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Michael Strozier Jr.
Florida Atlantic University, mstrozier2019@fau.edu

Melanie M. Acosta
Florida Atlantic University, acostam@fau.edu

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Case

Relational Supervision: Jegnaship And Eldering As Emancipatory Pedagogy For Black Teacher Supervision

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Michael Strozier, Jr.[1] and Melanie M. Acosta[1]

Abstract
The case delves into the historical and cultural roots of African education, emphasizing the vital role of elders and community in the learning process. It examines the impact of African educational philosophies, particularly from the Nile and Niger river valleys, on the development of character, humanness, and spirituality. The case explores the adaptation of these philosophies by African people during the Middle Passage and their application in Western contexts for the supervision of African American teachers. By interweaving culture, history, education, and storytelling, the authors aim to highlight the unique contributions of African American educational experiences. They argue that these experiences provide valuable strategies for the liberation struggle and the transformation of Black teacher development. The case also explores contemporary issues in the teaching profession, such as the limited presence of African American educators, pedagogical negligence, and professional marginalization, proposing culturally-centered tools for community preservation and well-being. The central theme is the importance of relational supervision rooted in African and African American cultural knowledge, which is seen as key to nurturing Black novice teachers and fostering their professional development.

Keywords

African American education; teacher supervision; emancipatory pedagogy; cultural pedagogy; African educational traditions, professional development; mentoring; educational leadership

[1] Florida Atlantic University

Corresponding Author:
Michael Strozier Jr. – College of Education - Florida Atlantic University
777 Glades Road, Boca Raton, FL 33430
Email: mstrozier2019@fau.edu

Introduction

Systems and structures of education and schooling created by and for African people and her diaspora have existed since the migration of homosapien- sapiens over 100,000 years ago. Copious interdisciplinary research confirms that within the "cultural cradle" of Africa emerges an educational standpoint reflecting the importance of continuous intellectual development, particularly in the Nile valley (i.e., Ethiopia, Egypt, Nubia, Sudan) and Niger river valley (i.e., West Africa). Indeed, as Hilliard (1995) explains, "Africans have faced and solved the problem of the design of education and socialization, as a part of Africa's broad cultural evolution" (p. 1), and his rich descriptions of education and schooling in ancient Africa is worth quoting at length:

> *Selecting the year 2,000 before the Common Era (B.C.E.), in the nation of Kemet (Egypt), we can use the ancient texts, monuments and architecture to reveal highly sophisticated higher education and highly developed arts, sciences, theology and philosophy existing in Africa earlier than anywhere else on earth. In fact, world education systems, including the Western world, must understand the Nile valley cultures to understand themselves (Obenga, 192). The Niger river valley in West Africa, similar in many ways, culturally, to the Nile river valley, produced great higher education institutions at Timbuktu, Jenne, Gao. The Niger river valley produced, side by side, a great, Islamic-based higher-education system, and a great indigenous African higher education system, represented in the philosophy and theology of the Dogon of Mali and others. In simple, summative terms we may say that continent-wide, Africans regarded the education process as a transformative process, one in which a person becomes more godlike, more human, by virtue of the cultivation rendered through the education and socialization process. It was a process rooted in a worldview where there was a belief in human perfectibility, the belief that humans could indeed become more like god. Basic skills were merely the lowest level of education. The development of character, humanness, and spirituality were higher levels of attainment. Africans did not come to the Western hemisphere empty-handed or devoid of culture (pg. 7).*

During the Middle Passage and once on Western soil, African people maintained not only their educational philosophy, but their pedagogical approaches which emphasized tutorial, apprenticeship and social learning methods and these approaches were used in the preparation of teachers. Central to each instructional approach were elders, men and women who nurtured the healthy development of the young. Some' (1999) writes, "The full blossoming out of youth requires taking risks. It demands that one be safe enough to respond to the urge for growth. That safety comes from the hands of older generations...thus the elders embody stability, dependability, and wisdom. In this capacity, they become a frame of reference, a resource, a research center" (p.123). Important too was the *Jegna/Jegnoch(plural)*, individuals from which wisdom could be shared with younger generations to advance community well-being through the preservation and protection of culture and cultural knowledge. Briefly, jegna/jegnoch derives from the Ethiopian word *jegna,* which is a person who has among other things, produced high quality work, and has dedicated self to the protection, defense, nurturance, and development of our young by advancing people, place, and culture.

Hilliard (1995) posits, "African views must be a part of any discussion of the design of education today, especially the education/socialization of Africans. (p. 3). We agree with Hilliard's (1995) wisdom and take up the call to tell the African American educational experience from the beginning, not the end. We understand that such a holistic account serves as a necessary intervention strategy in reforming Black teacher experiences and Black student outcomes.

In this case, we bring together culture, history, education, and storytelling to provide examples of African American teacher supervision. Our purpose is to center the agency of Black educators in the preservice supervision of African American teachers. We believe the African American educational experience is rich and offers for teacher educators and supervisors a story out of which strategies for the 21st century liberation struggle can be generated and readily employed. We also believe that African American educational experiences, when studied carefully, offers a heuristic for transforming Black[2] teacher development. While our work is responsive to current issue in the teaching profession such as the limited presence of African American educators (Fultz, 2004 ;Irvine 1988;; King, 1993; Fenwick; 2022) , the pedagogical negligence of African American preservice teachers (Acosta & Nightengale-Lee, 2022; Gist, 2018; Haddix, 2012; Cook, 2013; Meacham, 2000) , and the professional marginalization of exemplary Black educators (Acosta, 2019; Farinde-Wu, Lewis, & Allen-Handy, (2017) ;Griffin & Tackie, 2019) we understand our responsibility as African American scholars committed to educational freedom as more than responding to violence of White supremacy culture in education and schooling. We understand that our larger work is to create culture-centered tools for community preservation, transformation, and well-being.

After situating our casework within an African-centered cultural view, we further locate our teaching cases historically with respect to the modern history of African American teacher supervisors through a brief retelling of the story of the Jeanes supervisors. The Jeanes Supervisors were African American women teachers who revolutionized education in the rural South in 20th century largely through their educational supervision approach. Given this sociocultural and sociohistorical grounding, the emancipatory meanings of educational supervision come into view as we story and explore the myriad ways African American teachers interact with others in supervisor-teacher relationships. While our two cases differ in time and space, they are similar in style and approach. Specifically, we both drew on memory work (Ohito, 2021), a qualitative data collection method to develop our cases and both wrote narratives out of our own experiences. Moreover, both of our cases exemplify non-evaluative, informal supervision, a valuable yet understudied and under theorized phenomenon in education research. After presenting each case, we present bulleted activities that guide the reader toward remembering and storying their own experiences related to African American teacher supervision. Our case ends with questions for discussion. It is our hope to use our storied cases as a vehicle for cultural redefinition and reenactment of teacher supervision.

Teaching Notes

Afrocentricity offers a cultural platform from which to make sense of the educational supervision of Black teachers. Asante (2008) defines Afrocentricity as a "paradigmatic intellectual

[2] The term African American and Black will be utilized interchangeably to identify the universal significance of Black people and the relevance of African Americans within the United States that are part of the African Diaspora.

perspective that privileges African agency within the context of African history and culture trans-continentally and transgenerationally" (p .2). It is in this conceptual paradigm that we locate and center eldering and Jegnoch in the supervision of African American teachers to notice and name the dynamics of Black teacher supervision that exemplify best practice. African centered thinking places the highest value on the relatedness between all things, the goal being the balance of these things so that the result is a sense of unity. From this view, we understand that the epicenter of eldering and jegnoch is relational. That is, the careful cultivation and continual renewal of right relationships between old and young, so that a strong sense of connectedness emerges between veteran teacher and new or aspiring teacher and is intentionally renewed through supervising interactions.

Jegnaship

Jegna as a concept refers to a relationship of commitment, love, and humanity. This relationship, or jegnaship emphasizes the connection between the Jegna and Jegnee as they together preserve a cultural connection to the African Diaspora with high expectations to advance people, places, and culture (King, 2006). There are no true guidelines nor formulas for the enactment of a jegnaship, just a connectedness based on shared desire to protect Black culture and its youth from the many harms of hegemonic ethnocentrism. Within the jegnaship there emerges a sense of agency that positions each in terms of purpose and place for the success and achievement of shared goals (King and Swartz, 2016).

Jegnaship has been aligned with six pillars that characterize the teacher as jegna which includes, (1) proven ability to survive struggles and battles; (2) demonstrated fearlessness; (3) demonstrated courage in the protection of their people, land, and culture; (4) perseverance and attentiveness to our people; (5) produced exceptionally high-quality work; and (6) dedicated to the protection, defense, nurturance, and development of the youth by advancing the people, place, and culture (Nobles, 2011). The educators that serve as jegnas are valuable in the pursuit of Black excellence in the K-12 setting, for they advance the capabilities of Black children in a setting that serves to often oppress them and limit their inherent development.

Woodyard and Gadson (2018) grant us a clear description of the value of jegnaship as it relates to Black scholars in both Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) and Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) pursuing careers in psychology. According to the authors, Jegnochs that are members of the Association of Black Psychology (ABPsi) ensure the personal development and socialization of emerging Black psychologists. Woodyard and Gadson (2018) state that young Black scholars participating in the jegnaship thrived beyond the professional space because a jegna, "offers empowerment that is unique from a mentor. This type of empowerment is unique because it is rooted in knowing our experiences as Black students" (p. 47). Nobles (2002) explains that jegnoch are warriors who know the battles that their students are encountering because they have been and continue to be in those battles and it is this relational knowing that brokers a symbolic kinship bond between the jegna and jegnee. That is, each begins to assume the role of family member, thus strengthening and extending the family unit. It is during the moments of hardship that the jegna and the jegnee develop this bond and form a kinship that has yet to be intentionally integrated into the training of teacher supervisors.

Eldering

Eldering refers to the guidance that teachers provide to students through their more advanced knowledge and expertise, which are informed by wisdom. The central concern among elders is to be in right relationship with the one(s) under their care. Teachers who serve as elders know that learning is a communal experience predicated on the elder's belief that everyone is a knower and has something to contribute to the growth of the community (King & Swartz, 2016). Thus, the elder provides a safe container to both offer guidance and provide an attentive listening ear. As Some' (1997) describes, "To be an elder is to be able to come down to the level of the person you listen to, not with a mind to tell the person what to do and what not to do, but to share similar experiences you have had during your own life. The ability to listen and the willingness to support others in difficult situations is at the heart of and the soul of elderhood. In the absence of elders, the container of cultural wholeness breaks, and social chaos arises" (p. 124).

King and Swartz (2016) extrapolate on the African-centered concept of eldering as it manifests in K-12 settings involving teachers and students. In the relationship between teacher and student that comes out of eldering in the classroom, students begin to find their sense of place, or belonging in the learning community. Moreover, they locate themselves in the classroom community as an active part of the community's intellectual fabric with their dignity and spirit intact. This happens because eldering is not about having power over students, but in sharing power with students (King & Swartz, 2016). When teacher-elders are not only knowledgeable about the topic, but also about the cultural knowledge of their students, they are empowered and confident to ask critical questions, build on cultural values and traditions in their teaching, and cocreate the curriculum with students.

Indeed, jegnaship and eldering are critical in teacher supervision for aspiring and novice Black educators given they are both purposed to serve as a form of spiritual and psychological protection and preservation.

The Jeanes Supervisors: A Historical Exemplar Of Black Teacher Supervision

The Jeanes Supervisors worked amid racial violence and conflicting interests regarding Black education in the early 1900s, so much so that in 1913 Booker T. Washington commented, "There is more fascination and interest in this work of Negro education that there is in hunting for gold mines" (Fairclough, 2007, p.78). It was in this context that a Black woman named Ms. Virginia Randolph was teaching in a one room schoolhouse in Henrico County, Virginia (Caliver, 1933; Jones, 1937; McClure, 2009). Ms. Randolph understood her role and responsibility as that of nurturing the spirit of Black education within rural Southern communities, as well improving the material conditions of Black folks (King & Swartz, 2016; Kriesman, 2015; Treuhaft-Ali-Ali, 2017). Around the same time, Anne Jeanes, a wealthy white woman from the North was dying, and on her deathbed donated one million dollars specifically for the education of African Americans in the rural South. Thus, was born the Rural Negro Education Fund. Out of the fund, the General Education Board (GEB), a group of white businessmen from the North who sought to control the scope and direction of Black education for their own economic interests (Rooks, 2020; Watkins, 2001) created positions for white men who were hired to support and lead in the growth and development of Negro schools, called Superintendents of Negro Education.

Virginia's superintendent, Jackson Davis observed Ms. Randolph in action, and that moment in 1909 birthed the idea of the Jeanes Supervisors. Black women educators hired to support the education of rural Black folks across the South, and these Black women would as serve as defacto superintendents of Black schools. They were strategic, theory-driven, morally engaged innovative creators, indeed reflective of many good Black educators past and present. To be sure, the GEB meant for the Jeanes Supervisors to further their industrial education agenda as a tool of Black economic and political subordination. The Jeanes Supervisors, however, used their supervising positions as a platform to advance the liberation of Black folks everywhere through revolutionizing progressive-era pedagogy, community organizing, and meaningfully engaging families in education.

The spirit of the Jeanes Supervisors work is highlighted in their re-definition of progressive education toward a more holistic, integrated, hands-on approach that emphasized the value of both vocational and academic education. They were the epitome of translating educational theory into practice in innovative, meaningful ways. A careful examination of the Jeanes Supervisors work inside the classroom shows how they sought to go beyond the industrial curriculum promoted by the GEB and expand the subjects offered to rural children. They emphasized the kind of learning that was experiential, connected to children's local environment and nature, and the need for standardized assessments of student learning and progress. Importantly, they did this work in their own teaching and as supervisors they taught other teachers to do this as well through small study groups, book reviews on progressive education, forum discussions with training college professors and leaders. Thus, the meaning of supervision to the Jeanes supervisors was an expansive one that sought to enable rural children to both earn a living in the Jim Crow south and develop their academic skills. The Jeanes supervisors did not view progressive pedagogical methods merely to make education more vocationally oriented, but also to strengthen children's abilities in reading, math, and art. Significantly, supervisors supported other Black teachers in their care in framing their pedagogy similarly by first serving as a living model, then by bringing Black teachers together via conferences, research projects, and multidistrict organizations and clubs. In doing so, Jeanes supervisors defined and enacted the supervision of teachers relationally thereby amplifying their effectiveness.

Case 1

This case highlights the supervision experience of a Black male educator who, under the direction of a jegna and elder, discovered the caring nature of Black women in the establishment of his own agency. The case includes two core distinct memories related to the acquisition of knowledge and skill in developing pedagogical approaches. To best interpret the significance of his educational development, consider that the education of this individual was often most impactful outside of the traditional institutional setting. Examine the case with a lens that focuses on the cultural worldview approach for framing the conception of acquiring knowledge.

The class was still as the 3rd-grade teacher Ms. Nelson delivered instructions for the assignment, *"Ok for this assignment you will take this topic and do some research that tells me about…. your parents will have to take you to a public library to help you get some information on the topic."* These were the instructions delivered that left the third grader bewildered, but he knew this

assignment must be completed to maintain the high marks that are expected of him and what he has delivered to his parents in the past. This created within him a multitude of complex understandings that lead him to the ultimate question, *"What is research?"*

When school was over the young Michael began his task of completing this assignment through a succession of inquiry questions with his sister. He explained to her *"My teacher has me working on a project that she said I have to 'do some research' but I don't know what that is".* She went on to explain what research is and how she had to complete an assignment like that once before. The joy he felt when his sister explained she completed an assignment like that before created a sense of relief. He attempted to get the exact assignment she completed prior but to his surprise, she said no and told him he had to complete it himself. It was then that he realized that this was going to be a task he was going to have to take on his own.

Michael knew that asking his mother to take him to the library was not an easy accomplishment, so he then had to examine and inquire about where he would be able to gather the information for this research. It was then that he recognized his grandparents acquired a set of encyclopedias that remained on their bookshelves for years. They shared that the books were purchased for their children and grandchildren to have as a point of reference whenever the need arises. A couple of days later he was able to gain access to his grandparents' set of encyclopedias but then upon reaching the tool of knowledge, he was lost in how to utilize it. There appeared to be no rhyme or reason at first in how the books were organized. Upon further investigation and examination, he broke down the material into a manageable understanding to gain the necessary knowledge needed to complete the given project. The final product of the research project presented by Michael, a full page on the topic of study, was his orientation into the world of research and the gathering of information.

Fast forward approximately 20 years later Michael is now an employee of a school district, working for an Assistant Superintendent pursuing her Doctor of Education. She asked Michael to assist her in her endeavors by having him begin the process of gathering research for her to complete papers, but the busy demand of her schedule required someone to gather research on her topic of choice. Upon her first time asking him, he stumbled and two of the five papers he provided were not what she needed. She provided him with access to a vast bank of knowledge through her institution's online library research database. She explained the need to access full-text journal articles from a more current period. This was his orientation to professional research gathering that was beyond his scope and expectations as an undergraduate student. This forced him to develop keen eyesight and an understanding of what it takes to develop literature and research on a given topic.

Later, as she approached the end of her program of study, Michael was asked to develop his skillset in the analysis of data gathered from subjects utilizing a tool created and disseminated by his jegna/employer. She allowed him to analyze and learn the application of a statistical program that served the purpose of identifying all the needed results of her data collected. It is in this capacity Michael learned the efforts and capabilities that research may produce. It was by assisting and developing tools needed in research that Michael expanded his skill set. It was because of his experiences that he now has a vast knowledge base of research and its application.

It is from this experience that Michael learned to question and analyze research with a critical lens.

As witnessed in this case, eldering and jegnaship were approaches used to help Michael develop cultural values essential for his long-term work as a teacher -researcher, which underscores the influence of relational supervision. In the beginning of the case eldering was highlighted as Michael's sister guided him in developing a sense of determination by not allowing him easy access to her knowledge for, she knew his growth was to be carried in the completion of the task by his own will. In the later part of the case the work of his jegna developed within Michael a spirit of resilience as she pushed him to perform a task that had implications for his future abilities as a researcher and educator. Indeed, these acts are seen as untraditional forms of teaching supervision when viewed with a Western eye, however when interpreted through an African centered reality they represent morally-engaged ways to socialize young people into their life's work, including the work of teaching (King, 2017). The impact of these core experiences allowed for Michael's advancement as an educator because each attended to the development of his professional character as well as his teaching skills. Through relational supervising, which emphasizes the cultivation of personality in building pedagogical skills, new and upcoming Black teachers are socialized into the teaching profession in ways that are holistic, which prepares them to pursue teaching with both head and heart intact.

Case 2

Case two invites critical thought and action around the purpose of educational supervision for Black teachers. Said another way the case begs the question, "*To what does educational supervision mean for the Negro?* as inspired by Fredrick Douglass' timeless essay on the fourth of July celebration. What Black folks have known for centuries is that the preparation of children's teachers (and the teachers' teachers) is an invaluable part of whole community survival, transformation, and flourishing (Hilliard, 1995; Karenga, 1994). In this case, the teaching staff included 5 Black teachers, of which one teacher (Mrs. Copeland) was invited by the current principal to serve as supervisor of teacher interns and as department chair, though each teacher demonstrated responsibility in supporting the novice teacher's (Mrs. Acosta) professional development. The case unfolds on the grounds of an elementary school serving African American children, families and communities and is set in the early 2000s. Though Black teacher-elders engage in relational supervision out of compassion and freedom-mindedness, the educational supervision community must think carefully about how to perceive and honor Black teacher-elders relational supervision in ways that are not alienating.

"Mrs. Acosta" they beckoned with a slight wave and a nod. *"That's yo' name, right?"* Mrs. Acosta took firm, yet nervous steps toward the two Black women known as the teaching matriarchs of Metcalfe Elementary. Mrs. Acosta always felt their large, aging eyes watching, always smiling, and nodding in the hallways. She knew she was the *"newbie"*, but she didn't know how to take the attention she was receiving.

"What'chu got in that box--cupcakes?" Mrs. Copeland asked as she leaned in closely without fear. *"Girl, you doin' a good job with them kids, for a new teacher",* she said. *"Oh, I'm not new"*, Mrs. Acosta replied humbly. *"I started teaching a year ago back in Jacksonville. I just*

moved here with my husband and kids." "Girl, you got kids too!" "We thought you was a new teacher or something—girl, you one of us!" they seemed to say in unison. Mrs. Dyce chimed in while taking a cupcake. *"Well, "The way you just got on up and put on that Black history program for your students was so good. I was there in the library that day and I told my husband when I got home that we got a good new teacher. That teacher they had before, he didn't know what he was doin', but you got them kids together."* Though she didn't realize how much it would mean to her, Mrs. Acosta appreciated the confirmation they gave her. It made her feel like she was in fact doing the right thing with her students.

"Let's go down to my classroom for a minute", Mrs. Copeland directed. Mrs. Acosta followed trying not to walk faster than her two seasoned friends. Though Mrs. Acosta made casual conversation, she did more observing than actual talking. From time to time, Mrs. Copeland and Mrs. Dyce would spit words of wisdom casually, but definitely intended to provide Mrs. Acosta with the kind of teacher preparation she needed to continue teaching her Black students well. One the journey to Mrs. Copeland's classroom, which seemed to stretch on for miles, Mrs. Acosta noticed first that students loved Mrs. Copeland and she adored them just as much, but she wasn't nobody's fool. From the tiniest kindergartener to the biggest, baddest fifth grader, the kids flocked to Mrs. Copeland and showered her with hugs and smiles. Mrs. Acosta thought to herself, *"I want that kind of bond with kids".* More importantly, Mrs. Acosta noticed that Mrs. Copeland lavished praise on them-- telling them how smart they were or how cute their hair or outfit was. In the same breath, she was admonishing them if she saw them misbehaving or if they didn't turn in their homework. *"I know you know better than that",* seemed to be her favorite phrase. Or *"I know yo momma didn't raise you that way."* Mrs. Copeland proclaimed, without missing a beat, *"You gotta make these kids feel like they can do it, by any means necessary!"* Mrs. Dyce added, *"Umhmm, that's right. "You gotta treat them like they yo own kids at home."* Mrs. Acosta next noticed that Mrs. Copeland believed that every adult on the campus was important. As the three passed by the front office in no kind of hurry, Mrs. Copeland popped her head into the front office and exchanged greetings with the office secretary, data entry clerk, and custodian, all of whom were Black women. They received her warmly. *"They mo important than the principal",* she remarked matter-of-factly as they continued towards the intimacy of her classroom. *"They know more about these kids than many of the teachers do,"* added Mrs. Dyce. Lastly, Mrs. Acosta noticed that Mrs. Copeland was a giver. She always had something to give the kids that approached her—and Mrs. Acosta didn't see any pockets on Mrs. Copeland's clothes. It was like she was a magician, pulling pencils, coins, or candy out of the air to give to students. For one little girl who approached the three, Mrs. Copeland pulled out a pair of socks and told the girl to put them on her feet. It was a chilly January day and the little girl with short pigtails had on flip-flops. As the three walked on --Mrs. Acosta, thin and elegantly dress, Mrs. Dyce, fair-skinned, with grayish-brown hair, and Mrs. Copeland, short, with a large round frame and a jovial aura--- you would have thought they had been best friends for years. They seemed to share an immediate bond that for Mrs. Acosta was electric and transformative.

The case above helps us begin to outline the contours of what we are calling relational supervision and highlight its potential in the care and keeping of Black novice teachers. Relational supervision is part of the network by which Black novice teachers learn their important place in the Black liberation struggle. Historically, Black teachers, driven by the sense of moral authority embedded in eldering and jegnaship, created a system of support amongst

themselves through which they demonstrated their commitment to Black people. Such commitments were expressed through attaining graduate degrees, advocating for equitable schooling policies, innovating pedagogy, and recruiting and socializing new Black teachers to the work of Black education (Anderson, 1988; Fairclough, 2006; Houchen, 2015; Siddle Walker, 2012). In relational supervision, elders and jegnas take the initiative to nurture relationships with Black novice teachers, guide them experientially, and serve as a "living pattern" from which new teacher can see who and what they are to be in the lives of Black children (Fu-Kiau & La-Wamba, 2000). In case 2, Mrs. Acosta began to identify what she wanted out of teaching and who she wanted to be as a teacher after experiencing Mrs. Dyce and Mrs. Copeland in action.

Classroom Application Activities

1. ***Teacher supervisor self-study.*** A teacher supervisor/ educator must nurture beginning Black teachers' consciousness and agency, and this can be achieved through relational supervising. A beginning step in relational supervising is the teacher supervisor's careful study of self. For example, as part of clinical supervision requirements, teacher preparation programs should anchor professional development activities in teacher supervisor self-study. Teacher supervisors should guide their Black student teachers through self-study on a continual basis as part of teacher reflection, observation debriefing, and the creation of teaching statements. Moreover, teacher educators should guide teacher supervisors through self-study work; therefore, university faculty must engage in similar self-study before and during their time with teacher supervisors. Sealy-Ruiz (2020) developed an effective approach to teacher self-study that is helpful for educators at all levels called the *archaeology of self*. The *archaeology of self*, or any similar method of teacher self-study can open the possibility of teacher supervisor work informed by relational supervision.

2. ***Cultivate African/African American cultural knowledge***. If teacher supervisors and teacher educators are to be successful in their work with Black novice teachers, then they must formulate a holistic body of African/African American cultural knowledge. *How can one supervise a people without knowing a people?* Hilliard (1995) posits, "Contemporary views about teaching and learning in the United States for African American populations tend to be acultural and ahistorical as well as apolitical...There is a defining African and an African American culture which is shared by most people of African descent. It is powerful enough that it must be considered if African people are to be understood and served in education" (p. 3-4). Programmatically, clinical supervision policy and practice for Black novice teachers must be culturally centered and aligned with African/African American culture. To date, most university and school district teacher supervision programs are informed by European cultural views. Teacher supervisors and teacher educators should take reflective inventory of the extent of their African/African American cultural knowledge. This can be done by creating a KWL graphic organizer to evaluate current knowledge about African history and culture. Then professional development plans can be made that that include taking university classes in Africana Studies, as well as culture-centered field studies that encourage the identification and interaction with African American community elders.

Discussion Questions

1. How does jegnaship and eldering differ from existing models of teacher supervision in the American education system?
2. How can there exist within teacher supervision *jegnaship* that allows all stakeholders to create everlasting change in education for Black children? What could it look like in reality?
3. Can the call for Afrocentricity in teacher supervision evoke a return to the work of Black educators as a way to create safe spaces for novice and preservice Black teachers in this current climate animated by policies that dimmish the presence of Black people?

Conclusion

The rich legacy of African diasporic modes of education theorizing and praxis, though marginalized, has often been an initial catalyst of reform directed toward Black children, and this includes professional development activities for teachers. Through the two cases presented above we have attempted to revive what we have called *relational supervision*, a mode of support for Black new teachers developed out of the education supervision practices of African/African-descent peoples. The strength of relational supervision is in its placement as a central strategy in the human liberation struggle, its culture-centeredness, or rather its alignment with African/African American way of negotiating relationships and roles, and its ability to nurture Black teacher identify formation toward agency. Teacher educators must perceive and interpret the relational supervising of Black teacher-elders as a powerful tool to improve the practice of teacher supervision thereby improving the entire teaching profession.

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Author Biographies

Michael Strozier, Jr. is a doctoral student at Florida Atlantic University and a Mathematics Instructional Coach in Miami Dade Public Schools with a strong background in management and leadership that has contributed to the success of students within M-DCPS.

Melanie M. Acosta works for the educational well-being of Black children, families and communities through careful study of teacher practice. Currently, Dr. Acosta is an Associate Professor of Education and her research, teaching and service centers African/African American educational philosophies, principles, and processes in teaching and teacher education.