Stanford



Derric I. Heck

Ph.D. Student in Education, admitted Autumn 2019

Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

Derric Ivan Heck, a PhD candidate from Brunswick, Georgia, is an educator, researcher, and advocate whose career reflects a lifetime of service and a steadfast commitment to fostering equity, belonging, and systemic transformation. Currently a doctoral student in the Race, Inequality, and Language in Education (RILE) program at Stanford University's Graduate School of Education, Derric's research focuses on equity and justice in education, emphasizing identity development, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and the lived experiences of educators and historically and contemporarily marginalized youth. Employing narrative and qualitative methodologies, he centers community voices to co-construct solutions to systemic inequities, exploring these dynamics within U.S. schools and global contexts connected to the African Diaspora.

Early in his career, Derric worked as an architectural designer at John A. Tuten and Associates, specializing in designing schools. This work instilled a thoughtful, holistic approach to creating environments that meet the needs of students, educators, and communities. Inspired by his upbringing as the son of educators, Derric transitioned from designing the physical spaces of schools to addressing the systems and policies that shape what happens within them.

Derric holds a Master of Education in Social and Comparative Analysis in Education, with an emphasis on international educational policy, from the University of Pittsburgh, and a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Studies from Florida A&M University. He was also a fellow of the Remaking Cities Institute at Carnegie Mellon University through the UDREAM program, where he worked at the Urban Redevelopment Authority to develop equitable development practices aimed at addressing the displacement of lower-resourced citizens in Pittsburgh.

His professional experience includes roles as a Graduate Research Assistant at Stanford's John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities and the Center for Urban Education at the University of Pittsburgh; a social impact consultant with the Common Group; and a Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Propel Schools Foundation. Additionally, Derric was awarded a Fulbright-Hays grant for research and curriculum development in partnership with Sodo-Wolaita University in Ethiopia, where he deepened his engagement with global education issues and cross-cultural collaboration.

As a commissioner of the Brunswick Housing Authority, Derric sought ways to better support families with K-12 students by encouraging targeted initiatives to address their unique needs. This work underscored his commitment to activating relationships between schools and the community, fostering collaboration to address systemic challenges.

Derric's scholarly contributions include publications on topics such as mental health counseling program implementation and critical race theory in teacher education. His active engagement with professional organizations, including the American Educational Research Association, the American Educational Studies Association, and the Pennsylvania Council for International Education, underscores his commitment to advancing equity and justice in education. Recognized for his leadership, Derric participated in the 2024 Black European Summer School in Amsterdam and has served as an advisor to the Black Men's Guild of Stanford University. Other community involvement has included support of the Carter G. Woodson Academy, the Young Preservationists Association, and the Harmony Square Learning Center.

With an interdisciplinary background, extensive international experiences, and deep ties to the places he calls home, he brings a holistic perspective to addressing educational disparities. Across his career, whether designing schools, engaging with policy, or conducting innovative research, his work reflects a thoughtful approach grounded in collaboration and a commitment to equity and belonging.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Member, American Educational Studies Association (2016 - present)
- Member, American Educational Research Association (2016 - present)
- Member, Pennsylvania Council for International Education (2016 - 2019)
- Editorial Staff Assistant, Urban Education, SAGE Publications (2016 - 2018)
- Member, 100 Black Men (2010 - 2015)

Research & Scholarship

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Achievement
- Diversity and Identity
- Educational Policy
- Equity in Education
- International and Comparative Education
- Leadership and Organization
- Parents and Family Issues
- Poverty and Inequality
- Professional Development
- Psychology
- Race and Ethnicity
- Research Methods
- School Choice
- Sociology
- Teachers and Teaching

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

My research focuses on educational equity, with an emphasis on the lived experiences of Black educators, identity development, and culturally sustaining pedagogy. I employ narrative and qualitative methodologies to explore how race and education intersect, centering marginalized youth and communities. My work also examines the interplay between school-community partnerships, teacher agency, and disciplinary practices, contributing to

a broader understanding of belonging, wellness, and justice in education. Additionally, I engage with global education policy and comparative education frameworks to connect local educational challenges to transnational struggles for equity.