"I'm Staying and You're Gonna Love Me": Finding Authentic Freedom & Fostering Belonging as Black Female Early Faculty

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Abstract

The purpose of this reflection is to expand the knowledge on the retention of early Black female faculty by exploring their challenges and triumphs in dismantling Whiteness and developing an authentic sense of belonging in the academy. In higher education, Black women experience marginalization at the intersection of anti-black racism and sexism. Faculty of color experience racial microaggressions, excessive workloads and service expectations, and their expertise is seldom recognized. Despite these challenges, marginalized faculty authentically persist and find a sense of belonging within the ivory tower through mentorship relationships, departmental DEI efforts, opportunities for innovation, and cultivating Black sisterhood. This article details the experiences of two Black female speech-language pathology instructors: a third-year tenure track-academic faculty member, and a first-year clinical instructor, at a rural, Midwestern predominantly White institution. The instructor's perspectives can be used to create culturally responsive programming for recruiting and retaining Black women in higher education.

Key Words: *Higher education, retention, Black women, belonging, authenticity.*

And I am telling you, I'm not going... I'm staying, I'm staying. And you, and you, you're gonna love me.

The opening lyrics of Jennifer Holiday's hit song mirror the often-turbulent journey of retention within the "ivory tower" of higher education for early faculty members who identify as Black women. Women of color represent a small proportion of US faculty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022) and are underrepresented in academia. Only 2.75% of tenured faculty across the USA are Black women (Zerai, 2023). This is compounded by the challenges that act as barriers from access into this ivory tower. These challenges include invisible labor, lack of collaboration, and affected authenticity. In a case study of the experience of black female professors, they expressed being treated as matriarchs of their programs, expected to sacrifice themselves for the greater good (Fields, 2020). Additionally, much of the work done (mentoring, writing recommendation letters etc.) was not viable for capture on promotion and tenure packages (Fields, 2020). More than this, these professors were sought out by most students of color across their campus thus increasing their workload. The professors expressed feeling like they needed to be cautious of their tone, wardrobe and presentation in the workplace which impacted their ability to show up as their authentic selves.

Even with this, black women faculty are influential to students and the climate on campus. They offer perspectives that other faculty members can adopt (Priddie et al 2022). They are an asset, but one that is poorly studied, unsupported and overlooked. Noted by (Cafarella & Olson, 1993) over 20 years ago, information obtained from studies done on the experiences of white, female, middle class graduate women become what is generalized and used instead. This is the case more recently as well (Johnson-baily, 2004). Clearly, a glaring disparity exists within higher education for black women and even as students, their experiences are rendered nearly invisible. So how can these faculty be retained, adequately supported, or celebrated? Who tells their story and who hears their struggles with retention, authenticity, and belonging? The authors of this article, two black women faculty members, seek to help fill in the blanks and provide insight to some of these gaps by sharing their experiences.

Whiteness in Higher Education

The institution of higher education has socially and politically excluded historically marginalized populations based on race, ethnicity, ability, sex, gender, and sexuality. With consideration of intersectionality, interlocking systems of oppression, Black women have a nuanced experience with White Supremacy culture, at the convergence of gender and anti-Black racism. In her article theorizing Critical Race Theory for higher education, Patton (2016) notes "The establishment of U.S. higher education is deeply rooted in racism/White supremacy, the vestiges of which remain palatable" (p. 317). Anti-black racism upholds the institutional culture, through pedagogical practices, evaluation measures, hiring policies, and epistemological preferences. For instance, faculty performance is often assessed using student evaluations. Research on student evaluations of courses and teaching in higher education indicates significant bias towards academics of color and women, especially women from a non –English speaking background, as compared to White English-speaking male colleagues (Heffeman, 2022). There is no crevice in higher education where anti-Black racism and sexism is not present.

In the discipline of Speech, Hearing and Language Services (SLHS), the fourth Whitest profession in the country, retention rates of minoritized faculty are impacted by failed expectations, social isolation, tokenism, failure to achieve tenure and promotion (Horton et al., 2021). According to the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association, only 8.9% of ASHA members and affiliates self-report as a member of a non-White racial group and 6.4% indicate that they are Hispanic or Latino (ASHA, 2022). As a result, White faculty members possess significant power deciding the curriculum and research areas, ranking what scholarly efforts are most noteworthy. Historically marginalized faculty in SLHS experience burnout, mental stress, and exhaustion from battling racism, ableism, and heteronormativity, leading to career dissatisfaction (Horton et al., 2023). Painful experiences in the field as well as the significant absence of diverse community chips away at the sense of belonging for SLHS faculty of color. What has received little attention is the extent to which the culture that defines the field, Whiteness, allows professionals of color to thrive (Yu et al., 2022). Faculty of color need a revival of authenticity and belonging to flourish in higher education.

Authenticity and Belonging in Higher Education

This paper will explore the role of authenticity and belonging within Black female instructors' experiences in higher education at a predominantly White institution. While representing an alternative view of higher education, establishing meaningful relationships is of critical importance (Gravett & Winstone, 2022). The concept of authenticity is complex and prior research on authenticity in higher education emphasizes student experiences. Authenticity and academics' identity formation was examined by Kreber and colleagues (2010), and authenticity interacts with teaching in that "our conceptions of learners should be compatible with caring for students … and engaging students in dialogue around issues that matter" (p. 90). Teaching for faculty of color must be authentic, as well as the building of meaningful relationships. Faculty of color can enact authenticity by listening to and supporting students with empathy and showing genuine interest in their lives (Gravett & Winstone, 2022). In a comprehensive literature review, Kreber et al. (2007) identified 13 formal features of authenticity in teaching. Some include being true to oneself, supporting student flourishing, and the process of becoming by critically reflecting on core beliefs and the purposes of teaching (Kreber, 2007). As authenticity emphasizes embracing one's uniqueness and choosing to be exactly oneself, Black female faculty may cultivate a sense of belonging when authenticity is honored in both teaching and interactions with students and faculty.

In the resounding words of thought-leader Brene' Brown (2021), "true belonging doesn't require you to change who you are, it requires you to be who you are" (p. 157). Much of the educational literature emphasizes utilizing high-impact teaching practices to promote student sense of belonging. Research demonstrates that faculty diversity can have a significant impact on students' persistence, sense of belonging, as well as retention rates (Bitar et al., 2022). Not much is known about facilitating belonging for faculty, particularly Black female faculty members. While most inclusion efforts target recruiting and hiring faculty of color, focusing on demographic change, without intentional efforts around fostering belonging, is an inadequate approach to supporting their career success (Kossek et al., 2022). Retention is contingent upon an affirming climate where Black female faculty can authentically exist and experience a sense of belonging.

Social Position

We declare our social positions here with the understanding that reflexivity around our identities serves as a resource in research, rejecting the notion of researcher neutrality. We understand that we hold a combination of privileged and marginalized identities. We intend to use these intersecting identities as a resource for critical self-reflection and critique of systemic power structures.

Instructor 1: I am a Black, cis-het woman, a descendent of enslaved Africans, third-year tenure-track Assistant Professor in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Instructor 2: I am an African, cis-het woman, Clinical Instructor and Speech-language Pathologist (SLP) in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Professional Background and Clinical Experience

Instructor 1: K-12 Experience

The instructor attended the illustrious Spelman College, the consecutively ranked Number 1 Historically Black College in the country, and double majored in Psychology and Comparative Women's Studies. This liberal arts multidisciplinary background led to a genuine curiosity about human behaviors, including language and communication, as well as interlocking systems of oppression and social justice. Following her undergraduate studies, the instructor spent a gap year teaching English in China and returned to work towards her master's degree in speech-language pathology. In her earliest memories of engaging in the discipline, the instructor grappled with the intricate connection between one's culture and one's language.

While the discipline of speech-language pathology is rooted in racism, ableism, and capitalism, the instructor made space in the profession, seeing a need for Black speech-language pathologists to challenge biased policies and practices, with hopes of undoing years of harm toward the Black community. In 2013, The Atlantic ranked the field of speech-language pathology as the fourth whitest job in America, and very little about this demographic profile has changed in the last 25 years (Thompson, 2013). The low representation of racially minoritized individuals in speech-language pathology is very problematic with far-reaching implications to the perpetuation of White culture, White ways of knowing, and the

threat of increased disparities in healthcare/educational outcomes for marginalized clients (Ellis & Kendall, 2011). To sustain in a profession of glaring Whiteness, and find a sense of belonging, the instructor cultivated joy by serving Black and Brown children in urban, Title I schools. The instructor knew that survival in the field was contingent on authentic experiences, working with clientele that reflected her cultural/linguistic community.

Working in the schools, the instructor experienced the greatest challenges in locating and utilizing equitable assessment measures and representative treatment tools for Black children. Many of the most valued standardized assessments used to diagnosis children with speech/language impairments were not normed on diverse populations, thereby making them inherently biased. Also, many of the treatment materials used in the school setting did not reflect the rich, lived experiences and cultures of racially/ethnically diverse children in the 21st century. Despite these insurmountable challenges, the instructor found that strong relationships with students and families were foundational for the treatment success of Black children.

While working full-time in the schools as an SLP, the instructor enrolled in an online doctoral program to explore how school-based SLPs were building therapeutic relationships with culturally/linguistically diverse students. Within school-based practice, doctoral courses, and research, the instructor stumbled upon the concept of cultural humility. Cultural humility is characterized as a lifelong, iterative process focusing on self-reflection and evaluation, building mutually beneficial partnerships, and institutional accountability (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Cultural humility facilitates therapeutic relationships. Building rapport and relationships with students and families was not only a prerequisite for treatment outcomes, but also served as a mechanism for the instructor to harness authenticity.

The instructor's burgeoning research interest in cultural humility and practical experiences in culturally responsive practice led to the fulfillment of a lifelong dream--- a tenure-track Assistant professor position. In 2020, the explicit and widespread reckoning of racial justice sparked urgent implications for the underrepresentation of racially and ethnically diverse individuals and perspectives in the SLP profession. Following the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) documented a need for members to dismantle discriminatory practices by addressing unconscious bias and increasing cultural competency and proficiency (Deal-Williams, 2020). After six years of educational SLP practice, the instructor

accepted an Assistant professor position in Communication Sciences and Disorders at a rural, midwestern, predominantly White university, leading the efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Instructor 2: Medical Experience

This instructor was an international student first, arriving in rural Minnesota to begin her higher education career. The shift from growing up in a majority people of color (P.O.C) environment to being a part of minoritized population in the United States was an adjustment. To put it into perspective, the population in the town is only 6.9% Black or African American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Why rural Minnesota? An international student scholarship that allowed for in-state tuition rates in exchange for volunteering and enriching the local college town was the deciding factor**.** The instructor's college career culminated in a discovery of speech hearing sciences following an introductory level communication disorders course. This discovery and interest in joining the field was further supported by an article published in the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Leader - a bimonthly newsmagazine for and about audiologists, and speech-language pathologists - stating that at that time, there were no SLPs in public service in her home country of Zimbabwe (Hutchins, 2016).

Graduating with honors, the instructor accepted a job at a Trauma I hospital where the work began. Her workplace was a "safety net hospital"; these are hospitals which are often found in underserved communities and serve large populations of racial and ethnic minorities (Hefner et al., 2021). Due to this, the instructor's patient population spanned across different races, ethnicities, nationalities, and the workload was equally exciting and challenging. As this was at the height of the pandemic, the instructor's caseload in the inpatient rehabilitation sector spiked in acuity as an influx of patients filled the hospital and overflowed onto her unit. During this time, the instructor was trained and obtained her Certificate of Clinical Competency, and she continued to work at the hospital. The only black woman SLP on her team, she was supported by her interprofessional team of colleagues.

In her spare time, the instructor attended seminars, such as the Stanford Advanced Dysphagia course, to continue broadening and sharpen clinical skills. Her clinical skillset grew to include leading video fluoroscopic swallow studies and fiberoptic endoscopic evaluations of swallowing (FEES) along with therapeutic work with patients who had etiologies such as stroke, head and neck

cancer, traumatic brain injuries, and neurodegenerative diseases. It was not uncommon for her to begin the day in the inpatient rehabilitation unit, progress to treating in an acute care unit, and end observing more experienced colleagues' patients in the Intensive Care Units.

Higher Education Experience

Instructor 1: Tenure-Track Faculty

In the realm of higher education, a Black woman's experience is often a tapestry woven with resilience, perseverance, and an unyielding commitment to excellence. The instructor's familiarity with navigating Whiteness in the speech-language pathology profession provided context and preparation for entering academia. The instructor's mentor in graduate school, a White female, served as the department chair. Historically, as mentoring relationships are often shaped by power dynamics, there are often disparities in access to mentoring for faculty of color, leading to psychological distress and negative attitudes about the workplace (Davis et al., 2022). On the contrary, the instructor's transracial mentor relationship, which emphasized racial equity allyship, compassion, and guidance, was essential for her successful transition into higher education. Current research highlights how mentoring can offset marginalizing experiences for faculty of color, providing social and institutional connections, access to resources and feelings of belonging (Davis et al., 2022). In the safety of this strong mentorship relationship, spanning over nearly 10 years, the instructor's potential for success was unleashed.

Departmental efforts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion started prior to the instructor's arrival, clearing the path for her thriving. Instead of the instructor being responsible for "cleaning up" a mess from decades of compiled inequity and exclusion, the instructor had the opportunity to innovatively implement strategic goals in a way that was most authentic to her intersecting identities. Underrepresented minoritized faculty are required to extend a tremendous amount of effort combating racism on campus, including racial microaggressions, but also take more responsibility for fighting racial injustice as compared to majority White colleagues (Rodríguez et al., 2015). In one instance, the instructor was physically cornered in an elevator by a White male administrator who did not believe she worked at the university, forbidding permission to exit the elevator on a floor reserved for "university faculty." As a

Black woman, while experiences of racism on a university campus cannot be escaped, the instructor was motivated to rise above those hurtful experiences with resilience and hope, for the greater goal of the department---striving towards racial equity.

The undergraduate and graduate curricula were revised to include required courses on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics, all of which the instructor was asked to teach. These curricular changes attached value to the instructor's contributions and expertise. Previous research findings on retention of faculty of color have been contradictory, noting that minoritized faculty members' expertise is seldom recognized, and faculty of color are rarely identified as valuable collaborators (Rodríguez et al., 2015). The instructor was tasked to create three new courses and revise one existing course, using her unique areas of study, including cultural humility, cultural responsiveness, therapeutic relationships, and social justice. This space for innovation highly motivated the instructor. The execution of the new curriculum required not only the instructor's expertise, but also her lived experience as a Black speech-language pathologist. The instructor's teaching load was incredibly meaningful, and perfectly aligned with her core values: hope, faith, and justice. The instructor was able to bring her highest self to the classroom, multiplying her sense of belonging.

Finally, the instructor's new higher education role included mentoring racially/ethnically diverse graduate students, the Diversity & Inclusion Fellows. The programming stemmed from the efforts of two faculty members, the instructor's mentor/department chair, and a distinguished faculty member of color. They devised a model for recruiting and retaining students of color in speech-language pathology, using more holistic admissions practices. The first cohort of Fellows included seven racially/ethnically diverse graduate students. Most widely known as the "minority tax", faculty of color often have exponentially more service expectations as compared to White colleagues, outside of their contracted responsibilities, fostering feelings of tokenization and isolation (Guillaume & Apodaca, 2022). To avoid tokenization, the instructor chose to mentor the students through a strategic taskforce, created for co-engagement in equity work. Through social activities and social justice endeavors, the instructor formed authentic relationships with the graduate students of color, catapulting her sense of belonging as well as the students,' and provided sustainability for service requirements. Overall, the instructor's transition to higher education was successful due to the shared responsibility for DEI engagement in the department,

alignment of the teaching course load to her expertise, and intentional, culturally sustaining mentorship—with opportunities to mentor and be mentored.

Instructor 2: Clinical Instructor

The opportunity to work in higher education had not been on the instructor's radar, however, due to various unexpected factors, this became the case. Still new to the speech-language pathology (SLP) profession, the instructor found herself selected and hired to work on faculty at a SLP graduate program at a college in rural Minnesota, the same college she had arrived at as a young international student all those years ago. Her role was to be a clinical instructor for SLP graduate students as they completed clinical experiences on campus and in the local community. Along with this, there was the expectation to help innovate the clinical program, providing new ways for students to obtain clinical clock hours and experiences.

The instructor was overwhelmed with feelings tied to impostor syndrome. Literature suggests that there is harmful association between these feelings leading to burn out, poor job performance and job satisfaction (Bravata et al., 2020). Over-preparation was the solution the instructor chose to combat these feelings; meticulously planning her methods of clinical instruction, enrolling in continued education courses, and seeking out advice from colleagues. The instructor spent time characterizing her experience from graduate school to find the gaps, as well as the successes in the instruction and mentorship she had received. With this understanding, the instructor began to build a way of clinical supervision and instruction she felt would be most beneficial for her students. As a welcome gift, she received the book *Inclusive Teaching* by Hogan & Sathy from her only black colleague, a blazing Black female tenure-track professor. Reading portions of the book provided her with insight on the importance of increased structure to better support her graduate students, especially those most marginalized. The instructor developed a professionalism seminar for students, aided in revitalizing aspects of the program's clinical orientation, and began to develop new programs that would supply clinical opportunities for the students.

The most difficult aspect of the shift from medical setting to academia became the instructor's lack of knowledge about how the institution of higher education functioned. As a young, newly experienced, African woman, the instructor was opposite to everything the institution of higher education included and upheld. Research done by Kaminski and Geisler (2012) concluded that foreign born science and engineering faculty leave academia at higher rates than

US born faculty. Though this instructor is not in a traditional STEM based career, the implications of such data shed light on the reality of how retention of faculty depends not only on their field of study, but also on their intersectional identity. As such, the confidence and will to show up authentically and "take up space" was often not present for the instructor. This would have been detrimental to her retention, had she not had the relationship and support of her Black female tenure-track professor colleague. In a meta-study by Wang and Odell (2002), they found that mentor/mentee relationships were experienced as emotional support and did not directly focus on the mentor's knowledge. This was true for the instructor as her Black female colleague provided emotional support and disclosed spoken and unspoken rules in the proverbial ivory tower. Due to this, the instructor was able to "skip steps"; avoiding the hardships and mistakes new faculty can make.

Overall, the success in the instructor's transition to and retention in academia was underscored by her department's already present DEI initiatives, and the mentorship-based relationship she built with her Black female colleague. The instructor found a space to show up as her authentic self, where trust and vulnerability were evident, resulting in true belonging, belonging that did not require sacrifice of one's true self.

Mentorship as Community

Instructor 1: Empowered to Mentor

Belonging is a journey achieved by self-acceptance, when one can be their best self, their most authentic self, wholeheartedly. The instructor's voyage to wholehearted, authentic belonging in the early years of a tenure-track academic faculty position involved intentional self-preservation and self-love, within a community of trans-generational, bi-directional mentorship relationships. The instructor's role involved leading departmental efforts in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), including teaching DEI-specific courses; mentoring racially/ethnically diverse graduate students, the Diversity & Inclusion Fellows; creating events to facilitate inclusion and belonging within the undergraduate program; providing faculty/clinical supervisor education on anti-racist practices; leading the departmental strategic plan for dismantling racism. The current research literature highlights diversity educators' tremendous emotional labor as well as ongoing exposure to racial microaggressions, contributing to racial battle fatigue and impacting one's hopefulness towards social justice change (Miller et al., 2018). The excess workload and double standards for judging the work of

faculty of color can lead to a work life narrative of feeling undervalued and misunderstood (Lemus et al., 2022). To navigate these complexities, a sense of belonging is crucial for sustainability and retention.

The instructor's mentor provided support for navigating the department, college, university, and local community; however, given their White racial identity, they also directed the instructor to resources within the Black community. Because of this bridging, the instructor made a home within the university, developing relationships with Pan-African faculty and administrators, Institutional Diversity leaders, and found a homeplace within The Multicultural Center and African American Affairs division. The instructor also discovered mentorship within national professional associations. Diversity educators note the importance of receiving support and validation from others as an aspect of self-care for persisting in diversity work (Miller et al., 2018). Given the warm embrace of the Black university community, the instructor did not have to pour from an empty cup. Instead, the instructor's cup overflowed into mentorship to graduate students of color and empowering new Black faculty.

The instructor's greatest strength is building authentic relationships on a foundation of vulnerability with all students, especially students of color. Brene Brown defines belonging as "the spiritual practice of believing in and belonging to yourself so deeply that you can share your most authentic self with the world and find sacredness in both being a part of something and standing alone in the wilderness." (Brown, 2021, p. 157). Because the instructor believed in herself deeply, she was able to share her most authentic self with her students. Through the development of the DEI Strategic Task Force, the instructor mentored the Diversity & Inclusion Fellows individually and collectively, connecting with students through a variety of social and equity-centered events, from attending professional basketball games, and hosting potluck dinners at her home, to presenting research at national professional conferences, and implementing mentorship events for undergraduate students of color. In the graduate DEI courses, the instructor challenged students of color to wrap language around their lived experiences so that they could challenge systems intellectually, preparing them for entrance into a White dominated field, grounded in perseverance, excellence, and confidence.

Finally, the instructor cultivated joy through relationships with other faculty of color. Shortly after the instructor was hired, a Black female clinical faculty member was hired in the department. With countless mutual interests and genuine acceptance, the instructor provided mentorship and compassion so that

the new faculty member would not have to navigate the ivory tower alone. In this mentorship relationship, the instructor found a respected friend, highly skilled colleague, and sister. For Black women, self-preservation and self-love is crucial throughout one's career, and the affirmation and encouragement found within sisterhood is the ultimate sustaining power (Turner & Allen, 2022). By establishing the enduring bond of sisterhood, they persist in navigating spaces never intended for their thriving, and they empower each other as Black women to take up space, securing their authentic belonging in the academy.

Instructor 2: Receiving Mentorship

Mentorship has been a hallmark feature of this instructor's educational and professional career thus far. It has proved to be a cornerstone to professional progression, and a deeper understanding of her potential and skillset. Cooke et al. (2017) state that mentorship promotes learning and personal development. This is what this instructor experienced. During her graduate education, she was mentored by a Black woman SLP who was working in higher education and in the VA health system. Through the mentorship, she found belonging, a place to express herself authentically and the belief in her potential as an SLP. The mentorship transformed into a professional sisterhood and became a lifeboat as the instructor's mentor not only advised on clinical growth opportunities, but also fostered an environment of belonging as the instructor began her professional progression from novice to expert (Lave & Wagner, 1991; Arnesson & Albinsson, 2017). Aside from its relational aspect, the mentorship resulted in exposure to continuing education courses, and confidence to take on research opportunities while informing choices of clinical experiences that would make her a competitive candidate post-graduation. This was realized when the instructor obtained a coveted position at a trauma I hospital. As one of the first in her immediate family to enroll in graduate education, the instructor was able to overcome feelings of inadequacy because of her mentor's influence, with subsequent achievements majorly attributed to her mentorship journey.

Now, at her current position, the instructor has cultivated an informal mentorship relationship with her Black female professor colleague. The benefits of this have included a renewed sense of confidence in her professional decisions, an elevated awareness of the ivory tower of higher education, and a growing sense of belonging. This mentorship relationship has been integral in her retention in the department. A conclusion of this instructor's experience with mentorship is not only its benefits, but the ways in which it sparks a chain of relaying it forward. She now aims to provide mentorship opportunities to her graduate students and

beyond and believes this is especially important with Black women in higher education like herself, as it creates the space needed for continued development in an environment not historically built to include them.

Conclusion

Maintaining authenticity and navigating higher education for Black female early faculty can be a tumultuous journey. In academia, Black women have a nuanced experience with White Supremacy culture, due to sexism and anti-Black racism (Patton, 2016). Professionally, only 3.6% of speech-language pathologists identify as Black, resulting in institutional barriers for professionals of color (ASHA, 2022; Yu et al., 2022). Given these marginalizing experiences, Black female faculty's retention is dependent on the extent to which they can exist authentically and develop a sense of belonging through high-quality mentorship experiences, departmental DEI efforts, opportunities for innovation, and sisterhood. To position themselves as scholars, with esteemed contributions that belong in academic spaces, Black women need to engage in self-definition and self-valuation, challenging stereotypical images of Black womanhood, and defining themselves by their own terms (Turner & Allen, 2022). Future research should explore Black women faculty's self-identity, self-preservation, and self-love practices for maintaining authenticity and challenging Whiteness in higher education.

About the Authors

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Instructor 2: Tinotenda Mupambo M.S. CCC-SLP (she/her) is a Clinical Instructor and Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) in the graduate program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She works with SLP graduate students, providing instruction and mentorship while supervising their on-campus clinical experiences. Her previous experience included working with adult and geriatric population in a hospital setting treating speech, language, cognition and swallowing disorders. She earned her Master's in Speech-Language Pathology from East Tennessee State University and is also an ASHA certified speech-language pathologist.

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