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Dr. Nicole M. Joseph is an associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Vanderbilt University. She is also the Director of the Joseph Mathematics Education Research Lab. Her research explores two lines of inquiry: (a) Black women and girls, their identity development, and their experiences in mathematics; (b) Whiteness, White Supremacy, and how it operates and shapes the underrepresentation of Black women and girls in mathematics.

In Making Black Girls Count in Math Education: A Black Feminist Vision for Transformative Teaching, Dr. Joseph argues that Black girls face significant challenges in mathematics education. The underrepresentation of Black girls in advanced math courses and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) careers is a problem that has continued for decades (Collins et al., 2020). Dr. Joseph draws on her extensive research career using focus groups, historical analysis, interviews, and surveys to explore the reasons for this underrepresentation and offers strategies for addressing the issue (Bio. 2023).

The book focuses on the challenges faced by Black girls in mathematics education. Dr. Joseph explores how societal and cultural biases intersect with race and gender to create barriers to success for Black girls. The book highlights how Black girls internalize the stereotypes and prejudices that exist in society, which can lead to a lack of confidence and motivation in mathematics. Dr. Joseph also highlights the importance of representation, particularly the need for Black female role models in mathematics to inspire and encourage Black girls to pursue advanced math courses and careers.

Dr. Joseph emphasizes the systemic barriers to Black girls' math education, including lack of access to resources, tracking and placement practices, and teacher biases. Dr. Joseph argues that these barriers contribute to the underrepresentation of Black girls in advanced math courses and STEM careers. One example explicitly explored by Dr. Joseph is that the complex process of creating and adopting mathematics curricula in K-12 is “rarely informed by empirical research problematizing Black girls’ mathematics learning” (Joseph, 2020, p.53). Dr. Joseph attributes the exclusion to decision-makers not viewing this as important data. One impact of this oversight is that the “official” mathematical knowledge will not be culture-free or unbiased but will, in fact, be “situated in long histories of educational inequities” that will be propagated through teachers in thousands of state districts or schools across the country (Joseph, 2020, p.54).

The book offers strategies for creating more inclusive and equitable mathematics classrooms. Dr. Joseph emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive teaching, which involves recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds and experiences. The book provides examples of culturally responsive teaching practices that should be used to construct more inclusive math classrooms, such as incorporating students’ cultural backgrounds into math lessons and using united learning approaches. Dr. Joseph also stresses the importance of teacher training and professional development in addressing issues of equity and inclusion in mathematics education. The book highlights the need for teachers to examine their biases and beliefs about Black girls and work toward creating a more welcoming and supportive learning environment for all students.

Throughout the book, Dr. Joseph provides examples of how Black girls have succeeded in mathematics despite the obstacles. Black girls who are taught mathematics through instruction routines rather than memorization and speed are able to develop their math
proficiency. Also, the use of “authentic pedagogy,” a term coined by Keonya Booker and Jae Hoon Lim, which uses instructional methodologies to make mathematics relevant to the students, has been shown to have an impact on Black girls' mathematical identities. One student in the study, Dalia, explains how she associated decimals with money and fractions with cooking, providing her positive associations and familiarity with these concepts. This story, and others like it, provides a powerful counter-narrative to the pervasive stereotypes about Black girls' abilities in mathematics. Dr. Joseph also highlights the critical role parents and community members can play in supporting Black girls' success in mathematics.

Dr. Joseph provides a unique perspective on the intersectionality of race and gender in the experiences of Black girls in mathematics education. The book demonstrates how the biases and stereotypes that Black girls face are compounded by their gender and race, making it even more difficult for them to succeed in mathematics. Dr. Joseph's analysis is grounded in extensive research, and she provides numerous examples and case studies to support her arguments.

This book is an essential resource for educators, policymakers, and parents committed to ensuring all students have access to high-quality mathematics education. In conclusion, Making Black Girls Count in Math Education is a powerful and insightful book addressing a critical mathematics education issue. Dr. Joseph's analysis is well-researched and thought-provoking, and her recommendations offer a roadmap for creating more equitable and inclusive mathematics classrooms. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in equity and justice in education.

References
