DR’s Diversity Committee’s Newsletter Spotlight presents four of our newest committee members. For this Spotlight we asked each of them to describe their background and share why they have chosen to lean into this critical work.

**Dr. Lakeisha Johnson** is an Assistant Professor in the Communication Science and Disorders program at Florida State University and an ASHA certified speech-language pathologist. Her primary research interests include language, literacy, dialect, and executive function development in African American children. Dr. Johnson believes in building and leveraging research-practice partnerships to ensure children from vulnerable and underserved populations obtain strong language and literacy skills. *My Why?* I am passionate about culturally responsive assessment and intervention practices and their use in determining eligibility for special education services. Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds bring unique experiences into the classroom and these experiences should be leveraged to help them best meet academic outcomes.

**Dr. Taicia González** is an Assistant Professor of Special Education at the University of Arizona. Her research addresses issues of equity and inclusion for dual language learners with and without learning disabilities using participatory methods including youth participatory action research. Her identity as a Chicana, mother-scholar shapes her research interests and activities. *My Why?* I joined the CEC Division for Research Diversity Committee because I am excited that Special Education, as a field, is beginning to attend more to issues of race, culture, and language differences. CEC is a critical venue for shaping the field, and being a DR Diversity Committee member is a way for me to contribute to advancing that momentum.

**Dr. Suki Jones Mozenter** is an Assistant Professor of Reading/Literacies in the Integrated Elementary & Special Education program at University of Minnesota Duluth. Her research interests include: student identities, literacies, and languaging practices; critical pedagogy in teacher education; and partnership work geared toward critical, systemic change. She is a researcher and teacher educator interested in understanding how students come to see themselves and each other as readers and writers. *My Why?* As a teacher, I saw the richness in my students and their communities, as well as how the schooling systems restricted this very same richness. I work with CEC’s DR Diversity Committee to center the richness of these intersectional identities and to amplify research that does the same.

**Dr. William Hunter** is an Associate Professor of Special Education at the University of Memphis. Dr. Hunter has worked as a special education teacher, administrator, and residential mental health intervention specialist. He has published in the areas of engagement, classroom management, culturally relevant pedagogy, instructional strategies, transition, and post-secondary instruction for students with exceptionalities. *My Why?* I look forward to serving on DR’s Diversity Committee as well as the CEC’s Project 20/20 committee. I see a need for intersectional research designed to examine the support of students from diverse (including marginalized) backgrounds that focuses on their assets versus their deficits. My aim is to be a thought partner to encourage research that focuses on equity and the promotion of an “educational community of learners”.

Originally published in the Division for Research *FOCUS ON RESEARCH* Newsletter, Winter 2021