



Spotlight on School Psychology Innovators

Georgia State University research team studying African American School Psychologists' training and professional experiences

Introduction

The Multicultural Affairs Committee (MAC) is highlighting innovative and exemplary projects, activities, events, and research related to diversity. These include new or ongoing activities at school psychologists' K-12 schools, service learning projects, or a research project based at a university. The following submission is from Dr. Stephen D. Truscott's research team from Georgia State University.

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District/Organization: Georgia State University

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Description:

This research team, led by Dr. Stephen Truscott, recently completed an in-depth study of African American School Psychologists' (AASPs) training and professional experiences. The goal of this research was to elucidate both facilitators and challenges to African Americans' participation in school psychology graduate education and the profession.

Significance:

This work has several important contributions for the field of school psychology including but not limited to: (a) addressing a significant gap in the school psychology literature regarding AASPs; (b) providing data to address recruitment and retention of AASPs; and, (c) identifying the need for the field of school psychology to change in order to recruit and retain AASPs and AA academicians.

Target Population:

We sampled 30 African American School Psychologists using in-depth qualitative interviews. The findings are applicable to graduate programs and school districts interested in recruiting African American school psychology graduate students and practitioners.

Results:

Results indicated that the AASPs sampled chose to attend school psychology programs located in close proximity to their homes primarily due to family ties and familial obligations. Perceptions of support (e.g., financial, social, and professional) being available at school psychology

programs was important to AASPs decisions to enroll. To a lesser extent, prior exposure to a program also influenced some AASPs decisions to enroll. Once exiting programs, AASPs indicated that the location of a school district was the primary factor in decisions to accept a position. Compensation (i.e., salary and benefits) was the second factor contributing to AASPs' decisions to accept a position. AASPs also were interested in professional support (i.e., availability of mentors) being available in a district and the presence of people of color (both students and coworkers).

Presentations:

Truscott, S. D., Proctor, S. L., Harper, E. A., Collins, A. S., Powell, K. M., & Huddleston, L. (August, 2009). *Comprehensive Model for Recruitment of African Americans in School Psychology*. A poster presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Vancouver, Canada.

Proctor, S. L., Harper, E. A., Powell, K., Collins, A. S., Huddleston, L., & Truscott, S. D. (August, 2008). *African American School Psychologists' Perceptions of Minority Recruitment and Retention in School Psychology Training*. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Boston, MA.

Proctor, S. L., Harper, E. A., Collins, A.S., Powell, K., Huddleston, L., & Truscott, S. D. (March, 2008). *The Professional is the Personal: A Study of African American School Psychologists' Professional Experiences*. Poster presented at the Georgia State University Cultural Competency Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Harper, E. A., Proctor, S. L., Collins, A. S., & Powell, K. H. (February, 2008). *Recruitment and Retention of African American School Psychologists: Practitioner Perspectives*. Paper presentation at the annual meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists, New Orleans, LA.

Proctor, S. L., Harper, E., Collins, A. S., Powell, K., Huddleston, L., & Truscott, S. (August, 2007). *Emic Perspectives: A Study of African American School Psychologists' Professional Experiences*. Poster presentation at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA.

Harper, E., & Proctor, S. L. (May, 2007). *African American School Psychologists' Training and Professional Experiences*. Invited presentation to the school psychologists in Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, GA.

Proctor, S. L., Harper, E., Collins, A. S., Powell, K., Huddleston, L., & Truscott, S. (March, 2007). *African American School Psychologists' Training and Professional Experiences*. Paper presentation at the annual meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists, NY, NY.

Comments:

Research team members included Amanda Smith Collins, Erin Harper, Lillie Huddleston, Kathryn Powell, Sherrie L. Proctor, and Dr. Stephen Truscott. Four of the research team members are school psychology graduate students from culturally diverse backgrounds. This research represents the first attempt to understand issues specific to AASPs. Several articles related to this research are currently under review for publication.