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Secondary Mathematics Teacher Beliefs: Heterogeneous or Homogenous Tracking and Ability Grouping

Abstract

This study focused on secondary school mathematics teachers' beliefs about tracking (ability grouping across classes) and ability grouping within classes and their perceived effects on student achievement, student affects and behaviors, and instruction. Case study methodology was employed, and semi-structured interviews conducted with a purposive sample of six teachers from two schools in a city within the southeastern United States. Three teachers worked in a school that predominantly tracks their students while the other three teachers worked in a school that mixes their students by ability across classes. Data from this study are consistent with social inequities reported in tracking research and the institutional racism posited by critical race theory. This study raised several questions on the relationship between tracking and racial segregation and on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and student collaboration in the classroom.

Keywords

Teachers' beliefs, critical race theory, tracking, ability grouping

Author Statement

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Secondary Mathematics Teacher Beliefs: Heterogeneous or Homogenous Tracking and Ability Grouping

The purpose of this study was to understand the beliefs secondary mathematics teachers that taught in different tracking environments had about ability grouping and its effects on student achievement, student affects and behaviors, and the teacher's instruction. For clarity, tracking is defined as the act of separating students by academic ability into groups for all subjects or certain classes and curriculum within a school (Gamoran, 1992). Whereas ability grouping is defined as forming small, informal groups of students within a single classroom, and the teacher decides how the grouping is done (Slavin, 1987). Qualitative research was conducted in the form of exploratory case studies that utilized semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews provided the structure needed to provide meaningful data on the specific overarching research question while simultaneously allowing an opening through which the interviewed teachers could expound on their beliefs. The overarching research question was "*What are secondary teachers' beliefs about tracking and ability grouping?*"

Literature Review

History of Tracking

During the middle of the 19th century, toward the end of the Industrial Revolution, schools transitioned from having students of all ages grouped together into the familiar form of students divided into grades by age (Loveless, 1998). In the beginning of the 20th century, industrialization led to an increased demand for more children to attend high school, and high schools reformed to become more comprehensive in nature. At the same time, an increase in immigration brought an even larger influx of students into the public schools. Throughout the 1920s, educators used tracking to align students with

curriculum that was perceived to closely relate to their future careers (Slavin, 1987).

Intelligence tests and academic achievement were used in many cases to place students in tracks. Tracking declined somewhat in popularity during the 1930s and 1940s but still persisted.

Following the landmark court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 (1954) and the desegregation of schools, tracking re-emerged as a method to group students by ability and has been viewed by some as a form of re-segregation (Chayt, 2010; Oakes, 2005). Many argue that the result of this aggressive tracking was to discriminate against minority students by providing them with lower quality education (Loveless, 1998; Oakes, 2005). Some, however, viewed the re-emergence as a response to international successes in science and mathematics, such as the launch of the Russian satellite *Sputnik* in 1960. Tracking was seen as a method to help ensure American students kept pace with students from other countries by providing richer instruction to high achieving students, those perceived to be our future scientists and mathematicians. Throughout the literature, this tension between providing high-achieving students with more challenging educational opportunities and the exclusion of minority students from these opportunities is noted.

Historical court cases highlight the debate of tracking in schools for many years. The 1954 ruling by the Supreme Court in the *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 (1954) case against school segregation overturned the "separate but equal" policy set in place by *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537, 539 (1896) years earlier, signifying the push for desegregation in schools. Oakes (2005) stated that tracking eliminated many of the benefits of the *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 (1954) decision and that toward the end of the 20th

century and beginning of the 21st century, lawmakers and national leaders responded to increased concerns about tracking and its associated negative effects on students by viewing tracking as “second-generation segregation” (p. x). In response to the courts’ new mandates to reform school tracking systems, schools around the country began to dismantle those systems.

Amid similar concerns that tracking was a discriminatory act, a court case in Arkansas challenged the state’s policy on tracking students after their schools had been desegregated in the 1960s. The plaintiff, a parent of a student in an Arkansas school, believed that their school’s tracking was, in fact, discriminatory. The claim was made that tracking violates the Fourteenth Amendment’s equal protection clause (Zirkel & Gluckman, 1995). The claim led to the *Simmons v. Hooks* case in 1994, in which the court examined the constitutionality of tracking. The court ruled that tracking was in fact a violation of the constitution and a form of racial re-segregation.

Despite these legal battles and a plethora of research in the 1980s and 1990s regarding tracking, today’s schools are as segregated as ever (Kozol, 2006). Kozol points out that due to concentrated populations of minorities in inner-cities, schools in these locations often have enrollments that have minority populations of 95% or higher. In addition, Oakes (2005) points out that even in schools with diverse student populations, tracking results in high proportions of minority students in lower level classes. However, the term tracking is rarely used anymore. Instead, schools use the term ability grouping to describe placing students into classes that best meet their needs. This shift hides the inequities of the institution and in effect places the responsibility and blame on to minority students for not being capable of higher-level classes (Price, 2006).

Tracking Environments

It is believed by some that tracking is used by administration to manage students while ability grouping is used by teachers to promote learning (Ansalone & Biafora, 2004). Kulik (1992) noted that the practice of tracking is used more frequently in subjects such as math and reading. The theory behind tracking is to increase student achievement by decreasing the differences in student ability (Kulik, 1992). Tracking, some argue, allows teachers to better focus on individual student needs by grouping students with similar learning needs (Kulik, 1992). Furthermore, Kulik (1992) notes, tracking avoids having vast ability differences that require the teacher to differentiate instruction. The students’ similar ability level permits the teacher to challenge most of the students. Some argue that tracking also minimizes the chance of students becoming disengaged because of boredom or confusion and that both groups benefit from the instructional pace most appropriate for their ability. Academic competition among students may also be reduced (Kulik, 1992).

Others believe that tracking promotes students’ elitist identity as a result of unequal distribution of school resources and that students with high ability in non-tracked classes could lead other students to feel inadequate (Fiedler, Lange, & Winebrenner, 1993; Slavin, 1987; Oakes, 1992; Mallery & Mallery, 1999; Lynn & Wheelock, 1997). Indeed, Slavin (1987) believes that tracking is anti-democratic and that the schools’ focus on separating students according to ability perpetuates higher achieving students’ elitist identity (Slavin, 1987). Tracking can lead schools to provide unequal distribution of school resources, often favoring higher achieving students, because of pressure from numerous variables, including parents and communities (Oakes, 1992). Oakes (2005) believes that achievement gaps between racial and ethnic groups and between students of different socio-economic status suggest a misplaced educational focus when students

are tracked. A lack of awareness of the natural tendencies in tracking can result in high ability students receiving accelerated curriculum with a focus on higher-order thinking, while lower ability students practice remedial skills (Mallery & Mallery, 1999).

Non-tracking Environments

In non-tracked (sometimes referred to here as “mixed-ability”) environments, students may be grouped by differences in age, gender, and academic ability. While grouped heterogeneously within classes, students may mentor other students and allow students of all ability levels to receive the highest level of instruction (Reglin, 1992). Teachers can adjust the pace of instruction to meet their students’ needs; struggling students who require more attention from the teacher can practice, while students who grasp the concept can perform independent research or practice with solving higher-order problems. Grouping techniques such as cooperative learning in a heterogeneously grouped class can encourage social awareness, positive self-esteem, higher-order levels of thinking, communication skills, improved motivation, tolerance for others, and higher achievement (Slavin, 1986). Heterogeneous grouping provides highly committed, lower ability students with the opportunity to participate in more challenging classes (Braddock, 1990). Rosenshine (1983) believes, however, that some students’ learning is negatively impacted by grouping heterogeneously. He argued that the practice may cause high ability students to change their focus from learning to mentoring other students.

Several pedagogical approaches have been developed to group heterogeneously in non-tracked environments to help ensure student success. One method is known as *differentiated instruction*. Pugach (2009) defines differentiated instruction as a “term that refers to a way of teaching in which a teacher’s entire approach to curriculum and instruction takes into account [student] differences instead of expecting all students to be working

at the same level” (p. 312). According to Anderson and Algozzine (2007), when using differentiated instruction, a teacher must accept the fact that not all students are the same. The teacher knows that students differ in several ways including how they learn, their learning preferences, and their personal interests. Differentiated instruction allows the teacher to provide an opportunity for all students to learn the content as well as strengthen their abilities to make sense of the concepts addressed (Tomlinson, 2001). Additionally, differentiation provides each student with a positive, equitable learning environment (Anderson & Algozzine, 2007).

Anderson and Algozzine (2007) believes that all students are engaged in the learning process in a differentiated classroom. Furthermore, Tomlinson (2004) suggests that all students should be actively involved in their learning by participating in classroom activities. In order to promote student involvement, Pugach (2009) posits that, “differentiated instruction requires that teachers be flexible in their views of what it means to organize instruction and move well beyond adopting a one-dimensional approach to teaching” (p. 313). As a teacher progresses from one-dimensional teaching toward differentiated instruction, they should remember that:

If we had at our grasp the most elegant curriculum in the world, and it missed the mark for students with learning disabilities, highly advanced learners, students with limited English proficiency, young people who lack economic support, kids who struggle to read, and a whole host of others, the curriculum would fall short of its promise. (Tomlinson & McTigue, 2006, p. 3)

Teachers in mixed-ability classrooms recognize that students have different needs and learn at a different pace. Mixed ability classrooms present the teacher with frequent changes. The research on mixed ability grouping supports the use of supportive

groups (Linchevski & Kutscher, 1998; Kerckhoff, 1986). Supportive grouping is grouping student with varying abilities together. The group diversity is often believed to be beneficial to student development.

Methodology

In accordance with the ontological assumption that multiple realities exist and are as numerous as the individuals that create them, value is being placed on understanding individual teacher beliefs. One could argue that an individual's beliefs come from the reality they create. This reality is undoubtedly influenced by the external conditions available to the individual's senses. To infer teachers' beliefs on tracking and ability grouping the research utilized a qualitative methodology of semi-structured interviews. Because beliefs can be influenced by the environment one occupies, six teachers were interviewed, three from a school that usually tracks their students and three from a school that does not. This allowed for the researcher to explore the relationship between a school's tracking policy and its possible influence on teachers' beliefs.

Furthermore, carrying out these interviews agrees with the epistemological assumption of qualitative research as explained by Creswell (2013), "conducting a qualitative research study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied [...] subjective evidence is assembled based on individual views. This is how knowledge is known-through the subjective experiences of people" (p. 20). The objects of study were the six cases of teachers. The transcribed interviews were used to create teacher profiles in the form of a matrix to summarize their beliefs about tracking and ability grouping. The choices made in developing the structure and content of the profile matrix reflected the research questions.

To summarize, the research questions lend themselves to a qualitative research methodology because they deal with teacher

beliefs. These beliefs are subjective in nature and eliciting them from the participating teachers was no easy task. The researcher chose semi-structured interviews as the research tool, and interviews proved beneficial in providing a qualitative data upon which to infer teachers' beliefs on tracking and ability grouping.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers believe tracking and ability grouping impacts school climate and culture?
2. How do teachers' beliefs about tracking and ability grouping impact their instruction?
3. How do teachers believe tracking and ability grouping affects students?

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher conducted face-to-face semi-structured teacher interviews. The interviews were audio recorded. The interviews included questions that examined teachers' beliefs on tracking and ability grouping and their relationship to school climate and culture, instruction, and student outcomes.

Once data collection was completed, the teacher interviews were transcribed and coded using an a-priori coding matrix. The matrix had column headings including Student Achievement, Instruction, Affect/Behavior, and School Climate/Culture that corresponded with the research questions. Additionally, the second row of the matrix had a positive and negative section under each column heading. The matrix also had rows that were labeled tracked (school level) homogeneous, not tracked (school level) heterogeneous, grouped by ability (class level), not grouped by ability (class level), grouping (student group level), and grouped by other characteristic. Each transcript was coded by two coders.

Site and Case Descriptions

There were two different sites in this study, DSA and JHS. Both sites were secondary schools in the southeastern region of the United States that have differing policies and practices related to tracking. Three teachers from each site were interviewed.

DSA

DSA is a public magnet school for the arts that serves students in 6th through 12th grades. While the middle school students (6th – 8th grades) are tracked into separate honors and regular classes, high school students are mixed heterogeneously with honors and standard level students in the same classes until they reach the fourth year of high school mathematics. In addition, middle school students who are advanced one or two years are also placed in the mixed-ability high

school classes. All high school mathematics classes are offered yearlong for 50 minutes every day. The lowest high school course offered is Common Core Mathematics 1. The highest-level courses offered are Advanced Placement Calculus AB and Advanced Placement Statistics.

During the year of this study, DSA's student population was 39.3% black or African American, 33.9% white or Caucasian, 18.1% Hispanic, 4.1% Asian, 4.1% Multi-Racial, and less than 1% American Indian/Alaskan/Hawaiian Pacific Islander (Durham Public Schools [DPS], 2013). These percentages are fairly consistent with the city demographics (United States Census [USC], 2013) as shown in Table 1. Every high school mathematics teacher was white. The three teachers interviewed from DHS were Kayla, Greg, and Kelly.

Table 1: School Enrollment and County Demographics by Percent

| Race/Ethnicity | Durham County (2011) | DSA (2012-2013) | JHS (2012-2013) |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Black/African American | 38.5 | 39.3 | 37.0 |
| White/Caucasian | 42.5 | 33.9 | 34.4 |
| Hispanic | 13.5 | 18.1 | 18.2 |
| Asian | 4.7 | 4.1 | 6.0 |
| Multi-Racial | 2.2 | 4.1 | 3.4 |
| American Indian/Native Alaskan/Pacific-Islander | 1.0 | <1 | 1.0 |

Kayla

In summary, Kayla seemed to be concerned with doing what is best for all students. She provided evidence of her distaste for tracking, while simultaneously speaking to some of the benefits of tracking. Kayla spent more time planning for her

Common Core One class and spoke to it benefiting her students of diverse ability. Kayla additionally spoke to the effect that tracking had on a school's culture. She brought up race as a talking point in the history of segregation and tracking. She even described tracking as a form of segregation.

This interview revealed Kayla's beliefs on ability grouping at the across class and within class level. These beliefs were conflicting at times, but overall, Kayla provided evidence that she believed heterogeneously mixed classes and student groups within classes are better educational practices in the long run for students.

Greg

Overall, Greg preferred and recognized benefits in grouping students within and across classes heterogeneously. At times, Greg did speak positively and negatively in regard to heterogeneous grouping. However, Greg believed that heterogeneous grouping more positively impacted student achievement, instruction, teacher self-efficacy, student behavior, and school culture. Homogeneously grouped students require a teacher to have a better understanding of content while heterogeneously grouped students require a teacher to focus on pedagogy and discipline. Furthermore, Greg enjoyed teaching in both environments but made more positive statements about mixed ability grouping. Ultimately, students and instruction in homogeneous and heterogeneous groups have different needs according to Greg.

Kelly

Within most of her classes, Kelly described grouping mixed-ability students together as having a positive effect on student achievement, instruction, student affect/behavior, as well as the overall school culture and climate. She indicated that she valued having students work in groups but felt limited by the traditional algebra textbook being used at the school. "I definitely group, um, because I like investigative learning, and I like kids teaching themselves, and me acting more as a coach." Despite her mostly positive statements regarding students working in groups, in her lowest level class, Kelly did not believe the students could work in groups.

However, Kelly clearly saw this inability to work in groups as a function of having the students in a homogenous class. Kelly clearly believed that the benefits of mixing students of various abilities together in the same class outweighed the potential costs. When asked why she thought some schools still placed students in separate honors and regular classes, she replied,

I just think that under the pretense of doing more for the higher-level kids, we really are just dumping the bottom, whereas when we keep 'em all together, everybody gets solid instruction.

Having every student get quality instruction was more important to Kelly than making sure that higher level students were provided with enrichment.

JHS

JHS is a traditional public high school that serves students in 9th through 12th grades. Students are tracked into honors or standard level classes. Theoretically, it is possible for students to switch from honors to regular or from regular to honors from year to year, but in practice that rarely happens. Most classes are offered year long, every other day for 90 minutes. However, the lowest performing students in mathematics based on 8th grade End-of-Grade test scores are enrolled in a course called Common Core Mathematics 1/Foundations of Mathematics that meets year long, every day for 90 minutes. If students are identified as English Language Learners (ELL), they might be placed in a class called Introduction to High School Mathematics, which does not actually earn students a mathematics credit.

During the year of this study, JHS's student population was 37.0% black or African American, 34.4% white or Caucasian, 18.2% Hispanic, 6.0% Asian, 3.4% Multi-Racial, and 1% American Indian/Alaskan/Hawaiian

Pacific Islander (DPS, 2013). These percentages are very similar to those at DSA and also fairly consistent with the city demographics (USC, 2013) as shown in Table 1. Three out of thirteen high school mathematics teachers at JHS were black or African-American and ten were white. The three teachers interviewed from JHS were Diane, Carol, and Beverly.

Diane

In summary, Diane seemed to favor tracking. Tracking is the policy of the school in which she teaches. Towards the end of the interview Diane justified her belief, “I think the honors outweigh a little bit because we got some students here that are so gifted that I would hate for them to be bored in class or have to be self-taught.” Diane is showing deference to meeting the needs of the high achieving students concerning making student placement decisions. Although Diane obviously favors the tracking system over grouping students in heterogeneously mixed classes, she still exhibits some mixed feelings when talking about the potential benefits of mixing honors and regular students together.

Carol

Within her classrooms, Carol made concerted efforts to group students heterogeneously, reflecting her views on tracking students at the school level. Carol indicated this practice had a positive influence on student achievement, affect and behavior as well as her own instruction. Students grouped at the same ability level, she argued, often do not achieve at the same level they would otherwise. Indeed, Carol believed that higher-level students would not necessarily share their ideas with each other and would, on the contrary, complete their work independently, confident in their abilities. Lower-level students would “struggle” and not “know how to help each other”, thereby affecting their confidence and achievement. In mixed-ability groups, students can help each

other, learn from each other, and grow through their experiences working with others who have different experiences with the material. Carol reflected that by grouping by mixed-abilities in her classroom, she had been “differentiating” her instruction for many years and found the practice to benefit both her and her students. Carol has a clear pattern of describing non-tracked environments in positive terms and tracking in negative terms with respect to student achievement, affect and behavior. However, when discussing her own instruction, Carol made statements indicating that tracking had a positive impact, as it challenged her to create lessons and instructional strategies to best serve the level of students she has in her classrooms.

Beverly

With regard to grouping within her classes, Beverly often tried to group students of mixed-ability together. Beverly found this had a positive impact on her instruction because she could teach a concept to the strongest students in each group and have those students help teach the other members of their groups. Additionally, Beverly occasionally grouped the lowest students by ability together to provide them with more assistance while the stronger students worked in groups requiring less monitoring. Beverly focused primarily on her own classroom and students’ achievement throughout the interview even when asked about other teachers or parents. Beverly believed that lower achieving students could meet her high expectations and that she could raise their achievement level. The only factor that seemed to mitigate this belief was having too many students in one class. Beverly consistently responded to questions by stressing the importance of having high expectations for all students whether they were mixed or separated into different classes.

Results

In both schools from this study, lower level and tracked classes have a higher percentage of minority students while honors and advanced classes have a higher percentage of white students. At JHS classes designated lower level ranged from 73 to 100% minority students while at DSA similarly designated classes ranged from 65 to 81% minority students. Honors and advanced classes at JHS ranged from 43 to 74% white enrollment while at DSA similarly designated classes ranged from 54 to 82%. It is important to note that despite DSA's policies of mixing students heterogeneously in some classes at the high school level, tracking still occurs in the middle school and in fourth year mathematics classes. As a word of caution, the research did not compare the same number and type of class at both schools, meaning enrollment percentages should not be compared directly between the two schools. However, the percentages can show that enrollment differences do exist between minority and white students in lower and upper level courses at both schools.

Results from interviews indicate that all three DSA teachers discussed issues of race related to tracking without prompting from the interviewers. Kayla made a direct connection between the history of tracking and segregation. Kelly pointed out that that classes at DSA were much more segregated before the school began mixing honors and regular students together. Greg indicated several times that he thought students benefited from diversity in the classroom. All three teachers indicated the difficulties of trying to meet the needs of the diverse ability levels in non-tracked classes, but all agreed that the social benefits of mixing the students together outweighed the difficulties. In contrast, none of the JHS teachers mentioned race or equity issues until prompted by interviewers. Even when specifically asked about differences between honors and regular classes, all three teachers focused on differences in instruction. When specifically

asked about differences in racial demographics between classes, Carol responded by saying "I don't see race."

School Climate and Culture

DSA teachers all seemed to value diversity and expressed pride in their school's policies for promoting acceptance and learning. All three teachers spoke about the school's positive climate and accepting culture. Both Greg and Kelly spoke of heterogeneous grouping as one example among many ways that the school promotes diversity and acceptance. Kayla spoke to the positive impact on school culture from students with different backgrounds working together in class. They seemed to have a collective view of diversity as a school-wide value.

JHS teachers seldom spoke beyond the level of their own instruction and classrooms. Carol spoke about the school community and suggested that parents would not like it if the school started mixing students of different ability levels in classes. She indicated that students would probably have a more positive reaction and about half would understand if the reasons were explained. When asked specifically about school climate and culture, all three teachers tended to bring the conversation back to their own classrooms. None of the teachers spoke of values or beliefs at a school level.

Students' Affect, Behavior, and Achievement

All teachers at DSA and one teacher at JHS thought that mixing students of different ability levels in the same classroom was helpful for improving lower-level students' behavior and attitudes. Beverly thought that mixing most students together was helpful but thought the very lowest performing students should be separated into their own class. Diane believed that mixing students together would be detrimental to both high and low performing students.

Discussion and Implications

Diversity and Equity

As indicated in (Ogbu & Simons, 1998), both schools in this study had higher percentages of minority students enrolled in lower-level classes and higher percentages of white students in upper level classes despite the schools' differences in student assignment practices. Even from this small sample, we can conclude that different student assignment practices are not sufficient in eliminating the problem of school inequity. As Delgado and Stefancic (2011, p. 3) point out, the "ordinariness" of racism makes it difficult to address. Racism is institutionalized in our economy and our legal system, not just our educational system. Additionally, the differences in acknowledgement of racial differences between the two schools, reflects a difference in understanding institutionalized racism. Teachers at JHS seemed to take a color-blind approach, which can only ameliorate the most blatant acts of racism, while leaving the more invisible institutional racism hidden (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011).

School Climate and Culture

There were clear differences in teachers' expressed beliefs regarding school climate. DSA teachers spoke positively of their school's culture of respecting and promoting diversity as well as the subsequent impact on school climate. JHS teachers did not identify with a school culture and restricted most comments to their own classrooms. Even though there were strong differences in school climate and culture expressed, inequity in course enrollment still existed. This suggests again that even a significant change in school culture and climate cannot completely counter institutionalized racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011).

Students' Affect, Behavior, and Achievement

Most of the teachers in this study agreed that mixing students together in

heterogeneous classes would improve lower level students' affect, behavior, and achievement. There was also agreement that this could be detrimental to higher performing students' achievement. However, teachers at DSA, who acknowledged the importance of leveling social inequities, were more likely to accept the possibility that higher performing students might be somewhat negatively impacted if it meant providing more opportunities for lower performing students. Acknowledging institutional and social inequities seems to be necessary for teachers to fully embrace the idea of detracking.

Implications for Practice

The findings suggest that professional development should be provided to teachers in at least three areas. Some teachers are open to the idea of teaching mixed-ability level classes but worry about not being effective. These teachers should be provided with opportunities to learn about differentiated instruction techniques. In addition, evidence of different expectations for honors and regular students emerged from the teachers we interviewed. Literature suggests that having high expectations for minority students is critical to their success (Holbrook, 2006). Professional development related to setting and maintaining high expectations is therefore recommended. Finally, teachers at DSA valued diversity and recognized the impact of tracking on minority students, suggesting that educating teachers about the history of tracking and its effects on minority students might impact teacher beliefs.

Conclusion

Several of the teachers acknowledged having different expectations for honors and regular students. Ogbu and Simons (2008) and Price (2006), among others, find that teachers have lower expectations for minority students. Future studies should ask specific questions related to teachers' expectations for different classes as well as groups of students within the same classes. Additionally, this study only interviewed one African-American teacher

and she expressed much higher expectations for students in lower-level classes compared to the white teachers. This difference should be explored with a larger sample of teachers. A striking difference between DSA and JHS was whether the teachers identified strongly with their school's culture or not. At DSA, every teacher commented positively and with a sense of pride regarding the school's climate. In addition, they also mentioned valuing diversity. It is worth exploring the connections between the school and teachers. It is plausible to consider that the school culture would influence teachers' beliefs and that the teachers' beliefs would impact the culture. Additionally, schools might seek out teachers with certain beliefs or teachers might seek out schools with certain policies.

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