

Race-Conscious Mentoring: Building a Model for Meaningful Relationship Development between Mentors and Doctoral Students of Color in the U.S.A.

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Purpose of Research

Taking into account the racial disparities among doctoral degree attainment of students of color and lack of representation of faculty of color in information science programs on university campuses in the United States (US), the purpose of this research is:

- to introduce a conceptual framework for developing a mentoring strategy and structure between academic mentors and doctoral students of color.
- to develop a framework that addresses within-race and cross-race mentor-protégé relationships
- to improve the mentoring process for doctoral students of color in order to strengthen the level of retention and success in a doctoral program.
- to bring attention to the development of racially healthy mentor-protégé relationships.

Why is race important?

Scholars have noted race as being associated with exclusion, marginalization, unequal educational opportunity and achievement barriers (Lomotey, 1995; Young & Brooks, 2008).

National Center for Education Statistics (United States): Condition of Education 2012 & Digest of Education Statistics 2012

Demographic breakdown of US residents who received doctoral degrees between 2009-2010.

- 74.3 percent White
- 11.8 percent Asian/Pacific Islander
- 7.4 percent African American
- 5.8 percent Latino/a
- .7 percent American Indian/Alaska Native (Yohn & Thomas, 2012).

2011 demographic breakdown of full-time professors whose race/ethnicity was known, in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the US.

- 84 percent White
- 8 percent Asian/Pacific Islander
- 4 percent Black
- 3 percent Hispanic
- less than 1 percent American Indian/Alaska Native and two other races(Snyder & Dillow, 2013).

Definition of Mentoring (Doctoral Programs)

- senior experienced person (the mentor) provides advice, information, moral support and guides the career and personal development of the less experienced junior person/the protégé (Bowen, 1985; Eshner & Murhpy, 1997; Roberts, 2000).
- steers, guides, and supports the protégé through the doctoral process (Doloriet, Sambrook, & Stewart, 2012).
- plays a role in shaping research training and professional identity and socializing or integrating the student/protégé into the culture of academe (Bova, 2000; Lechuga, 2011).
- encourages the protégé to explore conference participation, publishing opportunities, internship opportunities, and networking with other scholars (Young & Brooks, 2008).

Definition of Race-Conscious

(teacher-student &/or faculty-student relationships)

- the ability to acknowledge and embrace the racial and cultural backgrounds (Teel & Obidiah, 2008).
- the understanding of the impact of racism and of the value of culturally relevant instruction (Teel & Obidiah, 2008).
- being proactive toward issues of equity (Young and Brooks, 2008).
- taking an open and honest approach in raising issues of race(Young and Brooks, 2008).
- allowing for the exploration of issues of race as a legitimate scholarly pursuit and seeks to "broaden the boundaries of what is accepted as legitimate knowledge in this world of ideas" (Young and Brooks, 2008, p. 408).

Definition of Cultural Competence

"the ability to recognize the significance of culture in one's own life and in the lives of others; and to come to know and respect diverse cultural backgrounds and characteristics through interaction with individuals from diverse cultural, and socioeconomic groups..." (Overall, 2009, p. 189-190).

Method

Approach: Data was collected through a critical analysis of the literature on mentoring, advising and underrepresented groups and/or students of color.

Step 1: Literature search—used key word searches that included: mentor(ing), mentee, protégé, doctoral student, faculty, college, university, advising, African-American, Black, Latino/a, Hispanic, Asian, American-Indian, Native American, minority, and people of color.

Step 2: Selected articles.

Step 3: Assigned codes (words or short phrases) to words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs to the text of select articles (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

Step 4: Found patterns in the literature by grouping categories and themes found in codes (Daley, 2004; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

Step 5: Displayed findings through a conceptual model (Daley, 2004).

Mentor-Protégé Pairing

- Same-Race/Within-Race Relationships
- Cross-Race Relationships with Faculty of Color as Mentor of a Different Race
- Cross-Race Relationships with White Faculty as Mentors

Same-Race Relationship between Mentor-Protégé (Faculty of Color and Student of Color of the Same Race)

Experience and/or Perceptions

- shared experiential perspective
- understanding of race issues and discrimination
- cultural commonalities
- cultural awareness

Research suggests: In some cases same-race relationships indicate higher comfort levels, easier communication, and higher satisfaction with the same-race mentor-protégé relationships (Barker, 2011; Ceja & Rivas, 2010; Grant, 2012; Williamson, 1994).

Cross-Race Relationship between Mentor-Protégé (Faculty of Color of Different Race than Student)

Experience and/or Perceptions

- person of color can relate
- understands race issues and discrimination
- cultural awareness
- opportunity to grow

Research suggests: In some cases faculty of color were preferred as mentors and cited as being more likely to "help" students of color out and "understand the obstacles" that students of color face (Ceja & Rivas, 2010; Williamson, 1994).

Cross-Race Relationship between Mentor-Protégé (Student of Color and White Faculty)

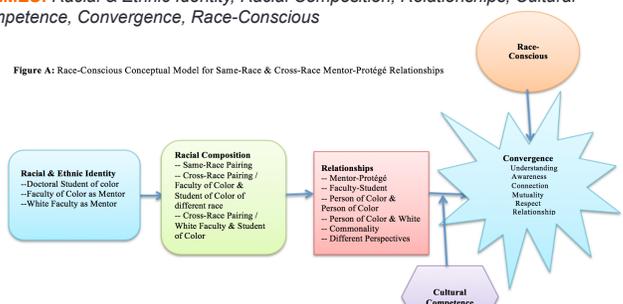
Experience and/or Perceptions

- difference in cultural values
- trust building
- power differentials
- opportunity to grow

Research suggests: Cultural competence is important otherwise the relationship could create dysfunction (Thomas, Willis, & Davis, 2007). Cultural sensitivity is important in providing mentoring to students of color (Miller & Stone, 2011). A cross-race relationship is a practical option given racial disparities among faculty and students of color (Thomas, Willis, & Davis, 2007).

THEMES: Racial & Ethnic Identity, Racial Composition, Relationships, Cultural Competence, Convergence, Race-Conscious

Figure A: Race-Conscious Conceptual Model for Same-Race & Cross-Race Mentor-Protégé Relationships



Race-conscious Model

- offers a way to conceptually approach the role that race plays in mentoring.
- brings attention to the development of culturally competent and racially healthy mentor-protégé relationships among faculty and doctoral students of color.
- reflects a mentor-protégé relationship that embraces understanding, awareness, connection, mutuality, respect, and relationship.
- provides a model that relies on a commitment to understanding culture, identity, personal experience, privilege, marginalization, alienation, exclusion, isolation, integration, and/or community in relation to the doctoral student of color's experience as it blends with the culture of academia.

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