

Research Week Abstract Instructions and Template
Posters and Presentations

Title – A Phenomenological Study of the Factors that Motivate Black Students’ Enrollment in Advanced Placement Courses

Program of Study – Education

Presentation Type –Poster (Remote)

Subtype –Applied

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Abstract:

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the motivations for Black students to enroll in advanced placement courses in the United States. The theory guiding this study is Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development (1979). Much of the literature associated with Black students in advanced placement courses focuses on the underrepresentation of Black students in the program and the factors that deter their enrollment. Few studies explore the lived experiences of Black students in rigorous coursework and their motivation. The central question that framed the study is: “What influences Black students’ decisions to enroll in advanced placement courses?” The criteria to participate in the study were to be at least 18 years old, Black, and have taken at least one AP class. Twelve participants from 4 different regions of the United States were involved in the study. Data was collected through one-on-one interviews, journal entries, and 1 focus group interview. Data was analyzed using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method. The results of the data revealed that Black students enroll in advanced placement courses due to educational influences, parental influence, the desire for rigor, college preparation, and peer influence. The study demonstrates that expectations, knowledge, and motivations within the microsystems and mesosystems have a positive impact on Black students’ enrollment in advanced placement courses. Implications drawn from the study are: Black students are inclined to follow the academic paths of their peers, Black students want to dispel myths that

they cannot be successful in AP courses, and Black students should share their perspectives and experiences with AP classes with other Black students. Recommendations for future studies include examining the motivation of Hispanic/Latino students to enroll in AP courses, and exploring the cultural competency professional development of teachers.