rashti and Martino, 2010). An analysis of this international research literature reveals similar themes and results as its US-based counterparts, focused on three main areas:

- (1) increasing the representation of black male teachers and school leaders in the profession;
- (2) serving as role models for black boys; and
- (3) marginalization of black male teachers and school leaders in educator preparation programs and the profession.

In the USA, Lewis' and Toldson's (2013) book *Black Male Teachers: Diversifying the United States' Teacher Workforce* is an important volume and the only collection of scholarship bringing together researchers, policymakers, practitioners and scholars to provide an informed and multivocal set of perspectives about the experiences and perspectives of black male teachers and school leaders in educator preparation programs, the profession and leadership positions. Contributors to the book have continued to use existing and new theoretical frameworks, methodologies, geographical locations and perspectives to offer new knowledge and insights about black male teachers and school leaders. Yet other than the Lewis and Toldson volume, the growing body of scholarship focused on black male teachers and school leaders is dispersed throughout various journals and books around the world. There is a need for more collaborative and collective volumes focused on black male teachers, teacher leaders and school leaders in the USA and abroad. This special issue responds to that call.

Overview of the special issue

The editorials, articles and book review presented in this special issue continue and expand the conversation about black male teachers and school leaders advanced by Lewis and Toldson (2013). This issue begins with two editorials, one from Dr Marvin Lynn, a pioneering and leading researcher in the area of black male teachers, and one from Mr Curtis Valentine, a nationally recognized school board member and co-founder of a district-wide initiative in Maryland to recruit and retain black male teachers. Lynn reflects on his teaching career as a former black male elementary schoolteacher who taught from a social



justice perspective, and how those early career experiences shaped his development as an educational researcher of black male teachers. He also reflects on the growing number of researchers who have developed research agendas focused on black male teachers and how the research landscape has expanded to include black male teachers from international backgrounds. Valentine provides a policymaker and practitioner perspective on how a school district responded to the urgent need for the recruitment and retention of black male teachers to reflect the district's black and brown populations. Together, these two editorials provide a timely reflection on how policies and efforts to research, recruit and retain black male teachers has unfolded in recent decades.

The research and conceptual articles presented in this issue build on these two editorials and extant black male teacher and school leader scholarship. In the first article, Bryan and Jett provide a conceptual argument for increasing the number of black male teachers in early childhood education through culturally relevant play. The second article of the issue continues to focus on the primary grade levels in its discussion of pre-service black male teachers in elementary education teacher preparation program in the England. Here, author Maylor provides insight into the lack of acceptance and prevalence of racialized experiences that pre-service black male elementary school teachers undergo in their training. Continuing with a focus on pre-service teachers, Goings, Bristol and Walker examine the transitional experiences of a pre-service refugee black male health education teacher. The detailed case study illuminates the relationship between the teacher's professional choices and how his life experiences as a refugee, father and nontraditional undergraduate college student. Furthering the discussion on personal identity and its role in education, Frank describes how a black male teacher shaped his students' mathematics identity in a predominantly black middle school. Frank's study highlights the role that teachers' moral and community responsibilities play in the classroom, shaping their students' identities. Davis' article focused on examining the preparation and teaching experiences of three black male mathematics teachers who taught in three African countries and their experiences in graduate and undergraduate teacher education programs and starting their teaching career in the USA.

Allen's article focuses on the racial literacy of practices of a black male history teacher with his black male middle school students, shifting the focus from teacher education programs to the dynamics of the classroom. She details how this teacher made sense of racism and white supremacy in his classes to help his black male students negotiate their own racialized experiences in these settings. Afterwards, Harris and Davis shed light on a same-race and -gender mentoring program for black male teachers and how the program has helped support its member teachers. Finally, Miller and Callender contribute the only research article in this special issue focused on black male school leaders in England. They examine the journeys of four black men to becoming school leaders, paying special attention to how issues of race and racism limited and hindered them.

Given the importance of [Lewis and Toldson's \(2013\)](#) book to this research area, Anderson reviews the book and offers insight from his 20+ years of professional experience as a mathematics and gifted education teacher, a teacher leader, a professional development facilitator and a school administrator. Taken together, the editorials, articles and book review of this issue provide insight into the experiences of black male teachers, teacher leaders and school leaders in educator preparation programs and the profession in early childhood, elementary and secondary education contexts and disciplines such as mathematics, history, English and health. This volume also bridges research, practice, and policy initiatives in the USA and other international contexts to promote a collaborative global discourse about issues impacting black male teachers, teacher leaders and school leaders.

Research on black male teachers, teacher leaders and school leaders is still in its infancy and has only emerged over the past 15 years. While this collaborative volume contributes to the ongoing dialogue on the recruitment and retention of black male teachers, teacher leaders and school leaders by focusing on immigrants, refugees and other international contexts, there is an urgent need for more research on black male teachers. This is especially critical in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Davis *et al.*, 2013), early childhood and elementary education (Bryan and Browder, 2013), special education (Scott, 2016), gifted education (Bryan and Ford, 2014; Bryan *et al.*, 2016), advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs and courses, as well as high school teacher preparation programs (Goings and Bianco, 2016), in both the USA and abroad. The historical and current state of black students and teachers in the aforementioned areas of education, especially males, makes this line of research imperative to better understand their experiences, which in turn is necessary in the crafting of appropriate policies and plans of action. There is a crucial need for continued dialogue on teacher and school leader recruitment and retention of black men as teachers and school leaders in every aspect of the education profession, and this special issue responds to this need.

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