

Unpacking the Concept of School Belonging with Educators in Predominantly Black and Latinx Schools: Practical Considerations for Educational Psychologists

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Abstract: In this presentation, we propose that existing literature on school belonging serves as a critical lever that educational psychologists can use to (1) contribute to a race-reimagined view of educational psychology, (2) engage in public discourse on role of psychological processes in curriculum and instruction, and (3) make psychology a brand that education stakeholders can trust. Guided by findings from an ongoing research-practice partnership in two urban middle schools that are predominantly Black and Latinx, we outline actionable steps for leading the next frontier of research at the intersection of culture, belonging, and motivation. We place a special emphasis on opportunities to support ongoing efforts in the areas of curriculum reform and teacher professional development. This line of inquiry also has implications for the way educational psychologists collaborate with teacher educators to design interventions aimed making schools places where all students want to be and want to learn.



Bio: Dr. Gray's research program examines how adolescents and emerging adults perceive and interpret their social encounters in achievement contexts, and whether these mental representations account for their achievement beliefs and behaviors. Currently, his research program is comprised of two components. The first component includes investigations highlighting the role of social identity processes in achievement contexts, particularly in terms of students' strivings to "stand out" and "fit in" within their peer circles. The second component of Dr. Gray's research focuses on understanding students' judgments about socializers (e.g., teachers, parents, and mentors), and students' interpretations of the messages that these socializers convey about scholastic achievement. Dr. Gray's research program ultimately will serve as a platform for collaborating with practicing teachers and administrators on initiatives that encourage students to make engaging in scholastic activities a priority. He received his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the Ohio State University.