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Navigating marginality en route to the professoriate: graduate students of color learning and living in academia

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The author contends that marginalization is a major issue for graduate students of color in their doctoral studies. She explains three forms of marginalization, and suggests some strategies for how each can be counteracted. These are physical, cultural and intellectual isolation, benign neglect and problematic popularity. Her analyses are informed by insights gleaned from her personal experiences as a student and professor of color in predominantly White institutions (PWIs), her observations and interactions with graduate students of color as an instructor and doctoral studies advisor, and from the research and scholarship of other scholars. The author makes an appeal for professors of color and their European American colleagues to make their curriculum, instruction advising, mentoring and relationships more culturally responsive to ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse students. By doing so they can teach these students more effectively how to navigate the marginality they encounter en route to the professoriate, and how to be more successful in executing their roles and responsibilities as professors of color.

Introduction

There is a growing body of research and scholarship on preparing students of color for K–12 teaching careers (Guyton *et al.*, 1996; Pailliotet, 1997; Becket, 1998; Gordon, 2000; Quiocho & Rios, 2000; Bennett, 2002; Sheets & Chew, 2002), but much less has been written about preparing graduate students of color to become professors in academia. Almost 30 years ago Duncan (1976) noted that, 'There has been remarkably little systematic evidence generated on the minority graduate experience and training' (p. 227). Little has changed in the intervening years. The research and scholarship that do exist tend to focus on recruitment, retention, enrollment patterns, funding and mentoring of graduate students (Katz & Hartnett, 1976; Justiz *et al.*, 1994; Pruitt-Logan & Isaac, 1995) and faculty of color (Altbach & Lomotey, 1991; Cross, 1991; Padilla & Chávez, 1995; Cho, 1996; García, 2000b; Turner & Myers, 2000). The data also are unevenly distributed among groups of

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color, with the most research available on African Americans, and the least on Native Americans.

While analyses of enrollment trends are important they ignore some critical dimensions of the challenges students of color encounter in the process of becoming professors of higher education. Duncan (1976, p. 227) notes that, 'Settling for inquiries at this level circumvents questions addressing the experiences of students and invites assumptions that a clear and direct relationship exists between certain "input" standards and desired outcomes.' Thus, the argument goes that if students of color make it through the admissions process, have sufficient funding and ample mentoring they will complete their degrees in a timely fashion, and will be successful in their subsequent careers. These assumptions overlook the other prices that many African, Asian, Latino and Native American students have to pay living through graduate studies, and being faculty of color in academe.

Graduate students of color face many of the same issues as their younger counterparts in K–12 educational institutions. They, too, have to function in an alien and often hostile environment, consistently encounter irrelevant curriculum, and frequently are taught by culturally insensitive and uncaring instructors. Most of their professors and mainstream peers assume that these students 'have it made,' and can 'write their own tickets' in the job market. In fact, most graduate students of color exist on the periphery of the academy, and their career trajectories are not as unencumbered as many think. Situations and experiences of graduate school may not differ significantly after they join the professoriate.

Research and scholarship on the quality of the intellectual and social lives and the professional development of graduate students of color need major improvements. The reforms should begin with a careful study of the obstacles they encounter, and proceed to developing strategies for dealing with them throughout their programs of study. The need for more multicultural content within courses and program options, as well as more culturally relevant learning experiences and more meaningful interactions with faculty of color, are obvious. Most of what has been written about these issues for K–12 schools is applicable to higher education as well, with modifications to accommodate contextual differences. Some progress is being made in these areas, at least in establishing rationales for multicultural education if not in actualizing the ideal changes they mandate. For example, many colleges and universities now include the study of cultural diversity in their core requirements. Most colleges of education offer some courses in multicultural and bilingual education, and some even grant masters and doctorate degrees in these areas. However, much more research, scholarship, curriculum revisions and instructional reforms are needed in the design, implementation and assessment of multicultural education in higher education.

This discussion takes a different direction—one that is of equal significance but is ignored in most conversations about education for and about ethnic and cultural diversity, wherever they occur. The focus is on the contextual conditions that shape the existential experiences of learning and living in academe of graduate students of color on the way to becoming professors of education. The discussion examines issues, relationships, assumptions, habits, climate and 'quality of life' factors in mainstream

institutions. In other words, the things that happen around the substance of academic programs and practices, and the implicit lessons embedded in the informal attitudes and behaviors of the caretakers of 'the system.' These factors strongly influence how students of color experience their graduate programs of study and careers as professors in predominantly White institutions (PWIs). The aspects of these phenomena that are the focus of analysis are identified as *marginalization*. As used here marginality does not mean a sense of internalized negative perceptions of self-identity or lack of competence on the part of graduate students or professors of color. Rather, it deals with goodness-of-fit issues between the needs, interests and skills of students of color, and institutional priorities and protocols; cultural, racial, ethnic and social differences; prejudices and discrimination; lack of culturally relevant academic and social support systems; and maintaining one's ethnic identity and cultural integrity (Epps, 1989; Akbar, 2000; Jones, 2000; Mabokela & Green, 2001).

Several key questions guide the ensuing discussion about preparing graduate students of color to become professors in the academy. They include: What are different ways that graduate students of color are marginalized in academe? How does marginalization affect their progression through and performance in their programs of study? How can graduate students of color navigate the marginality imposed on them to their advantage in preparing to become professors? Three major forms of marginalization are examined. These are *isolation*, *benign neglect* and *problematic popularity*. The explanations provided are informed by my own experiences as a graduate student of color and professor in PWIs, the observations of and interactions with ethnically diverse students of color throughout my career as a course instructor and doctorate studies advisor, and the research and writings of other scholars.

Physical and cultural isolation

Graduates students of color in colleges of education at PWIs are few in number, and generally spread out across different programs of study. They have the dubious distinction of being 'the only one,' or 'one of the very few' in both general courses and their areas of specialization. These students frequently spend their time physically isolated, and feeling excluded from the mainstream dynamics of graduate studies. Although they are in the same vicinity where these events occur, they do not feel like they are major players in the unfolding drama of their professional development. They are on the sidelines, watching the action instead of participating fully in it. This feeling is not idiosyncratic or sporadic; it is common and recurrent across setting and time. For example, three out of five students of color in Duncan's (1976) study in the early 1970s felt they were on the fringes, did not fit well in their departments and experienced indifference, coldness, hostility and contempt. Even though incidences of explicit hostility and contempt have diminished, contemporary students and professors of color have similar feelings of isolation (Padilla & Chávez, 1995; Turner & Myers, 2000; Mabokela & Green, 2001).

Graduate students of color at my own institution complain about feeling only tolerated or endured, sensing that discussions are going on and decisions are being

made around them to which they do not have access or knowledge until after the fact. By comparison European-American students seem to be 'favorite sons and daughters,' who are part of the inner circle, and enjoy its power and privilege. An African American graduate student in the College of Education at The Ohio State University lamented that 'my first year of doctoral school I really felt isolated and alone because I did not know any of the other graduate students in my classes. To make matters worse, I was the only person of color in my classes' (Hinton-Johnson, 2002, p. 5).

This physical isolation can have personal and professional negative effects. From a personal perspective it is difficult never having academic peers who share your own experiential frames of reference, or are from the same ethnic and racial backgrounds. It also is challenging to function in learning environments where, at best, there are only sporadic and highly stylized markers, cues or signals of your culture and ethnicity. These situations are aggravated by the fact that there are few professors of color on college of education faculties with whom these students can bond. Epps (1989) explains this situation further, noting that 'There is a tendency for minority faculty to be located on the periphery rather than in the mainstream of teaching and research' (p. 25), and, 'no matter how committed these individuals may be, there simply are not enough of them to meet the needs of all current and potential students' (p. 25), even if it were their sole responsibility to do so. Those who are present often are so over-committed that they are not accessible, or may have issues of their own that minimize their senses of ethnic affiliation and cultural connectedness. Conversely, there is something reassuring, comforting and even relaxing about being among people like yourself. There is a sense of kindredness, a feeling of place and belonging. Thus, the absence of a critical mass of peers and professors from their own ethnic groups places psycho-emotional burdens on graduate students of color that are different from those that affect European Americans.

Dealing with isolation takes emotional and intellectual energy that could otherwise be directed toward academic pursuits. In one of the few studies involving a large number of participants Duncan (1976) reported the results of 467 students of color who participated in the University of California, Berkeley Minority Survey. The research, conducted in the early 1970s, involved African, Mexican, Native and Asian American graduate students enrolled at Berkeley. Nearly 65% of the participants indicated that they rarely or never socialized with other graduate students in their departments, and were lonely and depressed more frequently than European Americans. Undoubtedly, these emotional dispositions, and the stress they provoke, have negative influences on the academic performance of many graduate students of color across ethnic groups. This assertion is supported by Fisher (1994). Her research revealed that stress significantly influences many of the cognitive activities involved in the acquisition, manipulation and consolidation of information, which are central to the work of academics. These include concentration, focus, judgment, attention to details, transfer of knowledge, memory and error frequency.

Many of the large universities graduate students of color attend are located in communities that are not ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse. Even those

in cities do not have close connections with surrounding ethnic communities. Thus, students depend on campus resources for social and academic supports (Willie *et al.*, 1991). Those who want to establish connections with local communities have to invest time, effort and money to get to locations where there are concentrations of people from their own ethnic groups, and an abundance of cultural sights, sounds, artifacts and institutions (such as churches, community agencies and restaurants). Most graduate students of color have limited resources to allocate for sociocultural needs, however critical they are. Ironically, in their quest for degree matriculation, they can contribute to their own physical isolation by not maintaining active ties with their ethnic and cultural communities.

In addition to physical isolation, graduate students of color are isolated culturally. The universities they attend and the programs they study are not routinely multicultural. Nor are the icons and symbols PWIs use to signify their identity and importance culturally inclusive. For example, the names of buildings around campus, artworks on display and speakers in lecture series are not as ethnically, racially, culturally and linguistically diverse as they need to be. Cultural gathering places for students of color are virtually non-existent. Students of color are immersed in a world that is not their own. It is as if they were 'guests' on their own campuses. As such, they cannot ever totally relax and genuinely join the hosts. Turner and Myers (2000) found a similar perception among the 64 faculty of color (including Asian, African, Latino and Native Americans) in eight Midwestern states who participated in their study, as well as in the research and scholarship they reviewed. They noted that 'at every level of academia a person of color is treated, at best, as "a guest in someone else's house" … even when white faculty and administrators greet minority faculty with apparent cordiality, they project the underlying attitude that they are making "others" feel welcome in "their" space' (p. 84). As 'visitors', graduate students and professors of color are scrutinized by, and have to 'perform' for, their hosts. Always being 'on stage' or 'in the spotlight' can be a very demanding existence.

There are a few exceptions to these general patterns. Occasional speakers and performers of color are invited to campus. Some relief from this cultural isolation can be found in ethnic studies and multicultural education programs. A few students are fortunate to form meaningful relationships with faculty and staff of color, as well as some mainstream members of the academic community. These individuals may not be in the same departments as the students, in the college of education or even members of the professional staff. They might be other students, administrative assistants or clerical and custodial staff.

What can be done to counter the physical and cultural isolation and frustration that so many graduate students of color experience? Several possibilities come to mind. First, students (and professors) of color should establish connections with their ethnic communities from the time the recruitment and admissions processes are initiated. Information about the location of various ethnic communities and institutions, the identity of local ethnic leaders and campus connections with ethnic agencies should be a part of the routine orientation of new students. When site visits are conducted the institutions hosting them should make sure that the prospective students meet

other graduate students, staff members and professors from their own ethnic groups, both within the college of education and in the larger university community. They also should have guided tours of their local ethnic communities, preferably hosted by residents of those communities. These experiences should be carefully planned rather than being chance occurrences or afterthoughts. Activities of this nature will signal to graduate students and new professors of color that the colleges and universities they are joining understand ethnic isolation, and are actively involved in compensating for it. They also will indicate that the university is cultivating interactive relationships with a variety of different ethnic communities, since the ideas suggested above need to be target-specific for African, Latino, Native and African American students, as well as cultural variations within these clusters. For example, different 'community connections' will need to be facilitated for specific groups within ethnic clusters, such as Korean, Taiwanese, Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian Americans for Asian Americans.

If information and connections are not forthcoming from the institution, graduate students should establish them on their own at the very beginning of their programs of studies. Residential professors of color and other graduate students can be very helpful in these endeavors. Who better can tell an African American female where to go for hair-care services and products? Personal endorsements from same ethnic group members for healthcare, shopping and legal assistance are much more dependable than choices selected from the yellow pages. These referrals have the added benefits of linking students of color with other individuals (both those offering the referrals and providing the services) from their own ethnic groups, and thereby counteracting the physical isolation they experience on campus. They also make living in isolation or on the margins of mainstream institutions more endurable. The need for this kind of 'ethnic-based cultural capital' is so obvious that one wonders why it is habitually ignored in the orientation and induction of new graduate students and professors of color.

Other aspects of programs of study, such as curriculum content, advising, mentoring and research and teaching supervision for graduate students of color also need to be responsive to ethnic, cultural, racial and gender specificity. Research conducted by Nettles (1990) and Parent (1999), as well as personal anecdotes reported by a wide variety of ethnically diverse individuals (Padilla & Chavez, 1995; Turner & Myers, 2000; Mabokela & Green, 2001; Peters, 2002) indicate that, despite significant similarities, there are enough differences in the doctoral experience within and across ethnic groups to warrant this variability. Nettles studied the backgrounds, experiences, performance and program satisfaction of African, Latino and European American doctoral students at four large public research universities that are 'among the 25 leading producers of Black and Hispanic doctoral students' (p. 5). These were Florida State University, Ohio State University, Rutgers University and the University of Maryland at College Park. Of the three groups, African Americans were found to have the most negative experiences before, during and after enrolling in graduate school, and the greatest need for corrective intervention. Nettles concluded his study with the recommendation that 'graduate institutions may need to have different programs, policies,

and strategies to address the unique characteristics and experiences of different minority groups rather than trying to serve them all as if they have identical needs' (p. 13).

A second strategy for overcoming physical isolation is to purposefully create an ethnic critical mass where there apparently is none. This can be done by building community among the few students of color enrolled in separate programs. The purpose of these communities is to connect with others who are in similar situations, to share experiences, to support each other, and to have an outlet or a place of refuge from the stresses and demands of their academic lives. Three examples of this strategy that worked very well come to mind. One involved a group of African and European American women at Purdue University studying Instructional Media and Development, an area traditionally dominated by men. As they approached taking their written exams, deciding on research projects and writing dissertations, they had similar difficulties communicating with their male peers and professors, and getting the kind of guidance, support and encouragement they needed to work through the challenges embedded in these tasks. They decided to support each other, and not merely on an informal ad hoc basis. They organized themselves into a group that had regular meetings, designated tasks, rituals and ceremonies, and even a name. They called themselves the 'Ladies Aide Society;' conducted their own 'pro seminars' for each other; held mock oral exams prior to the actual events; served as critical reviewers for drafts of written works; and celebrated each member's accomplishment throughout the process, from general written exams to receiving degrees. Even when no one was actively involved in one of these phases of matriculation, the 'Ladies Aide Society' met regularly, simply to touch base with each other. For instance, they had a regular Friday afternoon 'cocktail hour,' and an annual cookout. This example of community building illustrates the possibility of students of color establishing coalitions with others who share concerns of social, academic and cultural isolation but not ethnic identities.

Another example of student self-initiated, informal community building occurred in the College of Education at the University of Washington, Seattle. A group of African American graduate students decided to counter their isolation by reaching out to each other. The community formation began with those enrolled in the Curriculum and Instruction unit seeking out the one or two African Americans in the other programs within the college. Whereas the 'Ladies Aide Society' involved students in the same program, this 'community' was interdepartmental, including individuals from multicultural education, teacher education, educational psychology, and educational leadership and policy studies. They talked to each other about the isolation they were experiencing in their respective programs; developed a cueing system to signal each other when there was a pressing need for them to 'vent;' held social events (such as potluck dinners on the weekends); and were instrumental in organizing a local unit of the National Black Graduate Students Association. Seeing these students bonding in the hallways became a very pleasant sight. It made their presence more visible to others, occasionally shifted the spotlight from individuals to the group, and caused them to make a felt difference in the college that was not possible by each of them operating individually.

The third example of community building among graduate students of color is a formal, institutionally sponsored program of recruitment and funding. This is the Providing Research Opportunities for Future Scholars (PROFS) program at The Ohio State University. It is an 'academic, cultural, and professional development program for new Ph.D. students of color … in the College of Education' (Briley, 2002, p. 2) that is designed to help alleviate feelings of displacement while simultaneously providing professional development through building community and mentoring among faculty and fellow students of color (Hinton-Johnson, 2002; Peters, 2002). One of the participants in PROFS describes it as 'a home away from home,' 'a safe haven' (Hinton-Johnson, 2002, p. 6) where African American graduate students find affinity and camaraderie with each other and faculty of color, as well as encouragement, advice and living examples of how to navigate the mazeways of doctoral studies in PWIs. She added, 'Many times I have felt "out of the loop" or "in the dark" about the procedures necessary for earning a Ph.D., but because members of PROFS are at various levels, I am exposed to information most students have to stumble upon accidentally' (p. 6).

Graduate programs are very demanding, and can easily become all consuming. The consequences of this immersion are not as potentially isolative if one's studies are unfolding in institutional environments that reflect who you are. Since this is not the case with graduate students of color, to allow their studies to be all consuming is to contribute to their own cultural isolation. Thus, a third strategy for overcoming cultural and physical isolation is for graduate students of color to be deliberate and systematic about participating in ethnically specific cultural events on campus and in local communities *on a regular basis*. These might include going to churches, restaurants, grocery stores, theaters, concerts and festivals in their local ethnic communities. Students of color also can become involved in various kinds of community service projects, such as tutoring younger students, being a teacher's aide, assisting with girls' and boys' clubs or transporting senior citizens to grocery shopping, recreational and healthcare facilities. These experiences provide regularized opportunities for them to stay connected with their ethnic communities and to counteract some of the cultural isolation they encounter on campus. Satisfying these personal needs can be used to serve academic program requirements as well. Service education is increasingly becoming a common element of college education, and all graduate programs provide independent study options for students. Why shouldn't students of color use situations that meet their personal and cultural needs to serve academic functions too, since so much of their academic time is devoted to experiences that are not culturally relevant to them?

Intellectual isolation

Little, if any, relief from physical and cultural isolation is found within the substance of the programs of study taken by graduate students of color. If anything, the situation is reinforced by intellectual isolation. As Lynch (1997) suggests, 'exposed to Euro-centric, male biased curriculum using narrow models of instruction, students who

differ in any way from the norm may feel isolated and alienated from the educational goal that they are pursuing' (p. 57). The formal education of students of color includes little content on and pedagogy for ethnic and cultural differences. Yet, these are the issues that they are frequently interested in pursuing in their own research, scholarship and teaching after receiving their degrees.

Peters (2002) speaks poignantly about how intellectual isolation operated in her 'struggle to find footing within the academy' (p. 2). Her experiences suggest that some of the issues graduate students of color encounter are complicated further by gender. Peters explains that

> My professional goals … were not reflected in the research nor my interpersonal interactions … when I looked around for someone to talk to, to help me make sense of this experience, I found no one who shared my subject position immediately available to talk to. When I went to the research to seek out scholarly work in the field of educational administration, where African Americans were the subjects, I rarely found the stories of my sisters. Often, the women spoken of were white and the Blacks spoken of were men…. It occurs to me that I have no place, being neither white nor male, a status that potentially (and strategically) renders me the invisible visible…. It is disheartening to feel alone in the sometimes cruel world of the academy. It is particularly disconcerting to know that neither one's race nor gender has currency. (pp. 2, 3)

The intellectual isolation prompted by irrelevant curricular content is exacerbated by experiences graduate students of color commonly encounter within the dynamics of classroom interactions with peers and professors. These students are often excluded from substantive engagement in intellectual discourse in several ways. While these actions may not be intentionally malicious they nonetheless constrain the intellectual development of students of color aspiring to become professors.

First, their peers and professors do not deeply probe their ideas, challenge them to clarify their thoughts or otherwise critically engage with their contributions to class discussions. These behaviors are especially notable when racial and ethnic inequities in education are the issues of analysis. Students of color complain repeatedly that if they do not raise these issues, then they are not discussed at all. Even their initiation does not generate equal status intellectual exchange with European Americans peers and professors. When they raise unconventional or controversial topics, they are 'out there by themselves' without any public support from other students. The instructors claim ignorance as justification for not including these issues in their course assignments and readings. Or, they place the onus for correcting the oversights on the students of color by asking them to provide knowledge and references regarding their issues of concern. Dulce Cruz (1995) explains how this practice worked in her graduate studies experience. The faculty and other students constantly emphasized her ethnicity and difference. She recalled:

> One professor habitually turned to me whenever she needed someone to explain 'the plight of the marginalized.' She designated me, without asking my permission, as the spokesperson for all Hispanics and Blacks. When the term ended, she thanked me for 'giving voice to the oppressed.' But I did not feel she was thankful (nor did I want her thanks); she was congratulating herself for being liberal enough to 'empower' me—as if power can or should be given! Consequently, I often felt like the token most people in the department thought I was. (p. 92)

Students are placed in intellectual and identity quandaries by these kinds of requests. Simply because they are people of color and know what they want to know is not to say that they have the answers to their questions. And, as many respond (at least privately), 'I'm not being paid to teach the class; nor did I expect to have to teach myself when I paid to take these classes.'

Many of the same mainstream students who refuse to support students of color publicly in classroom discourses will approach them privately with glowing praise, gratitude and admiration for their comments. They even declare personal agreement with the positions taken by students of color, but never explain why this was not forthcoming during formal instruction. When students of color participate in classes that use cooperative learning and peer-coaching teaching techniques, they again complain of being denied equal status intellectual engagement. While they take seriously the responsibility to carefully read and thoroughly critique their peers' work to improve its quality, they do not receive comparable quality treatment in kind. Their work is given nebulous, generalized accolades, such as 'That was very interesting, profound, or exciting,' 'I really enjoyed hearing/reading what you had to say,' 'That's a point of view I never considered before,' and 'you are so articulate.'

These sentiments are often echoed in the feedback provided by professors. In her study of African American female doctoral students at the University of Michigan Rochelle Woods reports reactions to these superfluous accolades that convey the frustrations they evoke in many students of color. One of her participants declared that:

> If I hear the words, 'oh you're so articulate' one more time. If I hear, 'oh you really write well.' At every stage, you get the sense, like it's a surprise that we actually can put two words together, that we've read and understand [disciplinary scholarship]. (2001, p. 114)

Woods suggests that ingrained in these behaviors are deep-seated beliefs that students of color are not as intelligent or as competent in their areas of study as European Americans. Many students of color are tempted to diffuse this intellectual isolation by not talking in their classes at all. They are silenced more from being ignored and alienated, and as a defense mechanism, than by free choice.

In additions to these comments not having any substantive value, they focus more on the audience/listener's part of the learning teams than the author/speaker. What are students to make of this dubious praise, lack of courage and intellectual reciprocity? Are they to be grateful for being consigned to the role of 'risk-taker' and 'trailblazer' for advocating unpopular causes in their classes, while being denied real opportunities to develop their own intellectuality? What sense is to be made of these behaviors when they are repeated over and over?

Second, their mainstream peers often react to the contributions of students of color to classroom dialogue with passive or silent indulgence. Then, the conversations continue as if the students of color had not spoken at all, thus suggesting that their thoughts are insignificant. Another reaction is to seem awed and unduly impressed by what they declare to be 'deep and profound thoughts or perceptions,' but students of color think are only average or commonsensical. Mainstream students also frequently act as if they are intimidated and threatened by the passion with which students of

color speak about their convictions and causes. They shy away from engaging these thoughts because they are 'afraid of upsetting and arguing with students of color, since they tend to be oversensitive, over-emotional, and argumentative.' These kind of reactions caused one African American male majoring in Multicultural Education to repeatedly lament, with frustration and puzzlement, 'Why don't they understand? Why can't they see? Why won't they do?,' what is so imperative and obvious to him about providing educational equity to ethnically diverse students.

Another African American student's responses are even more telling with respect to the effects of being excluded from serious intellectual engagement. She says that:

> There were times when I got angry or annoyed when other students looked at me as if they were surprised or confused when I made comments or gave my opinion on reading material. I was also bothered when I sat in classes that had no required readings by or about people of color. And when I mentioned works of African Americans, no one seemed interested or knowledgeable about them. The most frustrating thing was that I did not have anyone to talk to about my experiences. I wanted someone to compare stories with. I wanted to ask someone if my conclusions about curriculum, classmates and teachers were irrational. (Hinton- Johnson 2002, p. 5)

A third common response is to invalidate the contributions of students of color by accusing them of 'over-generalizing' or 'essentializing' when they share information about the cultures, issues and experiences of their own ethnic groups, even though they have been assigned the responsibility of being 'authorities on themselves.' This latter role places students of color in a precarious position. Jacqueyn Mitchell gives a cogent description of how it works for her. The result is both the personal story of a particular individual, and a symbolic representation of the dilemmas of many different individuals. She says:

> … our role as spokesperson … [is] exhausting and stressful … we are burdened with the responsibility of *not misrepresenting* our people's realities. We realize that our statements can be potentially harmful to people of color if they result in distorted conclusions. As a result, like other minority researchers I am often overly cautious before I speak and write, hoping that the statements I make and opinions I give reflect fairly accurately the black experience in general, not merely myself in particular. Thus I forego a bit of my own autonomy, knowing that this is inherent in such a responsibility. (1982, p. 40)

To label the results of these efforts 'over-generalizing' and 'essentializing' is ludicrous and belittling to the seriousness with which the task is undertaken.

A fourth troubling variation of intellectual isolation occurs with students of color whose first language is not English, and/or when they come from other countries to study in the United States. Their spoken language facility is not as proficient and fluid as that of native English speakers. Understandably, they have some uncertainties about their oral English-language skills, and are initially reluctant to speak out in class discussions. Therefore, they need more encouragement, and time to form and express their thoughts. Rather than being patient and allowing these students ample time to engage in instructional discourse, their European American peers frequently 'speak for them.' After the initial efforts of the English language learners (ELL) or bilingual students to express their ideas, European Americans are quick to declare, 'What he

or she means is ——.' By doing this, they, in effect, *appropriate* the 'voices' of these students of color.

Students (and professors) of color experience another common form of *intellectual appropriation* when they try to make substantive contributions to discussions that go unacknowledged or unaccredited. A short time later a European American shares virtually the identical thoughts, which are received openly and with much praise. A similar kind of appropriation occurs in situations where individuals of color are involved in semi-private conversations with European Americans. They are the initiators of the dialogue, and provide the major ideas being discussed. In other words, they are 'speakers' and the other individuals are primarily 'listeners.' European American observers apparently see the dynamic very differently, based on how they respond to these conversations. When they consider something said that is worthy of bringing to the attention of the larger group, they assign the authorship of the ideas to European Americans, and may even ignore the presence of the individual of color in the conversation entirely. These are frequent occurrences for graduate students (and professors) of color.

This happened recently in a situation involving a European American male (James), a European American female (Ann), and an African American female (Jennifer) [all pseudonyms]. James and Jennifer continued to discuss the topic of a large group meeting during break time. Jennifer initiated the conversation and was deeply involved in sharing some of her ideas on the topic with James when Ann joined them. Ann listened but did not make any contributions to the conversation. When the large group reconvened, Ann announced that, 'James had some great ideas during the break. I think he should share with the rest of the group.' She did not even acknowledge Jennifer's presence in the conversation, and James did not correct this glaring oversight either. When he summarized the conversation, James did say, 'Jennifer and I were talking about….' He contributed to this complicity and intellectual appropriation by not clarifying that, 'Jennifer was talking and I was listening,' thus, giving Jennifer due credit for being the initiator of and leader in the conversation. Under other circumstances these behaviors would be called plagiarism!

By refusing to involve them in genuine intellectual discourse, students of color are denied opportunities to stretch their intellectual horizons, to deepen their thinking and to practice articulating their thoughts to colleagues. These skills are requirements for professors to fulfill the teaching, writing and research responsibilities of their jobs. The natural place to begin learning them is during graduate studies. Therefore, when graduate students of color do not have the opportunity to engage in substantive intellectual discourses about course content, with their own thinking, research and scholarship in their disciplines, pedagogical principles and practices, and with their professors and peers they are placed at a disadvantage in their subsequent professional development. As Duncan (1976) explains, this 'isolation can interfere with the acquisition of skills, dispositions, and values that contribute to the ability to learn one's professional role' (p. 235).

How can this intellectual isolation be contained or transcended? Some students of color are tempted to use silence as a responsive strategy—that is, to stop talking in

class and to stop trying to get their peers and professors to understand their perspectives and points of view. Graduate students of color should keep talking, not so much to inform or persuade others about the legitimacy of their causes, but to use their classrooms as platforms to crystallize their own thinking. Continuing to 'speak their truths' also is a way to avoid complicity in perpetuating their own isolation, and the marginalization of their advocacies. Advice offered to prospective teachers of color by Cynthia Dillard (1994) also befits graduate students on the way to becoming professors. She reasons that:

> When individuals find their understanding or realities of an event missing from a discussion, they must add their definition to the discussion to provide a full telling. If one *feels*, one also *knows*; this knowing is inherently no less valuable and truthful than academic theory … what is important must be spoken and shared … because of our subjugation, the transformation of silence into language and action is one of the most dangerous acts in which we people of color engage. (p. 11)

Students of color should enroll in classes together as much as possible to avoid being 'the only one,' and thereby diffuse the glare of the spotlight. This should not be left to chance or happenstance. Their schedules can be deliberately planned and coordinated. This is not as difficult to do as it might at first appear. Many students of color have common or overlapping interests even though they are enrolled in different programs. Many of them are interested in issues of equity and social justice in education, and they take some of the same courses anyway. With a little thoughtfulness they can minimize intellectual and physical isolation by taking these common-interest courses at the same time.

Furthermore, all students of color, regardless of their areas of specialization, can make a deliberate effort to take some courses that deal specifically with ethnic diversity during their graduate studies. These experiences can compensate for the voids in their other courses, as well as provide cultural validation and renewal for them as individuals. They can be places of refuge where students of color may even be among the numerical majority, as well as their cultural issues comprising the master narratives of the course content. This shift from 'minority to majority' status, although temporary, can be a powerful means of reaffirmation and revitalization, thereby improving the students' ability to persist and persevere in the other parts of their graduate studies.

Benign neglect

Other marginalization that graduate students of color experience stems from benign neglect. They often encounter professors in classes and as advisors who do not provide the kind of critical and constructive instruction that they need to develop their intellectual, research, writing and teaching skills. These individuals are 'benevolent' in that they claim to be advocates of students, and are willing to support them in whatever they choose to do. The support, in reality, becomes a form of non-directive laissez faire behaviors that leave students to flounder about, trying to find their way on their own through the writing aspects of their programs of study. Three aspects of this benign neglect are especially troublesome.

The first is how some professors react to the writing assignments of students of color. Many (if not most) graduate students have not mastered the craft of writing. They have good ideas and are passionate about what they want to do. But, they have not yet leaned how to convey ideas most effectively in the nuances and conventions of academic writing. Students expect their professors to teach them scholarly writing techniques (and rightfully so) by giving them constructive, critical and instructive feedback. This means providing comments that are much more thorough and explanatory than 'Interesting,' 'Well done,' 'Excellent,' 'Awkward' or 'Your ideas are confusing and ambiguous; they need to be written with greater clarity.' Students do not know what comments of this nature mean, or the reasoning behind them. Therefore, they have no idea how to improve the quality of their writing.

Sometimes professors will suggest the students' writing flaws are so significant that they should work with an editor. On the surface this sounds like good advice, but it frequently does not produce the desired results. Conscientious students go to campus or college writing labs that are often staffed by individuals with training in English, but who are not necessarily skilled in academic writing and educational scholarship. The assistance they give to students of color produces writing samples that sound like literary essays, which are not appropriate for research reporting or critical analyses of prior scholarship. The revised documents are unacceptable to the students' professors and advisors, and they are told once again, 'It's still not right. Revise again, with the help of your editor.' At some point, the professor may conclude that 'Even though the writing still has some major flaws, the students have done the best that they are capable of doing,' and assign an acceptable evaluation.

The students are not aware of this concession, so they think their revisions finally reached a high level of quality. After all, many of their advisors and mentors are accomplished scholars in their areas of specialization and their professional communities. If the students' work is of a caliber to merit their approval, then it must be of high quality. This false sense of security sets the students up for failure when they leave their institutions with degrees in hand and discover that they really do not know how to write. They will carry these misconceptions into subsequent writing assignments, and continue to repeat the same errors. Even worse, they still do not understand what is wrong with their attempts at writing. Thus, a vicious cycle is created that becomes tighter and tighter for students of color because their professors fail to give them instructive feedback, to closely supervise rewrites, and to insist on non-negotiable, but facilitated, high-quality writing performance.

Duncan (1976) suggests that the reticence of professors to give critical feedback may result from their inability to have face-to-face confrontations or dialogues with students of color, due to a lack of knowledge about or experiences with ethnic and cultural diversity, or because of their 'benign predispositions' (p. 234). Whatever the underlying motivations, not receiving constructive and instructive feedback from professors penalizes students. According to Duncan, the lack of oral evaluation is particularly troublesome because:

> Verbal statements from professors explicitly giving their perceptions, reactions, [and] evaluations are less likely to be ambiguous and could serve students well for their self-evaluation. However, if the oral feedback is not a frank appraisal it can be dangerous. (1976, p. 234)

Torres-Guzman (1995, p. 63) adds that, 'Writing is a lot of hard work. Few have accomplished its mastery and most of us are forever in the process. I have learned about writing by … editing my own and other people's work, by having others edit my work, and by reading about writing. Most importantly, I have learned by doing.'

Most graduate students can learn to write in a scholarly style, think critically and conduct interpretive analyses—but they must be taught these skills. Their advisors and professors should not assume that if these students do not have these skills, it is someone else's responsibility to teach them, that they cannot learn them, and that they should be 'passed on' through the graduate studies rites of passage, or dismissed from the programs. Instead, reading and correcting students' papers should be seen as engaging in instructional dialogue with the authors. Good teachers do not make pronouncements in classroom instruction without explaining their meanings, sources, manifestations and connections to prior and subsequent knowledge. They assist students to probe, clarify, embellish, translate and refine their thinking. The same kind of instructional services should be extended to the teaching-writing process for graduate students of color.

Another closely related version of benign neglect occurs at the time students select issues and topics for dissertations and other formal writing assignments, such as conference papers and presentations. Their advisors tend to take either of two less-than-desirable positions. They either expect the students to replicate their own work, or they tell them to 'do whatever you want to do.' The last option is enticing since it seems like an open invitation for students to pursue their own interests, and especially so because these may differs from those of their professors, who are conventional educational scholars. The problem with this apparent 'academic freedom' is that the professors often are not in a position to give students the kind of guidance and assistance they need through the research and writing processes.

Many students of color are interested in researching issues related to ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic diversity in education. Some of their advisors readily admit that they do not have any expertise or knowledge of the scholarship in these areas. But, even without specific multicultural content knowledge, professors know things about the writing craft that are generalizable across topics that can be taught to students. But, they often do not share these knowledge and skills. Instead, students are often left to their own devices to struggle through the writing process virtually alone. Sometimes their attempts are met with criticisms such as 'it's not scholarly enough;' 'you don't have sufficient empirical evidence to support your claims,' 'you're engaging in personal, passionate, and subjective storytelling instead of providing data and objective analyses,' or 'you're dwelling too much on racial, cultural, and ethnic differences.' Some students of color are even advised to reconsider their research choices because their significance is suspect. Thus, their research interests are marginalized, demeaned or invalidated. The experiences of the students in Woods' (2001) study are illustrative of this tendency. Their professors (including some of color) were not

always receptive to and supportive of their interests, questioned their ability to maintain 'scholarly objectivity,' and cautioned them against over-emphasizing race, class, gender and ethnicity in their research, writing and teaching. Instead, they are encouraged to study 'real issues.' These attitudes produce constraining relationships and learning environments that hinder the intellectual and scholarly development of students of color.

In writing and conducting research students of color often are caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place. Some try to solve this dilemma by following the advice of their major professors, regardless of how much it contradicts their own interests and desires. Others turn to members of their committees outside of their home departments, and informal contacts wherever else they can find them, to fill the mentorship voids created by negligent major advisors. These 'secondary advisors' guide students through the various revisions of drafts that dissertations and other writing projects need to reach acceptable levels of quality, but it is the committee chair who receives the credit and recognition for 'supervising the dissertation' and 'producing the student.' This kind of academic neglect from primary advisors has dual negative consequences. The students are under-served, and so are the individuals (many of whom are professors of color) who fill the voids left by abdicated dissertation committee chairs. The students do not get the professional tutelage they expected and the 'informal advisors' do not receive 'official credit' for the work they did. Other students linger indefinitely in the ambiguous space of 'ABD' (all but dissertation) for years and finally leave their program of studies, either voluntarily or by policy mandates, without ever completing the doctorate degree.

Under the guise of benevolent caretakers some professors think that they are doing students of color a favor, and making a worthy contribution to the limited pool of professors of color. In fact, they are patronizing and abdicating their responsibilities by not insisting on and facilitating this critically important aspect of academic life—scholarly writing. As one professor commented, 'It's true that his writing is not very good, but, you know, the profession is in desperate need of more African American men.' The same kind of 'indulgence' may not be extended to female African American students. Many of their mainstream professors wonder, 'Why are they so angry, hostile and stubborn. Why are they always resisting instead of doing what they are told to do?' In actuality these women may be simply trying to understand what they are supposed to do, and they are not delivering the tasks expeditiously because they have not yet mastered the necessary skills. Asian and Latino Americans (especially females) receive yet another variation of these condescending attitudes toward their attempts at writing. Some of their professors admit to being 'easy on them' because 'they try so hard, but have problems with expressing themselves in English,' and they do not want 'to be discouraging, or hurt their feelings.'

A Native American doctoral student at my campus suffered from benign neglect of his committee members that bordered on academic dishonesty. In my assessment his dissertation needed major improvements for it to be acceptable as academic scholarship. The problems were with the writing, not the significance of the research topic or the quality of the methodological techniques. His other committee members (all

European American males) declared it to be 'exceptionally good.' One even said the writing was 'some of the best I have ever read for a graduate student.' I was dumb-founded by these reactions, and wondered, 'How can they make such claims? Do they really believe what they are saying? Or, is there some other message being delivered, possibly that this poor writing was "exceptional" and "the best seen" for Native Americans?' This student had the potential and the will to learn the necessary writing skills, but, sadly, he was denied the opportunity and assistance he needed to do so.

These kinds of condescensions and lack of skill development can have devastating effects on the long-term career development of graduate students of color. They do not become good researchers and scholars by being patronized, misled or left alone. Novices are not familiar with the conventions of scholarly writings; yet, this is something they must learn if they expect their work to be disseminated through mainstream journals and publishing houses. Moreover, the writing efforts of students of color are often imbued with cultural nuances that can be problematic according to traditional standards. They expect to research and write under the tutelage of major professors who will teach them how to convert their raw materials into professionally acceptable documents. When this training is not forthcoming, these students, in effect, suffer from *intellectual and scholarly abandonment.*

Benign neglect extends to the arenas of teaching as well as writing and research. It is not an uncommon occurrence for students of color to have fewer opportunities to be teaching assistants (TAs) during their graduate studies (Katz & Hartnett, 1976; Nettles, 1990; Parent, 1999; Turner & Myers, 2000), especially in programs that do not deal specifically with ethnic and cultural diversity. Their support is more likely to be as research assistantships (RAs) with non-teaching responsibilities, or as teaching assistants in departments outside the college of education. Illustrative cases of these habits occur at my own campus regularly. Students of color are frequently employed as RAs in the minority recruitment and special services programs in- and outside the College of Education, but less so as TAs. African American students are usually not hired to be teaching assistants in the teacher education program during their first year of doctoral studies, but European Americans are. When they do receive these appointments, they tend to be for the multicultural education courses regardless of their own areas of specialization. For example, an African American female with a master's degree in English and public school teaching experience repeatedly applied, and was rejected, to be a TA for the English methods courses. A European American student with less background experience and time in the graduate program was hired instead. Two international students (from Japan and Taiwan) spent four years as TAs in the Asian Languages and Literature Department (teaching Japanese and Chinese), but never received a teaching assistantship in their academic home—the College of Education.

Even when students of color do receive assistantships in colleges of education they are denied the benefits of collegiality and the careful and constructive scrutiny of their job performance by supervisors that other TAs receive. Their supervisors are evasive and reluctant to engage with them about aspects of their teaching that need to be improved, wait until situations have reached crisis levels, and then take a punitive

rather than a corrective posture. They also seem to expect these students to be skillful teachers all the time, and are surprised when they are not. This assumption implies a subtle racial bias: that in order to be hired as TAs students of color have to be exceptionally skilled, and even in an arena (college teaching) that they have not practiced previously.

An example of the benign neglect that results from lack of supervision occurred with an African American male TA in the teacher education program at my campus. He was a 'favorite son' to the director and was very popular with the other TAs until he had some personal problems that caused him to miss a meeting and a task that required teaming with other TAs. This was not something he did habitually. In fact, missing this meeting was out of character for him. Rather than his peers recognizing this exceptionality, and working together to accommodate his personal situation, they complained to the director about his 'irresponsibility.' The natural thing for the director was to speak directly with the TA to find out what was going on, to explore the consequences of his action, and to determine how the situation could be corrected to everyone's benefit. She did none of these. Instead, the director contacted the student's major professor (an African American female) to complain about the student not fulfilling his responsibilities, and to solicit her assistance in 'talking to the student about his obligations,' because he would 'feel bad if I [the director] talked to him about the situation.' She did not stop to consider the potentially compromising position this placed the major professor in, and how 'bearing bad news' might adversely affect her relationship with her advisee. Why was this a major problem anyway when it was a single occurrence?

This is a gross example of benign neglect, marginality (of both the students and his advisor) and 'passing the buck.' The director could effectively remove herself from having to criticize and chastise the student while placing that onus on the advisor—she abdicated *her* responsibility to do what a supervisor should do. It also marginalized the student by keeping him from receiving constructive and corrective feedback about a *specific, contextualized performance*. His major professor was not directly involved with his teaching tasks, and had neither the authority, nor the knowledge or responsibility to intervene. Unfortunately, this kind of abdication of responsibility by mainstream professors, and using professors of color as buffers in relating to students of color, is not uncommon. It shifts the burdens away from where they rightfully belong onto the shoulders of scapegoats, who often accept them because of their commitment to advocating for and mentoring graduate students of color.

How students deal with these kind of marginalizing experiences during their doctoral studies is good preparation for coping with similar ones once they become professors. There are several things that can be done to ensure that students begin to develop the coping skills they need to deal with benign neglect. First, they should develop active networks with other students and professors of color who are engaged in research, scholarship and teaching similar to those they are interested in pursuing. These individual (and organizations) probably will not be in local residence, so the students will have to build national connections. Learning experiences can be structured that require students to make personal contact with some of the authors of the

scholarship they are reading. Some professors are already using these techniques, and receiving positive results. These early contacts can lead to long-term relationships and the kind of mentoring that some students of color cannot receive in their local programs and colleges. Having national mentors who provide feedback and guidance on their work also can be a powerful leverage for students. In addition to validating and refining their work, they can improve the persuasive power of students with their professors, fill cognitive voids created by their local program limitations, and serve as entrees into a national community of kindred scholars engaged in similar pursuits.

Another strategy to counteract the marginalizing effects of benign neglect is for graduate programs of study to provide learning experiences that are specifically designed to help students of color develop skills for being professors in academe. These should go beyond learning the standard disciplinary knowledge, research methodologies and writing skills that are typically taught, and deal with the additional issues that professor of color encounter, such as those discussed above. *Deliberately and systematically structured learning experiences* might include course work and/or regularly scheduled discussion groups on topics such as 'Conducting Insider Perspective and Social Justice Educational Research,' 'Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Academy,' 'Academic and Scholarly Writing Across Different Cultural Contexts' and 'Functioning Effectively in the Academy as Scholars of Color.' Experienced professors of color can, and should, take the leadership in delivering these services. As García explains:

> Those within the system need to seize the baton and delineate and share what is necessary for the newcomers to succeed. Faculty who have mastered the academy can play a crucial role in ensuring their colleagues' success by providing the mentoring and guidance that, as research underscores, has been lacking for many before them. Who better to help demystify the route through the professoriate than those who have actually taken the journey? (2000a, p. xvii)

However, this does not mean that European American professors should not be involved as well. Changes also must be made in the curricula and pedagogy of doctorate studies, and in institutional commitments to make them more culturally responsive and inclusive of racial, cultural, ethnic, social and linguistic diversity.

Evidence from research studies and the lived experiences of professors of color from all of the major ethnic groups indicates that there is truth to the adage that they have to be better than their European American peers to survive and flourish in academia (see, for example, Benjamin, 1997; Padilla & Chávez, 1995; Turner & Myers, 2000; Mabokela & Green, 2001). This does not necessarily mean acquiring greater content and pedagogical knowledge, but mastering skills of perseverance and resistance, and navigating the nuances of marginality. Therefore, graduate studies for students of color should include some elements that are not required for their mainstream counterparts. In this sense, they, like pre-collegiate and undergraduate students, need a culturally different education. It is not enough to know good writing, research and teaching techniques in abstraction. These must be understood in the context of different cultural settings and frames of reference, as well as the cultural ethos and performance expectations of different institutions of higher education.

Students of color also need to be taught how to protect their advocacies and research emphases from undue criticism by skeptics. One way to do this is to contextualize particular issues or topics of analysis within broader disciplinary parameters. A case in point is my students who want to study ethnic identity development and disciplinary disproportionality of ethnically diverse students in K–12 schools. Since their 'disciplinary home' is Multicultural Education within a Department of Curriculum and Instruction I insist that they center their studies, 'conceptually and theoretically,' within these epistemological arenas, rather than examining these issues from psychological or administrative perspectives. This is good training for aspiring professors of color to develop lines of inquiry, analytical skills, theoretical interpretations and practical applications that are compatible with their 'fields of specialization.'

Problematic popularity

Graduate students of color also experience a form of marginalization that, on the surface, appears not to be marginalization at all, and seems to counter the isolation discussed above. Their status of being the 'only one,' or 'one of the very few' in their programs of study causes them to be in popular demand for many service functions. They are sought after to 'represent' diversity on committees, programs and promotionals, as well as being frequently called upon to make guest appearances in classes, both within and outside of their own departments. This 'popularity' has some troublesome features. First, it is indiscriminate in that these students are asked to participate in affairs without giving due consideration to whether they have the competencies the tasks require. The invitations come from people in status positions who have power and authority that can be used to the benefit or the detriment of the students. Therefore, they often are placed in a position where they feel they cannot refuse the invitations without suffering some negative political consequences. How can a graduate student refuse an invitation, with grace and acumen, from his or her major professor, department chair or dean to perform service functions? These students also are astute enough to know the importance of building their professional portfolios while in graduate school, and that these invitations to serve can be worthy contributions to it. Nor are they immune to the ego-stroking that these requests can provide.

If the students mention that the tasks they are asked to perform are not something they know much about, they are assured that this is not the case. After all, their 'life experiences and just who they are' will make worthy contributions to the charge of the committee or task force. Once these groups begin their work, the students soon realize that their place on them is not fundamentally different from what they experience in classes. Their contributions are not taken seriously. Herein lies one of the major problems with this kind of popularity—it is a form of 'window dressing' and 'tokenism,' or symbolic participation without having any substantive influence on the course of events. Frequently those extending the invitations are simply using the students for their own purposes, rather than providing genuine opportunities for them to enhance their professional development.

The second problem with this 'popularity' is that it is precarious. Graduate students of color are popular and in high demand with faculty, administrators, peers and staff as long as they do not differ with or significantly challenge the wishes, ideologies and authority of the powers that be. If, or when, this happens there is no forgiveness, and actions in one situation can cause students to fall out of favor and be ostracized universally. Having a confrontation with one member of the faculty or staff can lead to a student of color being disfavored by everyone in the department. While this may involve administrative matters, it can result in the student being denied future RA or TA appointments. Conversely, the students who remain in the good graces of the decision-makers are the ones who are repeatedly selected and recognized with the 'choice' assignments. Other students who are equally capable (if not more so) are not given the opportunity to participate in these learning experiences.

Recognition and visibility are important issues in the lives of professors of color. Graduate students should begin to deal with them during their doctoral studies. They can benefit from adding components to their graduate programs that focus on the 'power and politics of professional service,' and 'living in academe without losing your cultural and ethnic self, or selling your soul.' These may be structured courses, or systematized dialogues with local mentors and other professors of color nationwide. The challenge here is for graduate students of color to learn early the futility of trying to gain success in academe on a foundation of personal popularity, or trying to serve the wishes of everyone. This does not mean being antisocial or avoiding all professional community connections. Rather, the answer is learning how to make judicious decisions about who to serve, when and how.

There are some invitations to serve that cannot be refused, some that can, some that can be passed on to someone else and others that can be prevented from being made at all. One way these demands can be managed is for students (and professors) of color to carefully study the service opportunities available, decide which one fits best with their resources and interests, and then volunteer for it. Once involved in one or two of these self-selected choices, all other invitations should be refused. Another strategy is to share the 'spotlight' with other students of color. The 'favored one' can use his/her 'leverage' to recommend peers for recognitions and appointments.

Conclusion

Some students of color have very positive experiences during their graduate studies, but many do not. Their issues of concern are resolved at the point of admission, or even the completion of the degree. Many follow them into their careers as professors. They encounter discrimination, hostility, isolation, tokenism and marginality. Their intellectual capabilities are doubted, and their research interests are often suspected or neglected. When they try to claim the same prerogatives as granted to their mainstream peers (such as researching and writing about things of personal and cultural relevance to them) they are discouraged, silenced and sometimes even abandoned. As Jacquelyn Mitchell (1982, p. 37) explains, 'These turmoils follow … minority students beyond graduate school, into our places of employment, to research organizations,

businesses, postdoctoral training programs, to all academic environments.' Therefore, preparation for the professoriate for graduate students of color should deal *explicitly and assertively* with the various forms of marginalization. Failure to understand and learn how to manage these may account for why graduate students and professors of color leave academe more often than their intellectual capabilities and technical skills deserve.

More of us who understand the challenges living in academe as professors of color must be diligent in breaking the silence, and sharing our knowledge and skills with graduate students. We also must help them understand that the marginalizing presumptions and practices of mainstream colleagues and institutions do not preempt their personal power and creativity. Despite the constraints under which they must function, professors of color are making worthy contributions to research, scholarship, teaching and professional service. They can do even more if they know how to navigate marginality, and do not allow it to interfere with their intellectual focus, psycho-emotional well-being and scholarly productivity. We owe this kind of education and empowerment to the next generation of scholars. To do less is to inadequately prepare them for the roles and responsibilities they will be expected to fulfill, and to prevent them from perpetuating the problems they encountered. In order to live most successful in the academy professors of color must traverse marginality, maintain their ethnic and cultural integrity, and be transformative agents of change, along with being productive scholars, researchers and teachers. Therefore, their graduate studies preparation programs should be responsive to these mandates.

Notes on contributor

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