

Study examines impact of African-American teachers in Title I schools

June 8 2012

Closing the academic gaps in performance among students from diverse backgrounds is a challenge for schools and a mandate from the government. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has prompted schools and school districts to re-examine elements that impact student achievements.

A study completed by a recent graduate from University of Houston's Executive Education Doctorate in Professional Leadership suggests that African-American [students](#) do not necessarily fare better when taught by African-American teachers. The study examined the impact of African-American teachers on African-American eighth-graders in Texas Title I schools and found no significant relationship between their academic achievement and the percentage of African-American teachers on campus.

Additionally, the study, conducted by Walter Hunt, a Houston-area assistant principal, found the [achievement gap](#) between African-American and Caucasian students was greater on campuses with a larger percentage of African-American teachers.

"As an administrator of a campus that fits the criteria of a Title I school, I wanted to look at minority student achievement in low socio-economic environments, which can have a profound impact on campuses that are receiving federal funds. So my focus was on the teachers," Hunt said.

"There has often been a preconceived notion that the staff make-up should resemble the student body population, and this has often directed

recruitment and hiring efforts among building principals."

Hunt examined eighth-graders and teacher diversity in 198 Title I Texas schools. Title I is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and provides additional funding for those campuses serving children from low-income families. He studied 2010 eighth-grade math and reading scores from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests and compared scores of African-American and Caucasian students with campuses of large and small percentages of African-American teachers.

"At first glance, it would appear that teacher race doesn't matter when addressing student achievement of minority students, but there are many layers involved when analyzing achievement of a middle-school student, such as racial identity, self-identity, age, involvement in school activities," he said. "In this particular study, I was surprised to see that the campuses with more African-American teachers did not have the highest African-American [student achievement](#). This just goes to show that having a positive impact on students is a complex, multi-layered process."

His study suggests next steps that include a broader examination of other middle school grades, as well as high school, that looks at the relationship between academic achievement of Hispanic students and the percentage of Hispanic teachers. He also suggests a broadening of the study to include social studies and science TAKS scores.

The study was a project to complete the UH College of Education's Executive Education Doctorate in Professional Leadership. The two-year program is for working education professionals and provides intensive research and applied skills for real-world education concerns. Students bring the most pressing concerns experienced by the educational community to each course. A practical internship or laboratory of

practice gives students an avenue to apply the specifics of these problems to their other courses and their research. Students who successfully complete the program are qualified for superintendent positions, school administrators or university professors.

"I think the program has helped to prepare me for the challenges that I will encounter as an educator in public education in the 21st-century," Hunt said. "The program's design not only exposed me to research-tested theory, but focused on real-world application that is unmatched by other programs."

Provided by University of Houston

Citation: Study examines impact of African-American teachers in Title I schools (2012, June 8)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2012-06-impact-african-american-teachers-title-schools.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.