

## Book Review: Teaching Men of Color in the Community College: A Guidebook

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Wood, J. L., Harris, F., III, & White, K. (2015). *Teaching Men of Color in the Community College: A Guidebook*. Montezuma Publishing. San Diego, California. Pages: xvii + 90  
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*Teaching Men of Color in the Community College: A Guidebook* by J. Luke Wood and others provides a beneficial blend of providing practical strategies for advancing the retention and success rates and exploring research related to men of color in the community college. This work is especially timely given that policy makers and higher education admistrators are being held increasingly accountable for the improvement of outcomes for all community college students.

Community Colleges provide the primary passageway into postsecondary education for men of color. Statistics reveal that almost seventy-five percent (75%) of African-American and Latino men begin their public post secondary education at community colleges. Challenges facing these men of color in community colleges are evidenced by outcome gaps between them and their White and Asian counterparts. The authors report staggering statistics about the outcomes of African-American and Latino men who attend community college such as completion and transfer rates within a six year time-frame.

Given the total number of men of color in community colleges, the colleges' commitment to open door education and local community needs, these institutions are positioned to design new life opportunities for men of color and their families. Still, doing so would necessitate momentous building among the community college instructional leaders, primarily those that readily interrelate with these men in the classroom.

*Teaching Men of Color in the Community College: A Guidebook*, emphasizes a demonstrated plot to empower community colleges professionals to support the teaching and learning activity of men of color in advancing student success. This plan is accomplished by confronting common barriers faced by men of color, promising practices for teaching and learning, recommendations for instructional leadership and an inventory tool to measure institution's cultural level in support of men of color.

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## BOOK REVIEW: TEACHING MEN OF COLOR

The approaches presented in this guidebook are derived from the following sources:

- Extensive research on men of color in community colleges;
- Interviews conducted with 35 men of color to determine factors that influenced their success in community colleges from their perspectives;
- Data of success collected from men of color who had transferred from a community college to a four-year institution and earned a bachelor's degree;
- Quantitative data employed from the Community College Survey of Men (CCSM);
- Twenty-seven (27) faculty members with certain criterion who were highly noted for success in serving men of color from historically underrepresented groups.

Foremost, the authors want to ensure that the strategies recommended for educating men of color line-up with strategies that work for all students but due to societal pressures, external life challenges, and alienating campus climates, men of color significantly benefit from the guidebook's teaching strategies and approaches. Secondly, the authors state that all faculty members' regardless of their racial/ethnic or gender background can effectively teach men of color.

Part I delivers the necessary contextual foundation to engage the teaching and learning content presented in this guidebook. In laying the foundation, three primary areas of focus are addressed:

- Factors necessitating enhanced teaching and learning strategies;
- Institutional responsibility perspective on student success; and
- Socio-Ecological Outcomes (SEO) model that guides the conceptualization of factors that influences outcomes for men of color in community colleges.

This foundation for teaching and learning engagement was developed as a result of faculty leader's identifying factors of personal and institutional challenges that affect the success of men of color. Also, Part I will facilitate institutions to grasp strategies for men of color that are essential due to their experiences with external pressures, racial-gender stereotypes, inadequate preparation for collegiate work, and male gender socialization.

The purpose of Part II in this work presents and examines effective practices that can be developed by faculty in building bonds with men of color. Integration of these practices will be expected to create greater rapport with men of color. As a result, faculty should observe greater levels of engagement, persistence, and achievement among these students. The significance of enhanced relationships rooted in trust, mutual respect, and authentic care was a leading theme in the data that were collected from faculty leaders. Throughout chapter II, the holistic approaches outlined serve to foster relationships and these relationships are an integral foundation to student success for men of color.

Part III enlightens promising teaching practices identified by faculty leaders. Here, the authors describe certain messages as effective communication by faculty that tends to be successful counters to life barrier experiences and empower men of color in the classroom learning environment.

In addition, Part III identifies four areas of teaching excellence (e.g., content relevancy, critical reflection, collaborative learning, and performance monitoring). Also, certain practices are noted in this chapter that prove successful by faculty members contributes to improve

outcomes for men of color in the community college. These four areas can have an intensified benefit to men of color's success due to external pressures in their lives, preK-12 experiences of classroom marginalization, and the socialization of men of color in wider society.

### **New Understandings**

In this guidebook, there are offerings of recommendations to instructional leaders as to how they can better encourage faculty members to effectively teach men of color. Recommendations range from professional development, revising hiring practices, revealing hidden assumptions on policies in practices in place and more.

It is interesting to note that *Teaching Men of Color in the Community College: A Guidebook* explores how the Community College Student Success Inventory (CCSSI) that can be used by institutional leaders in determining readiness to serve men of color. Institutions can use this valid inventory to determine their areas of strength and those in need of improvement. The CCSSI also serves as 'roadmap' (p. 78) on new approaches for continuous improvement rather than to 'target' (p. 79) specific areas or individuals. Also, it clearly indicates that faculty members are in strategic positions to boost men of color. The chapters are designed to be read independently of each other and still serve as a resource. The book is a valuable tool of instructional enlightenment for community colleges to broaden their mission to positively impact the retention and graduation success for men of color. To be sure, *Teaching Men of Color in the Community College: A Guidebook* should not be left on a shelf in the office of student enrollment to collect cobwebs, but in the hand of every academician for greater retention so that men of color can be added to the ranks of those who add to the wide body of knowledge.