Peer-Reviewed Article

Serving African American Students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution: Black Centered Action Instruction as a Pedagogical Practice

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ABSTRACT

From a critical race perspective and the narrative view of one faculty member, this paper discusses some teaching practices implemented for undergraduate Black students who attend a Hispanic-serving institution. The findings of this work offer Black-Centered Active Instruction (BCAI) as a pedagogy to engage the students. BCAI centers the specific needs of Black students who are within the minority, pushes for active engagement with Black students both in and out of the classroom, and encourages the creation of safe Black spaces for undergraduate students. The implication of this work encourages educators to consider the history of antiblackness within American culture, primarily minority spaces, and apply this to similar practices in higher education.

Keywords: African American Students, Africana Studies, Black Studies, Experiential Learning, High-Impact Learning Practices, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Interdisciplinary Studies, Pedagogy

Abbreviation	Term
CRT	Critical Race Theory
HBCU	Historically Black College and/or University
HSI	Hispanic Serving Institution
HWI	Historically White Institution
MSI	Minority Serving Institution
PWI	Predominately White Institution
US	United States

INTRODUCTION

Many United States (US) colleges and universities, especially those that are historically White, have a long history of systemic anti-Blackness that traces back to the universities' use of enslaved Black labor and their participation in US chattel slavery (Harris et al., 2019). Today, a number of these Historically White Institutions (HWI) have transformed into Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) (Petrov & Garcia, 2021). Schools that have historically ignored the humanity in Black learners now have enough students of color enrolled that their institutions can identify as serving minority students (an MSI or an HSI). In the case of the US, the Latinx student demographic needs to be at least 25 percent of the undergraduate student enrollment for a college or university to be designated an HSI (Santiago, 2006; Garcia, 2020). These US HSIs are classified based on student population and are not necessarily based on the university's interest or ability to serve minority students (Garcia, 2020; Santiago, 2006; Laden, 2001). This is not the reality for all MSIs, as most Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) aim to serve the specific needs of their Black students (Hubbard & Stage, 2009). HSIs too must continually rethink the ways in which they are serving students (Garcia, 2021), especially their Black students.

Servingness has proven to be a racialized privilege, to which Black students are often excluded (Vega & Boveda, 2022). US HSIs are not immune to this, as schools themselves are racialized spaces where Whiteness holds power (Hall et al., 2021). US Societal institutions, such as HSIs, merely reproduce the racism evident in our society (Rosa & Díaz, 2020). This is not to frame all HSIs as negative spaces, as most are necessary institutions where some students have positive experiences and feel that they belong (Dayton et al., 2004; Musoba et al., 2013). However, it is essential to note that even when an institution is minority-serving, it still possesses the ability to overlook the needs of its Black students.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Black Student Experiences at HSIs

Many Black students enter these college campuses and assume that because the HSIs are minority and/or Hispanic serving, they will be readily accepted and the colleges will provide abundant academic resources (Bonner II et al., 2015). However, students often experience the opposite, as many Black students attending HSIs indicate feelings of exclusion, and that their varying needs are not met (Pirtle et al., 2021). Specifically, some feel invisible/unseen, and that there is an expectation that they might fail or

underperform (Brooms, 2022). Black students have reported that they are underrepresented in the student population at HSIs, and that these campuses lack Black faculty (Serrano, 2022). These reasons and more could be why the students experience anti-blackness (Pirtle et al., 2021; Abrica et al., 2020), which tends to cost students a mental and emotional tax (Givens, 2016). Black students have experienced microaggressions (Joslyn et al., 2022), have been stereotyped (Stanislaus, 2021), reported that they experience barriers to graduation (Knox, 2018), do not feel a sense of belonging or welcome on the campuses of HSIs (Serrano, 2022).

Black Resistance, Survival, and Counter Spaces on HSI Campuses

As a coping mechanism for racialized experiences, Black students frequently create sub-communities in American universities where they are within the minority. Often, Black students find each other within majority-white spaces, and create communities where they can continue to practice their cultural traditions that have largely been ignored by the dominant campus community, such as joining Black Greek Lettered Organizations, which have a long history of connecting Black students to society, each other, and professional networks (Black & Bimper Jr., 2020; McClure, 2006). Students will also purposely house themselves in majority Black dormitories, as "the presence of a reasonable number of 'same-race' peers provides role models and academic, social, and cultural support for these students – critical ingredients for a successful college experience" (Altbach et al., 2002, pp. 38-39). These interpersonal relationships support Black students, enhance social experiences, and encourage academic success for Black students (Palmer et al., 2011). All of this is evidence that Black students will create avenues to advocate for themselves within racially isolating campuses. However, there is an "over-reliance on Black student organizations to fulfill the student needs" (Pirtle et al., 2021, p. 12). Although Black students have been able to find ways to counter their experiences of anti-Blackness on college campuses, institutions of learning must do their part to support student engagement.

While anti-blackness must be dismantled at a systemic level, we as educators can also do our part to dismantle it in our classrooms (Bonifacio, 2022). This can begin with our classroom pedagogies. In the contemporary era, many educators have turned to culturally relevant pedagogy, Afrocentric paradigms, and high-impact learning practices to best serve their Black students.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Applying critical race theory and perspectives to education, pedagogy, and classroom practice, culturally relevant pedagogy makes "attention to race a way to help students achieve both academic and cultural excellence" (Ladson-Billings,1997, p. 134). It provides space for student academic success, allows students to learn while remaining culturally competent within their own culture, and encourages student critical consciousness to critique the larger society (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally relevant teaching recommends that teachers be able to identify their own deficit thinking, recognize student cultural capital, and reject white middle-class biases hidden in education (Howard, 2003). As more traditional pedagogies devalue the cultural practices of multicultural students, culturally relevant teaching encourages educators to value the cultural and linguistic talents brought to the classroom by students of color (Colvin & Tobler, 2013). This pedagogy has also created space for culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogies, which similarly center the education of diverse and multicultural students (Ladson-Billings, 2021b; Ladson-Billings, 2014).

While culturally relevant pedagogy has stemmed from the teaching practices and experiences of a Black woman educating African American students (Ladson-Billings, 2021a), and can be applied to the learning of Black students and African centered teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2000), it has evolved to be a relevant pedagogy for learners of diverse backgrounds and for a multicultural student education (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Saint-Hilaire, 2014). Though this is inclusive and important for students of different backgrounds, a practice that exclusively centers the concerns and specific needs of Black students is most important for Black Students at an HSI. African Americans, while still people of color, have unique socio-political, historical, and economic experiences in the United States, and at HSIs. Though they might share some similar experiences of oppression as other marginalized groups, African Americans have distinguishable needs. Historically, when the needs and concerns of Black people are conflated with the needs and concerns of other groups, Black needs often go overlooked, ignored, and get the short end of the stick. Therefore an education centering the specific experiences and histories of the Black people is necessary.

Afrocentric and African Centered Pedagogies

Afrology "is the transgenerational and transcontinental Afrocentric study of African phenomena," which "denotes the Afrocentric study of African concepts, issues, and behaviors" (Asante, 1998, p. 19). Used in theory and practice (Kumah-Abiwu, 2021), such pedagogies support the study of all

African people, continental and diasporic, specifically using African-centered paradigms and an African consciousness to do so (such as through African-centered values and principles). "Afrocentricity says that Africans must be viewed as being the center of our historical narratives, as the subjects of our explorations, as the resistors of White oppression and conquest, and as the mothers and fathers of human civilization" (Asante, 2020b, p. 210). There are multiple Afrocentric theories and practices (Mazama, 2001) that have been used to decolonize Eurocentric frameworks of education (Sheik, 2020), mentor students (Leslie, 2002), create scholarly disciplines (Mazama, 2021) and guide all aspects of daily life (Mazama, 2002). Such practices are anti-racist and emancipatory (Asante, 2020a).

Although described as liberatory, African-centered theories have been criticized for essentialism because they mainly focus on Africa as a basis of thought, but fail to "create a balance between examinations of the external and structural forces that condition African American life and the internal factors that reveal the social relations, cultural values, and sociopolitical architecture of the Black community" (Cha-Jua, 2000, p. 47). According to such critics, Afrocentricity seems to ignore the sociopolitical realities of African Americans and instead focuses on an African consciousness believed to be shared by all African diasporic peoples.

High-Impact Learning Practices

Regardless of the theoretical framework or pedagogy used, very important tools for education are high-impact practices (Kilgo et al., 2015). According to Anderson et al. (2019), high-impact learning can "help undergraduates develop real-world skills through hands-on applied learning" (p. 231). Some examples of high-impact learning can include "first year seminars, study abroad experiences, service learning, internships, collaborative research, and capstone courses" (Chepp, 2017, p. 163). Such active and collaborative pedagogies can yield higher retention of first-year, first-generation, and underrepresented students (Lidinsky, 2014). I have found that many of my past students have benefited from high-impact learning practices, and therefore, I make it a duty to implement some sort of high-impact learning practice each semester. With this work, I would like to explore the possibility that combining high-impact practices with Black centered study, could be beneficial to Black students attending HSIs.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research is not to discredit existing pedagogies but to build upon them to create relevant practices that appeal to the specific needs of Black students who attend HSIs. Scholarly research on African American students at HWIs and HBCUs focuses on pedagogies appropriate for African American students within such institutions. For example, research suggests that at HWIs, Black students often experience race-related stressors such as incidences of racial discrimination and feelings of isolation (Neville et al., 2004), as well as offensive microaggressions (Banks & Landau, 2019). Other research has illustrated that Black students tend to do well and be socially and academically satisfied at HBCUs because the HBCUs provide supportive environments (Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002; Palmer & Gasman, 2008). However, less research has been conducted on appropriate pedagogies for African American students at HSIs. Therefore, this research hopes to contribute to the literature gap while reflecting on classroom practices in education at West Coast HIS (pseudonym) in the United States. As the researcher, I will attempt to answer the following research questions:

R1: How might Black students experience HSIs?
R2: What are some of the needs of African American students at HSIs?
R3: How can educators serve the specific needs of African American students who attend HSIs?

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that acknowledges that racism is endemic (Parsons & Plakhotnic, 2006). This means CRT understands that racism has always been, and will always be an issue within society and its institutions (Milner, 2013). This includes college campuses, academia, and all other societal establishments. Therefore, CRT considers the prevalence of racism within higher education, in order to best serve undergraduate African American Students who are engulfed in such realities. CRT at its core is liberatory, so the pedagogical practices discussed in this work aim to provide a just educational experience for Black students.

Positionality

Positioning myself within the work that I do, means understanding my privilege and power (Cooper, 2005), but especially understanding the dynamics of working as a member of the in-group, while constantly

challenging what I already believe to be true about the African American students at this particular HSI (Merriam et al., 2001). When I identify myself as a member of the in-group, I mean that my racial identity is similar to that of the students, and I would have likely had similar experiences if I were also an undergraduate student at West Coast HSI. Even considering myself an "insider" assumes that the Black community at West Coast HSI is a monolith (Merriam et al., 2001), and that is not my aim here. However, it is important to make a note that many of the undergraduate African American students I served have shared similar experiences with other undergraduate African American students at this particular HSI.

Method

       Considering the verbalized needs of my students, some of the traditions of Black Studies, and the missions and goals of the department, I considered multiple ways to best serve my Black students. The students served were traditional-aged Black college students, who varied in major and minor areas of study. Many were African American Studies majors, and most were enrolled in courses offered by the African American Studies Department. The following methods were practiced and implemented during the 2019-2020 academic school year: creation of safe Black spaces, active engagement with Black students outside of the classroom, courses that center Black histories, and critical self-reflection.

DISCUSSION OF PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICES UTILIZED

       Black students deserve an education that is empathetic and supportive (Johns & Hawkes, 2020), validates their history and lived experiences (Jones, 2020), and incorporates mentoring (Craven et al., 2014). This means that as educators, we should target and meet the specific needs of Black students who attend our institutions. Hoping to make a bridge between theory and practice, I hope that this work will provide some insight into how educators, can take steps toward making education equitable for Black students in US colleges and universities, especially HSIs. Considering some of my pedagogical classroom practices, I will share how I have purposely centered the unique needs of Black students who attend West Coast HSI. The pedagogies discussed throughout this work will reflect my work as a lecturer at this university.

       It is important to note that although this institution of instruction is indeed an HSI, during private and public conversations, many of my African American students have referred to it as a "PWI" (Predominately White Institution). This is likely because, at this school, the campus culture reflects

a similar campus culture of PWIs/HWIs around the country. That is, they marginalize the Black students (Abrica et al., 2020). Similar sentiments have been reported in the literature. Often, the faculty of these institutions are majority White, therefore the school feels like a PWI (Pirtle et al., 2021). Last, "the Hispanics [students] here think they are White," which make the campus feel like a PWI (Bonner II et al., 2015, P. 47). Placing this into context, this means that as a minority-serving institution, the needs of Black students are often unnoticed and forgotten, similar to that of a PWI/HWI. With this understanding in mind, I purposely made it my duty to center the specific experiences and needs of the Black students within my pedagogies and practices. It is also important for me to note that I was working in an African American Studies Department, and the majority of my undergraduate majors identified as African American and/or Black. Therefore, it would have been doing my students an injustice to not center their needs within my pedagogies.

A pedagogy that I offer is Black Centered Active Instruction (BCAI). BCAI centers the specific interests of Black students and encourages active engagement with these students both in and out of the classroom. BCAI is a liberatory practice that, true to Black Studies, is descriptive, corrective, and prescriptive (Marable, 2000). That is, BCAI describes the histories, experiences, and cultures of Black People, attempts to correct past wrongs of racist education, and prescribes solutions for students. It encourages the relationship building between faculty and students, and the mentoring of students by faculty. BCAI promotes social responsibility, and understands that teaching needs to be engaging both inside and outside the classroom in order to be impactful. Therefore, BCAI is an active approach to instruction, that incorporates high-impact learning practices.

Here I will discuss specific examples of how I have implemented BCAI through the creation of safe Black spaces, active engagement with undergraduate Black students outside of the classroom, courses that center Black histories, and critical self-reflection. Although my implementation of BCAI is steeped in Black Studies, these practices can be executed in multiple disciplines. That is, BCAI incorporates teaching and learning strategies that can be interpreted and practiced throughout multiple departments and areas of study. This means that the examples of practices that I share here are not limited to students within African American Studies, and can be provided by professors of Engineering, Psychology, English, Art, or any other campus department. I am hopeful that educators of various fields will be able to recreate similar activities for their students.

Creation of Black Spaces: The Black Student Retreat

2,456 Black students applied to West Coast HSI for the Fall 2019 semester, however about half, 1,292, were accepted, and only 348 of those Black student applicants ended up enrolling. During the fall 2019 semester, there were 33, 282 students enrolled at West Coast HSI, and of that student population, only about 3% of those students were African American. Further, the larger city that houses the school, has less than a 2% population of Black people. During the 2018/2019 academic year, the university awarded a total of 6,791 bachelor's degrees, 2,830 master's, and 9 doctoral degrees. 188 of the bachelor's degrees, 59 of the master's, and 0 of the doctoral degrees were earned by African American students. These numbers are important to put the Black student population into perspective. It is my hope for the reader to understand how much in the minority African American students are within the campus and larger community.

With such small representation, it becomes extremely hard for African American students to find community amongst same-race peers. This is important because students of color tend to find peace, empowerment, and support when surrounded by other peers of color within their informal created networks at HSIs (Comeaux et al., 2021). Further, Black students tend to feel fulfilled with their institution when they are supported by positive interpersonal environments (Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002). On top of the available research, many of my Black students often share with me their dreams of wanting to attend an HBCU, pursuits to apply to an HBCU graduate school, and interest in HBCU culture. One of the implications that I take from this is that students want to experience being around more Black students, need safe spaces where they can express themselves freely and culturally (Ohito & Brown, 2021), and want their social and cultural capital to be valued and nurtured (Simon et al., 2022).

Considering this, it is of extreme importance that the educators of these students provide the much-needed safe Black spaces for their Black students. Classrooms can be a great space for Black students to gain community and engage with other Black students. This is especially true with Black Studies classes, as the students get to be in classrooms where their histories, cultures, and experiences are the center of focus. However, the limitation here is that these same classrooms include the diversity of the school. That is, their peers within the classroom are not always necessarily Black, but rather the classroom is a multicultural space of learning. While a diverse student body in the classroom is more often than not, a good thing, this does hinder the importance, significance, and emphasis of a safe Black

space. Therefore, safe Black spaces usually need to be created outside of the classroom, while still incorporating student learning.

Understanding the need here, I participated in the planning and implementation of a free overnight Black student retreat. This retreat was a three-day off-campus weekend getaway, that encouraged leadership skills, community building, social and professional relationships, and the faculty mentoring of Black campus students. The Black student retreat offered workshops, group activities, team-building icebreakers, goal-setting skills, and many other student-centered activities. Some of the specific activities included the re-imagining of Black campus life, where students created memes that reflected how they imagined the Black community on campus could be post-retreat; hands-on organizing and planning tutorials to model prioritizing a daily, weekly, monthly, and semesterly agenda; and small mentoring breakout groups that allowed each faculty and staff member to have one-on-one and mini group opportunities to better assist students. Ultimately, the retreat was a safe learning space for Black students to assemble, create community, and become more involved in campus life. Based on the feedback that we received from student participants, the retreat was a success for community building, feelings of empowerment, and identity building of the undergraduates.

To recruit student participants, we created a flier that advertised the Black student retreat. The printed copies of the flier were placed in the Department of African American Studies, as well as in the Black student resource center. Digital copies of the flier were emailed to students on the list serves of the African American Studies Department and the Black Student Resource Center. The flier was also provided to instructors within the Department of African American Studies to share directly with their students. There was only space for 40 students, so all interested students had to submit an application via Google forms to participate. However, most of the students who applied had the opportunity to attend, as waitlisted students were added to the retreat once some students canceled their participation. All of the students who participated were Black, traditional-aged, undergraduate students who were enrolled at the university.

Like many pedagogical proposals, there are some challenges here. Like Black students, Black faculty and staff also experience Anti-Blackness (Vega, 2022), and feel unsupported on the campuses of HSIs (Venegas et al., 2021). The greatest challenge is that research has proven that faculty of color tend to be overworked with unpaid and unofficial duties (Gordon et al., 2022; Turner et al, 1999; Quezada & Louque, 2004). Already underrepresented and burned out (Jackson, 2018), Black women faculty especially, have reported a

low work-life balance with work taking up a significant amount of their time, and they are therefore unable to experience an equal balance between their career responsibilities and their personal life (Szelényi & Denson, 2019). "A possible explanation for this finding may be related to the high service demands that are often placed on women throughout the academic career, a burden that is even more exacerbated among faculty of color, among them African American faculty" (Szelényi & Denson, 2019, p. 651).

Adding an additional layer of unpaid work could make the emotional and physical workload for Black educators a burden. With careful strategy, however, the creation of safe Black spaces for Black students outside of the classroom could be mutually beneficial to the educator. Such activity could be credited to student service, which reflects well on the work of the educator (I also understand that service is often not as heavily weighted when being considered for tenure and/or promotion). Even more, this service to students could also be supported by university funds. For example, West Coast HSI encourages faculty to apply for extraordinary service to underrepresented groups awards. Although the name of the support could vary, I am confident that universities around the country could offer similar opportunities for funding and compensation for faculty time. Further, it must also be considered that scholars often enter the field with an understanding that much of their work will be credited to service, and not necessarily financial compensation, reimbursement, or support. I am not agreeing that such a reality is okay, however I am simply mentioning that it is indeed a common experience.

Active Engagement with Black Students Outside of the Classroom: Study Away and/or Abroad

West Coast HSI employed 2,120 faculty members during the Fall 2019 semester. Making up about 6.7%, 72 of those faculty members were Black. These statistics do not distinguish the rank, position, or tenure status of faculty, as I was unable to locate data for this. It is likely though, similar to myself, that a number of these faculty members were part-time and/or non-tenured/non-tenure track. To my knowledge, there were only 2 tenured Black faculty on campus when I started working there in the Fall of 2019. It is not clear how much time the cited faculty members spend on campus engaging with students, as part-time and non-tenure track faculty are not usually obligated to go above or beyond their contractual teaching obligations, or perform service for university students (this of course reflects some structural issues with the lack of investing in Black faculty for tenured and/or tenure track positions). I understand the inequities experienced by non-tenured/non-tenure track and part-time faculty, but still encourage all educators, regardless

of rank, to actively engage with their Black students outside of the classroom. This is especially true for those educators at HSIs.

As emphasized in the above section, student learning must happen both in and out of the classroom. However, unlike the points outlined in the previous section, the learning spaces outside of the classroom do not always have to be Black only. The important idea is that the student can engage with Black faculty (who also often serve as mentors and confidants to the students) outside of the traditional learning space. Research has suggested that students who are mentored outside of the classroom, and engaged academically with their professors in spaces other than the classroom, tend to perform well inside the classroom (Peterson et al., 2024; Ullah & Wilson, 2007). Additionally, minority students are most successful when they have support from faculty (Jones & Castellanos, 2023; Musoba et al., 2013). Further, active engagement outside the classroom could be a beneficial high-impact learning experience for the students.

In an attempt to encourage high-impact learning practices for my students, I co-organized a study away to New Orleans. This program was not limited to any racial group, and was widely advertised to the campus community. However, the study away was a credit-earning course offered through the Department of African American Studies, and my co-organizer was the lead staff for the Black student resource center on campus. Because of these two factors, most of the students who signed up to participate were students who were enrolled in my African American Studies courses, and students who frequented the campus' Black student resource center. Ultimately, all of the students who expressed interest, and signed up to participate, identified as either Black or Bi-racial (Black and Latinx) students. This turnout was significant, as such programs are typically enjoyed by white students (Edwards, 2021). So much so, the campus Study Abroad office was surprised and enthused that we were able to recruit so many Black students into the study away.

The major goal of this course was for my students to connect classroom theories and perspectives to knowledge acquired in the field. From a lens of pre and post-Hurricane Katrina, I planned for the students to study how Black communities within Louisiana have been impacted socially, politically, and economically. Myself and my co-lead also met with the students weekly to mentor and prepare them for our departure (many of the students enrolled had never been on a plane or left California). Before leaving for the proposed one-week study away, students read multiple materials on the history of slavery and race in Louisiana, the contemporary state of education and schools in New Orleans, and other available literature. While

on the trip, students would get the opportunity to visit historical sites such as Congo Square, the Whitney Plantation, Preservation Hall, and many other important local landmarks.

The class was also expected to participate in a community immersion project, where the students would engage with an afterschool program. With this project, students would be providing service to local communities through the tutoring and mentoring of k-12 students. To prepare for this, West Coast HSI students grouped themselves into teams of about 4-5, and each cluster of students created various workshops to engage with the k-12 students. Some of the workshops planned included creative writing, mindful thinking, and vision boards/journaling. Unfortunately, the trip was canceled about 3 weeks before departure, in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19/Coronavirus. The cancelation was ordered by the school, as all university travel was forbidden during this time. There were plans in place to reproduce a similar program for the following academic year, however I relocated and started working as a post-doctoral fellow at a different institution. Even if I had stayed at my former institution full-time, it would have been unlikely that a study away trip could have happened during the 2020-2021 academic year, as the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged most institutions to continue the travel freeze for faculty and students. In fact, West Coast HSI met virtually for much of the 2020-2021 academic year because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Although a wonderful opportunity for some students, there can be some limitations with practices such as a study away. Not all students will have access to such a program. For example, space was limited to 25 students in our course. Therefore, no more than 25 students would be able to participate in this high-impact learning. Additionally, students would need to have the financial resources to afford such a trip. While we were able to find some outside resources to assist with the costs for this program, the students were still expected to pay $1000 plus airfare and some meals. This is not to say that the costs for such opportunities are unrealistic, as some schools provide student travel awards and scholarships for study abroad/away activities. I simply want to recognize that there were and are barriers present.

Courses that Center Black Histories, Cultures, and Experiences

Many students who have been educated in public k-12 American schools have acquired a very Eurocentric understanding of History, English, Social Studies, and all major areas of study (Krueger-Henney, 2019). When these students enter college campuses, they bring with them their single understanding of those fields. Part of our jobs as educators is to provide

educational counter-narratives (Ender, 2021), and to get students to think critically about the education that they received in the past, while exposing them to new and diverse perspectives. Essentially, we have to provide humanizing stories to those marginalized groups that have not been the center of their educational understandings.

Regardless of individual student major or minor, most Black students can benefit from Black Studies courses taught by Black faculty and Black Studies scholars. This however is not a new phenomenon, theory, or revelation. As explained by W. E. B. Du Bois, "there are certain positive reasons due to the fact that American Negroes have, because of their history, group experiences and memories, a distinct entity, whose spirit and reactions demand a certain type of education for its development" (Du Bois, 1935, p. 333). That is, Black students must learn of Black histories, cultures, and experiences from the perspective of Black people. Not only is the information humanizing, but Black students often report positive interactions with faculty of their same race (Newman, 2015), and the presence, teaching, and mentorship from Black faculty could have a positive impact on Black students' academic success (Llamas et al., 2021; Hickson, 2002). This does not mean that only Black faculty can teach such courses. This does mean that the reading materials should largely reflect the understandings of Black authors, scholars, and academics, however. This is important, especially in the current societal milieu, where diverse perspectives, civic education, and critical race theory are under political attack (Miles, 2021).

I have personally instructed many African American Studies and African American History courses. Most of the courses have been instructed for African American Studies Departments/Programs, though some have also been for History, Women and Gender Studies, General Education, or other Humanities, Arts and Letters, or Social Science Departments and/or Colleges. Some of those courses have included: Education of the Black Child, Black Women in America (1619-1960), Black Women in Contemporary Society, African Americans and the Development of America's History and Government, The Humanities in African American Culture, Sociology of African American Communities, Main Themes in African American Studies, and African American History Since 1865. My course evaluations have for the most part remained favorable, and the students tend to perform well in the courses. I am hopeful that the students who were enrolled in the courses, were able to take away new and meaningful information for their personal, academic, and professional growth.

Historically, Black students have protested and fought for the creation of Black Studies departments and programs with courses to be taught by

Black faculty (Kendi, 2012). Today, students who have taken Black Studies courses have reported feelings of empowerment and self-determination (Chapman-Hilliard & Beasley, 2018). Black Studies minors have expressed a positive sense of self and racial identity (Fuller, 2016), and Black students enrolled in Black Studies courses have experienced better retention (McDougall III, 2021). In other words, courses that center Black histories, cultures, and experiences, have generally been a benefit to Black student success.

Critical Reflection of Self

I am still very new to academia, and therefore still have so much to learn. Also, I understand that even though I, or other educators, could implement such practices with all of the best intentions, students may still see or experience some inequities within such proposals. My main intention here is to serve the specific needs of Black students who attend an HSI. Although there are standard needs that remain the same semesterly, there will also be new concerns yearly. I want to be sure that my pedagogies remain recent with the needs of students, and are transformed with societal and academic trends. With this in mind, I like to reflect on my teaching semesterly in order to improve ways that I can best serve my students. Some of the ways that I have done this are through student evaluations, peer debriefings, and self-reflections.

Measuring the effectiveness of the Black Student Retreat, my co-lead and I created a Google form for students to complete following their attendance/participation. The idea for this questionnaire was to gauge the impact of the retreat on student experiences, and to understand what we could change or keep for the student retreat in the following years. What we found was that most students appreciated the activities that encouraged peer-to-peer relationship building. This was especially true for daily icebreakers. Students disliked anything that seemed similar to coursework. For example, students were required to read a chapter of an edited book. Following their individual read, we spent a couple of hours discussing the chapter as a group, and participated in discussion questions related to the chapter. Although the chapter centered student experiences, which we assumed would almost mirror some of the students' experiences, the students felt like they were in class on a Saturday, and therefore did not get the most enjoyment from the reading or the discussion. This was helpful to understand, as I nor my co-lead considered how this assigned chapter and classroom-style discussion questions would be received by students.

Additionally, I reflect on course evaluations from both my students and my peers. I typically make use of the evaluation that is crafted by the university and/or the department, which tends to inquire about whether students are retaining information from my teaching strategies. I do understand that reading the evaluations from students can sometimes be daunting, however. This is especially true for faculty of color who often experience racism in the classroom from students who often challenge the lecturer's authority, and question their instructor's scholarly expertise and capabilities (Pittman, 2010). Further, research has suggested "that minority faculty are given lower teaching quality scores and higher difficulty of course scores than are non-minorities" (Baker, 2019, p. 18).

To accommodate this, faculty can consider feedback from their peers. At West Coast HSI, faculty of all ranks have their classrooms observed and their teaching evaluated roughly once per academic year. I have found this feedback from peers to be very helpful, considerate, and critical. It can be used to reflect on one's teaching and pedagogical practices, classroom engagement, and teacher presence within the online classroom. Typically, colleagues have provided suggestions to complement their criticism. In my experiences, some peers have volunteered to share practices that have worked best for their students, suggested readings that can be implemented with specific modules, and offered other activities and resources that they have found to be helpful.

Supplementary to their feedback from evaluations, peer debriefings can help evaluate the success of student programs and activities. For example, after the Black Student Retreat's end, my colleague/co-organizer and I met multiple times to discuss the happenings of the weekend's event. We were able to collectively read over the student feedback, share ideas on how to strengthen future retreats, and provide each other feedback on what we could have done differently both individually and collectively to better serve the students. This interaction is important, as sometimes once an event is over, we as faculty can distance ourselves and move on to the next plan or project. This is understandable, as we can all be extremely busy juggling the multiple responsibilities required in academia. Reflecting on a past event can sometimes seem like a chore, and not spending time wisely. However, it can also be important for professional development.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

Ultimately, we need to consider the history of antiblackness within American culture, even within largely minority spaces, and apply this to the reality of similar practices in higher education. That is, schools have a history

of practicing racist policies (Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021). Even though an institution is Hispanic, or minority-serving, it is likely that similar to PWIs, the campus is somehow operating as a disservice to its Black students. Because of this, it would be helpful for educators to create safe Black spaces for Black students, actively engage with undergraduate Black students outside of the classroom, create and instruct courses that center Black histories, and critically self-reflect on their teaching practices. Keeping this in mind, this paper calls for educators to consider BCAI as a viable pedagogical tool. Some questions to consider while engaging in such a pedagogy: Is this equitable? Is the learning student-centered? How can we incorporate engaging and high-impact learning practices?

This paper is merely an introduction to possible research that could be done on this topic, and therefore there are some limitations here. First, this paper centers US institutions, however anti-blackness is a global reality (Bledsoe & Wright, 2019; Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021). This means that it is likely that Black students within colleges and universities around the world experience anti-Blackness. Research could consider how to best serve such students globally, or how to serve the specific needs of Black students within specific countries outside of the United States. Future studies could also conduct interviews and focus groups of students to measure their individual and collective experiences as students. Such reflections could allow for HSIs to provide necessary resources for African American students enrolled at their institutions. Other studies could also consider the retention and academic performance of Black students at HSIs. The results of said studies could yield implications for whether or not the offered pedagogy, curriculum, and/or services to Black students are helpful to the academic success of Black students attending the specific HSI. Without continuing conversations centering Black student experiences, HSIs will continue practices that do not effectively serve their students.

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