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Righting the Historical Record: Highlighting the Significant Contributions of Black Psychologists in American Schools

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The field of educational psychology, while closely aligned with several adjacent branches of psychology, focuses on teaching and learning processes in support of the development of students within K-16 environments and beyond. Similar to other fields, educational psychology has been historically dominated by theories and empirical studies developed and carried out by White scholars who presented racially and culturally biased ideologies that lacked Black perspectives. Couched within an Afrocentric and Critical Race Theory framework, the present article sets out to right the historical record by uplifting the voices of four prominent Black psychologists who played an important role in American schools and who have been largely ignored in the field of educational psychology. We review the works of Inez B. Prosser (1897–1934), A. Wade Boykin (1947–present), Barbara J. Robinson Shade (1933–present), and Asa Hilliard III–Baffour Amankwatia II (1933–2007). Each scholar has made significant impacts on American schools, ranging from pursuing innovative research topics and methodologies, providing expert testimony in landmark civil rights legislation, and leading college and university initiatives with generation-wide impacts on Black learners and communities. Based on the impact of the scholars highlighted in this article, we offer recommendations for the next steps in advancing the field toward a position of eradicating anti-Black racism and toward uplifting and centering the voices of Black learners.

Public Significance Statement

In this article, we highlight the significant contributions of Black psychologists in American schools—many of whom have been historically excluded from popular psychological texts. By tracing the lives and works of four prominent Black educational psychologists, we demonstrate that the movement to address anti-Black racism in American schools dates back to the early 1900s. We connect these historical efforts to current advocacy efforts.

Keywords: Black educational psychology, Black psychologists, Afrocentrism, critical race theory, Black education

For more than 100 years, Black psychologists have made significant contributions to the knowledge and practice of educational psychology. However, a scoping review of foundational texts, theories, and practices demonstrates a dire gap in the works of Black[1] educational psychologists. Systemic, historical erasure of the voices and knowledge production that Black psychologists have made to the field has important implications for the training of educational psychologists. When Black scholars—and their lived experiences and cultural epistemologies—are not represented in the

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[1] In this article, Black is used interchangeably with African American, Negro, Afro-American, Colored, and Africans in America.

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canon of popular texts, educational psychologists are taught to think of educational psychology from a White perspective, where Whiteness becomes both the norm and the ideal. The overarching goal of the present article is to right this historical wrong and to uplift the voices of four Black American psychologists who played a key role in American schools and in the education of Black learners in the United States (U.S.).

The field of educational psychology, while closely aligned with several adjacent branches of psychology, focuses on teaching and learning processes in support of student development in K-16 environments and beyond. There are other definitions in the literature; however, this article focuses on the definition that has been vetted through the Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) codes (https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/cipdetail.aspx?y=55&cipid=87816). The National Center for Educational Statistics identifies educational psychology as a subfield under clinical, counseling, and applied psychology (CIP code 42.2806) that is focused on the application of psychology to the study of the behavior of individuals in the roles of teacher and learner; the nature and effects of learning environments; and the psychological effects of methods, resources, organization, and nonschool experience on the educational process. Educational psychology includes instruction in learning theory, human growth and development, research methods, and psychological evaluation.

Recovering the Intellectual Tradition of Black Educational Psychology

The study of race in educational psychology has, at times, been characterized as shallow, reductionist, and superficial (Zusho & Kumar, 2018). Similar to other fields, educational psychology has been historically dominated by theories and empirical studies developed and carried out by White scholars who presented culturally biased and often racist ideologies that lacked Black perspectives and had nothing to do with pedagogical utility (Hilliard, 1992a, 1992b, 1996; Shade, 1976, 1979, 1986, 1989). In fact, when reviewing the larger canon of publications in the field, DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014) found that less than 2% of articles published in educational psychology journals explicitly focus on race. It stands to reason that research focused on Black youth and/or anti-Black racism in schools in educational psychology outlets is only a subset of this already limited number of works. Scholars have called for the field to curb deficit views of minoritized communities as well as assumptions of cultural inferiority implicit in conventional approaches to conducting educational psychology research (Matthews & López, 2020). This includes the perpetual use of White students as a reference group without conceptual justification, omissions of Black American participants' socioeconomic status—which has the potential to foster monolithic views of Black people—and a lack of consideration of researchers' racial background and its potential impact on Black participants (Graham, 1992). Building upon contemporary efforts to push for meaningful studies of Black American culture within educational psychology, we seek to elevate the teachings of Black American scholars whose contributions to both the science of psychology and the field of education position us to revisit and expand on existing notions of the intellectual roots of educational psychology. Specifically, we highlight the work of Black American psychologists whose research agendas prioritized and centrally focused on Black education by foregrounding rich sociopolitical experiences that provide deep and nuanced meaning to the very constructs we consider central in teaching and learning. Some themes present within the work of these Black scholars map onto various aspects of a Black education research agenda (King, 2006) by responding to essential questions such as: *How does one's work as a psychologist support Black people in resisting oppressive treatment and societal conditions and reclaiming freedom as a people? How does one's work as a psychologist provide a sense of continuity, alignment and historical connection to Black ancestral heritage? How are students specifically being centered to feel like they, as Black people, matter?* The career efforts of the Black psychologists we highlight in this article collectively speak to these questions. Although these psychologists were not all trained in educational psychology programs, their work provides a blueprint for a strength-based justice-oriented approach for educational psychologists seeking to deepen their social impact in schools and society. As strength-based approaches in educational psychology become more prevalent for understanding Black individuals and communities, the work of these scholars provides a firm intellectual tradition upon which future directions in the discipline may advance. We assert that the perspectives of Black educational psychologists are essential

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to all branches of psychology seeking to support and uplift diverse learners within any learning environment (Hilliard III-Baffour Amankwatia 2006; Shade, 1989). Further, we demonstrate that the call to eradicate anti-Black racism in schools and promote racial justice, using a strength-based approach, has been a long tradition of Black educational psychologists dating back to the early 1900s.

Conceptual Considerations

We approached this article from an Afrocentric/African-centered and critical race theory perspective. As described by Asante (2020), the theory of Afrocentricity, "refers to African agency and the centrality of African interests, ideas, and perspectives in social, historical, behavioral and economic narratives" (pp. 48–49). Critical race theory (CRT) on the other hand is a method used to critically examine how racism is weaved into the very fabric of American institutions, including education (Bell, 1980). Together, Afrocentrism centers the voices and lived experiences of Black individuals, whereas CRT sets out to illuminate how systems and structures have been used to exclude and oppress communities of color (Thomas & Brevetti, 2021).

Afrocentricity, as a conceptual framework, has been traced back to over 60 years with the work of W. E. B. DuBois (Bay, 2000). With respect to education, Afrocentricity is used as a means to support Black American learners[2] as it centralizes Black culture (ways of being, thinking, and behaving), values, and knowledge production, including positive interpersonal relationships as a foundation to understanding existence (James Myers, 1991). As described by Hilliard et al. (1990), "Afrocentricity is a foundation based on the see[ing] of the story of a people told, not merely the story of isolated heroes and events through an African-centered worldview" (p. vii). It is important to note that African-centered ideologies are diverse and on a spectrum. A number of scholars, including Joseph White, Wade Nobles, Na'im Akbar, Linda James Myers, and Frances Cress Welsing, have been viewed as having African-centered epistemologies—however, they do not hold the same perspectives regarding the meaning of Afrocentricity (see Belgrave & Allison, 2018). We acknowledge that many theories, such as CRT, multiculturalism, and feminism, are on a spectrum with a wide range of perspectives, including African-centered/Afrocentrism. While we understand that Hilliard III had problems with the term Afrocentrism (Crowe, 2003, 2005), electing instead to publicly identify as a Pan African Nationalist, we understand that his concerns about the term—like many scholars—had to do with how the term was being popularly represented and interpreted. Moreover, as Nantambu (1998) has argued, Pan-African Nationalism is an Afrocentric approach.

Highlighting Black Educational Psychologists

In this article, we highlight the work of Inez B. Prosser, A. Wade Boykin, Barbara J. Robinson Shade, and Asa Grant Hilliard III–Baffour Amankwatia II. Each psychologist's work was principally focused on the improvement of Black American students' psychosocial well-being within and outside of schools. First, we review Inez B. Prosser—commonly regarded as the first Black woman psychologist in the U.S.—whose work was focused on desegregation and its impact on personality and socioemotional outcomes of Black youth. Second, we review Boykin's (1986) career, including his work on triple quandary theory and connectiveness to Black students' academic achievement. Next, we review Barbara J. Robinson Shade, who helped lay the foundation for culturally relevant education involving Black students in K-12 schools through the examination of culture, personality, cognitive style,[3] and behaviors (Shade, 1989). Finally, we cover Asa Grant Hilliard III–Baffour Amankwatia II, whose career was devoted to advocating for changes in U.S. schools (Pine & Hilliard, 1990), including the need for structural changes that laid the groundwork for more than 50 years of supporting Black student learning (see Boykin et al., 2004). It is important to note that the two women reviewed in this article had a larger impact on the practical application of Afrocentric work, both having held major administrative roles that shaped institutions for Black students. Further, for Inez B. Prosser,

[2] The term African-centered, Afrocentric, Africentric, and Black are used interchangeably in this article.

[3] While we recognize scholars might find the term "cognitive style" to be problematic, particularly in the context of educating Black learners, Shade used this term in all her major works. She did so as a way to examine what she understood to be the different affective and personal orientations Afro-Americans exhibited in each dimension of the cognitive style construct (perceptual style, conceptual style, and personality style). We use this term to be consistent with Shade's usage, although we know many educational psychologists today would use terms like "learning processes" and/or "learning strategies."

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her life was cut tragically short. The review of her work in the present article reflects the significant contributions she made during the 37 years of her life.

Inez B. Prosser

Inez Beverly Prosser (1897–1934) was born to a working-class family in rural South Central Texas, the eldest of 11 children. Her parents had saved enough money to send their eldest son, Leon, to college. Leon insisted that his parents invest in Prosser's college education instead, given that she was valedictorian of her class. Following graduation from Yoakum Colored School in 1910, Prosser began her college studies at Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College, now known as Prairie View A&M University in Prairie View, Texas. At the time, Prairie View A&M was the Black college equivalent to Texas A&M.

Prosser completed a 2-year teaching certificate in 1912, graduating at the top of her class. She then spent 2 years teaching in an elementary school followed by another 2 years as an assistant principal in a vocational/trade school before joining the faculty at Anderson High School, where she worked until 1927. In 1921, Prosser began focusing more centrally on completing her bachelor's degree in education at Samuel Huston College, a Black college in Austin, Texas. She graduated in 1926 with distinction and with minors in English and Psychology. She began completing coursework toward her master's degree in Education via correspondence at the University of Colorado since there was no option for graduate studies in Texas for Black students. Prosser earned her master's degree in 1927, 1 year following the conferral of her bachelor's degree.

Prosser's (1927) master's thesis, "The Comparative Reliability of Objective Tests in English Grammar" demonstrated a growing interest in measurement. Specifically, Prosser developed four types of English grammar tests that she administered to 303 students grades 8–11 at Anderson High School. Each test measured different types of English grammar skills that illuminated different types of intellectual abilities. These findings are important because they demonstrated how students were tested mattered in being able to accurately assess learning outcomes. Prosser's work was the first of its kind in assessing the impact of measurement style on English grammar assessment among a Black-only sample.

Following the completion of her master's degree, Prosser spent several years working in college settings, often juggling academic and administrative posts simultaneously. This started with spending 3 years as faculty at Tillotson College, a small Black junior college in Austin, Texas, where Prosser taught in Education and Psychology and even assisted in admissions and the development of the course catalog. Next, Prosser became faculty at Tougaloo College, a small Black college in Tougaloo, Mississippi, which offered a 4-year degree. During this time, Prosser also became principal of Tougaloo High School, the first Black high school in the state to receive full accreditation by the Mississippi Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. This distinction is especially noteworthy because it granted automatic admission to many colleges, thus creating a direct pathway from high school to college for Black students in Mississippi, in addition to developing a blueprint for other Black schools to do the same. Prosser also applied for the General Education Board fellowship, which she secured in 1931, to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Cincinnati. The fellowship was developed to offer financial assistance to promising scholars whose work was focused in the South and on Black education.

In 1931, Prosser began attending the University of Cincinnati to study with Louis Augustus Pechstein. Pechstein had developed a record of advising Black doctoral students. When Prosser began her own dissertation work, it was conceived as an extension of Mary Crowley's doctoral dissertation that was completed in 1931 (Crowley, 1931), "A Comparison of the Academic Achievement of Cincinnati Negroes in Segregated and Mixed Schools." Crowley's work was centrally focused on academic differences; Prosser's (1933) work looked to extend this scope to nonacademic variables, including social skills and personality. Crowley observed that academic outcomes between the types of schools that Black children attended (segregated; mixed) were shaped by activities outside of the academic realm, including psychological and socioemotional. Crowley recommended that future research examine how school contexts impacted Black youth in terms of their socioemotional development and opportunities for learning and growth. Prosser therefore set out to examine the experiences of Black youth in schools in her dissertation, "Non-Academic Development of Negro Children in Mixed and Segregated

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Schools." Her work was centered on three critical questions: "What are the racial attitudes or the feelings of social distance of Black children toward other groups?" "What are the emotional responses of the Black children to the attitudes of other races toward them?" "To what degree are aggressiveness and submission fostered in the two types of schools?" (Prosser, 1933, pp. 1–2).

Prosser was primarily focused on examining how Black youth came to understand race and racial identity in different school contexts and how this understanding of one's racial self impacted socioemotional development. It is important to point out that Prosser's dissertation was couched within an immensely challenging sociopolitical environment. Major legal battles of the time were arguing for integration as a means of racial equality with many legal scholars citing schools as the primary and most important element against "separate but equal." In 1930s Cincinnati, where Prosser collected data for her dissertation, children attending Black schools were immersed in Black education—from teachers to administrators and peers—whereas children in segregated schools were immersed in Whiteness, whose education was solely developed and delivered by White teachers, administrators, and among nearly all White peers. This distinction in the racial makeup of schools was important to Prosser. Schools in Cincinnati were only desegregated at the student level—*Black teachers were only allowed to be employed in Black schools.* Prosser understood that although desegregation was critical for racial progress, Black youth would suffer in school systems plagued by anti-Black sentiment, practices, and policies. For her dissertation, Prosser matched 32 pairs of students enrolled in segregated and mixed schools and found that some youth in mixed schools were not as actively involved in the school environment, with some engaging in more daydreaming and retreating from interpersonal activities. Based on her findings, Prosser argued that mixed schools did not provide a better learning environment for all Black youth and that instead, only those youth who volunteered to attend mixed schools—and who did not need to be more interpersonally involved—might fare equally well academically and socioemotionally. In short, Prosser did not provide a blanket recommendation for desegregation in schools.

Inez Beverly Prosser died in a tragic car accident 1 year following the completion of her dissertation. Although Prosser's work was interrupted by her untimely death, the impact of her work was substantial. Not only did Prosser make significant contributions to the schools in which she was employed, including developing one of the first high school-to-college bridge programs for students attending a segregated high school, but also conclusions Prosser posed in her dissertation—namely, that some Black youth would fare equally well in mixed schools—were used to make the case for school integration in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Prosser has also been featured in numerous publications about the impact of her dissertation work with some authors noting the compounded misogyny she faced as a Black woman in psychology in the 1930s (Johnston & Johnson, 2008). In reading Prosser's dissertation, it can be argued that she was writing from a critical studies perspective—albeit critical studies were not formally introduced in the psychology literature at the time. Prosser argued that most Black youth would fare better in Black-only schools because it was within those schools that they would be seen fully, with opportunities to grow emotionally and personally, where they would be nurtured by Black teachers, administrators, and peers. It should be noted that Prosser's professional career was entirely within Black schools and colleges. She was therefore speaking from professional experience in terms of the cultural setting, practices, and policies that characterized Black schools. For an extensive biography of Prosser's life and legacy, see Benjamin et al. (2005).

A. Wade Boykin

A. Wade Boykin, Jr. (1947–present) graduated from Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) in 1968, the same year that civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated. Records show that Boykin's father was a musician—a pianist, who was well-known in Detroit and played in the original McKinney's Cotton Pickers and Cozy Cole (Thurston, 1973, 8-D). In his dissertation and again in later work (2011), Boykin thanks his aunt Eleanor with whom "[he] would have never succeeded" (p. xii). Eleanor Boykin Jones earned an AB degree and teacher certification and later became the director of the Detroit Public Schools' Guidance and Counseling Department (Moon, 1994, p. 147). From the public record, it is clear that Boykin came from a lineage of educators.

Boykin's undergraduate advisor, William Heid, is credited with introducing him to the field of experimental psychology during his college years, which set the stage for Boykin's graduate studies in experimental psychology at the University of Michigan. He received his MA in 1970 and his PhD in 1972 after completing his dissertation. While at the University of Michigan, Boykin, along with William (Nick) Collins and J. Frank Yates, established the Coalition for the Use of Learning Skills (CULS) as a program to help support the academic success of Black students (Tobin, 2017, p. 18).

In 1969, Boykin was a founding member of both the National Black Students Psychological Association (BSPA) and the chapter at the University of Michigan (University of Michigan Department of Psychology, 2019). He and Yates also secured funding from the Russell Sage Foundation in 1974 to host the first Empirical Conference on Black Psychology (later named "Black Empirical") at the University of Michigan (Holliday, 2009, p. 332). Boykin's work stands out from mainstream educational psychology research on motivation and achievement behavior because his scholarship grew out of the complexity of what it means to be socialized within American schools as a Black child. One of the primary takeaways from Boykin's scholarship was that there is much more to Black American students' achievement motivation than what can be readily understood by simply observing their behavior. The key assumption of Boykin's (1986) triple quandry is that the achievement choices and behaviors of Black students in American schools involve the complex negotiation of the Black cultural values students bring with them to school with the mainstream socialization messages they receive about how to behave and what to value within the school context. Universal, mainstream frameworks of achievement behavior do not account for the ways that Black students are situated relative to American policies and social expectations. Boykin argued that because most American schools do not preserve the cultural integrity of Black students, students (unlike members of society's ethnic majority) must actively or passively cope with this cultural violence, and that sensitivity to these underlying coping strategies must be taken into account when attempting to interpret Black students' achievement behavior.

Boykin's scholarship invited educational psychologists to reconsider the notion of achievement and on-task behavior, paying close attention to how creating a culturally affirming learning environment supports Black students' motivation and existing meaning systems. In this way, Boykin challenges deficit narratives about Black students' disengagement in school by articulating why a lack of cultural affirmation may cause students to purposefully disengage from academic learning. In other words, disengagement is not solely about aptitude but also about cultural preservation and resistance to cultural oppression.

There are several conceptual and practical ways in which Boykin's scholarship aligns with the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), which requires the preservation of students' cultural integrity in schooling environments (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b). A driving force behind the work of both Ladson-Billings and Boykin is the notion of cultural synchronization (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b) or the prioritization of constructive outlets for cultural expression in the context of a school or classroom environment (Boykin & Ellison, 1995). From an empirical standpoint, Boykin and his colleagues provide evidence that the preservation of Afrocultural themes is positively linked with the academic performance of Black students (Coleman et al., 2021).

Although the term *cultural integrity* cannot be solely attributed to Boykin, his scholarship certainly argued that educational justice for Black students involves honoring and affirming cherished aspects of Black culture within American schools. Using a combination of observations and vignettes (Boykin et al., 2005), focus groups (Ellison et al., 2000), action research (LaPoint et al., 2006), surveys (Tyler et al., 2008), and experimental designs (Coleman et al., 2017), Boykin worked to understand the prevalence and benefits of Afrocultural themes for the instruction of Black students. This included an orientation toward movement (physical expressiveness and an appreciation on rhythm), verve (high levels of stimulation), communalism (interdependence and a prioritizing of the group over the self), orality (expressing oneself verbally), and affect (emotional expressive; see Boykin et al., 1997; Sankofa et al., 2019).

Boykin's work remains underutilized in mainstream educational psychology. Considering the advances in educational psychology around participatory action research, state-space grids, educational technology, and mixed methods, the cultural themes uncovered in Boykin's work provide a strong foundation for moving the field of educational psychology forward and more deeply examining and dynamically responding to the needs of Black students in American schools in practically relevant culturally sensitive ways. Boykin's triple quandry remains a powerful conceptual tool for educational psychologists seeking to guide educators in understanding how Black students' engagement patterns are implicated when they experience a cultural mismatch between home and school. Moreover, the observation protocols developed by Boykin and his colleague serve as a practical tool for providing educators with feedback on various dimensions of their instruction that may exacerbate (or thwart) perceptions of home–school dissonance.

Barbara J. Robinson Shade

Barbara J. Robinson [Shade] (1933–present) was born in Armstrong, Missouri, during the lowest point of the great depression. Early in her childhood, her family moved to

Junction City, Kansas, just outside of Fort Riley, a U.S. military training post and prisoner-of-war camp (Carter, 2015). Given the military's close proximity, Shade attended integrated schools, and many of her mentors were from the 9th Cavalry. In 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which abolished discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or religion in the armed services. As a result, despite growing up roughly 65 miles away from the site of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* court case, Shade's junior and high school experiences were not as overtly impacted by anti-Black racism as Black children just west of her. As a teenager in a single-headed female household, Shade's kinship network extended far beyond her biological family, into the church and school, which did follow a racial divide: the people in the school district who looked after her were White, whereas her biggest influences came from Black Baptist churches in and around her community (B. Shade, personal communication, May 25, 2022).

Upon graduating from high school in 1951, Shade attended Pittsburg State University (PSU) in Pittsburg, Kansas, to pursue a degree (BS) in Business Education. A large part of her decision was informed by her experiences going to Black Baptist conventions and meeting Black kids who went to all-Black schools, which she also wanted to experience. PSU afforded Shade close proximity to Black students. After finishing her undergraduate degree in 1955, the same year as the Montgomery Bus Boycott, she got married and had two children with her husband. Her family relocated to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and in 1960, she became a school teacher for Milwaukee Public Schools. Shade taught high school business education in inner-city schools with mostly Black students. It was in this context that she began to more clearly see how racial disparities impacted Black students and different learning patterns among Black students. Her fellow Black teachers also helped her develop and hone her understanding of structural and institutional racism, what she called, "critical race theory before they had a name for it" (B. Shade, personal communication, May 25, 2022).

Shade attended the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee as a part-time student, where she graduated with her master's (MS) in Education Psychology in 1967, the year of the long, hot summer of racial uprisings. The uprisings fueled her analysis of the mistreatment of Black children in schools (B. Shade, personal communication, May 25, 2022). Following the completion of her MS, Shade continued to work as a public school teacher until 1969, when she became the executive director of the Dane County Head Start. She moved to Madison, WI, where she enrolled at the University of Wisconsin–Madison to pursue her PhD in educational psychology, which she completed in 1973, with the support that she received from an academic fellowship. She also earned her license in School Psychology given the uncertainty of the job market following the backlash from the Civil Rights Movement (B. Shade, personal communication, May 25, 2022).

Shade's first tenure-track job (1975) was in Afro-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison after completing a postdoctoral fellowship. Her job placement was a result of there "not being that many positions [in educational psychology]" (B. Shade, personal communication, May 25, 2022). At the same time, it also spoke to her research interests—given her life and teaching experiences, Shade began to develop an Afrocentric analysis that considered African American culture and style. In particular, Shade began to examine upper- and middle-class Black families because everyone who was looking at Black families often examined the underclass and poor (Shade, 1976). What she noticed, however, was Black students, irrespective of their class, were experiencing racism in schools (B. Shade, personal communication, May 25, 2022). Her Afrocentric analysis helped her develop a framework for thinking about the parallel culture of Black and White upper-class families. Black families, she hypothesized, were not interested in assimilating into Whiteness despite their class mobility. Rather, they were maintaining a strong sense of Black identity and pride that often was at odds with White culture. Integration, she noticed, led to a decline in Black achievement—Black students who had previously been performing extremely well on the achievement tests began to see declines upon integration into White schools.

The bulk of Shade's work has employed an Afrocentric and critical race approach to understanding cognitive skills, culture, and style among Black students. In her research, she investigated how tests for measuring cognitive skills were biased against Black students due to cultural style differences. As described by Shade, orientations and differences in perception are connected to the socialization of Afro-Americans, which is rooted in multigenerational kinship networks that emphasize the need to learn how to attend to cues and develop behavior compatible with learning to survive, collective responsibility, responding to authority of the dominant family member, and preparing for independence (Shade, 1982, 1983). As such, she argued scholars need to be more careful to disaggregate between cognitive style and perceptual style, that while spatial–perceptual functioning influences cognitive performance, one has to be attentive to not conflate preferential differences in visual–spatial orientation with differences in cognition (Shade, 1981, 1982, 1986). School settings, she concluded, often require cognitive strategies that are sequential, analytical, or object-oriented, whereas Afro-Americans often have universalistic, intuitive, and person-oriented cognitive strategies, which might be putting them at a disadvantage. These disadvantages might be improperly being interpreted and framed as a cognitive deficit but are rather just a difference in cognitive style.

Shade's many contributions to scholarship were only part of the impact she wanted to make. In 1980, she joined the faculty in Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin–Parkside, where she earned tenure and eventually became the Dean of the School of Education (1989–1996). During her

time as an administrator, Shade helped increase faculty diversity, expand the diversity of the teacher education program, and develop a postbaccalaureate program, EC3 (Elementary Certification for Ethnic Colleagues for the Elementary School), an alternative certification program to recruit and prepare upcoming teachers of color (Shade et al., 1998). Shade ultimately retired in 1997 as a professor in the School of Education, holding on to her strong desire to prioritize access to education for students of color, particularly Black students.

Asa Grant Hilliard III–Baffour Amankwatia II

Asa Grant Hilliard III (1933–2007), also known as Nana Baffour Amankwatia II, was a significant African [American] scholar in educational psychology. He was an innovator in terms of understanding the relationship between schools and Black communities and was one of very few African Americans who achieved a degree in educational psychology in the 1960s. Hilliard III's vast contributions were rooted in principles of social justice, antiracism, and later Pan-Africanism, which centered on African values and lived experiences. He published over 300 works that focused on addressing racism, biased testing, and Afrocentric curriculum that would foster positive Black experiences in schools. This brief biography focuses on a selected body of Hilliard III's scholarship that spans over 50 years.

Born in Galveston, Texas, on the 22nd day of August 1933, during segregation, Hilliard III often spoke about African cultural roots and strong family ties that existed within his family. His lineage included family members who settled in the community of Shankleville, Texas, which was one of ten freedmen's towns in East Texas (Crowe, 2003, 2005). He came from a family of educators that spanned three generations and devoted their lives to racial justice. His father, Asa Hilliard II, was heavily involved with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and established the National Teachers Association for Black Teachers. Hilliard III often referred to his father and uncles as race men and his aunts as race women—fighters of civil rights and justice (Crowe, 2003, 2005).

Hilliard III moved around quite a bit during his early years following his parents' divorce. He lived in Galveston and Houston, Texas, and Denver, Colorado, with his siblings and single mother. He would spend the school year with his mother, Lois Otha Hilliard: *née* Lowe, in Denver, and summers with his father in Texas. He described his mother as an entrepreneur who was independent with strong will and tenacity.

While at the University of Denver, Hilliard III, obtained his bachelor of arts in Psychology in 1955, the same year as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (II).* As an undergraduate college student, Hilliard III lived on campus, with all White roommates in the university dorms. He explained that as a college student, he organized against the racist practices at the University of Denver (Crowe, 2003, 2005). In fact, Hilliard III noted that one of his psychology professors would lecture on the inferiority of Blacks compared to the White population. The lectures left a lasting impression on Hilliard III to the extent that the aforementioned experiences helped to shape the direction of his scholarship.

Upon graduation, Hilliard III became a teacher of history and mathematics with the Denver Unified School District (DUSD), followed by service in the United States Army. After his discharge, he went back to school to complete a Master's in counseling in 1961 and an EdD in educational psychology in 1963. After graduating with his doctorate from the University of Denver, he became faculty, chair, and dean at San Francisco State University in the Department of Education and soon thereafter took a leave of absence to work in Liberia as a Peace Corp consultant. Hilliard III had a long career, ultimately serving as Fuller E. Calloway Professor of Urban Education at Georgia State University with appointments in the Departments of Educational Policy Studies, Educational Psychology, and Special Education. In addition, he was one of the founding members of The Association for the Study of Classical African Civilization (ASCAC).[4]

Hilliard (1963) had a strong interest in cultural differences within teaching and learning that stemmed from his dissertation work, "An exploratory study of relationships between student-teacher personality, ability, lower division grades, and the student-teacher's evaluation of pupils." His experiences as a former K-12 teacher led to his position that cultural differences in teaching and learning—when different from traditional White, western approaches—should also garner respect, empathy, and reciprocity (Hilliard, 1967). These early works set the foundation for the next 40 plus years of Hilliard III's career, dismantling structural racism and increasing positive Black pedagogy and cultural knowledge via an afrocentric lens (principally a Kemetic conceptual frame, 1987). Throughout his career, Hilliard III addressed structural racism that prevailed in schools, particularly in racially biased testing (AlkebulanNation, 2018; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Hilliard, 1976, 2000; Jensen 1980; Rushton & Jensen, 2005).

Hilliard's (1978) article, "Straight talk about school desegregation problems" addressed structural racism in education. He stated that 24 years after *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation activity still remains "more politics than pedagogy" (p. 101) and that racially coded and oppressive language (e.g., lack of preparedness, underprivileged, academic deficiencies) were more often attributed to Black and Brown teachers and students in order to maintain individual and institutional racism and White superiority. Hilliard III maintained that Black and Brown parents send their children

[4] ASCAC focuses on African-centered worldviews, for people of African descent, in the development and strengthening of African knowledge, history, and culture.

into environments that are often hostile or indifferent toward them—an argument that is still being made about the U.S. educational system today (García, 2020).

Hilliard's (1987, 1992a, 1992b, 2003) Kemetic education focused on cultural unity, cultural identity, and common purpose within a holistic teaching environment that consistently nurtured learning. Hilliard III believed that for liberation, learning, and excellence to happen, African American children should know the story of African people through the integration of African-centered stories that are grounded in community awareness and historical truths of cultural unity, not mass destruction (Hilliard, 1995; Hilliard et al., 1987, 1990; Hilliard III–Baffour Amankwatia, 2006). According to Nobles (2008), Hilliard III understood,

> The development and education of Black children becomes defined in political terms (No Child Left Behind, at risk, school reform, desegregation, bussing, social justice, minimum standards, closing achievement gaps) that serve to further marginalize Black children and not by what is natural and expected from the highest possibility of being human. (p. 732)

Hilliard III believed in Black student learning using a strength-based approach by focusing on African-centered content and creating a positive learning environment that used culture and historical knowledge as a foundation for Black education. Hilliard III was a board-certified forensic examiner and diplomat of both the American Board of Forensic Examiners and the American Board of Forensic Medicine. Much of his career focused on undercovering and pointing out racially biased testing on Black students (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Hilliard 2004; Snyderman & Rothman, 1988). His work in uncovering racially biased testing was instrumental in so many ways. He provided expertise in the case of *Larry P. v. Riles*, questioning the very validity of mental measurement. His involvement with "no child left behind" and his work debunking pseudoscience, intelligence testing, and structural racism had a significant impact on Black learners in education (Hilliard, 1996, 2000; Serpico, 2021).

Next Steps Toward Centering Black Voices in Educational Psychology

Documenting the strength-based contributions of Black educational psychologists is only the first step toward advancing anti-Black racist practices and policies in the field. At a structural level, the field must shift focus toward positive educational experiences of Black students and away from deficit and/or individually focused resilience models. This article has been intentional in its focus on highlighting the works of Black psychologists who have committed to positively impacting the lives of Black learners. The four Black psychologists presented and discussed in this article focused on Black culture as a strength-based approach to learning. They did not just publish, attend conferences, or train the next generation of scholars; they testified as expert witnesses, were cited in landmark cases won on behalf of Black Americans, and led significant change efforts focused on bettering the lives of Black learners in organizations and colleges. Taken together, they focused on racial identity and Black community schools (Prosser), the education and training focused on Black students (Boykin), Black culturally centered epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies, and a sense of belonging within Black identity (Shade) and African-centered learning (Hilliard III). Although only four Black psychologists were highlighted in this article, we acknowledge that many others have also contributed invaluable scholarship in the spirit of uplifting Black learners.

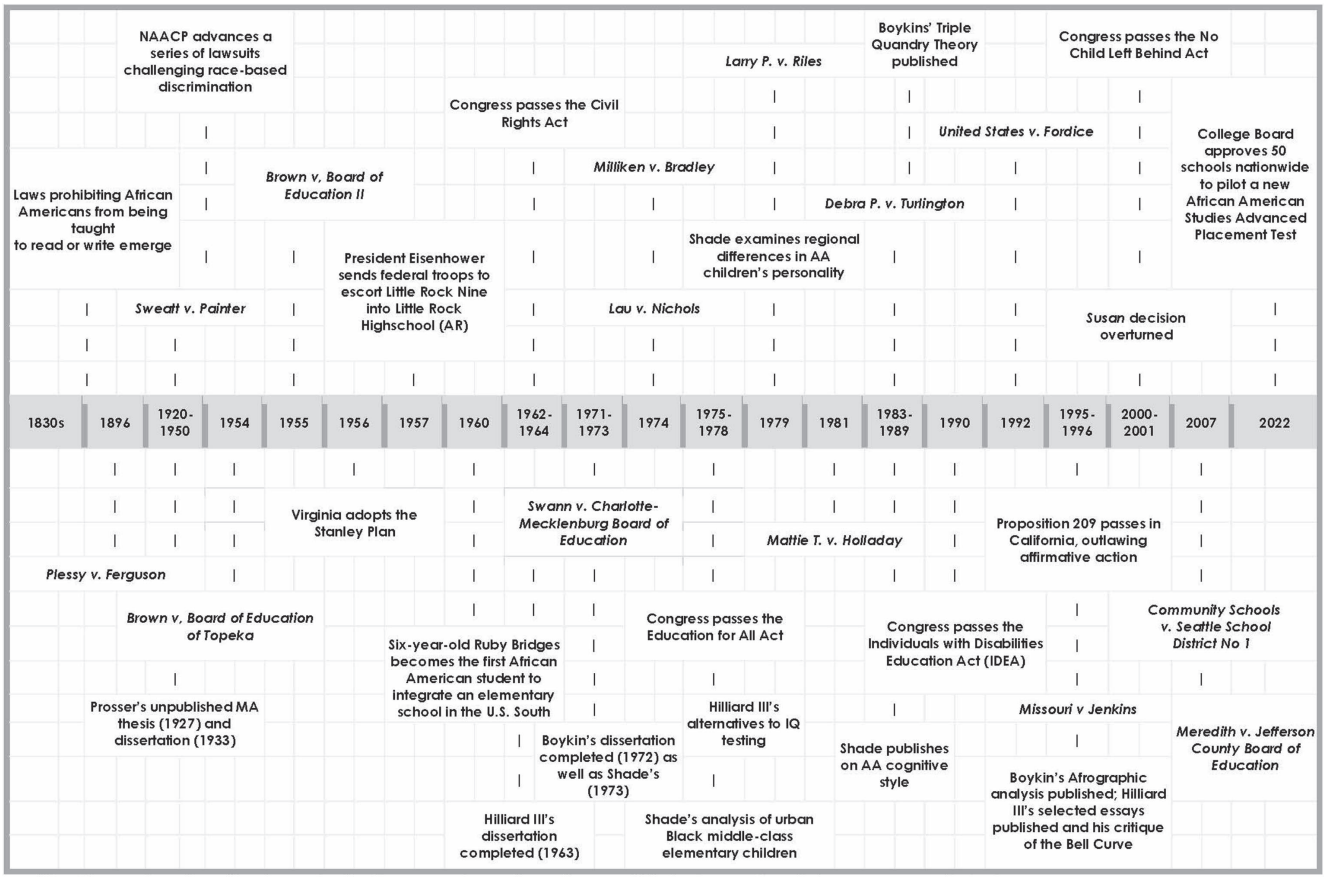
Prosser, Boykin, Shade, and Hilliard III were particularly interested in improving the educational experiences of Black learners. They critiqued biased educational systems while simultaneously providing tools to help strengthen how Black students are taught. We hope this article fosters future conversations on ways to decolonize educational psychology training, syllabi, and mainstream peer-reviewed publication outlets to advance an agenda that uplifts Black learners. Educational psychology must face a reckoning with our past and, as Asa Hilliard (1977) poignantly argued, contend with our "conceptually incarcerated" minds (p.12). This requires a paradigm shift—away from Eurocentric frameworks and methods and back toward the legacy of Black scholars who have long been offering analyses and solutions that run against the status quo and mainstream canons of thought. While there have been important recent gains in the call to dismantle racism in psychology (Andoh, 2021), it is imperative that this work is done so with an attentiveness to anti-Black racism. Critical race theorist Bell (1980) reminds us to be critical of the "interest-convergence" that happens when White institutions incorporate Black voices and interests only when further securitizing benefits for White people. In practice, dismantling anti-Black racism must then mean citing Black educational psychologists as well as rethinking what is considered knowledge production and who is considered to be a knowledge producer. Many Black educational psychologists never published in psychology journals, let alone top-tier psychology journals. This was not out of disinterest or lack of scholarly quality. It was due to exclusion—an active exclusion of Black-centered epistemologies and methodologies, making them inaccessible outlets for many Black educational psychologists. Dismantling racism does not mean asking Black scholars to assimilate into the readymade, anti-Black academic spaces that have long been imposed upon them. Dismantling racism means dismantling the underlying structure of those spaces. And, as emphasized through Black educational psychologists, the classroom is a pivotal site to do the work of combating anti-Black racism.

Significant methodological advances make it possible for educational psychologists to uplift the voices and needs of Black students in schools (Martin et al., 2019). For example, BlackCrit (Dumas & Ross, 2016) is a critical quantitative method that provides a window for understanding Afrocultural themes in education settings from an intersectional lens, whereas state-space grids allow scholars to understand the dynamic relationship between culturally relevant pedagogy and Black students' patterns of engagement over time (Hilliard III–Baffour Amankwatia, 2006). Further, photo voice and photo elicitation research methods elicit narrative accounts of the cultural alignment (and misalignment) between home and school via the use of images, thus fostering opportunities for educators to bridge, connect, and establish harmony between these two worlds for Black youth (Hilliard, 1983).

Context shapes the questions one asks, the problems one is able to identify, and the interventions one can possibly imagine; context, in short, informs our sense of exigency. Continually, Black educational psychologists have worked under conditions that fostered their active erasure—in and beyond the field. We have included a historical timeline (see Figure 1) as an appendix of major legal cases and events that actively shaped the lives of and were shaped by Prosser, Boykin, Shade, and Hilliard III. Understanding the impact of these scholars, and of most Black scholars, means looking beyond publications and the academic setting and considering the significance of the contexts in which they were actively working to create positive, affirming environments for Black students.

Black people are not a monolithic group. Future work that centers on Black voices and Afrocentric epistemologies must do so from an intersectional lens, recognizing that racial experiences in the U.S. are synergistically connected to gender, social class, immigration, sexual orientation, and many other historically minoritized lived experiences. The histories shared in this article highlighted how systemic racism has detrimentally impacted Black youth in schools. The next step is to consider how Black experiences intersect with other important cultural experiences and, looking

Figure 1
Historical Timeline



Note. Historical timeline of legal cases, landmark events, and critical contributions of Black educational psychologists impacting Black education.

toward the future, create innovative opportunities for teaching and learning for Black students.

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