

AMIRAH SAAFIR, PH.D.

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Professional Appointments

California State University, Fullerton

August 2021—present

Assistant Professor

Child and Adolescent Studies

Education

University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA)

Ph.D.: Education

September 2020

Howard University

BS: Psychology

2012

Research Experience

Graduate Researcher

UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies

2013 to 2020

- Explored the impact of school ethnic context on school adjustment outcomes for 6-12th grade public and private school students from diverse backgrounds with an emphasis on students from marginalized backgrounds.
- Mined data from the California Department of Education to understand school ethnic and socioeconomic contextual factors and merged with data on related psychosocial and academic adjustment variables.
- Cleaned and pruned data from 26 middle schools and 200+ high schools with 6000+ students and 7 time points
- Performed longitudinal data analysis on the impact of school contextual factors on adolescent socioemotional well-being.
- Performed data analysis techniques including t-tests, correlations, linear regression, univariate and multivariate analysis of variance (ANOVA), and multivariate latent growth analysis.
- Wrote syntax for variable computation, coding, merging, and analyses using SPSS, SAS, M Plus & Stata
- Drafted doctoral dissertation, which examines racial identity as a source of resilience for Black students with a particular emphasis on the impact of changes in school ethnic context over time on racial identity development.
- Co-authoring 2 peer reviewed articles on educational disparities in 6-12th grade.
- Presented at 10+ local and national conferences including American Education Research Association.

Graduate Researcher

2015 to 2016

UCLA, Peer Relations Project – Los Angeles, CA

- Managed and cleaned data set of 1,000+ students
- Lead data collection for small-scale study at 3 Southern California middle schools surveying 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students on their attitudes and understandings of race, gender, and sexual orientation
- Supervised and trained a team of research assistants on tasks such as data collection and entry
- Attended regular check in meetings with the principle investigator and other project leaders
- Advised undergraduates on other research related topics such as conducting literature reviews, developing research questions, and writing research proposals

Graduate Researcher

University of Pittsburgh Applied Developmental Psychology

2012 to 2013

- Conducted a mixed methods research study on the factors influencing parent childcare selection
- Transcribed and coded 25+ parent interviews
- Calculated inter rater reliability scores for transcript coding team
- Used NVIVO qualitative analysis software to identify key themes
- Cleaned and analyzed 100+ variable data set
- Performed factor analysis on 20+ item scale
- Presented mixed methods findings at 2013 Society for Research on Child Development Bi-Annual Meeting

Teaching and Mentorship

Course Instructor

2019 to 2020

California State University, Northridge (CSUN)

- Served as faculty instructor for a 16 week, 35 student on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Privilege in Educational Contexts.
- Developed multimedia lesson plans geared toward helping students unpack societal structures that impact student educational experiences and development
- Provided regular feedback student writing and presentations.
- 90% of students finished the course feeling confident in their ability to analyze and evaluate course theories and use them to critique real world situations.

Research Methods Workshop Instructor

2014 to 2016

Summer Training For Excellence In Education Research – Los Angeles, CA

- Developed and taught 8-week education research curriculum for HBCU undergraduates.
- Scaffolded student through the process of developing research questions, determining appropriate research methods, collecting and analyzing data, and interpreting and presenting findings.
- Supported students in successfully submitting abstracts to national conferences.

Workshop Instructor

2014 to 2016

Graduate-Undergraduate Mentorship Program—Los Angeles, CA

- Designed and taught 8-week workshop curriculum on applying to graduate school.
- Provided support and advice around the graduate school experience and application process; more than half of students went on to top graduate programs.
- Facilitated relationships among students and faculty mentors.

Work Experience Related to Applied Social Science Research

Program Director

2017 to 2020

Bruin Excellence & Student Transformation Grant Program—Los Angeles, CA

- Lead diverse, cross-functional team of mentors, organizers, and researchers in coordinating support for student activist leaders of color organizing around social justice issues impacting education including racial and gender discrimination, housing insecurity, and mass incarceration.

- Assisted in managing \$300,000+ program budget
- Awarded \$50,000 Spencer Foundation small research grant.
- Developed research reports and presentations for program stakeholders including, funding agencies, academic administrators, students, and community members.
- Used a data driven approach to develop programmatic features and leadership development curriculum that responds to the needs of student of color activists.
- Conducted program evaluation research including developing quantitative survey and qualitative interview protocol, conducting 30+ interviews and focus groups, and tracking the longitudinal growth of student leadership skills.
- Drafted a peer reviewed manuscripts exploring the experiences of student of color activists and the impact of social justice focused mentorship and leadership training.

School Records Project Manager

2013 to 2020

Middle and High School Diversity Project—Los Angeles, CA

- Coordinated collection, cleaning, and coding of student record data for a large scale study.
- Developed research partnerships with school administrators across Northern and Southern California and obtained school records data for 6,000 students across 26 middle schools and 200+ high schools.
- Mined data from the California Department of Education to understand ethnic and socioeconomic trends in schools and classrooms and merged to analyze with student records data from schools.
- Translated and disseminated research findings through newsletters for schools, synthesizing findings with education policy and reform literature.
- Communicated regularly with principle investigators and provided regular written reports and technical memoranda.
- Trained and supervised a diverse team of undergraduate and graduate students on data management tasks including data entry, coding, and cleaning.

Program Coordinator

2015 to 2017

Graduate-Undergraduate Mentorship Program – Los Angeles, CA

- Lead a diverse team of graduate and undergraduate students of color in developing resources and programming geared toward making graduate school more accessible for underrepresented students.
- Secured yearly program funding through grants and campus partnerships.
- Developed program evaluation surveys and analyzed and disseminated findings through research reports for program stakeholders and conference presentations.
- Developed relationships with campus partners and implemented long term strategic planning that led to achievement of program institutionalization.

Selected Recent Publications

Chen, X., **Saafir, A.**, & Graham, S. (2020) Ethnicity, Peers, and Academic Achievement: Who Wants to be Friends with the Smart Kids? *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. 1-13.

Saafir, A., & Graham, S. (in progress) Representation Matters: Perceptions of Change in Ethnic Representation and Racial Identity Development for Black Adolescents at the Transition to Highschool.

Selected Recent Presentations

Saafir, A., Graham, S., & Juvonen, J. (presented August 2020) Understanding the Role of Friends in Shaping Black Student's Perceptions of School Ethnic/Racial Context and Racial Identity. Paper presented at UCLA Annual Adolescent Consortium.

Saafir, A. & Graham, S. (accepted April 2020). Ethnic Identity Development for Black Adolescents Across the School Transition. Paper accepted to be presented at American Education Research Association Annual Meeting.

Saafir, A. & Graham, S. (presented March 2019). What Does it Mean to Be Black?: Ethnic Exploration, Racial Discrimination, & Perceptions of School Climate. Poster presented at Society for Research in Child Development Bi-Annual Meeting.

Graham, S. & **Saafir, A.** (presented April 2018) Social Identity Complexity as a Buffer of the Effects of Racial Discrimination on Multiethnic Middle School Students. Poster presented at the Society for Research on Adolescents Bi-Annual Meeting.

Saafir, A., Levy, H., & Graham, S. (presented April 2017). Ethnic Identity in Context. Paper presented at the American Education Research Association Annual Meeting.

Saafir, A. & Graham, S. (presented April 2016). The Color of Friendship: The Impact of Ethnic Identity on the Ethnic Composition of Adolescent Friend Groups. American Education Research Association Annual Meeting.

Saafir, A., Sandra Graham (March 2015). I'm Proud of Who I Am: Ethnic Pride as a Buffer Against the Impact of Low SES on Academic Achievement. Society for Research in Child Development Bi-Annual Meeting.

Selected Honors and Awards

UC-HBCU Fellow	2013-2017
Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship	2015
University of Pittsburgh Hot Metal Bridge Post-Baccalaureate Fellow	2013
NIMH Career Opportunities in Research Fellow (COR)	2012

Skills

- SPSS, SAS, Stata, MPlus, NVIVO, MAXQDA, & Qualtrics
- Large-scale and longitudinal data analysis
- Teaching and Mentorship
- Grant Writing