Empirical Article

Expressions of Authentic Voice: Urban High School Students' Perceptions of Teaching as a Career Choice While Participating in a Pipeline Program for Aspiring Teachers of Color

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Abstract

Students of color do not pursue teaching careers as often as their white counterparts. Project Teacher Development (PTD) is a partnership between a large urban school district and a public regional university to recruit and prepare students of color as future educators. The goal of PTD is to identify, mentor, and inspire high school students to pursue careers in education using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as an interpretive framework. Results from this longitudinal qualitative study indicate increased awareness of teaching skills and expectations for college. Too often, programs in education expect future teachers of color to divorce themselves from their racial and ethnic identities. Participants in this study expressed authentic voice, which is essential to develop autonomy, relatedness, and competence—the foundational elements of SDT. While the challenges of

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recruiting and preparing teachers of color remain multifaceted, specialized pipeline programs that maximize success for marginalized students are essential.

Introduction

There has been a dramatic shift in the demographics of the population in the United States. The nation has become multi-dimensional in race, ethnicity, class, language, and religion. Nowhere has this shift been more apparent than in public schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 47% of all school-aged children were students of color who identified as Black, Hispanic, Asian, or two or more races (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). Historically, the enrollment of white students decreased from 61% in 2000–2001 to 48% in 2016 (NCES, 2016). While the diversity of the PK-12 student population continues to increase, the diversity of the teaching workforce has not.

Black students comprise about 15.3% of the public-school students nationwide, but Black teachers represent only 6.7% of the teaching workforce (Riser-Kositsky, 2019). Latinx students are the fastest growing underrepresented group in the United States. Latinx students make up 26.4% of the total U.S. school-age population (ages 3–17) but represent only 8.8% of the teacher workforce (Riser-Kositsky, 2019). Data from the National Center of Education Statistics between 2003 and 2011 show the percentage of public school teachers of color increased one percent from 17% to 18% (Murray & Jenkins-Scott, 2014). By 2016, this percentage increased to 20% (Meckler & Rabinowitz, 2019), still far lower than the proportion of students attending public schools.

Research focusing on Black teachers suggests that while teaching was once seen as a profession to gain entry into the middle class, college students of color are selecting different career paths and other job prospects (Milner & Howard, 2004). With the increasing diversity of today's student body combined with the lack of diversity in the teaching workforce, colleges and universities have an expressed need to recruit and retain more students of color in teacher preparation programs. The literature is replete with concerns from scholars, educators, politicians, and others about the racial and ethnic underrepresentation of teachers in schools and particularly the underrepresentation

within teacher preparation programs, most of which operate at Predominately White Institutions (PWI) (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Kozol, 1992; Sleeter & Milner, 2011).

Across the nation, the teacher shortage, especially teachers of color, is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. "[T]eachers of color are leaving the teaching force at faster rates than their White counterparts" (Kohli, 2018, p. 307) which may be a consequence of diverse teachers not feeling valued or respected for the cultural capital they bring to the profession (Kohli, 2018). Diverse teachers with multicultural perspectives provide positive social effects for all students, including reduction of racial prejudice and improved learning outcomes (Howard, 2019). Egalite and Kisida (2018) report racially similar teachers make students feel cared for and motivated to explore college aspirations. When students of color are taught by teachers of color, they may see teaching as a viable career that is congruent with their culture.

To combat the teacher shortage, school systems have collaborated with colleges and universities to bring students of color into and through existing teacher education programs by attempting to build a pipeline of potential teacher candidates of color (Sleeter & Milner, 2011). These programs put in place to try to address this issue historically have been called pipeline programs or Grow-Your-Own programs. Some teacher cadet programs, or teacher fellowship programs, prepare underserved high school students for the possibility of obtaining a college degree in education and joining the teacher workforce (Toshalis, 2014). Other outreach Grow-Your-Own programs provide opportunities to develop positive feelings toward teaching that may or may not have existed before while intentionally recruiting from within communities of color (Gist et al., 2019).

Some pipeline programs are designed to increase students' awareness, motivation, and to demystify the college experience; whereas, other pipeline approaches involve internships and summer enrichment opportunities for high school students to increase their enthusiasm for teaching as a career choice (Sleeter & Milner, 2011). To further bridge the gaps in the teacher workforce, there are some alternative route programs for working adults to switch from one career into teaching as career (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Boser, 2011; Gist et al., 2019; Toshalis, 2014). Furthermore, alternative provider programs in which superintendents certify teacher candidates have been developed (Fraser & Lefty, 2018). According to Sleeter and Milner (2011, p. 94), "programs designed to recruit and prepare teachers of color have been in existence for a long time but are not well researched and consequently are not well known."

Project Teacher Development

Project Teacher Development (PTD) is the name of a comprehensive pipeline program implemented at a large school district in the Northeast United States for the purpose of recruiting and preparing students of color to attend college and become future educators. The PTD pipeline is a collaboration between the urban school district and a regional public university that consists of three unique programs that are advertised and promoted to high school students at no cost to students or their families.

PTD is supported by three major components. (1) Side-by-Side (SBS) is a series of seminar-style workshops offered during the regular school day for students in grades 9 to 10. The program is conducted by university faculty and college students to introduce the high school students to the art of teaching through microteaching. The high school students participate in SBS during the school day each month throughout the academic year. (2) Color of Teaching (COT) is a mentoring program that provides students of color in grades 7 to 12 with a college student mentor. Matched mentor-mentee pairs communicate to set goals, provide encouragement, and discuss routes for college success. COT includes events held on the university campus such as public lectures, athletic contests, and participation in low-ropes team building activities at the campus climbing wall facility. (3) College Readiness Summer Academy (SA) provides students in grades 11 to 12 with opportunities to attend lectures taught by college professors, participate in field trips, and learn about college from the admissions, library, and financial aid office staff. Students in SA also function as teacher assistants for younger children attending summer camp and they reside in the university residence hall overnight for 1 week.

> The urban school district in this pipeline program is committed to developing teachers of color from their student population with the hope that these alumni will return to the district to teach. Commitment on behalf of the school district is an important consideration for recruitment and retention of students of color into the teaching profession (Dixon et al., 2019; Torres et al., 2004).

At present, there are no studies that examine pipeline programs through the interpretive framework of intrinsic motivation as a construct for becoming a future teacher. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to explain three lines of inquiry. First, we examine the usefulness of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000) including the principles of autonomy, relatedness, and competence to better understand the dynamics for why students of color pursue or do not pursue careers in education. The second line of inquiry focuses on how PTD embraces both the cultural context and lived

experiences of participants to express their authentic voices. Programs in education often expect future teachers of color to divorce themselves from their racial and ethnic identities. Authentic voice is essential to develop autonomy, relatedness, and competence—the foundational elements of SDT. The third line of inquiry explores the career motivations, interest level, and perceived barriers of urban students of color who were nominated for and participated in this pipeline program.

Increasing Opportunity

A review of the literature reveals a saturation of research on the achievement gap (Howard, 2019; Martin & Baxter, 2001; Noguera, 2009; Noguera & Wing, 2006; United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2004). Yet, the notion of "achievement gaps" assumes a deficit model of thinking for students of color in that their existence is inferior to set standards. This deficit approach perpetuates ideologies that support teaching as a career pathway for specific types of people or students. However, as Milner (2015) states, "*opportunity*, on the other hand, forces [society] to think about how systems, processes and institutions are overtly and covertly designed to maintain the status quo and sustain depressingly complicated disparities in education" (Milner, 2015, p. 8). While making sure all students are academically prepared for the rigors of college is imperative, offering students an opportunity to "improve their own lives and those of others as they work to make meaningful contributions to their families, their communities, and to society" can also empower students to reach their goals and dreams (Milner, 2015, p. 8). In framing the lack of teacher diversity in this way, the educational systems need to recognize their role in supporting underrepresented students to persist in teacher preparation programs.

What is often missing in the preparation programs, however, is authentic student voice to shape the curricular aspects of the programs. Culturally relevant pedagogy should focus on academic achievement, socio-political consciousness, and cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Culturally relevant approaches seek to understand students' lived experiences, perceived barriers and motivations, and make changes to the program to address those needs when appropriate as opposed to just fitting students into prescribed curriculum. To provide opportunity for authentic voice to emerge within culturally relevant experiences, effective programs must be intentional about building trust and developing relationships to support each participant's autonomy and to share their honest lived experiences, hopes, fears and dreams in safe spaces. The value of having all voices heard is paramount to fully including all perspectives. Doing so may increase the sense of belonging for

teachers of color to the profession. PTD utilizes the idea of the opportunity gap and authentic voice to argue for the need to address the disparities in education and to recruit high school students of color to the teaching profession while also exposing them to and supporting them throughout college.

There are several reasons why diversity in the teacher workforce is important. Brockenbrough (2018) states, "Black teachers are credited for developing culturally responsive pedagogies that allow them to effectively engage Black students" (p. 7). Students of color experience more implicit bias and unfavorable teacher perceptions when they are taught by teachers who are not their same race (Dee, 2005). Therefore, more teachers of color may alleviate these biases and unfavorable perceptions. Students of color accrue academic benefits when taught by a same-race teacher (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). When teachers of color share similar cultural experiences, it may allow them to tacitly understand the learning experiences of their same race students. Additionally, teachers of color may have keen insights that might otherwise remain hidden (Delpit, 2006).

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a motivation theory that focuses on three universal, innate, and psychological needs: (1) *autonomy* refers to the need and freedom to control one's choices, (2) *competence* refers to the sense that an individual has the knowledge and skills to succeed, and (3) *relatedness* refers to the sense of belongingness and the desire to be connected and affirmed (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory argues that individuals will function and grow optimally to develop the intrinsic drive to succeed when all three are met. Ryan and Deci (2000) suggest intrinsic motivation can be enhanced in a variety of situations including schoolwork, career decision-making, and goal setting. SDT was used as a framework to encourage student participants in the pipeline program, PTD, to be autonomous, to understand and build individual competence, and to experience relatedness to the teaching profession. The theory is focused on increasing self-determination and intrinsic motivation.

Microteaching

Microteaching is a training technique used to introduce novice teachers to the art of teaching, especially presentation and reinforcement skills. In this study, practice microteaching was embedded into various components of the pipeline program. For example, SBS seminars provided students with knowledge of learning theory and communication strategies. Additional

seminars provided opportunities for students to perform microteaching. In SA, students assisted teachers of young children attending a summer educational camp.

The introduction of microteaching and concepts such as instructional scaffolding and communication skills reinforces the components of SDT by providing students with an opportunity to research a topic, develop a lesson plan, and teach content. The new knowledge and microteaching experiences contribute to the development of expanded teacher competencies, teacher dispositions, and a basic understanding of the skills necessary to be an effective teacher. Feedback is provided to high school students by university professors and college student mentors through an informal rubric. Studies suggest that microteaching is a viable and meaningful learning experience for students attracted to the teaching profession (Amobi, 2005; Benton-Kupper, 2001; Vare, 1994). These early experiences give students the opportunity to practice teaching and to develop efficacy for teaching.

Voice

Authentic voice is a learned growth process to express one's holistic self. Growth does not take place in a social vacuum but develops in a continuous interaction with the social environment, which can either foster or undermine one's development (Ryan & Deci, 2013). When individuals struggle within themselves to reconcile the cultural conflicts arising from competing values and aspirations, this can stifle their authentic voices (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). "SDT assumes that human beings actively contribute to their own development and should not be considered passive recipients that are completely determined by external forces" (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2011, p. 386).

The impact of cultural isolation and structural racism students of color experience in school further contributes to why students of color may not want to become future teachers. Moreover, Sleeter and Milner (2011) suggest college students of color are disheartened by the whiteness and irrelevance of teacher education programs they observe. Communication of authentic voice allows a person to share their cultural capital in a way that is respected by others and this can facilitate identity congruence, which is when an individual's authentic self aligns with what others observe (Oyserman & Destin, 2010).

Implementation of the Study

The PTD pipeline program was conducted over a period of 5 years, from 2015 to 2020. The urban school district where the study took place is situated

in between several heavily rural communities. The student demographics at the school district include 59% Latinx, 18% Black, 14% White, 5% Asian American or Pacific Islander, and 4% mixed race. Eighty-eight percent of the student population qualified for free or reduced lunch. Students' consent and written parental permission forms made available in both English and Spanish were distributed and obtained.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was used to investigate three research questions exploring student motivation, personal development, and student authentic voice (see Table 1). Purposive sampling (Patton, 2002) was selected to understand and interpret the experiences and actions from the students who participated in the pipeline program. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), purposeful sampling is applicable when the participants are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating. Selection of participants was limited to only those electing to participate in PTD. Some students who were invited did not persist for various reasons; for example, they had other school and family obligations.

Sixty-seven students participated in the PTD from September 2015 to March 2020. Of those students who have graduated high school, 13 (19.4%) have matriculated to the university sponsoring the PTD partnership. For the current study, participants identified as 54% Latinx, 24% Black, 12% mixed race, 9.5% Asian American or Pacific Islander, and 0.5% other races (i.e., Egyptian, Nepalese, Thai, White). Ninety percent of the participants identified as females and 10.4% identified as males. The age range was from 15 to 18, which represented the spectrum of ages for high school students.

Several steps were taken to increase integrity in the study. An audit trail was carefully maintained and the multiple data gathering techniques were used to reduce bias through triangulation. The researchers triangulated the data by analyzing the exit tickets and the interviews with the students as well as the pre-post surveys administered in SBS and SA.

Throughout the study and analysis, the researchers periodically disengaged from the setting to discuss expectations and biases to ensure accuracy of the interpretation of the data. Peer consultation provides researchers an opportunity to discuss their experiences, to check their thinking, and to share their opinions. Triangulation enabled the researchers to qualify certain codes, while also allowing the students' voices to generate more codes and to help dictate the adjustments to PTD since the intent is to be culturally responsive to all participants' needs and interests.

Table 1. Conceptual Framework Alignment.

Conceptual framework premises	Research questions	Data sources
A goal of many teacher pipeline programs is to identify, mentor, and inspire future teachers.	RQ1: In what ways does participation in PTD inspire, educate, and mentor ethnically diverse students to consider being future educators?	SBS pre-post surveys SBS exit tickets (relatedness) SBS interviews SA 3-2-1 summaries COT focus group
Self-Determination Theory postulates that intrinsic motivation can be enhanced in a variety of situations including schoolwork, career decision-making, and goal setting.	RQ2: How do ethnically diverse students demonstrate autonomy, relatedness, and competence (SDT) during their participation in PTD?	LASSI (competence) SBS exit tickets SBS pre-post survey (autonomy) SBS exit tickets (relatedness) SBS teaching demonstration (competence) SA Letter to future self SA Maxwell's book focus group (autonomy)
Culturally relevant education is a framework that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning.	RQ3: How does PTD cultivate ethnically diverse students' awareness of authentic voice within their lived experiences and cultural context?	SA focus group about the experiences students of color have in school SBS interviews about culturally relevant courses offered in high school SBS Pre-post survey SA Movie night focus groups

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for the study were collected using a naturalistic inquiry case study approach (Merriam, 1998). As is usual with qualitative naturalistic research, several types of data were gathered using multiple strategies to explore students' self-determination and interest for pursuing careers in education. These strategies included interviews and pre and post open-ended survey questions designed to gauge students' interest for a potential future career in education. In addition, teacher nomination forms, field notes, 3-2-1 summaries, teaching demonstration evaluations, movie night focus groups, book discussion focus groups, self-reflection surveys, and the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) were used to answer the research questions. Student demographic profile questions were also designed and included on surveys to gather data on ethnic identity, family backgrounds, and extracurricular activities as well as participants' personal self-perceptions.

The data sources were then used to examine participant self-reflection as it relates to SDT as well as their efficacy for teaching. Data sources also focused on analysis of social justice and cultural relevance. Additional measures such as 3-2-1 summaries and exit tickets were used to investigate whether participants synthesize their lived experiences with their future possible selves (Oyserman & Destin, 2010). The study was designed to allow students to share their voices, needs, and strengths, and to help shape the transformation of PTD to suit their cultural backgrounds, and their personal and professional development.

Research Questions

Three basic premises contributed to the conceptual framework for this study as listed on Table 1. The purpose of the alignment table is to succinctly align the research questions with the actual data sources.

Findings

Qualitative data were coded initially in three phases—open coding, refinement of coding, and axial coding (Glaser, 1992) using a deductive analysis approach to create codes derived from existing literature and the principles of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As new codes emerged from the data, they were added to the codebook when appropriate to identify patterns and themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Findings for the study are presented below as they informed each of the three research questions.

RQ1: In what ways does participation in PTD inspire, educate, and mentor ethnically diverse students to consider being future educators?

Much of literature focuses on potential barriers that students of color experience, especially in pursuit of careers in education (Graham & Erwin, 2011). Obtaining a college degree is a requirement to being certified to teach. Therefore, participants were asked to specifically describe why they may not attend college to get a better understanding of the participants' perceived barriers to college. Two primary sub-themes from the data emerged as reasons for not attending college: (1) lack of financial resources, and (2) not achieving good grades in high school for admission to college. In response to the participants' feedback, the PTD curriculum incorporated financial aid officers and college admissions staff who were invited to meet with students to answer their questions.

Students reported being able to visualize their "future selves" attending college in post-surveys. In addition, in SBS students completed the LASSI which is a 10-scale, 60 item assessment of students' awareness of and use of learning and study strategies related to skill, will, and self-regulation. Self-reflection activities such as the LASSI can also positively affect student motivation to pursue college and inspire students to consider a career in education when their strengths align with teaching.

Other ways to practice self-awareness is through developing trusting mentoring relationships where positive and constructive feedback is valued. This sub theme emerged from the data as a factor that inspired and motivated the participants. Several participants gave voice to how they were supported and valued. For example, a senior Black female participant stated:

> I started off having Janice as my first mentor then Monique. They were both so encouraging to be my best version person. Janice and I shared the same personality and that's what helped me to understand what she's been through in college, learning from her mistakes.

Through mentoring, ethnically diverse students learn to access and navigate college and can be inspired to pursue a teaching degree. One Black female participant shared:

> I was in Color of Teaching for 3 years since my sophomore [year] and currently I'm a soon-to-be graduating senior. During my time in Color of Teaching I always felt important because someone was there to help me or to hear me. I feel as a growing young woman I need that; in this society to not get caught up

in my stress and just talk to someone about it. Color of Teaching helped me realize I wanted to help adolescents just like teachers, counselors, principals, etc.

Another sophomore Black female participant echoed the desire to become a teacher. She reported:

I selected my top [career] choice because becoming a teacher is something I really want to do. What interests me about being a teacher is coming up with fun ways to learn and being able to help students with their education.

A senior Egyptian female student reported, "My new dream is to be an ESL teacher for young kids." Another junior Latina participant said, "[My goal is] to graduate, go to college, major in early childhood and minor in special ed." These students as well as other students in PTD expressed a desire to be future teachers.

Participants completed an open-ended item on the pre-post survey that asked them to finish this statement: "*I think I would make a good teacher, school counselor or principal because. . .*" In their own words, students listed their qualities, and by doing so began to expose what the students think are the qualities of good educators. A freshman Latina said, "I am a people person and I like having good communication and I am organized." This participant focused on the soft skills educators need to be successful. A senior Nepali female wrote, "I love being around people and support them and educate them, especially those that [sic] come from other countries." This comment demonstrates an appreciation for diversity. A senior Latina student said, "I love working with kids. I am creative and I've been told I would make a good teacher."

By having students identify what it means to be a teacher, they begin to express identity-congruence. Oyserman and Destin (2010) suggest identity-congruence is an important indicator of future career success. The basic premise of the model is that people interpret situations, like becoming a teacher, in ways that are congruent with their currently active identities. Therefore, if students connect their traits and understandings to effective teacher traits, they are more likely to envision a possible future career in education.

Frequency counts from pre-post surveys suggest student interest in pursuing careers in education increased. The pre-post survey included an item focused on congruency. The prompt asked students to rate their interest level in careers in education. Pre results showed that 73.2% of the participants demonstrated an interest. The post-survey results showed 79.1% of the participants indicated an interest. This shows an 8% gain in students' interest in

pursuing careers in education. Several variables may have contributed to this percentage gain such as attrition of the participants who started the program but did not finish and a participant's feelings on a given day. These participants' voices give insight into students' thinking about their identity-congruence or identity-incongruence as it relates to their future career decisions.

RQ2: How do ethnically diverse students demonstrate autonomy, relatedness, and competence (SDT) during their participation in PTD?

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is composed of three characteristics of motivation as they relate to personal development: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Of the three psychological needs of SDT, analysis of the data for this study suggests relatedness as the most salient need in supporting student motivation to pursue a potential career in education. Autonomy was also coded second most frequently, and competency third. The fact that all students in PTD were from the same school district and were part of PTD cohorts may have contributed to these findings. For example, participants attended SBS sessions as a group and SA participants lived together for a week on campus. Furthermore, the college mentors, some of whom graduated from the same school district as the participants, may have contributed to relatedness and a sense of belonging.

In an intentional effort to build more of a community, PTD students, program coordinators, and mentors worked together to create a behavioral agreement for the learning community. Students were asked to think of the best class they ever had and to generate ideas about what made it the best class they ever had. They were also asked to do the same for the worst class they ever had and then a behavioral agreement was created and voted upon in a democratic fashion. Providing a space for students to find their voice can impact their motivation to participate in the program and their willingness to contribute positively to the democratic classroom experience. Voice empowers students to self-advocate.

Program directors and college student mentors implemented many self-reflection activities throughout PTD such as "Getting to Know Yourself" and "This is Us" which are active learning strategies that promote metacognition, self-awareness, and problem-solving. The goal of the "Getting to Know Yourself" session was to have students better understand their preferences, and why knowing more about oneself is important for finding satisfaction within a given career. The purpose of the "This is Us" session was for everyone to get to know one another and to establish how differences are

appreciated and necessary for careers in teaching, social work, counseling, and working in a school. In addition, the microteaching activity helped participants to develop skills related to teaching. A senior Latino student in SBS reflecting on his microteaching stated:

> Hands down my favorite memory was the activity where I became the teacher and taught others how to play Hangman. That really showed me how difficult it was to teach simple things like games.

This same Latino student, who presented with college student mentors at two academic higher education conferences, stated that when he was a freshman in the program, he would never have thought that he would be speaking in front of people. He then auditioned for parts in the school plays and earned a lead role his senior year. He also gave a graduation speech at his high school commencement ceremony. Additionally, other high school students presented at regional and international academic conferences with university faculty. PTD creates spaces for transformative experiences and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Many students in PTD shared examples of stepping out of their comfort zones. For some, it is speaking in front of a group of people. A sophomore Latino student shared on the last day of SA that his personal goal for the week was to do more public speaking and to make friends, and that he felt like he accomplished both of those goals although he was initially very skeptical. Another freshman African American male student in the SA said, "I learned I need to step out of my comfort zone and be more social. I need to take more risks in life." When students learn to advocate for themselves this can have positive effects on their social, personal, and academic development.

Autonomy. A high school freshman Latina student shared her voice as a presenter and as a panel discussant during an international mentoring conference in Florida. She co-presented with college students and the program coordinators. At the conference, she discussed preliminary data from the research and her personal experiences. This student has completed three components of PTD and is a valuable informant for this study. The student stated:

> COT brings to light the things in college like activities [e.g. presenting at a conference] rather than what [high school] tells us about money and grades. It makes the thought of college more enjoyable.

Autonomy emerged from the data in several other places in this study. Students reported stepping out of their comfort zones and learning more

about how people make good decisions. Participants read a book during the SA and summarized what they have learned and how they can apply that learning to their lives. One SA cohort read and discussed *Sometimes You Win Sometimes You Learn for Teens: How to Turn a Loss Into a Win* (Maxwell, 2015). This book is about overcoming obstacles as told by influential figures and includes interactive journal activities to illustrate how any failure is an opportunity to succeed. Success, in this book, is defined by the choices one makes. Participants, therefore, learned the value of their own decision-making and how their decisions impact their autonomy. A different SA cohort read and discussed *Inspiring Teens: A Guide to Living a Life Without Regret* (Vidakovic, 2016). This book includes 50 life changing tips that guide the reader toward a path of success and not regret.

During book circles, many participants were able to apply the main messages from the texts and self-reflect on their own decision-making process using their authentic voices. A sophomore Latina student wrote on her summary reflection, "Obstacles are everywhere but you must prevail." Another sophomore Black female participant recounted that one of the things she learned during SA was that we should "learn from our mistakes." A third senior female wrote that the two things she learned this week that she will apply to her life are, "learn from my mistakes and don't take everything as a loss." Providing participants with opportunities like these to share their authentic selves helps them to become more self-aware and to learn to self-advocate.

Relatedness. At the end of the COT 2018 programming year, a senior Black female student shared how she felt a sense of belonging, stating:

> Color of Teaching was one of my biggest support systems during my high school years. I always wanted to go to college, but I was very confused how to get there. Color of Teaching mentors helped me to set a goal in the beginning of the semester then midway through my 3rd marking period we would reflect back and ask ourselves if we have accomplished our goal.

A male senior Latino who had participated in the COT mentoring program for 4 years reiterated his sense of belonging:

> Being in the Color of Teaching program helped motivate me for college in many ways. It gave me an insight on how tough college can be if you are not organized. My mentor motivated me because he would check up on me from time to time to make sure I was doing what I had to do to succeed. Color of Teaching gave me the support that I needed through high school because I was not always the best at school. The people there guided me into the right direction by working with me individually.

These two testimonials above are examples from the data that demonstrate how students are validated and supported, and both students are presently attending college. PTD creates this familial culture which is typically embraced by African American and Latinx communities. When students were asked to self-reflect and present themselves to the cohort, it is possible that they felt appreciated and more of a sense of belonging to the group because they were accepted and valued by the group. When participants shared their testimonials at the final celebration of SA, students were emotionally moved and explained how connected they felt to the cohort.

Each component of PTD incorporates parents/guardians as key stakeholders in the success of their child. They are invited to attend college admission, financial aid, FAFSA, and campus safety workshops. Families are also invited to attend orientations as well as celebrations recognizing their child's completion of various components of the program. These activities foster trust between the families and the university and alleviate fears that marginalize cultural groups may have about their child attending college or pursuing a career in education.

Competence. Exposure to practicing new skills can lead to competence. In SBS, students reported that the "Teach This!" (microteaching) session was the most challenging and the best activity. At the end of SBS and SA components, students select a topic, complete a lesson plan, and then teach the lesson to their peers and the program leaders. This experience provided participants with an introduction to the skill sets effective teachers need.

Public speaking is a competency that all teachers need to master. One of the participants' biggest fears emerging from the data was a fear of public speaking. Components of PTD ask students to speak in small groups and to present to larger groups. For example, students led book circle discussions, taught several lessons, spoke in front of large groups, and presented at various PTD ceremonies and events. Activities like these help students to build their competencies for teaching. A sophomore Black male student wrote in his summary reflection:

> My three life lessons from this camp was [sic] to be brave, to ignore any gossip about yourself, and to know you don't have to please everybody. What I would do to become amazing is to embrace more of myself and to become an outgoing person.

This relatively shy student gained confidence in order to take a risk and speak to the entire group. He decided to be courageous. His realization is an important precursor for developing both competence and autonomy.

RQ3: How does SBS cultivate ethnically diverse students' awareness of their voice within their cultural context?

Culturally sustaining teaching is empowering (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Students of color bring rich experiences to PTD, and the program encourages them to be authentic. One senior Black female discussed a powerful memory, she wrote:

> My favorite memory ever being in Color of Teaching was BSU poetry night. I jokingly volunteered to talk about my experience of being a dark skin female. However, since Color of Teaching was invited, the mentors encouraged me so I talked about various obstacles that I had to deal with being in my skin tone. I have never been so vulnerable and felt so loved at the same time. All the mentors were there hugging me while I was crying.

This student felt supported in a safe space to be vulnerable and to share her lived experience. She understood that college creates spaces for her to share her authentic voice. This realization can positively affect her motivation to pursue college as well as foster a sense of belonging to COT. If and when students matriculate to the sponsoring university, they already have a caring community of mentors who will support them.

One SBS summary activity asked students why we need more teachers of color in the teaching profession. One sophomore Black female shared, "To show people all races can do what they want and to bring different races to the school." Another senior Latina participant noted, "You need more teachers of color because there are different things they can bring to the table." These two students appear to be aware of the need for diverse teachers.

During one of the SA sessions, one freshman Black female shared a story about how one of her teachers dismissed her out of class because she was tapping her head with her fingers. The teacher was not aware that the braids in her hair made her head itch. The student reported that she could not scratch her head, because it would ruin her braids, so she tapped her head with her fingers to mitigate the itching. According to the student, her teacher thought she was being distracting to others and got frustrated and told her to leave the room. This story inspired a great discussion about the need for teachers to have cultural awareness and competence.

The guest speaker at this SA session, a Black male Assistant Principal employed at an urban high school, encouraged the student to use her voice and self-advocate in the future and to inform the teacher so that misunderstandings could be avoided for future students facing the same situation. The guest speaker encouraged all students to advocate for themselves and to take steps toward becoming empowered change agents.

Discussion and Implications

Educators who work with students of color should be versed in culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Honest conversations about the impact of cultural context, institutional racism, and identity development should be promoted to help the students not feel alienated from the teaching profession and to honestly express any concerns they have about becoming a teacher of color (Witmer, 2014). Based on the participants in this study, it appears students of color benefit from sharing their authentic voices as they consider themselves as future educators. Increased PTD programmatic supports, new relationships, and expanded opportunities provided for students' basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competency, and facilitated students' intrinsic interest in learning about teaching and a future career in education. Intrinsic goals foster the actualization of one's personal interests, values, and potential (Kasser, 2002). When people are intrinsically motivated to pursue their goals, their overall psychological well-being is higher. Intrinsic goals are more likely to lead a person to have experiences that can satisfy inherent psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Kasser, 2002).

It is important to appreciate the barriers that underrepresented students commonly face such as microaggressions, racism, and reduced access to one's culture group which is known as cultural isolation (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Fann, 2005). When participants' voices intersect with SDT, the experiences students of color have may be more authentic to their true selves which may mitigate some of the barriers from their perspectives.

PTD increased awareness of effective teaching skills, and the importance of using one's authentic voice to self-reflect and self-advocate, while providing participants spaces to explore new opportunities in a safe environment where authentic voices are valued. Historically, the cultural capital that teachers of color bring to the profession has not been embraced and their authentic voices have not been valued. PTD seeks to create space to develop future teachers of color who are invited to share their authentic voices.

The results of this study should be interpreted in relation to some limitations. First, not all students participated in all components of PTD. Some students were not available when PTD programs were offered because of extracurricular activities and after-school responsibilities (i.e., family vacations, work obligations, and/or simply forgetting to come to sessions). Although microteaching was embedded into various components of PTD, and several sessions were designed to inform students of college admission procedures and financial aid, future research on teacher pipeline programs should focus on developing student competence in areas of teaching such as

public speaking as well as providing spaces for future teachers to develop their authentic voices. Another limitation was the advent of COVID-19 which caused PTD programs to be suspended temporarily because of CDC social distancing guidelines.

Conclusion

PTD is a pipeline program aimed at addressing the mismatch between the shifting demographics in the PK-12 school population and the lack of teachers of color entering the teaching profession. The PTD model serves as a pathway for recruiting students of color into teacher education programs and supports the general recruitment effort of the university and ultimately the diversity of the teaching force by emphasizing the importance of participants' authentic voices.

PTD offers continuous mentoring for students; it provides students with early exposure to careers in education, and it is predicated on SDT psychological constructs. PTD supports underserved students who are interested in careers in education. The program was delivered using a developmental approach for entry into the education profession, providing support for students in high school. PTD activities inspired students to step out of their comfort zones, to apply concepts from the books that they read to their own lives, and to create future goals.

To address ongoing systemic barriers in schools that affect student achievement and disproportionately burden underrepresented teacher candidates, multiple wrap-around supports such as mentoring, and attention to students' personal, academic, social, and cultural needs are necessary. These supports may also assist to promote students' sense of belonging on a college campus and mitigate culture shock. When students of color are consistently disadvantaged in schools, colleges and universities need to look closely at the culture that may be sabotaging students' opportunities for success. PTD is a pipeline program with the potential power to disrupt these ongoing systemic barriers and to recruit, support, listen to, and value more students of color as they pursue a career in education.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

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