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Journal of Urban Education

Focus on Enrichment

Spring 2010 Volume 7

Issue Number 1

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Journal of Urban Education: Focus on Enrichment

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The editors of *Journal of Urban Education: Focus on Enrichment* invite submission of original manuscripts which contains essential information for enrichment focus in urban schools. All manuscripts must be carefully edited before submission. Article submissions should not exceed 7 to 15 pages single-spaced 8.5" by 11" manuscript pages (roughly 6,500 to 7800 words), in a 12-point font and with one-inch margins. The manuscript must be typed utilizing Microsoft Word. Submissions should include three hard copies of the manuscript as well as a disk copy. Authors should include a separate cover page with their names, titles, institutions, mailing addresses, daytime phone numbers(s), fax number(s), e-mail addresses, and brief biographical sketches. Every effort should be made to ensure that, except for the cover sheet, the manuscript contains no clues to the authors' identity. The manuscript must be accompanied by a cover letter containing the name, address, and phone number of a contact author, as well as a statement that the manuscript is not under consideration elsewhere. The editors request that all text pages be numbered. The page length includes the "Footnotes" section (for substantive additions to the text which should be included at the end of the paper) and the "References" section (where full citations amplify the abbreviated in-text references for books or periodicals, e.g., alphabetized by author's name). References should include the most recent publications on your research topic. For writing and editorial style, authors must follow guidelines in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*. The editors reserve the right to make minor changes for the sake of clarity. Manuscripts should be sent to the Editor, *Journal of Urban Education: Focus on Enrichment*, Southern University at New Orleans, 6801 Press Drive, New Orleans, LA 70126.

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INTEGRATING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING INTO AN URBAN CURRICULUM: PROTECTION AGAINST THE BIG BAD WOLF

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Abstract: As a result of the federal IDEA act of 2004 encouraging the establishment of statewide Response to Intervention (RtI) systems a growing number of states are providing curriculum intended to develop the social and emotional skills of their students. Implementation, or expansion, of this component within the curriculum will be challenging for urban districts already striving to meet the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. This article examines the relevance and implications of integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) components in urban education.

Two long-distance runners approach their starting positions. One is poised at the line, peering straight ahead, alive with anticipation and flexing the arch of his high-performance track shoe. He begins to mentally map out each twist and turn on the course. Every fiber of his being has been prepared for this moment and he eagerly awaits the sound of the gun. His competition gazes at unfamiliar terrain and begins to feel uncertain. The sole on the bottom of his shoe has worn thin and may cause him to falter if the climb becomes steep. It usually does. Flinching at the loud report, he loses precious time. Raw talent cannot overcome the inequities in this race. The shame of failure is not alleviated by this awareness; it is absorbed within, because no one summons the courage to speak the truth on his behalf.

All too often our students in urban areas begin their race on a playing field that is anything but level. Children born into homes that possess fewer economic resources learn fewer words. They do not acquire language at the same rate as those whose family incomes afford them quality health care, quality day care programs, and a broad range of experiences which stimulate comprehension and language acquisition. Urban children living in low income areas are more likely to be raised in one-parent families struggling to meet daily needs, with little time for individualized atten-

tion and less access to community services. They are exposed to more violence and crime and therefore enter school with a host of issues that they cannot communicate, but nonetheless exist.

Many of those engaged in the process of education have never shared these experiences, or lack thereof. There is a failure to recognize, or validate, that what is not expressed is also a significant factor and will impact the foundation for healthy learning. Brain-based research has established the link between affect and cognition. We know that the greater a student's confidence and self-esteem, the more success he or she will likely enjoy, both in school and in life.

The focus of concern in recent years has been driven towards academic achievement and test scores. Monumental efforts have been made to collect data and utilize research-based programs to enhance and develop curricula. In most districts, formative assessments allow data teams to track student progress and provide differentiated instruction. Educators are becoming more proficient at identifying areas which may need support or remediation and providing opportunities that foster learning.

Why then, are so many urban districts still struggling with extremely high drop-out rates and increasing incidents of school violence? Recent research also reflects an inverse relationship between suicidal behaviors for African American and Latino youth, which are steadily rising, and those of the Caucasian population, which are declining (O'Donnell, O'Donnell, Wardlaw, & Stueve, 2004). Although progress has been achieved in the development of academic delivery systems, tacit reluctance remains to delve into the murky waters of affect and provide an integrated approach to enhancing the life-skills of students. If educators are truly concerned with preparing all minds for the 21st century, and not just those outside the city walls, it is vital to find the time and the courage to do so. All students should be sent to the starting line prepared.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Response to Intervention (RtI) emerged as a result of the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 and is also supported by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of 2001. It is a multi-tiered model for improving student achievement by providing early identification and research-based interventions. A primary goal is to pre-

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vent the over-identification of students in need of special education services. Accordingly, schools have been given authority to allocate up to fifteen percent of their special education budgets towards providing additional interventions for all students, regardless of special education status (Samson, 2009).

Persistent concerns voiced by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) regarding the disproportionately high numbers of minority and English as a second language (ELL) students labeled have caused urban educators to examine procedures for determining special education eligibility. Inadequate instruction, class management issues and absenteeism are variables which need to be recognized and addressed, not a cause for determination. Nor should a child who has through no fault of his own been denied exposure to affective support systems be labeled as emotionally disturbed, or identified as a behavior problem.

In response to this issue a growing number of states involved in the implementation of RtI are also developing a multi-tiered intervention process for behavioral supports, which includes a component for enhancing the social and emotional learning capacity of students at the tier 1 level. This preventative measure is based on the premise that there is a direct link between social and emotional health and academic achievement. (Viadero, 2007)

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as a process for helping students develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. SEL promotes the character qualities that will produce healthy and productive relationships. Their primary focus for engaging students in this type of learning is to promote the ability to manage our emotions and understand how they impact the choices we make, establish positive relationships, resolve conflicts appropriately, develop empathy, and face difficult situations responsibly and ethically. These skills are seen as vital to academic success, as well, because they impact areas of our affective domain, which in turn stimulates the desire to learn (Rose, 2003).

SEL programs generally work to develop core competencies in the areas of self-identity, self-management, problem solving and decision making, as well as

communication and relationships. In 2003 CASEL conducted a study of 80 different programs implemented across the United States. They were evaluated based on components of their design, instructional practices, effectiveness, implementation supports and inclusiveness of the learning environment. The results highlighted twenty-two programs that documented positive outcomes through the use of pre and post measures, comparison groups and measures of behavioral outcomes (Collaborative For Academic & Social and Emotional Learning, 2003).

A three year collaborative research effort is also being conducted (2008-2011) to review and identify valuable strategies and instruments for assessing student SEL, contextual elements leading to positive outcomes and ways to effectively use data collected.

WHY SHOULD WE FOCUS ON SEL AT SCHOOL?

The process of learning that we engage in within our schools is, in fact, a social process (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). Students interact with teachers, their peers and the school community. The quality of these interactions depends upon their ability to integrate SEL skills. The ability to problem-solve difficult situations will increase one's tolerance for ambiguity and critical thinking skills. A student who has developed mechanisms for handling personal frustrations will be more likely to push themselves harder to achieve and less likely to become disillusioned or drop out of school.

BRAIN FUNCTIONS AND SEL

Brain-based research emerging over the past ten years is changing the way we view brain functions. Rather than regarding them as separate domains, research is indicating that the amygdala, which houses the emotional part of our brain, is integrated in the process of storage for the cerebral cortex (Rose, 2003). This supports, from a neurological perspective, what educators have known all along: Students remember more and for longer periods when they are emotionally engaged in the learning experience. When we tap into emotions and real-world experiences in the classroom we increase the likelihood that students comprehend and retain information (Covino, 2002).

This theory also supports the premise that attention to

the affective domain is essential to learning. Students who are unable to engage emotionally are often preoccupied with other concerns. A leading child psychologist, Dr. Maurice Elias states:

Many of the problems in our schools are the result of social and emotional malfunction and debilitation from which too many children have suffered and continue to bear the consequences. Children in class who are beset by an array of confused or hurtful feelings cannot and will not learn effectively. In the process of civilizing and humanizing our children, the missing piece is, without doubt, social and emotional learning. Protestations that this must be outside of and separate from traditional schooling are misinformed, harmful and may doom us to continued frustration in our academic mission and the need for Herculean efforts in behavioral damage control and repair. The roster of social casualties will grow ever larger (p. 2).

UNDERSTANDING THE RESISTANCE

Urban school districts are under close scrutiny and pressured to meet yearly progress demands as reflected in mandated state test scores. The negative trickle-down effect of these mandates causes administrators and teachers alike to be wary of losing instructional time to a domain which they perceive to be somewhat nebulous and without academic value. In fact, this very lack of commitment on the part of educators has contributed to the demise of some SEL programs. Bryan et al. states, "These programs have failed to establish their value, in part, because they are typically implemented weakly and lack coordination" (2007, p. 388). Providing an excellent curriculum is only half of the challenge. Gaining the support of administrators and staff will ultimately determine the quality of services rendered in any subject area. It will never suffice to plop a manual in front of an educator and say, "Just do it!" Teachers need to feel engaged and committed to content for effective delivery. Students are perceptive enough to know when this is not the case and they respond accordingly.

Another weakness of SEL implementation is program fragmentation. Rather than adopting a comprehensive framework for student development and achievement, many districts are relying upon individual programs. School districts are nationally engaged in an average of 14 different initiatives to combat identified problems and ensure the safety of their students. Each pro-

gram usually carries its own special vocabulary, or terminology, which can be confusing and unauthentic to students. This leads to an inability to transfer, or assimilate, classroom lessons into real world situations. "It is a mistake to address these problems in isolation instead of establishing holistic, coordinated approaches that effectively address academic performance mediators such as motivation, self-management, goal setting, engagement, and so forth" (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004, p. 194).

Understandably, implementing a comprehensive SEL program which is infused (not a separate entity) within the school community will require a paradigm shift on the part of educators. Undeniably, if this is achieved our students will be more prepared to meet the challenges of 21st century learners. Ultimately, however, the same question will resound in every big city across the nation, "What about the test scores?"

THE IMPACT OF SEL ON STANDARDIZED TESTING

In the past, when educators begrudgingly agreed to implement SEL initiatives the general consensus was that at least it wasn't going to hurt learning (Viadero, 2007). Recognizing that empirical evidence would legitimize support for SEL, CASEL spearheaded a large-scale research project to determine whether this was the case. Durlak and Weissberg (2008) received a grant to conduct a meta-analysis of 207 studies of SEL programs, representing more than 288,000 students from urban, suburban, and rural elementary and secondary schools.

Their findings indicate that despite using time in the school day, the programs did not detract from student performance. In fact, relative to those not involved in SEL programs, the students scored 11 percentile points higher on standardized achievement tests (CASEL, 2007).

Other findings of the study indicate that performance improved most significantly when the program was implemented by school staff and not outsiders, and that the degree to which the program was implemented had a strong influence on outcomes. "A clear implication of the new study is that effective SEL programming by school personnel must be supported by

coordinated state and educational policies, leadership, and professional development to foster the best outcomes" (CASEL, 2007).

More states are including a curriculum that proactively addresses the need for students to develop social and emotional learning skills. Programs that target specific areas of concern are extremely important, but it is more advantageous to perpetuate the health and stability of children in ways that may prevent them from turning to substance abuse, or violence, to begin with. One State's Response.

The framework for Response to Intervention (RtI) in Connecticut is referred to as Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI). The executive summary of the framework, released in February of 2008, includes 10 key components essential for providing "a coordinated, comprehensive, high quality system of education for all students" (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2008). Eight of the ten components are directed towards improving academic outcomes. Two are not. One of the key elements listed in that summary is the need to formulate culturally sensitive curriculum and the other refers to "A school-wide or district-wide comprehensive system of social-emotional learning and behavioral supports." This represents a shift in thinking at a policy level which would allow for differentiation based on the needs of a particular community and a more comprehensive view of educating the whole child.

Even where such a system already exists maintaining the integrity and commitment towards implementation is difficult to sustain, especially in urban areas where staff turnover is high and staff development is costly. New Haven, Connecticut, has been most fortunate to have a long-standing relationship with Yale University's School Development Program (SDP), founded by Dr. James Comer, in 1968. The strength of the SDP is its process orientation. It is not a quick fix, nor a program reflective of the latest trends in education. It has withstood the test of time because it is a framework based upon the solid foundations of child development and recognizes that the best way to empower staff is through a no-fault, consensus and collaborative decision making process. The SDP places emphasis upon viewing children holistically, as well as involving parents and the community in the educational process. It is a comprehensive program which adheres to the "It takes a village to raise a child" phi-

losophy, and recognizes the need for staff engagement, commitment and development to achieve successful implementation.

Fidelity to this program has been challenged by the climate of NCLB in recent years. Despite research based support and a sound theoretical basis, the SDP model struggles to remain rooted in the philosophical base of New Haven schools. Lack of time and resources has eroded the foundation. The process for integrating SRBI will begin in earnest in the fall of 2009. It is hoped that fidelity will govern the shift towards acknowledging SEL in Connecticut and data can then be collected to examine program effectiveness. Also, recent legislation regarding disciplinary policies within school settings should lend support towards the revitalization of a program which is proactive and preventative by its nature.

Other districts will need to re-examine and revitalize their efforts, as well. Preparing children for a global marketplace will require that educators recognize the need to build a broad range of skills, not excluding cultural awareness and peaceful conflict resolutions. Students who are more cognizant of social and emotional processes will have less difficulty accepting differences and will develop coping strategies that will enable them to adapt to new situations. This is part of the challenge to develop 21st century learners.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

We are ever in danger of relegating SEL to an isolated program rather than regarding it as a life-long learning process that should be integrated into an already existing curriculum. For reasons of sustainability and to grant the scope and sequence it deserves these skills should become part of the fabric of everyday school life. Selecting appropriate literature, examining the lives of exemplary individuals, providing opportunities for discourse and debate, engaging in service projects, action research, and learning how to mediate conflicts are just a few of the ways that we can develop students' higher order thinking skills while simultaneously addressing SEL curriculum. Beginning class with a brief morning meeting that creates a sense of community and grants the opportunity for a few students each day to share their joys and struggles can provide a healthy outlet for shared expression. It needn't be costly and it shouldn't be unauthentic, but

it will require dedication on the part of educators and support from the community.

MAKING THE LEAP OF FAITH

Admittedly, this effort will require a leap of faith on the part of administrators and perhaps, though recent studies may indicate otherwise, an appreciation for the "implementation dip that can occur whenever a new program, or focus is introduced (Fullan, 2001). The positive aspects of promoting the social and emotional learning of our children far outweigh the roadblocks that change can engender, however. Recognizing the uniqueness of urban education and the need to deviate, or differentiate, to serve the needs of our student population is part of our professional obligation. It does not diminish our status as educators; it challenges us to become more knowledgeable about the intricate workings of the human heart and mind. Brain-based research has legitimized the need to re-examine our delivery of services. When concern for the future of this nation's urban youth is permitted to surpass that of next year's test scores we will gain the capacity to envision a comprehensive response truly differentiated to meet the specific needs of the community we serve. Additional research examining the unique challenges that our students face must be completed to determine the best course of action. Though emerging brain-based research supports the link between cognition and SEL, further studies are necessary in this evolving field, as well. Most importantly, cultivating the desire of administrators and faculty to engage in this process must be achieved for a successful outcome. Research can help to substantiate its value, but those implementing the process will ultimately determine its success, or failure.

In the medical profession physicians acknowledge the fact that social and emotional health impacts physical and psychological well-being. In urban education we do our best to pretend that the relationship between affect and cognition does not exist because the implications of that knowledge are both politically uncomfortable and overwhelming. Research has proven that SEL can increase standardized test scores, but even if it didn't, would it be any less valuable to instill in our children? We can help to build equity at the starting line. The question remains, will educators embrace the time and effort necessary to ensure a fair race?

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SCHOOL COUNSELOR ADVOCACY: IDENTIFICATION AND RETENTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN GIFTED STUDENTS

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Abstract: This article explores the reasons traditionally underserved African-American students are not readily being identified, recruited, and selected for gifted education programs when they demonstrate gifted characteristics. Suggestions are given to redress the lack of training professional school counselors receive in handling the gifted education and the referral process, as well as the “deficit orientation” educators may hold regarding racially and culturally diverse students. Implications for future research are discussed.

The role of the professional school counselor in increasing the presence of African-American students in gifted education is crucial, yet appears undervalued. Professional school counselors are stakeholders in education, yet there is a paucity of scholarship that addresses the importance of the professional school counselor in identifying gifted and talented students. Several authors (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Bryan, 2005; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Lee, 2005) have contributed to the current research examining the professional school counselor’s role of advocate, champion of social justice, social change agent, and urban school counselor, in order to empower marginalized students to increase in achievement and to be successful (Mitcham-Smith & Bryant, 2006).

The lack of professional school counselors’ input in the

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referral process becomes more apparent when considering the underrepresentation of African-American students in gifted programs. In a study of the top 100 largest school districts in the United States, it was found that over 51% of the population under the age of 18 are from racially and culturally diverse backgrounds (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000), yet culturally diverse students are underrepresented in gifted education programs by as much as 70% (Gabelko & Sosniak, 2002). The controversial issue of low numbers of these diverse groups in gifted education persisted (Baldwin, 2001; Bernal, 2002; Brown, 1997; Evans, 1996; Feldhusen, 1998; Ford, 1998; Harris & Ford, 1999; Howells, 1998; Kornhaber, 1999; Rhodes, 1992; Worrell, Szarko, & Gabelko, 2001).

This article explores reasons traditionally underserved African-American students are not readily identified and recruited for gifted education programs. First, suggestions are given on how to combat the lack of training professional school counselors receive in handling gifted education and the referral process (Mitcham-Smith & Bryant, 2006), as well as the “deficit orientation” (Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman, 2002) educators may hold regarding racially and culturally diverse students. Second, a description of the referral process for gifted students and the myriad definitions of giftedness are presented. Finally, implications for teachers, school counselors and counselor educators are offered.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO UNDERREPRESENTATION

What is the reason for the lack of culturally diverse students in gifted education? Although they possess gifted characteristics, African-American students are not readily identified and recruited for gifted education programs. Extant literature suggests there is a “deficit under-representation orientation” held by educators that prevents them from recognizing gifted characteristics in African-American students (Ford et al., 2002). A review of the literature on underrepresentation in gifted education indicates that there are several factors that contribute to racially and culturally diverse representation, including the definitions of gifted, referral process, how giftedness is determined, and issues concerning retention (Ford & Grantham, 2003).

LACK OF CONSISTENT DEFINITIONS

Students with exceptional abilities are often labeled “gifted.” But what is “gifted”? Webster’s II Dictionary (2005) defines the term as “endowed with a special aptitude or ability” (p. 303). However, the definition fails to inform the reader of what qualifies as a “special aptitude or ability”. Many scholars (e.g., Anguiano, 2003; Clark, 2002; Ford, 1998, 2003; Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman 2002; Manning, 2006; Renzulli, 1986, 2003) have maintained that there is a lack of consistency in the definition of “gifted”.

Many definitions of “giftedness” are quantified and dichotomous (Ford, 2003). Renzulli (1986) questioned the term “giftedness” by stating that the term only referred to students being “above average” and did not take into account other qualities, such as creativity. The label “gifted” has been said to be used to indicate high intellectual or academic achievement (Manning, 2006). A student is considered to be “gifted and talented” when he or she performs at, or has the potential to perform at a higher intellectual capability than other students of the same age (Anguiano, 2003). One of the first people to use the term was Terman in 1925 who identified students who were “gifted” by whether or not they scored within the top two percent in general intelligence on the Binet test or a similar measure of giftedness (Manning, 2006).

While many definitions equate giftedness to the students’ test ability or potential to perform higher than their peers in various academic settings, other definitions continue to measure giftedness by IQ or test taking performance and scores. In this case, gifted students are those who have a certain IQ or achievement score. To identify “gifted” students, some schools use a variety of intelligence tests, achievement tests, or both (Ford, 2003).

Disagreement over the definition of giftedness still confounds the field of gifted education. In 1993, the U.S. Department of Education issued a culturally sensitive definition of giftedness:

Children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capacity in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, and unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific aca-

ademic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor (U.S. Department of Education website, 2006).

The 1993 federal definition elucidates the notion of talent development and recognizes that some students face more barriers in life than others by including the word “potential” (Ford et al., 2002). Before the new definition, most states adopted the 1978 definition which did not mention issues of diversity. The most recent definition reminds educators that giftedness exists in all groups. Although the federal definition is one that is inclusive, unbiased, impartial, and unprejudiced, states are still not required to adopt the definition. In moving from state to state, a student may be considered “gifted” in one state and allowed to participate in gifted programs. However, in another state, the same student may be denied the opportunity to participate because he or she does not meet that state’s criterion for “giftedness.”

In reviewing definitions of “giftedness” on the Davidson’s Institute for Talent Development (2006) website, it was found that distinct definitions between states exist. For example, Georgia’s definition of “giftedness” is:

A student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability (ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities (p.86).

To the contrary, the definition in California views the student in a more holistic manner in determining “giftedness”. We often assume the things that we do not know. With such inconsistent definitions, giftedness becomes equated with high achievement or demonstrated performance. In schools which follow this philosophy, gifted students must be able to demonstrate tangible evidence of high achievement in the form of grades and high test scores. Otherwise they are unlikely to be identified for gifted programs (Ford, 2002).

THE REFERRAL PROCESS

The “gate keeper” through which students become eligible for official evaluation for entry into gifted pro-

grams is the referral process (McBee, 2006). Most school districts require that a student be referred or nominated before being formally assessed for gifted program placement (Anguiano, 2003; Davis & Rimm, 2004; McBee, 2006). Students who do not receive a referral or teacher recommendation will be unable to enter the program no matter what formal assessment procedures are used to identify giftedness, which may pose a particular problem if teachers lack adequate preparation.

LACK OF TEACHER TRAINING

Due to the over-reliance of teacher referrals and recommendations, the lack of teacher training in gifted education has become a concern (Elhoweris, Kagendo, Negmeldin, & Holloway, 2005; Rhodes, 1992). One of the first classic studies on teacher nominations was conducted by Pegnato and Birch in 1959. Through comparing a variety of screening methods on the basis of effectiveness, percentage of nominated students, efficiency, and the percentage of gifted children nominated by screening methods, they concluded that teacher judgment was a poor method of screening students for individual testing (Ford, 1998; Grantham & Ford, 2003). Teacher judgment was only 45% effective. Much scholarship indicates that teachers are less effective and less accurate than parents in recognizing students who require gifted education services (Ford, 1998; Ford et al., 2002). Similarly, an earlier study by Karnes and Whorton (1991) indicated that teachers receive little or no training to identify "giftedness" and as a result, teachers cannot be considered a reliable source for identifying gifted learners and nominating them for gifted programs. Too often, educators and administrators are not knowledgeable in identification of gifted students. Moreover, teacher nominations may not be an accurate indicator of possible giftedness because a student who does not always receive all A's or is not the best behaved may very well be gifted, but is not nominated for gifted screening (Anguiano, 2003).

LACK OF MINORITY EDUCATORS

Not only are African-American students underrepresented in gifted education, but culturally diverse professional school counselors and teachers are also scarce. The growth of ethnic and minority student

enrollment is creating a critical need for minority teachers to provide positive role models for the students (Tomorrow's Teachers, 2002). According to the Tomorrow's Teachers and U.S. Department of Commerce data, more than one-third of students in today's public schools are people of color; by the year 2025, half will be persons of color. Meanwhile, only 13 percent of their teachers are minority. More than 40 percent of schools across America have no teachers of color on staff (Ford, Grantham, & Harris, 2000). Furthermore, when teachers of color are missing, minority students are frequently placed in special education classes other than gifted, have higher absentee rates, and tend to be less involved in school activities (Ford et al., 2000). Other experts argue that a lack of minority teachers hampers staff's ability to relate to a diverse student body and boost parental involvement (Tomorrow's Teachers, 2002).

Ford (1999) found that minorities are underrepresented in the teaching profession despite the fact that the student population is becoming even more diverse. The article indicated that 41% of the student population is minorities, while only 15% of the teacher population is comprised of the culturally diverse. Ford stated that the need for minority teachers is vital in gifted education as they are adept at mentoring and advocating for minority students. Likewise, minority students profess to identify more with school when they have minority teachers. Ford, Grantham, and Harris (1996) contended that by enlisting minority teachers to model professional behaviors to students of all ethnic and racial backgrounds, it could help resolve some of the underrepresentation that exists in many gifted programs. Minority gifted teachers will expose students to the perspectives that minority instructors bring to the classroom.

ATTITUDES AND BELIEF SYSTEMS

School Counselors' Attitudes

Increasing school counselors' awareness and competence in multiculturalism has become to be recognized as an area of professional development (Constantine, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) presents position statements articulating the inclusion of multicultural awareness among counselors and the need for counselors to be culturally competent. The Education Trust's

Transforming School Counselor's Initiative's mission statement states:

Everyone working in school systems has a critical role to play in helping schools meet the needs of underserved students, especially school counselors. Compelling data underscore the need for school counselors to work effectively to improve academic results for low-income students and students of color (Education Trust, 2006).

These positions suggest that counselor education programs require significantly more training in multicultural competence (Rayle & Myers, 2004; Taylor & Adelman, 2000). In order to meet the needs of all students, professional school counselors are required to deliver comprehensive school guidance. Eschehanuer and Chen-Hayes (2005) argued that the needs of students, families, and educators located in urban areas have outgrown the traditional individual-focused model of school counseling. Similarly, Bemak and Chung (2005) suggested that school counselors need to take a more active role by becoming leaders and change agents by infusing advocacy into their work and training; this is due to some old practices being outdated and obsolete in terms of being effective for all students. This role calls for professional school counselors to be advocates and take on many roles, such as team facilitators and collaborators with members of their schools, families, and communities (Bemak, 2000; Bryan, 2005).

School counselors are in a unique position not only to work with children, but to initiate conversations concerning some of the issues raised in educating at-risk, gifted, and under-identified gifted students (Gentry, 2006). Lee (2005) stated that specific competencies are needed to effectively address the personal, interpersonal and structural challenges of students in urban areas. Lee suggested that school counselors in these areas should:

- Have the awareness, knowledge, and skills to work with the culturally diverse.
- Base their individual and group counseling skills on helping students build empowerment and help students develop positive attitudes toward school.
- Focus on understanding the systems (family system, political system, criminal justice system) in which the students live.

- Intervene in social systems to help their students if needed.
- Work with other educational professionals to promote student development.
- Be in the forefront of developing educational initiatives that promote the development and academic achievement of students.

With this said, it is vital for professional school counselors to acknowledge and recognize that underrepresentation of racially and culturally diverse students in gifted education is a problem and one that they can help to solve.

In an empirical study, Mitcham-Smith (2005) investigated the role of the professional school counselor, the perception of the role, and school counselor self-efficacy. The data reported significant findings in perceptions regarding promoting diversity agendas. African Americans and Whites differed significantly when asked how important promoting diversity and multicultural agendas were as a role for school counselors. African-American school counselors perceive promoting diversity and multicultural agendas as being significantly more important than Whites. Moreover, African-American school counselors performed this role more often than White school counselors. African-American school counselors reported that professional development in promoting diversity and multicultural agendas would enhance their performance as a school counselor. Conversely, White school counselors indicated that professional development in promoting diversity and multicultural agendas would not enhance their performance.

Teachers' Attitudes

The referral process has become a potential source of unfairness in gifted education (Elhoweris et al., 2005). The principle barrier to the recruitment and retention of African-American students in gifted education is the pervasive deficit orientation that exists in society and its educational institutions (Ford et al., 2002). The deficit perspective exists whereby students who are culturally different from their White counterparts are viewed as culturally deprived or disadvantaged. This perspective keeps educators from recognizing the gifts and talents of African-American students (Ford et al., 2002). A study by Burstein and Cabello (1989) found that teachers believed that poor academic achievement

and performance among minority students was a result of cultural deficit. Similarly, McBee (2006) found that inequalities in the nomination procedure may be one of the primary reasons for under-representation of minorities in gifted education. The study concluded that Asian and White students were much more likely to be nominated than Black or Hispanic students when analyzing demographic information, gifted nomination status, and gifted identification status for all elementary school students in the state of Georgia. A study by Elhoweris et al. (2005) on the effect of children's ethnicity on teachers' referral and recommendation decisions for gifted education programs found that students' ethnicity did make a negative difference in the teacher's referral decisions.

Teachers often bring to the decision making process their own assumptions of what is giftedness. The attitudes and unjustified beliefs that some teachers hold may limit access and opportunities for students to participate in gifted programs. This is affected by the ideology behind what educational professionals determine to be "gifted" or "intelligent." Because of the idea some educators may have about intelligence being natural and static, it is less likely that racially and culturally diverse students will be referred (Ford & Grantham, 2003), specifically if the belief is that racially and culturally diverse students are not as intelligent as White students. Elhoweris et al. (2005) found that when teachers were given equivalent descriptions of a child with gifted characteristics whose ethnicity was labeled as African-American and a child whose ethnicity was not labeled, teachers were more likely to refer the nonlabeled child to gifted education.

Ford's (1999) review of the literature indicated that teachers often attribute behaviors such as cooperation, answering correctly, neatness, and punctuality as criterion for making referrals. What happens when gifted racially and culturally diverse students do not demonstrate these behaviors? Deficit thinking among teachers, administrators, and school counselors may increase the misunderstanding of characteristics in those that are culturally different (Ford et al., 2005). Ford et al. (2003) also noted that characteristics such as verve and movement, which is common in African American students, may be misinterpreted as hyperactivity. Students who are culturally different may be perceived to be dysfunctional and their values and practices may be viewed as "abnormal" or "incorrect"

(Ford, Moore, & Milner, 2005). These negative perceptions of racially and culturally diverse students held by teachers can result in a shortage of referrals for minority students to be evaluated for gifted education. Consequently, this action denies racially and culturally diverse students access to challenging programs.

Students' Attitudes

Ford et al. (2003), articulated that many of the concerns of gifted students include pressure from their peers resulting in poor peer relationship, the goal of working toward perfectionism due to expectations from significant others, and confusion about their gifts. However, these concerns are intensified for gifted Black students, especially where anti-achievement is an attempt to maintain cultural identity and avoid social isolation (Ford & Harris, 1995). A student's connection with school and the ability to identify with academics is very important in determining whether he or she will remain in school and graduate.

According to Ford et al. (2003), Black students who lack positive or healthy racial identity are likely to succumb to negative peer pressure; of being accused of "acting white." Gifted minority children find that they must choose between academic success and social acceptance. They are frequently alienated and isolated from both Black and White students (Ford et al., 2003). Being singled out makes Black students feel alienated and limits their interest in gifted programs (Grantham, 2004). Gifted African-Americans often go to the extreme of sabotaging their academic careers by refusing to be placed in gifted programs because their friends would not be present in the classes (Ford, 1996).

Ogbu's (1992) cultural inversion is the tendency for involuntary minorities to regard certain behaviors as inappropriate for them because they are characteristics of White Americans. Ogbu defines involuntary minorities as people who were originally brought into the United States or any other society against their will...through slavery, conquest, colonization, or forced labor.

The behaviors involuntary minorities value are usually the opposite of that of whites, and therefore, more appropriate for them. This has a great deal to do with explaining how involuntary minorities, such as Native

Americans and African Americans, approach schooling. This leaves many otherwise high achieving Black students to experience achievement dissonance or a conflict with what is expected of them and of what they are actually capable. An earlier study by Kunjufu (1985) concluded that some Black youths concealed their academic achievements for the fear they would be labeled as "acting white." Students were often forced to choose between being popular among peers or achieving academically. A later study by Steinberg (1996) also argued that Black youth's presumption that academic success is incompatible with Black identity is the cause for the achievement disparities between Black and White students. Peterson-Lewis and Bratton (2004) found that some high achieving Blacks were complimented by apparently well-meaning White authority figures external to their schools for their high academic performance by telling them that they did "not really seem Black".

Steele's (1997) stereotype threat is also important to consider. Stereotype threat exists when one faces a situation in which one's performance could confirm the negative stereotype about one's group, and this threat may further impair performance in the domain of interest. For example, if a student is constantly told by peers or teachers that Black students do not perform as well as White students, the student may engage in off-task cognitions and then begin to conform to the stereotype; performing poorly because he or she is expected to do so. Steele and Arson's (1995) study supported the stereotype threat hypothesis. In this study students were placed in both diagnostic and nondiagnostic testing situations. The study concluded that Black students had lower test scores than whites when all students were asked to identify their race before taking the test, but the students showed similar performance when racial identity was not requested.

MULTICULTURAL PREPARATION

Students' cultural background, extra-curricular activities, native language, personality and maturity must all be considered when making referrals for gifted education. This can be accomplished by providing multicultural preparation for educators. Multicultural education preparation among all school personnel, including teachers, counselors, psychologists, administrators and support staff may aid in helping to in-

crease the recruitment and retention of African American students in gifted education (Ford et al, 2002). The input from the students' parents, teachers, the school counselors, and other professionals should be considered when screening and testing for gifted education. Professional school counselors and teachers must be cognizant of any biases, deficit thinking or closed mindedness they harbor pertaining to minorities. In addition, professional school counselors and teachers must closely examine their beliefs about those students they serve that are culturally different and from diverse backgrounds. It is imperative to be aware of ethnocentrism and to be careful not to judge others based on the predominant race. Professional school counselors and teachers cannot assume that the family life and background of racially and culturally diverse students is the same as their own. It is important to understand the values of the cultural diversity that exists and learn to not only tolerate differences but to embrace and celebrate these differences. The authors have adopted Ford's model of the Multicultural Educator and have applied it to the professional school counselor. Ford's model contends that the multicultural school counselor will possess the following knowledge, skills, and dispositions:

- Adopting a social justice ideology entails:
- Developing democratic attitudes and values
- Gaining knowledge of the stages of cultural identity
- Immersing oneself in diverse settings
- Recognizing that we are all prejudiced, but seeks to change
- Adopting a multicultural framework
- Possessing the ability to view society and issues from multiethnic viewpoints
- Appreciating and respecting diversity
- Multiple Theories of Intelligence Considered

Many theories of intelligences and giftedness exist, but only a few take a holistic approach in order to include racially and culturally diverse students. School counselors can advocate for using a holistic approach for these students. Gardner's (1983) Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) defined intelligence as having the ability to solve problems or to fashion products valued in one or more cultural settings. Gardner differen-

tiated among seven different types of intelligences—linguistics, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and bodily kinesthetic, spatial, and musical. The MI concept is a more viable cognitive functioning and educational theory because it takes into account the nature of real-world intelligent behavior (Matthews, 1988). The MI theory also provides an educational and developmental context for the ‘talent’ identification and programming portion of giftedness/intellectual exceptionality, by incorporating musical, bodily, kinesthetic and spatial intelligences as part of the artistically-creative domain; these are areas where Blacks perform particularly well. In addition, in the theoretical underpinnings of MI, cross-cultural relevance is an important factorial-inclusion criterion. MI theory therefore leads to a broader identification and educational programming policies that can capture gifted children from culturally-diverse backgrounds.

Sternberg’s (1999) Triarchic Theory of Human Intelligence is also relevant in assessing intelligence with multicultural groups for the purpose of selection and placement into gifted programs. Sternberg notes that the concept of intelligence is variable: there are different meanings across different cultures. He concludes that, intelligence is to some extent, culturally defined. He also observed that various conceptions of intelligence have sound effects on a child’s performance in school where a match between the intelligence conceptions of both parties resulted in better performance by the child. This has very important implications when assessing abilities in diverse cultures and thus, one cannot assume that conventional tests of intelligence measure equally valued skills.

Goleman’s (1995) Emotional Intelligence (EI) also takes into account a more holistic approach in determining what can be qualified as intelligent behavior, in a social context. According to Goleman, EI is how we balance and manage our emotions. EI is also a predictor of how we will act and succeed in life. Emotional Intelligence enables us to have the ability to manage our relationships and interpret other’s feelings. According to Pfeiffer (2001), with regards to giftedness, many of the defining criteria for EI (e.g. decoding social information, social perceptiveness, using feeling to motivate, plan and achieve) are abilities that constitute outstanding youth leadership potential.

Leadership is currently included in ten state defini-

tions of gifted and talented (Davidson, 2006). Additionally, given that the gifted field is interested in figuring out how to promote excellence among talented youth, empirically supported psycho-educational strategies that promote EI may support talent development. The EI construct may also be a framework to assist gifted students who are troubled with social, emotional or interpersonal behaviors. It may be possible to increase positive learning by altering curriculum and academic demands to match the gifted student’s social competence/ emotional maturity.

The work by Sternberg (1999), Goleman (1995), Gardner (1983), provide an initial framework for developing a selection battery that may be leveraged to increase the number of racial and ethnic minorities in gifted education. This is especially true to the extent that operational measures of these assessment tools assess facets of intellect that may be viewed as non-traditional. Because of the traditional ways in which assessment tools have placed minorities at a disadvantage, research dealing with the creation of relevant norms, evaluation of the psychometric properties, and the subsequent validation of the battery are all relevant aspects to consider before a serious effort to integrate these tools into a giftedness selection program is undertaken.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS

The potential role of professional school counselors in increasing racially and culturally diverse enrollment in gifted education should not be underestimated. Professional school counselors can play a key role in the referral/identification process, changing gifted education programs to make them more culturally responsive, and in providing support to culturally diverse students in gifted education in order to increase recruitment and retention. Professional school counselors can advocate for systematic gifted screening for all students. According to Davis (2005), “one way that school counselors can be prepared to work with students from diverse ethnic backgrounds is to develop multicultural competence – to understand and develop attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and skills that are needed to work with culturally diverse populations” (p. 130).

Professional school counselors can be instrumental in

educating parents, teachers, administrators, and students about special educational opportunities that exist within their school system. This will require school counselors to improve communication with culturally diverse families so they are aware of gifted education programs and are involved in the screening and placement process (Mitcham-Smith & Bryant, 2006). Professional school counselors can also advocate for increased teacher training in the identification of gifted characteristics, particularly in African American populations.

Counselors should also find ways to promote non-biased procedures and testing for culturally diverse students. They can advocate on the school and the district level to promote changes in policies that guide referral processes. According to Shore (2001), strategies for success must be incorporated in order to meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, specifically ESL students. These strategies include assessing needs, empathizing, family involvement, and fostering a sense of belonging. In addition, professional school counselors can explore ways to increase nominations and referrals, possibly by identifying and including this concern in the annual school improvement plan. A comprehensive guidance and counseling program should include recruitment and retention plans for the gifted education program. Moreover, the process of the recruiting and retention efforts must be monitored in order to be effective and to recommend adjustments of objectives from year to year.

Furthermore, in order for professional school counselors to be responsive to the challenges they face in schools today, they must continue to seek out professional development opportunities focusing on working with students from diverse backgrounds (Davis, 2005). Professional school counselors must infuse multiculturalism into their comprehensive school guidance plan and counseling by means of awareness through classroom guidance, multicultural school-wide activities that promote cultural awareness, and family outreach programs to include culturally diverse parents in school activities.

In adopting Sue's (1991) model of the culturally skilled counselor the authors have applied it to the role of the professional school counselor. A culturally-skilled professional school counselor will be one who is actively involved in the process of becoming aware of his or her own assumptions about human behavior, values,

biases, and preconceived notions. A culturally-skilled professional school counselor would also be one that actively attempts to understand the worldviews of his or her culturally and ethnically diverse students. Finally, a culturally skilled professional school counselor will be one who is developing and practicing the appropriate, relevant, and sensitive intervention strategies and skills when working with his or her culturally and ethnically diverse students. Finally, the adoption of Sue's model would require professional school counselors to participate in an ongoing process in the recognition of the complexity and diversity of each student.

Implications for Counselor Education Programs

Counselor education programs and teacher education programs must offer extensive training in multicultural education and curriculum design. Gifted education teachers and professional school counselors need training on how to integrate multiculturalism in the gifted program. The paucity of research suggests that multiculturalism is not currently integrated in gifted educational programs. Increased multicultural training can result in a larger number of minorities being referred for gifted education screening.

Therefore, in order to prepare future counselors to be able to effectively advocate for all students, it is vital that the structure, requirements, and goals of many graduate training programs are modified in order to assist students in developing competencies to intervene at an extensive level (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007). These multicultural initiatives can include the opportunity for students to translate their academic knowledge into real-world contexts by developing and implementing innovative models and programs within large community sites (Constantine et al. 2007). For school counseling students, this can mean that they get the opportunity to intern or complete practicum at schools located in urban communities where there will be interaction with students from many different backgrounds that may be different. School counselor education programs may also wish to encourage students to consider participating in events that reflect the values, beliefs, and practices of these students' cultural groups, such as attending religious services or other community events.

It is evident from most studies that the inclusion of a multicultural course in the counselor's training pro-

gram resulted in higher levels or self-reported multicultural competence. Having said this, it is critical that counselor education programs include multicultural counseling coursework infused throughout the curriculum. Holcomb-McCoy (2005) also states that it would be beneficial if counselor education programs even included additional multicultural counseling courses. It is also vital that programs evaluate the content of their multicultural counseling courses to ensure that students are receiving training in all domains of multicultural competence (Holcomb-McCoy). It is vital that counselor education programs begin to require more than one course in multicultural counseling or even require students to take courses in subjects such as diversity of education or a course on African-American studies or other coursework in order to help students to receive a thorough understanding of the needs of students of color.

CONCLUSION

The increase in the culturally diverse population in the United States is not paralleled in gifted education. Increasing professional school counselor training as well as teacher training in multicultural education will help these professionals more readily recognize the gifted characteristics exemplified by culturally diverse students and increase their referrals. School counselors can and should become advocates in helping to identify and retain racially and culturally diverse students in gifted education. This will continue to be a great concern as the population becomes more diverse. As the representation of culturally diverse students in gifted education is slowly increasing, so must the representation of racially and culturally diverse professional school counselors and teachers in gifted education.

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TWO-WAY IMMERSION PROGRAM ADVOCACY FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN: THE KEY TO GLOBAL COLLABORATION

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to highlight the urgent need for African American children to learn, read, write, and speak other languages as well as the English language with fluency. Research (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Collier & Thomas, 2004) indicates that children often learn best from each other, not only in regards to academics, but also how to coexist in social and global arenas. This learning can be accomplished through the enrollment in Two-Way Immersion Programs. It is hoped that this article will equip individuals with basic knowledge regarding Two-Way Immersion Programs so that they will be able to have a meaningful discourse with parents of African American children regarding the necessity to enroll their children in Two-Way Immersion Programs at an early age, not just for academics sake, but also in relation to economic power, and the need to be able to compete in the political, economic, and social wealth of the country (Vance, 2004). It is crucial that all involved recognize that this enrollment is an initial step forward in educating all of our students to become productive assets in our global society.

Today's world is a rapidly growing planet that is inhabited by people of many different races, cultures, and religious beliefs. The International Data Base (2008) has estimated that by the year 2042, at least 9 billion people will inhabit our earth. With this influx of different populations, as with any major change, comes discourse particularly regarding language. The National Virtual Translation Center (2007) documents that there are 6,912 living languages spoken in the world today, with the United States noted as the fifth most linguistically diverse

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country in the world. In the United States, Day (1996) reports that census data states that at least 17% of this country's population speaks a language other than English. Many of these people are people of color; however, African Americans who speak English as a first language as well as another language comprise a very small portion of the population.

English is often thought of as a universal language. Many English-speaking Americans tend to think that English is the main language that is spoken by a majority of all of the countries and territories of the world. It is true that English is spoken by more than 340 million people in the world as a first language (National Virtual Translation Center, 2007); however, once a person travels outside of the United States, it becomes easily apparent that in some countries, English is only one of the official languages of many countries (for example, in Canada, the official languages are French and English). Besides the United States and Great Britain, there are only a handful of countries in the world where one could virtually live and travel without learning to speak anything but English (Lyon, 1996). In the case of Latin American, Asian, and African countries, English is often not even listed as one of the official languages of the given country. This would indicate that either a large majority of the earth's inhabitants speak English and another language, or more significantly, the majority of the earth's inhabitants speak languages that do not include English as one of them.

How does this impact the African American child who speaks English as a first and only language? It is the intent of this article to highlight the urgent need for children, particularly African American children, to learn with fluency to read, write, and speak other languages as well as the English language at an early age. We would like to equip teachers, public school administrators, and higher education faculty with basic knowledge regarding Two-Way Immersion programs so that such individuals will be able to have a meaningful discourse with parents of African American children regarding the necessity to enroll their children in language immersion programs at an early age.

LANGUAGE LEARNING IN AMERICA-A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although our country has always been considered a predominately English-speaking country, the United

States has always been ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse. There is a common perception by many people that English is the only language that has ever been spoken in the United States, but, in fact, as far back as colonial Pennsylvania and as late as 1916, there have been German and French language schools in our country to educate children in their native tongue who did not speak English (Bennett, 2007; Crawford, 2000). Schools were also developed for children who were Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Polish, Italian, and Czech speakers (Crawford, 2000). Many other states passed laws authorizing instruction in English and German (an Ohio law of 1839), or English and French (Louisiana in 1847), or English and Spanish (New Mexico in 1848) (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). Even though these children eventually received an education in English, the first or native language instruction served as a facilitator to ensure that not only was the language retained, but ethnic and cultural values were preserved and passed on to the next generation.

There was a different story to be told for the children of African origin. In the early days of this country, many children of African descent were illiterate most often due to their slave status. Generally, it was against the law to teach a slave and or children of African descent in the United States to read and write, and quite often, it was forbidden for them to speak the language(s) of their African origins (Funke, 1920). This meant that children of other races and ethnicities were often literate or semi-literate in English and their first language, whereas African American slave children were not even literate in English (Bennett, 2007). During and after the civil war, some change emerged and schools were established so that children would have access to learning, just as their Anglo counterparts did (Bennett, 2007).

LITERACY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN FROM 1900 TO THE PRESENT

By the 1900's, a large majority of Americans (with the exception of recent immigrants) were English speaking and were literate in English, regardless of ethnicity; however, opportunities afforded to African American students as well as other groups of students of color were often inadequate and second class in na-

ture. Examples of this could be found with underpaid teachers, curriculum that often focused on learning skills needed for basic manual labor instead of a curriculum that would enhance literacy skills, and understaffed, poorly equipped facilities (White, 1969; Carson, 2003). Yet such inadequacies did not impede the academic success for African American students at that time. Through the 1960s African American children continually defied all of the odds despite substandard facilities and inferior materials. Opportunities for second language learning usually presented itself in high school in the format of learning a foreign language. This was a forward step in trying to bring the African American child 'up to speed' with its counterpart but, this was (and is) not the optimal setting for learning a second language to fluency.

As the face of today's child in U. S. schools changes, the needs for educating him/her changes. The 2000 Census estimates that there are about 380 languages or language families that are designated by U. S. school aged children as primary languages spoken in the home (Shin & Bruno, 2003). In addition, according to the U. S. Census (Shin & Bruno, 2003), some of these languages include Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Korean, Haitian Creole French, and Tagalog just to name a few. Census data further indicates that at least 4.4 million households are "linguistically isolated", or in other words, no English is spoken in the home (Shin & Bruno, 2003). With these children also comes the challenge and charge of educating them so that they can be literate in English and the native language. Furthermore, our educational system and our society must face the task of educating English-speaking children to accept and embrace the cultural and linguistic diversity that these non-English-speaking children bring with them to school and global arenas. Both of these challenges are increasingly addressed through the implementation and student enrollment in either bilingual, dual language, or more specifically, Two-Way Immersion educational programs.

WHAT DOES A TWO-WAY IMMERSION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

Two-Way Immersion educational programs integrate language minority and language majority children in the same classroom to provide content instruction

(that is, instruction in reading language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science) and overall language development in two languages (Christian, Howard, & Loeb, 2000). Children begin in these pro-

- ELL's and native English speakers complete work in both languages in a balanced proportion (Lindholm-Leary, 2004/2005).

Table 1: Students Participating in Language Programs at Morgan Elementary School in Galveston, Texas School Year 2008-2009

Educational Program	Anglo English Speaking Children	Hispanic English Speaking Children	Hispanic Spanish Speaking Children/English Learners (ELL's)
Transitional Bilingual Education	No Enrollment	No Enrollment	*204
Two-Way Immersion/Dual Language Education	4	30	204

*Students in this category are actually participating in the district's TWI program; however, these students qualify for bilingual and or ESL services and would normally participate in the district's bilingual/ESL program if TWI was not available.

grams in early elementary school (generally pre-kindergarten or kindergarten), and they generally continue throughout the duration of elementary school. Some of the major goals of Two-Way Immersion educational programs include the following:

- The students are expected to develop oral fluency and literacy in English and the second language,
- The students are expected to attain academic achievement at or above grade level in both languages,
- The students are expected to have positive attitudes regarding school and themselves, and,
- The students are expected to be knowledgeable and demonstrate positive attitudes about other cultures due to the participation in the Two-Way Immersion educational program. (Christian, Howard, & Loeb, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2004/2005)

Two-Way Immersion educational programs generally include some of the following components:

- Instruction and class work generally take place in English and the target language,
- English is used for at least 50 percent of instruction,
- During different periods of the day, there are times when only one language is used by children and teachers with no translation or language mixing,
- Both English Language Learners (ELL's) and native English speakers spend most of the day together for content instruction,

Many parents and children tend to perceive language programs (i.e., bilingual educational programs) as remediation or as a program for children who have learning challenges because of language. This often stems from the fact that in bilingual educational programs, language minority children who are learning English are segregated together in one classroom, often at the expense of being segregated away from the mainstream (Collier & Thomas, 2005). Two-Way Immersion programs are perceived by parents and children as a kind of educational program for children who are gifted, because the language minority students are not segregated from the mainstream, and because all of the students, language minority and majority alike are respected and valued as equal learning partners in the classroom (Collier & Thomas, 2005; Collier & Thomas, 2004).

WHO ENROLLS IN SECOND LANGUAGE BASED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS?

Many children come from homes where English is not even spoken; yet these children come from homes that can be considered culturally and linguistically diverse. These children can be defined as English Language Learners (ELL's) (Carrasquillo & Rodríguez, 2002). This group of students are afforded the opportunity to enroll in some type of language educational program that enables them to learn academic English, whether it is in a bilingual, two way immersion, dual language immersion, or English as a Second Language (ESL) program (Alanis, 2000; Lara-Alecio, Galloway, Irby, Rodriguez, & Gomez, 2004). Most often, many parents who have the opportunity choose to enroll their children in bilingual programs, however, an increa-

singly large amount of parents are choosing to enroll their children in two way immersion or dual immersion language programs. Christian, Howard, and Loeb (2000) note that the latter two programs generally integrate two different language groups of students within the same classroom setting with the goal of the instruction being to educate both groups of students to be literate in both languages, thus creating a group of students who are fluent in two languages.

This means that Table 1: Students Participating in Language Programs at Morgan Elementary School in Galveston, Texas School Year 2008-2009 quite often the majority of the English-speaking children who do enroll in these programs are Anglo children. This leaves the opportunities for growing up literate in two languages for the ELL's and the Anglo English speaking children. The following table is an example of the level of student participation in various language programs (English/Spanish) by ethnic/racial/linguistic demographics from Morgan Elementary School in the Galveston Independent School District (Galveston, Texas). Morgan Elementary School's TWI program is an old and well established program that is well regarded throughout the region and the state of Texas. In past years, all students participating in this particular TWI program have been documented to outscore their regular education counterparts in English and in Spanish on the state criterion referenced tests and the norm-referenced tests (current testing information was unavailable). Although the number of African American students outnumber the number of English Speaking Anglo students, but numbers are small in comparison to the number of English Speaking Hispanic students and the number of ELL Spanish Speaking Hispanic students, thus underscoring the need to recruit more African American children as participants in TWI programs.

Information in the preceding table was obtained as per request from the Galveston Independent School District in compliance with the Texas Public Information Act (2009).

ACADEMIC ADVANTAGES RELATED TO LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

Although many people tend to think that being educated in two or more languages would retard a child's

learning capabilities, it has been documented that learning a second language has many specific benefits. For example, children who learn a second language are more cognitively advanced, have better concept formation, and are more flexible in their thinking (Hetherington, Parke, Gauvain, & Locke, 2006). Different scholars contend that English speaking children learning a second or multiple languages develop advanced levels of second language proficiency as a result of participating in dual language programs (Lindholm-Leary, 2000; Christian, Howard, & Loeb, 2000). So specifically, how does this translate to academic achievement?

Even though few research studies have been conducted regarding African American children and their participation in Two-Way Immersion programs (a large majority of the research supports positive academic achievement and cultural gains through participation in Two-Way Immersion programs for Anglo and Hispanic children), this would not indicate that it would be detrimental for African American children to participate in these language programs. Torres-Guzman (in Garcia & Baker, 2007) contends that children enrolled in dual language programs have been documented to outperform their norming peers in their first and second languages by the upper elementary grades. She also contends that both populations of children (language majority and language minority students) do exceptionally well on standardized reading and language tests and writing assessments- as well as their monolingual peers in basic monolingual classrooms. Lindholm-Leary (2001) also states the resounding academic efforts of children in dual language programs: children studying up to four languages keep up with their peers who are not in immersion programs- these children can complete examinations with proficiency in either one of their first two languages. As far as math, science, and social studies are concerned, Lindholm-Leary (2001) documents different studies that are conducted of children in dual language programs who must complete standardized achievement tests in math, science, and social studies in relationship to their peers in monolingual classrooms. These tests are usually done in English and a second language for the children participating in dual language programs.

In a study done by researchers Nicoladis, Taylor, Lambert, and Cazabon (1998), scores for reading and

math for African-American children and Anglo children who were native English speakers in Two-Way programs were compared in English and in Spanish. This particular study was done to find out whether or not there was a connection between race and intelligence in language learning. Most importantly, this study found that African-American children performed as well as Anglo children in English and in Spanish academic achievement and intelligence tests. This would indicate that African-American children outperform their norming peers in both languages on different achievement and intelligence tests.

In all of these studies conducted, the various students who are enrolled in dual language programs have been documented to have succeeded academically in completing different standardized tests at higher levels than their peers in monolingual classroom settings in math, in science, and in social studies in their first and second languages. So, it is apparent that a child, and in particular, the African-American child who learns his or her academic skills in more than one language has an academic advantage over the monolingual child.

ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES

Not only should being educated to fluency in two languages be explored on the basis of academic excellence, but the economic advantages that are crucial in today's society must be explored as well. It is quite unfortunate for all of our children that the United States is one of a handful of countries that a person could live in, and never learn a second language for any reason. It is because of this that Crawford documents the U. S. Secretary of Education as having said that, "It is high time that we begin to treat language skills as the asset they are, particularly in this global economy" (in Garcia & Baker, 2007). When looking at economics in regards to the importance of being fluent in at least two languages, we must review the global situation. With 6,912 living languages spoken in the world (The National Virtual Translation Center, 2007), businesses are truly realizing the need to employ persons who are fluent in more than one language. As the former German Chancellor Willy Brandt stated, "If I am selling to you, I speak your language. If I am buying, you must speak my language (German)" (in Domke-Damonte, 2001).

The U. S. marketplace deals with foreign businesses and investors on a daily basis, but to be able to effectively communicate to get the job done is another matter. According to U. S. Census data, 17% of the population of the United States speaks a language other than English at home. By the year 2030, Lara states that Hispanic students will constitute a majority of Texas and California public schools (Lara-Alecio, Galloway, Irby, Rodriguez, & Gomez, 2004). With the demographic landscape of the United States constantly changing, the need to be fluent in more than one language for all of our children in the United States is critical. Domke-Damonte (2001) states that in a European study of small and medium businesses, at least one-fifth of all of the countries surveyed (1, 300 companies) admitted that they lost important business due to the lack of language skills, or in other words, because employees only spoke the native language. Back in the United States, Domke-Damonte (2001) also states that there is evidence that suggests that an average U. S. college graduate who speaks fluent Japanese in addition to English can add another \$15,000.00 to his or her net income. This indicates that it is imperative that we look at the way that we educate our children. Banks (2004) indicates that we must educate our children to be active participants in a global economy rather than just an economy centered only on our country. Lindholm-Leary (2001) contends that American children are still too isolated from people who are different than them, and that American children are still too insulated in their own cultures and languages. Dual language education, specifically Two-Way Immersion educational programs bridge this gap, and teaches children at minimum of two different language groups, the need to have respect for differences, as well as how to have cooperative skills that will be needed when they grow up to effectively participate in the global economy (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

CULTURAL ADVANTAGES

All children need to competently participate in the global economy. In regards to African-American children, they should also have a descent amount of respect for themselves and for the various cultures that will also participate in the global arena. Too often, when children are placed in various educational programs (for example, Special Education or Regular Transitional Bilingual Education Programs), the child-

ren who participate in these programs are perceived as children with problems. These perceptions often give way to social distance and segregation in terms of the children in the aforementioned programs, as well as the children who are in all English educational programs (Collier & Thomas, 2004). These negative perceptions can be eradicated for African-American children with participation in Two-Way Immersion educational programs.

Lindholm-Leary (2001) notes that if a child can enjoy being in a Two-Way Immersion program from an additive standpoint instead of a subtractive standpoint, the student often enjoys higher levels of language proficiency, academic achievement, and self-esteem. The key here is that the program is presented in such a way that it is perceived as additive or in addition to, or as having a positive impact on the child's life instead of an impact that is negative. The presentation and implementation of a quality Two-Way Immersion Program in the lives of African-American students can be achieved through Two-Way Immersion classes that are taught by sensitive teachers so that children from the different language and ethnic groups learn to have mutual respect for each other and view each other as valued partners in the learning process and ultimately, in the global arena (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Not only is this essential for African-American children as far as a cultural advantage, but of course, it is also important in terms of academic achievement; according to scholars (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Collier & Thomas, 2004) a Two-Way Immersion Program that is implemented in terms of being additive will promote high levels of literacy in both languages for African-American children and English Language Learners.

Even though our country is very diverse, many children do not collaborate and or interact with children outside of their own cultures. Upon the return to their communities, many children are either linguistically isolated, meaning that once they arrive home, they have interactions with persons who speak only languages other than English (Shin & Bruno, 2003), or, they are culturally encapsulated. Banks (2004) raises the question of whether or not nation states are adequately educating students to be citizens of the world, meaning even though children should be educated with shared values and beliefs, children should be educated to incorporate and accept diversity within a multicultural society. This could be addressed with

the enrollment of African-American children in Two-Way Immersion Programs. When African-American children (as well as children of other races and or cultures) participate in Two-Way Immersion language programs, a respect and nurturing of the multiple cultural heritages is developed and in general, this usually leads to friendships that basically cross racial, cultural, and social class boundaries (Collier & Thomas, 2004).

Genesee (1987) contends that Two-Way Immersion education is often the facilitating tool that leads to the improved relations between two cultures of people instead of the coexistence of two solitudes or rather, two cultures coexisting in their own separate spaces within the larger society. This concept is along the same lines as Banks (2004) concept of educating children for a global society. Our nation has always been a smaller microcosm of our world- a nation of many races, cultures, languages, ethnicities, and religious beliefs. Because of the many languages that exist in our nation, it is becoming increasingly recognized that being able to communicate in more than one language is a valuable asset (Christian, Howard, & Loeb, 2000). Therefore if more African American children successfully participate in Two-Way Immersion language education programs, these children will be able to form beneficial collaborations in the global arena with success. It is up to each capable individual to encourage the participation of African American children in these kinds of language programs. It is a win-win outcome. African American children can achieve the success they warrant by becoming viable, productive citizens, and the consumer (world at large) receives invaluable services that we crave in today's global society.

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OVERCOMING EDUCATIONAL THRALLDOMS AND GROWING QSTELL - QUALITY STUDENTING, TEACHING AND LEARNING TO LEARN.

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Abstract: This discourse focuses on improving the quality of studenting, teaching and learning to learn (QSTeLL). QSTeLL - are qualities of mind and student logic that must be allowed to grow in each student (Studenting) and be present in any learning environment, especially in difficult and/or disadvantaged contexts. This discourse also argues that both historical and contemporary approaches for improvement are unlikely to succeed when these approaches are insufficiently differentiated to fit contextualities that are too specific for easy replication or transference. This discourse speaks to possible alternative pedagogy for classroom improvement and forwards the position that the classroom is the prime base for any improvement in social justice in schools, education, student citizenship, and social justice in society. This discourse argues against the traditional and dominant tendency of imposing standardized solutions when an in classroom differentiated approach is much more ideally suited to QSTeLL.

A student's perspective of the world of schooling can be seen in the multiplicity of contentious learning expectations. Supposedly, students are prepared for the temporal aspect of living based on an industrial pedagogy intended to shape their character through the practice of appropriateness, conformity, conduct, and propriety. Society then expects these same students to challenge the status quo they were socialized into by fitting in and being different while also thinking critically.

Schooling and education pedagogies do reflect society. Formal educational opportunities, for many students in the dominant industrialized model, are contentious learning pedagogies. The effect has often been barren of high quality for the majority of the studenting, teaching and learning to learn processes. With the

improved quality of studenting - students using knowledge and skills to evaluate, synthesize, and produce new or expanded knowledge - teaching and learning to learn are essential if opportunities are to be developed that will enhance each learner's private logic and reduce many of the unpleasant anticipations so highly visible in so many classrooms, e.g., boring lectures with note taking and mindless worksheets.

Classrooms with low cognitive and low quality pedagogy, bereft of rudimentary social justice, prevent many of these students, who have been systemically disenfranchised and become disaffected, from finding few, if any, opportunities for success. Every schoolhouse has an abundance of classrooms that are segmented and nascent traditional factory production lines which further adds to the social injustice extant in our society and cultural surround.

The contemporary concern for the education of lower-class whites and minority groups in American society emerges primarily from the practice of identification, classification, and labeling of such students as slow or inferior (Brookover, Gigliotti, Henderson, Nile, & Schneider, 1974, p. 162).

Education history, predating much of Dewey's (1899, 1916 and 1919) work, shows a perpetual interest in generating and sustaining improvements in all classrooms where, from time to time, there is an increased social urgency for ways to raise QSTeLL, especially those located in areas of below average socio-economic status. The greater reality may be that it only looks, based on school Mean Proficiency Scores, as if many of these schools are failing. When looking at Value Added data for different schools there appears to be equivalent rates of growth for low poverty and high poverty schools (Raudenbush, 2004: 20), but that the lower the socio-economic status of the student population, the lower the entry level of achievement. Unfortunately, if you want schools to look like they are failing you need only use the school's Mean Proficiency Scores to show any unsuspecting viewer that school A did so much better than school B. The next assumption leap is then posited that school A must be a better school and school B must be a poor or failing school. Unfortunately, it isn't that clear cut as test scores are simple measures of dubious value and they tell us nothing about QSTeLL inputs.

Most testing done in most states and through NCLB requirements, legislation fraught with social injustice practices, for Title I schools is a test to determine the school's Mean Proficiency. In schools where high po-

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verty is a major factor there appears to be consistent failing, while in schools with low poverty there appears to be consistent proficiency. Both factors have been known and understood for decades if not centuries so why continue to use such a simplistic comparison? A good question with many possible answers, but it is not the purpose of this discourse to go in that direction. It is hoped, however, that attention to simpleminded testing and the damage it is doing to our students, teachers, schools, society and democracy will continue to be part of the national discourse that touches social justice and equal opportunity, as it will only be then that things will change for these students, teachers, neighborhoods, schools, and society.

IMPOSING AN UNDESERVED THRALLDOM UPON ALL LEARNERS

QSTeLL – Quality studenting, teaching and learning to learn - is being deterred by empirically manipulative forces of central control, data numbers, and imposing undeserved thralldoms upon all learners. Much of the ongoing QSTeLL research often supports the concept that low income families' children are less likely to overcome the hurdles of their lower initial status. There are few surprises here as these circumstances highlight the situational class and social justice differences affecting students and have done so long before any of them even enter a classroom. Inevitably, these will continue influencing their circumstances as they mature unless attention to QSTeLL and appropriate opportunities and interventions, in each classroom, alter this path.

... in general, the powerful and influential in our society shape the laws and have a great influence on the legislature and the congress and this creates a reluctance to change because the powerful and influential have carved out for themselves or have inherited a privileged position in society. (Jimmy Carter, 1974).

The circumstances in President Carter's comments may well indicate why schooling differentials remain, and today may be actual or perceived indicators of subsequent educational achievement potential. Students denied enhancing opportunities by vested interests and privileged positions protecting their own at the expense of so many others is a persistent issue. Many researchers and their collective results tend to reinforce these socio-economic reality factors influen-

cing school success and opportunity. This may explain some of the variation in student achievement and illustrate how social status is related to other important factors such as persistence, perception of potential, studenting skills, quality teaching, resilience, strength of peer influences, political and economic influences, and crime.

We are at a point in our society, again, where we can clearly see the growing disenfranchisement, disenchantment, and disaffection that the presentism of continued, misguided and externalized policy. Policy and practices aimed at improving the personal position of a privileged minority occur in a minority of classrooms. The rhetoric of raising standards suits their needs and purposes instead of a more egalitarian and liberal education founded on QSTeLL available for each student.

The egalitarian positions that have emerged throughout history highlight the possibilities for each child regardless of where they come from. When classrooms are focused on egalitarian and democratic principles, use the upper cognitive levels of evaluating and creating in Bloom's Taxonomy ([1956] 1984) for student work, and provide multiple varieties of QSTeLL, then an abundance of potential benefits for both the majority and the minority will become visible and benefit everyone. We should also continue to hope and fight for policies and legislation that will replace these shortsighted adumbrates of our antiquated industrialized standardization policy mentality, de facto and de jure gate keeping, perpetuation of the status quo through de facto and de jure actions of the dominate culture, and spend our time and resources 'looking for and building student's affinities and strengths' (Levine, 2002, pp. 283-6).

MEASURES BASED ON MEAN PROFICIENCY ARE SHOWN TO BE SCIENTIFICALLY INDEFENSIBLE

Within the confines of scientific validity and reliability, limits and policy implications through the mass of accumulated test data may offer some insight, but are still insufficient for high-stakes decisions and shine little light on students' strengths or affinities, QSTeLL, or the many other cumulative effects in each student's life. This is especially true when 'test scores' are used as the primary source of information about a student. Test data must be supplemented by additional stu-

denting, teaching, and learning assessment information that looks at the practices within the school and classroom, but especially the quality of the experiences students are engaged with. As evidenced by Raudenbush (2004), most of the data collected is moderately convergent with the reality of the school, but only tells a few sentences of the book length history of any school or student's formal and informal learning experiences. A few output pixels are woefully inadequate to produce a picture of the more critical inputs of studenting, teaching and learning to learn quality.

QSTeLL, expert teacher assessment evidence, and knowing a student's strengths are critically important. "If we want to prepare kids for adulthood, one of the most important things we can do is to celebrate their strengths, those assets with which they're going to find meaning in life and be able to make contributions" (Scherer, 2006, p. 8) because "An awful lot of important skills can ride the coattails of your affinities. If you combine affinities with strengths, you begin to carve out a potential career" (Scherer, 2006, p. 14).

Levine sees the school best serving their students by finding their strengths and developing them to the highest extent possible. He suggests that we should be educating our teachers to spot and exploit these strengths to best guide and develop the students' abilities. When discussing standardized testing, he suggested a very different approach, a random schedule of testing to avoid teaching to the test which will allow for treating the student as an individual and giving them a voice in their educational experience. "One of the main goals of education is helping kids over time figure out who they are" (Scherer, 2006, p. 15).

THE BEST AND THE WORST REMEMBRANCES – LET'S START WITH A 'BEST'...

What follows is a narrative of a classroom at the end of the school year, but is typical of this teacher's class all through the school year. Mrs. W. is one of those teachers who rarely sends kids to the office for behavior issues because they rarely occur and when they do they are used as a learning experience – as they should be. After all, school is for learning. What is depicted here is possible at any level of formal schooling and for any subject.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF QSTELL – QUALITY STUDENTING, TEACHING, AND LEARNING

Excerpt:

The final week of school in this 800 student inner city middle school is always chaotic, for teachers, for students, and for all adults involved. However, one constant we can always count on is Mrs. W.'s 8th grade science class. Mrs. W.'s students always seem to be engaged in one task or another anytime you enter her classroom. Her lessons always have high cognitive educational components which go well beyond the standardized curriculum and their standardized expectations.

Two days until the end of the school year, most teachers are taking their students outside to burn off energy and play football or soccer. Not Mrs. W. Her class is outside taking measurements and flying their rockets they created in class. The students each have a clipboard and are busy recording data that will be used in their small task group presentations and power points. The class has already set up their presentations and only need to enter the data recorded outside to finish. The students are actively engaged, not acting aware of the other teams having a field day on the neighboring athletic field.

This class is a multi-level heterogeneous group of students. The students had formed into groups of four. In total there are five groups. One group is a group of five. Mrs. W. walked around the various groups working on their rocket launches and observed; sometimes she observed quietly, taking it all in, and other times she politely asked the group questions. As I watched her questioning techniques, I realized she did not always ask the whole group, but asked individuals, the whole group, or a specific job representative for the answer to her questions. The students were very capable in their answers; in fact, they appeared eager to supply an answer.

By the end of the rocket launches, the other 8th grade team, which was previously outside playing water balloons, ended up meandering over to the field and watching the launch. The other students began to ask inquisitive questions to the students in charge of the launch. The students demonstrated their knowledge and even related the current lesson to previous lessons learned throughout the year. One student in particular, an EC student many teachers had written off as being much less capable, answered a challenging question related to the velocity at which the rockets traveled. The other students, who knew this particular student, were genuinely impressed. K... beamed with pride as the other students looked upon him with respect.

At the end of the day, I met with Mrs. W. and asked her one simple question... "At the end of your 33rd year, what makes you want to return the next day, knowing you do not have to?" Her answer was simple. "Days like today when K... is able to answer a very difficult and challenging question and beam with pride make it all worthwhile. Engaging students in learning and showing them that school and education can be fun is what allows me the energy and courage to continue teaching."

THE BEST AND THE WORST REMEMBRANCES OF K-12 SCHOOLING

Lewis and Kim (2008) concluded that:

. . . low-income urban children do want to learn, regardless of their actual demonstrated ability levels, and they appear to be resilient in this respect. We found that elementary school-age low-income African American children are aware of strengths and deficiencies in their teachers and can name each explicitly. Even within controlling or negative school environments that reflect a pervasive culture of low expectations, they overwhelmingly expressed a desire for teachers who treated them well, helped them learn, and who were fair (emphasis added) and caring toward them. Moreover, given the opportunity to work with a teacher who worked with them in ways consistent with what they looked for in good teachers, the children in our study responded with productive classroom behaviors (p. 1305).

The above can probably be repeated in endless schoolhouses and classrooms and is corroborated “now more than ever [by] the research premise to improve classroom practice in any school requires that we must ask for and pay much more attention to the needs and views of students to improve their learning capacities” (Kane and Maw, 2005, P. 311) and the quality of the studenting, teaching, and learning to learn they are entitled to. Glass (2003) speaks to the present as

(F)ixed standards dictate curricula that ignore the depth and range of students’ backgrounds and knowledge, and substitute demeaning assessments and labels for teachers’ professional judgments (p. 165)

FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE – GUIDANCE FROM ADULTS AND EGALITARIANISM WOULD BENEFIT FROM STUDENT INPUT.

There is real value in student input to teacher guidance and planning and how students study and the creation of rubrics can be used to grow QSTeLL. Social justice demands that each voice in each classroom have an equivalent value and even though the capacity of students to decide their own goals and objectives in their education is limited by their lack of experiences, there should be little reason not to engage them in a more egalitarian process. Guidance from adults that opens up the experience opportunity is a

key element for every classroom and the adults are the guides and prime alphas, never doubt the importance of this part of the equation, but that doesn’t make them the dictators who plan and control everything. This becomes a fascinating area to ponder and is a key element of this discourse. The degree of control is touched on often as it goes deeply into the construction of education / learning / teaching / and especially studenting.

Periodically, additional funding and other improvement schemes have also been made available to classrooms, even to those located in areas of disadvantage, and have tried to address some of the particular needs of classrooms within these contextualities. Often, and unfortunately, the existence of long standing *de facto* or *de jure* educational practices, as well as political, economic, and social happenstance fail to nourish these classrooms because of the simplicity of standardization.

To be sure,

some gaps may open between *de jure* norms and *de facto* – the reality of the practice in the operation of any institution, but *de jure* norms, especially when they have been worked out with some care and clarity, are at least strong *prima facie* evidence of actual practice (McFarland & Starmanns, 2008, p. 4).

SOMEONE’S CHOICE IS ALWAYS BEHIND EVERY DECISION

The *de jure* drive to raise standards in difficult or challenging contexts has become a central and urgent issue in education policy of the federal ‘No Child Left Behind Act’ of 2001 (Mostly an updated ESEA, 1965) which mandates an overly aggressive system of sanction based corrective measures for classrooms / schools / districts receiving federal assistance. When many of these classrooms / schools fail to meet these externally imposed progress goals toward an impossible 100% AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) the sanction/punitive ‘improvement’ measures associated with ‘No Child Left Behind’ are not too distant from the schoolhouse door.

What is missing in this thinking is that TEST scores are not the same as achievement, are too often bogus measures of an achievement reality of any student, classroom, teacher, or school and would seem to have been promulgated in opposition to the very idea of

what they should have learned in Psy 101 -human behavior - tends to resist any sort of generalizability and that generalizations may, seemingly, measure effective teaching – how well students do on a test, but totally fails to measure or encourage quality studenting –how well students learn to learn.

It may seem counter-intuitive that a school accountability system using ideal tests of student proficiency in key subject areas could nonetheless fail to provide good evidence of school quality and school improvement. Yet I believe this to be true and contend that it is useful to explore this proposition in depth without drifting into the complex domain of test quality.... [static] measures such as school mean proficiency levels cannot isolate the contribution of school quality, no matter how good the test (Raudenbush, 2004, p. 6).

The labeling, targeting and reconstitution of failing classrooms, often with myopically vested private sector involvement, combines a high degree of empirically driven – number of questions right or wrong on a secret test- accountability model with a pronounced naivety towards the social and economic problems that envelop these very classrooms or how prior knowledge effects each student differently, has greatly contributed to a significant increase in the mental truancy. More so, even than what so many traditional teaching methods have driven students to, because now, they also hear, repeatedly, ‘this may be on the test’.

The price ‘someone else’ ends up paying for the destructiveness of much of this mindless testing and mental absence or truancy only exacerbates coming to terms with the inherent complexity of studenting, teaching and learning to learn. This empirically driven model is not too dissimilar from the ‘improvement’ approaches that appear to prevail in other countries where those same types of classrooms located in similarly disadvantaged areas are expected, through their own efforts, to overcome deeply rooted and long term socioeconomic problems to, supposedly, produce better results and higher standards.

It has never been unknown, understood or an accident that the preponderance of classrooms labeled as underperforming are located in disadvantaged urban and rural areas and, seemingly, tend to be conveniently ignored when the powers that be already know what the performance on these externally imposed empirically driven models will be. One also has to

wonder what the real point of this exercise really is. Also, one has to ask: Is it because so many policy influencers are set in the business of business milieus that a business analogy provided by McClung (2008) may be close to a reality of

...punishing and suppressing teachers in highly diverse schools that don’t make AYP, wise policies would increase funding for resources and training that would help educators optimize their use of teaching methods that work best for the students we are asked to teach (p. 2).

IS IMPROVEMENT POSSIBLE? IN A WORD – YES!!
IMPROVEMENT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE!

The classroom improvement movement, well into its second century, has often been criticized for ignoring powerful socio-economic influences that impact classrooms and for offering naïve and, often, standardized or simplistic solutions to complex social problems. While there may be some validity, from time to time, to this position, sociologist, philosophers, researchers, and educators working in this field continue to engage the issues surrounding ‘improvement’ in urban and rural classrooms in difficult contexts, (e.g., Dewey et al.). The evidence has been clearest when it looks towards the difficulties disadvantaged classrooms face in simply getting to a ‘fair shot’ at success (e.g. Chapman and Harris, 2004; and Stoll and Myers, 1998). Impediments have typically been: high staff turnover; de jure and de facto lack of equability of resources and facilities; classrooms with higher student numbers; and a constant stream of replacement teachers and administrators, mostly new and in their first teaching or administrative assignment, add to the other typical pressures that classrooms in more politically connected areas simply do not face. Research has also shown that weak support from state and local funding sources, low levels of formalized educational qualifications in the local community’s population and less than good employment opportunities only compound other problems extant in these communities and make the extent of the educational challenge facing these classrooms and schools significantly greater.

In spite of all of these hurdles and when value added testing is used to follow same student progress it is seen that the high poverty schools studied improve at the same relative rate as the low poverty schools. If

the quality of studenting, teaching and learning to learn can be improved it would be possible that these schools would perform at an even greater improved rate and level and maybe even do as well or better than the low poverty schools they are compared with.

CREATING QUALITY STUDENTING - IMPROVEMENT PARADIGMS, PRACTICES, AND PREDILECTIONS

... to teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge. ... There is in fact, no teaching without learning. One requires the other. And the subject of each, despite their obvious differences, cannot be educated to the status of object. Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning (Freire, 1998: pp. 30-1)

Teaching, studenting and learning, when done well, are and always have been a most complex enterprise and many feel that incorporating QSTeLL is much more difficult now than they have ever been because of the expanding centralized federal and state political contexts; growing numbers of disenfranchised, disaffected, and dissatisfied students; and shrinking workable or viable solutions. This is concomitant with teachers being blamed, in spite of the increasing numbers of restrictions; excessive mandates; test prep expectations; pacing guides; and increasing frenzy and hysteria over test scores.

Consequently, more now than ever, all classroom teachers, regardless of years of experience, need higher quality supports. Teachers must win and hold the trust of their community by having the best interest of their students at heart and being capable of creating QSTeLL classrooms. But, most importantly, they must be supported by administrators who can see the difference between the perceived chaos of an active and collaborative learning environment and a classroom with just poor teaching command and control. Administrators must spend time in classrooms to better understand how to create learning environments of emotional safety and trust for both the teachers and the students and understand that it isn't about content, but is about quality studenting, teaching and learning to learn – something often in short supply in far too

many traditional teacher-test prep-centered classrooms of the 19th century industrial model.

Improving professional practice and improving the quality of classrooms need improved inputs. Without paying attention to the inputs: learning; teaching; Studenting; content; politics; economics; and almost anything else that can effect / affect schoolhouses and their classrooms, teachers, or students we will continue on the same well-worn path that we have been on for far too long.

IF ONLY TEACHING AND LEARNING TO LEARN WERE EASY –

Efforts to improve teaching, studenting and learning in classrooms, in any situation, have to consider the effect of the mix of social, political, and economic characteristics (Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000). As Thrupp (1999) notes: 'the issue of classroom mix highlights the powerful social inequalities in the provision of schooling' (p.183). Many of the essays touched by this discourse continue reinforcing the de facto and de jure facts that social, political and economic background factors explain much of the variation in student achievement (e.g. Rutter, Maughan, Moritmore, & Ouston, & Smith, 1979). It is clear that the achievement of students in classrooms in challenging contexts remains consistently lower in the low-poverty schools, but the rate of growth is still similar (Raudenbush, 2004: 26-7).

COMPLEXITY AND COMMITMENT

The pattern of underachievement is often due to complex influences within the classroom, within the community, and within the socio-political system and one standardized level of intervention is questionable, set up for failure, and naive. To be fair it must be added that this is not saying that any improvement efforts are pointless or that all improvement programs are destined to fail, because, in the end, a few motivated and committed people, even with poor and inadequate tools, can make a huge difference as in the case of Mrs. W.'s 8th grade Science class.

This may be in spite of centralized and standardized

initiatives where the teachers and supportive administrators have learned to comply, but use work-arounds to circumnavigate de jure and de facto imposed limitations. However, research and 33 years in education suggests otherwise, especially in districts and buildings where compliance is demanded and work-arounds are not appreciated. There may be a generally strong negative correlation between most measures of social disadvantage and classroom achievement, but some classrooms facing difficult and challenging circumstances are able to significantly add value to the quality of studenting, teaching, and learning achievements (Maden and Hillman, 1996).

There is also substantial evidence to suggest that many classrooms in these settings do improve despite disadvantage. Again, this is more likely the case where the teachers in these classrooms exceeded normal efforts, much like Mrs. W., to secure this improvement and achieve gains in studenting and learning that are more subscribable to the quality of the teaching, studenting, and learning then to the school policies, and other policy affectations.

IMPROVING STUDENTING ISN'T A QUICK FIX

Although there are studies seeking to understand the mechanisms beneath improving studenting, teaching and learning to learn in classrooms it is more likely the case that empirical certainness are still to far from compelling or conclusive (Moss, 2007). Much of the studenting, teaching and learning to learn improvement and attainment of quality effort and results, for example, have simply not focused on many classrooms much less those in challenging and difficult contexts.

As Gray (2001) concedes: "we don't really know how much more difficult it is for classrooms serving disadvantaged communities to improve because much of the improvement research has ignored this dimension – that it is more difficult, however, seems unquestionable" (p. 33). This may be because the complexity, the focus on effectiveness (test results) rather than studenting, teaching and learning to learn quality, and a quick fix ideation keep many of the successes and failures out of the visible realm of understanding.

This is in keeping with Vygotsky's Theory of the Zone of Proximal Development. The Zone of Proximal de-

velopment (ZPD) is defined as

...the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Guk & Kellog (2007) argued "that a teacher should be a 'tram driver', who organizes the social environment of learning" (Guk & Kellog, 2007, p. 281).

NOURISHING QUALITY STUDENTING

Many of these historical and modern day treatises and studies referenced continually speak for more finely differentiated strategies for classroom improvement and address many of the key issues concerning improvement of classrooms facing challenging circumstances. To many a more differentiated – in the sense of what is going on with heterogeneous groups inside of a classroom on a day to day approach and contextually specific situational awareness of classroom improvement requires capacity building that is achievable by most willing teachers to some degree. It can be even more achievable when teacher initiated and administrative supported internal accountability systems are the predominant assessment vehicle rather than the persistence of increased external accountability systems.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT?

Many mechanisms for low quality studenting, teaching and learning to learn have been suggested though causation has consistently shown itself as tough to prove. It is probably safe to assume that income and other socioeconomic resources are potentially strong predictors of student achievement because, historically as parents acquire more resources they choose to access safer neighborhoods with better schools and grow higher expectations for their children who then may become more studious and similar to the peers they engage with in these new neighborhoods (e.g., Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin, 2002; Orfield, 2005); teachers also tend to come from mid level socioeconomic backgrounds and tend to give higher social status to the higher socioeconomic parents' children and treat them more respectfully (e.g., Lareau and

Horvat, 1999); and high socioeconomic parents, because of sufficient disposable income and a different view of their social context, through their children's performance in school, tend to spend more on remediation / enrichment tools for use in the home (Brooks-Gunn and Markman, 2005). Consequently, most middle to upper income homes are not as concerned about basic (food and shelter) survival pressures (e.g., McLoyd, 1998; Conger, Conger and Elder, 1997) they tend to have better and more reliable health services and nutrition.

This is not to suggest that low poverty classrooms cannot improve as many are as rote minded and traditional in nature as classrooms in high poverty schools, but the low poverty students have more external supports so they are less, but not totally, adversely affected by lower quality studenting opportunities. High poverty classrooms and schools are more likely to have similar circumstances in addition to struggling teachers, poor quality classroom environment, and other complexities which demonstrate conditions that are determined by the complexities themselves. Hargreaves' (2004) work tends to confirm what has been consistently known by experienced educators and continues to illustrate underachievement of students, teachers and schools as complex sets of variables interacting in various ways when viewed in different classroom contexts within different time frames. It also tends to reflect human nature.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR GROWING QSTeLL

Several significant variables to seriously consider and necessary for growing QSTeLL are teacher retention and the quality of teaching students work under can affect studenting in multiple ways. First, schools with high teacher and administrator turnover cause students to be more likely to have inexperienced teachers who, initially, are less effective, on average (Rockoff, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain 2005; Kane, Rockoff and Staiger, 2006). Second, high turnover of teachers and/or administrators produces an instability which makes it more difficult to have quality studenting, teaching and learning to learn.

This instability may be particularly problematic when some form of top down reform is imposed, as newer teachers are less likely to know the history of the

school issues due to their general lack of experience in teaching and will tend to repeat mistakes rather than support reforms with efforts which they are not familiar. Third, any turnover costs time and effort for recruitment, development, support and stabilization. In addition to all these factors, turnover in high poverty schools reduce quality studenting as quality teachers are the ones more likely to be hired for other positions in low poverty schools and leave.

ENHANCING COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY AND THE QUALITY OF STUDENTING – WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

There is a plethora of classroom improvement projects, programs and proposals, with some being effective in certain circumstances while others are adopted as uniform methodologies for standardized development. Fortunately there is some recent work that suggests some newer projects, programs and proposals for studenting, teaching and learning to learn improvements and interventions embrace higher cognitive development tasks and enhanced cognitive complexity by becoming more highly differentiated in how and what is used and when it is used. Although this is viewed by many as relatively underdeveloped there is a long history of ideas that have proven sufficiently robust because of their use of higher cognitive task quality, task or peer grouping strategies, and differentiated content and methodology. Authors, researchers, and educators continually speak to the need for an appropriate fit between student, teacher and learning developmental requirements. In this framework, classroom improvement strategies fall into three different contexts.

IMPROVING FAILING CLASSROOMS – ONE CLASSROOM AT A TIME

Level I – Low QSTeLL classrooms, usually rote and traditional in methodology, need strategies that are formulated to assist them to become even moderately effective. With the right kinds of assistance, even teachers who are unwilling to change can improve the quality of studenting enough to make students a little more willing to become engaged. Unfortunately, as in the example below, the tendency for low quality will persist if it is allowed to, will most likely remain inef-

fective with this type of teacher continuing to provide low quality QSTeLL opportunities. Overcoming the failure in these classrooms requires a high level of external support as it might be assumed that these classrooms do not have internalized capability and will need a principal, assistant principal, or head teacher who understands the issues and is willing to provide the necessary assistance. If this isn't the case then there will need to be central office or consultant assistance, for the teachers and administration, which could provide a clear focus and basic curriculum and instructional ideas so that an internalized confidence and competence can begin to grow.

EXAMPLE OF LEVEL I CLASSROOM: 9TH GRADE HISTORY CLASS – 16 STUDENTS.

Mr. Y.'s room is arranged in seven slanted rows facing the front of the room; three rows on the left side and four rows on the right. Classroom expectations are posted at the front of the room above the whiteboard. There are three expectations: 1) Respect yourself and others, 2) Arrive on time and be prepared to learn, and 3) Remain in your seat unless directed otherwise. There are three large windows along the far left wall and two bookcases and a computer located in the rear of the room. There is also a "lost and found" box sitting atop one of the shelves. Mr. Y. is in his 14th year of teaching.

1:53 p.m., students were seated at individual desks working independently on the focus for the day. The focus was posted on the whiteboard: p. 738 # 1-5 from the textbook. Mr. Y. asked one student to "get quiet" twice while working on the focus. This particular student had difficulty attending for most of the class period. Mr. Y. continuously asked him to stay in his seat and be quiet. One student asked for assistance from Mr. Y. with one of the focus questions and rather than address the question, Mr. Y. responded, "We're getting ready to go over all of the answers." He gave the students a one minute warning.

At 2:00 Mr. Y. began calling on students to answer the question. For the first question, he randomly selected a student, for the second he called on someone who raised their hand, for the third he called on a student who was not paying attention, for the fourth he called on the same student who answered the second question, and for the fifth question he answered it himself. Quite a few students appeared rather disaffected (heads down, sighing, staring off), during the review of the focus. Mr. Y. provided little in the way of feedback. His responses were basically short "correct", "good", or "okay."

At 2:04, Mr. Y. handed back graded quizzes. A quiz was given two days before. The quiz appeared to be one half multiple choice and one half short answer. He instructed the students to make corrections if they wanted extra points and return the corrections to him during their next meeting. After everyone had received a quiz back, he directed the students' attention to the front of the room where he put a page of notes on the overhead. He instructed students to copy the notes taken from the textbook chapter subheadings. The notes were related to the Renaissance and Reformation. He gave them approximately ten minutes to copy the notes. While they were copying, he silently took the attendance and then moved to the back of this room and worked on his computer for a couple of minutes. He got up when one student asked him to move the notes up so he could see them better. After he decided they had enough time to copy, Mr. Y. began discussing the Renaissance and Reformation. His discussion was basically taken directly from the notes with little in the way of elaboration. A couple of students were still frantically trying to copy the notes while Mr. Y. was speaking.

At 2:21 Mr. Y. put another page of notes on the overhead and again requested that students copy. Several students grumbled as he put the second page up. One student remarked, "My hand always hurts after I leave this class." The other students laughed and Mr. Y. gave no attention to her remark. While students were copying this second page, the student who Mr. Y. had asked to quiet down earlier began tapping his desk rather loudly. Mr. Y. asked him to step outside. He then exited the classroom to speak with the student and returned about a minute later with the student. Students copied these notes for about ten minutes when Mr. Y. began discussing them just as he did the first page. Most of the students appeared disengaged and uninterested. Mr. Y. asked no questions or for any student input during his discussion.

At 2:33, Mr. Y. asked students to open their book and work on the review questions for the Renaissance chapter with a partner. He allowed students to choose their partners. He circulated the room while students completed the assignment. One student asked if each pair could turn in one assignment rather than individual assignments. Mr. Y. responded, "No. I need to see everyone's work."

Observer exited the classroom at 2:40 as students continued working on the chapter comprehension questions.

Level II – Moderate or emerging QSTeLL classrooms include characteristics that indicate some success and potential for moving out of Level I classroom status. These classrooms often qualify as effective and are

showing improved QSTeLL qualities or potential for improving QSTeLL. Level II classrooms can still use external supports, especially when it is seen that internalization is slipping back to Level I. These classrooms will only need limited and periodic support. E.g., 4-6 formative observations a year with frequent drop in visits of 5-10 minutes. The observation below is closer to Level I, but because of the game and the lack of classroom management issues it falls into the low end of the Level II range. Classrooms in Level I and II tend to go back and forth depending on what the tasks are and what the teachers are willing to try. External supports are still needed to help these teachers continue trying more student-centered tasking and with some small modifications improvements in QSTeLL will grow.

Level II: 7th Grade Math Class

In this classroom the desks are in groups of 3 or 4 and are arranged around a computer cart with a laptop and a LCD projector in the center of the room. There are 19 students present. On the counter top are two desktop computers. On the back wall is a bulletin board with shapes like circles, triangles, squares, etc. Another bulletin board has some mathematical formulas that the students are in the process of learning. In the front of the room there is a white board and a projector screen. As the class changes most students come in and sit in the desk clusters. Mrs. S. has 4 years of teaching experience.

1:45- Two students walk to the cabinets on the sidewall and take out the calculators and begin putting one on each desk...they do this without being told. The teacher begins to pass out sheets with a huge head on them. "Since we are reviewing chapter 11 today I would like for you to start by filling in the blank head with the things you learned from chapter 11." The students stare at her for a second...with faces much like the ones on the sheet she gave them. One says. "What do you mean Mrs. S?"

She prods them along.... "Do you remember any symbols? Formulas we have worked on?" The student answers "yes."

Mrs S.- "like what?"

Student- "like pi"

Mrs. S. - "ok start there, write pi and all the other things you know about it." She says she is giving them 3 minutes to work and goes over to a desktop computer where she has a webpage that is a timer and sets it for 3 minutes. They are told not to work together.

1:50-When the timer goes off she allows each student to share something they have on their head. All add something, even if it is as simple as a shape. Mrs. S. talked about the formulas for finding the volume and area of a square and a triangle and the calculator processes they would need to use to find the answers.

1:57- Once they finish the introductory activity Mrs. S leads them in practicing the formulas with their calculators. She asked them to find the area of a triangle. On the board she drew a picture of a telephone pole with a cable coming from it to the ground to represent the triangle. This helped the students to see "a triangle in disguise."

Once the students had the answer they raised their hands. One girl blurted out and the teacher gave her the "look." She apologized. For each of the formulas they practiced the teacher drew a life-like picture to depict the shape instead of just the shape itself.

2:10 - "For the last 20 minutes of the day we are going to play Jeopardy." She turns on her laptop and the projector. On the screen is what looks like a Jeopardy game board with columns and money values. Mrs. S. created it using Power point software.

She instructs one student to take small clothes to the bathroom and get them damp..."Not wet...just damp," she says. Another student passes out small white boards, one per group of desks...There are 6 groups. As they are doing that Ms. S sets up her timer on the other computer. Once the student returns with the damp cloths she gives one to each group of students. Ms. S. then explains the rules. "You have played this review game before." Group one will pick the first question, everyone will have 3 minutes to answer the question on your white board...talkers will have points deducted. When the timer goes off you must hold up your answers to receive credit."

Group one picks the question they would like and the teacher sets the timer. The question is revealed and the groups get to work. They finish well before the 3 minute time limit and start talking. She tells them to get quiet and waits for the timer even though everyone is done. Once the timer goes off everyone holds up their boards and she looks at each answer. They are all correct, so each group gets the amount of points. She moves to group two and they go through the same routine. Not all groups get the answer correct so she allows the group who got it right to go to the board and explain their work. Before the next question she informs the students that the timer is going to be shortened to one minute and a half. This change seems to work in keeping the students focused.

2:25- They get through about 5 questions before it is time to get ready for the ending bell. She tallies up the points and the winning group chooses to get points on their test the next day. Ms. S. calls on one student to pick up the clothes and another to take up the white boards. The two students who passed out the calculators take them up and put them away. As they are doing this she advises all of the students to look in their planners on today's date. "Look at what is on your homework list for the day. You need to add studying for the Chapter 11 test. Be sure to focus on objectives 11.1 and 11.2, those will be on your End of Grade test."

Level III QSTeLL classrooms use strategies that go well beyond the limitations of Level II classrooms. At the beginning of this discourse is an excellent example of an upper Level III classroom. Level III classrooms use multiple QSTeLL methodologies to expand ways to create their own support networks through the expanding use of new ideas, practices, and the use of collaboration arrangements that are seen to fit the variety of situations they are learning to work with. As with anything there is a range, but the characteristics shown below are good and in Mrs. W's classroom there are many indicators of Level III type classrooms that are consistently working at high QSTeLL levels.

2nd Example of Level III classroom: 6th Grade Social Studies

The observation began at 8:28 after class had already begun. The students were grouped in four pods of six and working diligently on European country projects. There were 27 out of 29 students present. Each pod had a folder with stacks of information about their specific country as well as crayons and markers, rulers, and "blank" books on their desk. These books contained information the students had been researching and were sectioned off with paper clips. The noise level was loud, but tolerable and definitely not out of control. The students genuinely seemed to be talking about their country and the requirements for their books. All students appeared on task. The room was decorated with bright posters showing the outline of several European countries, journal entries from the perspective in people living in those countries, and a word wall. The word wall has increased drastically since my last observation and many "thinking" words have been included such as: evaluate, justify, conclusion, identify, etc. Mrs. C. has 4 years of teaching experience.

Mrs. C. was seated with a group of students whose coun-

try was Germany. The cover of each student's book was decorated with their country title and they were working in the second section. Students were discussing the war and its impact on food, clothing, and people. I observed all students actively participating and Mrs. C continued to ask guiding questions such as "Why was food scarce?" Her vocabulary was familiar and the students openly offered answers without raising their hands. This did not appear to be a problem with such a small group and it had the feeling more like a conversation and not a question/answer session. Mrs. C. was not giving direct instruction but prompting her students to consider the information that had researched. J... was eager to contribute to the conversation and even prompted D... by asking, "What's your take on this?" Mrs. C. affirmed his question and left the group at 8:36. She walked one complete circuit around the room and then sat down at another group's table who were working on Sweden.

The group studying Sweden was comprised of only five students because one was absent. This group contained two EC students from this inclusion class; however, a stranger would not have been able to observe this. Mrs. C. did not prompt these students to speak as they were already engaged in a conversation about the Swedish banks. Although they were a bit too focused on money and offered questions about if I had a million dollars, they continued to work on drawing the outline of the country and the Swedish flag in their individual books and assisted each other. T... told J... that she should use colored pencils instead of crayons because they draw finer lines. Mrs. C. commended the group on their collaborative work and walked around the room again.

At 8:41 Mrs. C. joined another group that was researching Italy. As she joined them, A... asked, "Do you think it is really shaped like a boot?" Then M... turned the map so that A... could see the shape. M... began talking about Italian food and the group's conversation became lively as each group member talked about their favorite Italian foods. Mrs. C. redirected their conversation and reminded them to focus today on their map, the written explanation of its location, and the flag. One student asked if they should include latitude and longitude location and Mrs. C. answered yes.

At 8:50, Mrs. C. circulated around the room again and sat down with the last group she had not talked with. This group was discussing their country, Norway, and looking through the folder of information provided on the table and could not find the map. M... shouted that someone took the map and a brief dispute erupted. Mrs. C. calmly asked if any of the group members had seen the map and reminded them not to argue, especially over such a trivial issue. Each of the students began looking through the papers on their desk and the floor. The map

was found under the nearby bookshelf and had obviously just slid off the table under the shelf. M... said "I told you so" and Mrs. C. promptly corrected his negative behavior with a 1 minute group conference about jumping to conclusions and how to handle this type of situation better.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

With these contexts in mind we must also look at what the student are or aren't doing in each of these classrooms. When students behave in certain ways the observer can safely assume that the behavior is normal for that student in that context. It is always interesting to watch the student's reactions when teachers change their routine when observers come in as the students tend to question what is going on. Each classroom has a limited or extended variety of activities, depending on the Level they are operating at, with the higher quality classrooms having smoother transitions, greater student involvement and engagement, and higher cognitive level tasks. The point of these observation narratives is to illustrate the unique character of each classroom and the group dynamic. Many administrators and outside consultants think that systemic and uniform intervention strategies, that have seen some gains in some situations, will also work in any situation and this just is not likely to be the case and becomes part of the problem instead of being part of the solution. When standardization or imposed programmatic changes are imposed on everyone they will tend to generate resistance, resentment, or a culture of dependence and external blame that only helps Level I classrooms persist.

A word of caution is always required as quick gains in working with teachers in Level I and Level II classrooms may simply reinforce a dependency on external controls, assistance, and supports and fail to be able to change to a Level II or III classroom. If the teacher's inability or unwillingness to build an internalized capacity to meet the requirements of a Level II or III classroom becomes obvious then other considerations must be made by administration to see what the extenuating circumstances are and mediate from there. The primary goal should always be to increase differentiating self-sufficiency so that there is a growth capacity that will move QSTeLL - the quality of studenting, teaching, and learning - into the ideal, high quality Level III range. In the end the real accountability is

what and how districts, schools and their principal's operationalize helping struggling teachers into becoming more successful and higher quality teachers. This isn't done by mandating from the office or directing everyone to raise their test scores through daily test drill activities. It is done with patience, guidance, and enough support and encouragement so that teachers are willing to try, even if they fail from time to time, QSTeLL are strategies that will rely on high cognitive tasks - especially at the evaluation level - that are of interest to the students and engage their attention.

SITUATIONALITY, DIFFICULT CONTEXTS, DIFFICULT TIMES AND DIFFICULT CHOICES

This is not about a "blame culture", castigating insensitively those who are tackling formidable challenges with resolution and commitment" (Thrupp and Lupton, 2006, p. 313), but is situational. Situationality will always trump any improvement efforts as it will dictate specificity of time, place and persons that generalized or standardized 'solutions' rarely engage adequately, alter, mediate or improve. What is evident to the teachers in Type III classrooms is that they will be working through situationalities of various levels of difficulty and significance, as many as 100 to 200, every day. Level II and III teachers see and recognize these situationalities and mediate them to lesser and varying degrees of success or adequacy with their efforts being dependent on an unknown number of internal and external factors unique to any teacher and also unique to context, time of day and year.

These typical classroom typologies can be informed about many possible solutions to many possible issues, but in the face to face world of studenting, teaching and learning to learn there is little time to consult or ponder as the numerous and ongoing situationalities escalate in seriousness when immediate and appropriate actions are not close at hand. If an expanding number of possible solutions, strong intuitive capabilities, and confidence are not in the teacher's skill set then it will be obvious, as anyone who has spent any time in a classroom well knows, that these teachers will tend to rely on the Type I command and control model.

There are many types of classrooms that fit the Type I description and each has very individual and unique reasons for being there. It comes down to the school's

principal, as the instructional leader, to be able to make: correct determinations of what the persistent issues are; capabilities of the teacher to correct them; and the type of assistance that would be most effective in resolving them. Additionally, categorizing all of the predominant issues from serious to not as serious and dealing with them a few at a time is a good initial triage plan. Massive unfocused assistance and mandated 'fix everything programs' will do little to resolve the most serious issues without a more specific understanding of what they are.

Internalized willingness and accountability vs. externalized accountability are serious factors as well. Recent work by Elmore (2003) suggests that low performing teachers and classrooms lack quality internal accountability, e.g., an agreement that has cohesiveness with expectations for quality studenting. Elmore argues that externalized accountability pressures designed to improve classrooms in difficult contexts may have push back that builds resistant in less capable teacher's classrooms from becoming successful. Elmore also writes that holding classrooms and their teachers more accountable for improving QSTeLL will only work if there are teachers in these classrooms who have knowledge and capabilities that will allow them to continuously respond appropriately to pressure for improvement. Many think that sanctions will act as motivation and that Type I, II or III classrooms have similar internalizable capacities for improvement. These assumptions thrive because of limited understanding and capacity to differentiate between teachers and classroom types that may improve in difficult contexts. Internalized and externalized accountability heuristic devices for differentiating capability of internalized capacity for development offers a powerful means of analysis, but is only one lens that looks at classrooms because, in the end, there are very different internal capabilities for growing QSTeLL and enormous variations for having and developing internalizable accountability. All of these activities, like any learning, take the time they need. If the time isn't available then the likelihood of success is reduced or eliminated.

CONCLUSION

While Type I, II, and III classrooms are acknowledged to be relatively imprecise, as most of education tends

to be, the case remains that the real importance of diagnosing a classroom's capacity to grow QSTeLL is the most important of any improvement strategies if they are to be appropriately adapted to meet the needs of the students. Hopkins (2001) and Stoll et al. (1996) devote considerable attention to the concept of context specificity and how it relates to classroom improvement and the growth of QSTeLL. Hopkins (2001) also notes that authentic classroom improvement strategies must pay attention to context with a wide range of improvement options being made available to these teachers and more intelligent usage of linking strategies to needs.

Improvement strategies must be seen as a 'one classroom at a time' strategy that is contextualized and teacher specific. When principals understand teachers' capabilities and needs they will have a starting point for growing QSTeLL so that differentiated strategies for improvement of individual classrooms is the end result. What is needed to develop these combinations of improvement practices that are appropriate to the unique nature of each classroom, are strategies that would be different for a classroom which is developing QSTeLL than for ones that are not.

Those Type I teachers who aren't being successful, but are capable, may need knowledge from external sources and more collaboration opportunities with Type II and Type III teachers that will allow them to become sufficiently competent to develop their own practices and continue to grow QSTeLL. Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) speak to classroom improvement and they acknowledge the importance of capacity building as well as an appreciation for cultural change so that QSTeLL is sustained and sustainable. They pay particular attention to the necessity of differentiated approaches needed for improvement to occur in any context, but especially in a democratic classroom.

"Dewey's democratic thought supports the establishment of a 'community of inquiry,' broadly characterized by debate, reason, and recognition, and one that is fully compatible with deliberative democracy" (Rorty, 2007; 917). This community forms a sustaining improvement over time and is the real key for determining what particular combinations of external support and internal development are ideal for growing QSTeLL. Using the potential of learning communities to increase teachers' capacity for classroom improvement is an ideal and beneficial strategy (Hargreaves,

2003).

These communities provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate without becoming dependent on external consultants or generalized interventions. This, of course, depends on teacher's internal capacities to become a willing part of these learning communities and to benefit from them. Sadly, not all teachers have this capacity and that these Type I classroom teachers may not benefit from having other teachers to work with or from being part of a learning community and may not be in the right profession.

Our profession expects teachers to develop higher capacities that can be achieved by creating internal accountability instead of relying on external accountability. Teachers with the lowest capacity to improve will unlikely do so through compliance, mandates or sanctions. This has always been a failed strategy because it does not build capacity for growing QSTeLL.

Standardized approaches for teacher improvement that combines external accountability, internalized pressure, and public blame will not force improvement of QSTeLL and is unwise as it tends to exacerbate the problem rather than solve it. Instead, much of the historical evidence suggests locally created improvement strategies developed by partner teachers and the building principal who fully appreciate each unique classroom context will best match the conditions and build a teacher's internal capacity for growing QSTeLL. If you think raising achievement in schools or classrooms are difficult then classroom improvements that neglect diversity and variability within classrooms are destined to fail.

When each classroom teacher helps create a capacity for improvement their students "will tend to pass from catch up to consolidation to moving ahead" (Gray, 2004: 306). Quality classroom observation narrative provides a starting point for creating capacity to grow QSTeLL as they illustrate what is and isn't happening and places to make small improvements. By using the observation narrative and in-school supports the principal can move from being reactive - catch-up - to becoming proactive and move their teachers ahead as they develop in class grouping and appropriate differentiated strategies. The improvement process must focus on teacher's capacities for changing their practice and must also respect diversity, complexity, and variability that are an integral part of classroom and

schoolhouse contexts.

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SHAKE HANDS AND COME OUT FIGHTING: TEACHERS RESPONDING TO CONFRONTATIONAL PARENTS

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Abstract: This investigation of the dynamics of parents' "bullying behaviors" exhibited in interactions concerning their children's school experience addresses a previously unexamined gap in the research on parent-teacher communication. An exploratory, descriptive and confirmatory approach was used to answer the following questions: 1) What types of parent bullying behaviors do teachers experience in school settings? How often do such incidences occur, and what form do they take? 2) Following an instance of feeling bullied by a parent, what consideration have teachers given to leaving the teaching profession? 3) What types of bullying behaviors exhibited by parents are seen as subtle or blatant by teachers? 4) What are potential "triggers" to incidents of parents bullying teachers? 5) Do experiences of being bullied by their students' parents vary according to a teacher's age, gender, ethnicity, grade level and numbers of years of teaching? Findings indicated a positive correlation between physical assaults by parents upon male teachers. Additional positive correlations were found between incidences of property vandalism and gender of teacher, ethnicity, and age variables.

Parental bullying of school personnel is a relevant social issue which warrants scrutiny and response. Pearce (1991) stated that bullying is an act of violence demonstrated in adult problems which can be seen in relationship to assaults, vandalism, hooliganism, and domestic violence. These maladjusted behaviors lead to criminal convictions, alcohol abuse, child abuse, employment problems, marital breakdown and psychiatric breakdown. Dissatisfied parents may react at school from what they perceive as some wrongdoing on the part of the teacher aimed toward their child. Parental bullying behaviors and the frequency of those behaviors are related to the extent and severity of victimization felt, but often unexpressed, by school personnel which, in turn, can have

negative impact on the larger school environment.

Parents and educators working collaboratively have the ability to communicate to middle and high school students in public schools the positive message of high expectations for school success. Epstein (2002) encouraged parents and educators to partner in working toward successful endeavors for the children by instilling the message of thriving academically. Mutual parent-teacher relationships can play a role in fostering student learning. Open and effective communication, along with proactive involvement, can minimize misunderstandings and disagreements between parents and teachers. For many parents, a fundamental part of the parenting role is to be their child's strongest advocate with (or against) the teacher and school (Katz, 1996).

On those occasions when parents and teachers disagree about curriculum, assignments, peer relationships, homework, or teaching approaches, a pattern of open communication can be invaluable in resolving differences (Willis, 1995). Disruptive parent behaviors at school can be viewed as bullying. As stated by McEwan (1998) when parents cross the line and move into aggressive acts toward school personnel, the wrong message is sent to youth who are watching. While parental aggression toward school personnel may primarily be verbal, it sends a discouraging message; these parents are disengaged from the school program.

Jaksec (2005) suggested that there appears to be an increase in the type of incidents where parents become too direct and confrontational with teachers. Angry parents comprise a relatively small population who, when frustrated, exhibit angry tempers. Jaksec (2005) goes on to reiterate that:

The increased stress and tension in the environment from such an episode influences and has the potential of immobilizing a school program. As Jaksec (2005) noted, "[w]hen parents are upset they exhibit behaviors that make their interactions with school personnel problematic. (pp. 8- 9).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

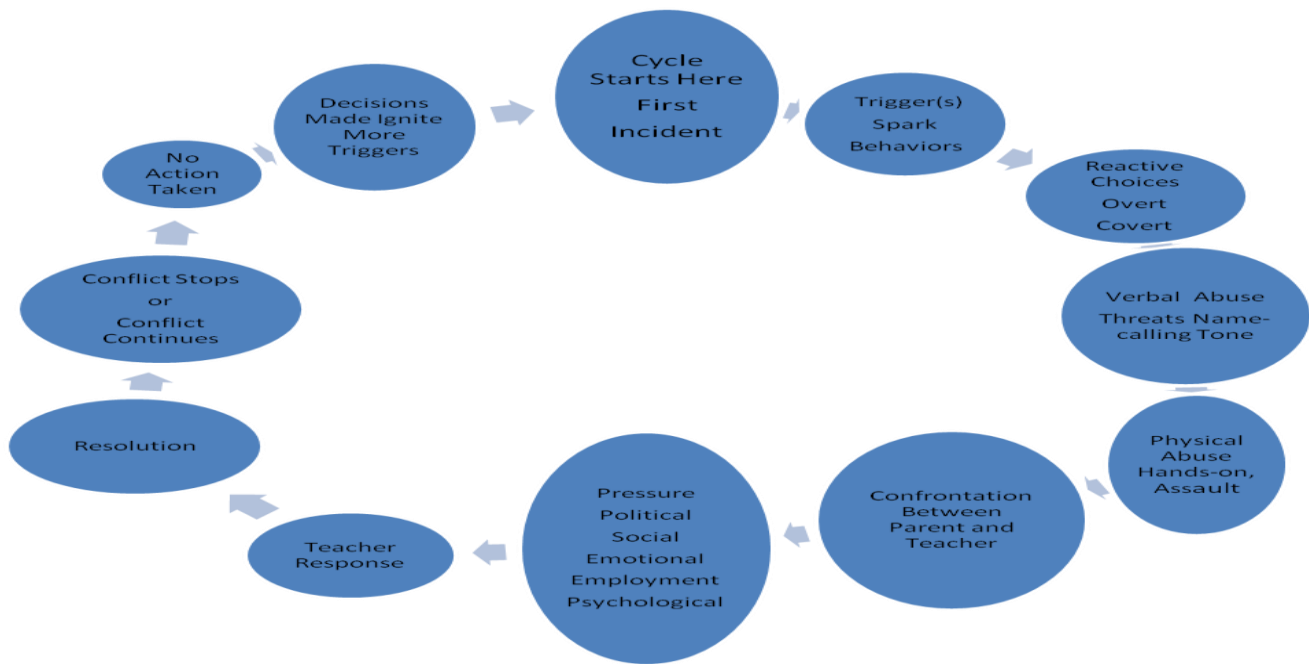
The purpose of the study reported in this article was to investigate the dynamics of bullying behaviors of urban parents towards teachers in one urban school. There exists a gap in the literature about the occurrence and frequency of parent bullying. The limited

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research that is available indicated a possibility in prevalence of parental bullying (Alfandary, 1999; Jaksec, 2005; Campbell, 2004; Briggs, Broadhurst, & Hawkins, 2004; Benefield, 2005; King and Alexander, 1996). There is seemingly a lack of information on the contributions to the body of knowledge in the literature on bullying behaviors of parents toward teachers. Direct research into the bullying of teachers by students' parents/guardians has been an over looked area for inves-

perceived as demonstrations of bullying by teachers in one urban high school.

Table 1: Conceptual Model on Parents Bullying Behaviors toward Teachers



tigators, despite the fact that, until very recently, the prevalence of student-on-student bullying has been viewed as a stark “wake-up call” for U. S. families with school-age children, and it is becoming a factor in decisions made by pre-service and in-service teachers to enter or remain in the profession.

Bullying within any institutional structure, perhaps because of the shame and guilt on the part of the victims, can exist as a seemingly silent activity -- making the conduction of research particularly difficult for institutional “insiders.” Among the few published studies on parents who bully, Benefield (2005) stated that despite a wealth of anecdotal evidence, there is currently very little empirical research data available on the prevalence or impact of the various forms of physical and emotional violence directed against staff in schools. This study was undertaken to determine the degree to which parent/guardian behaviors were

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following five research questions guided the study:

1. What types of parent bullying behaviors do teachers experience during interactions with parents/guardians? In what form and how often do such perceived bullying incidents occur?
2. What consideration has been given to leaving the teaching profession after a parent-bullying episode?
3. What types of bullying behaviors are perceived and described by teachers as “subtle” or “blatant?”
4. What “triggers” are identified by teachers to

initiate the bullying incidents?

5. Do teachers' experiences of bullying from parents/guardians vary in accordance to a teacher's age, gender, ethnicity, grade level and years of teaching experience?

LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Though valuable to the study of adult bullying of other adults, this study was focused solely on the perceptions of teachers and administrators in one inner city high school. Parent perceptions were not examined in this study, but should be addressed in future research through a more broadly-based survey. Additionally, as Swanton (1998) noted, "rural, urban, and suburban schools may show variances in reporting incidents [of bullying of teachers by parents] . . . [and] the under-reporting of incidents by teachers is considered a serious barrier to improved understanding of parental aggression. This study was limited to the perceptions of educators in one urban school, because of the researcher's desire to examine undocumented and/or anecdotal teachers' and administrators' reports of bullying by parents among a population that offered access within a short time-frame before survey participants might have moved on to other school placements.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The Conceptual Model for bullying behaviors of parents against educators shows an external "trigger" or response, which begins the cycle of bullying and violence on the far left side of the model. The trigger may be some action viewed by the parent as a violation against their child. Triggers may include suspension from school, low grades on a report card, and a child abuse report to officials or exclusion from a field trip. Both parent and teacher may initiate triggers. Reactive choices a bully may employ might include overt or covert actions on the part of the parent. Bullying behaviors are sparked by a parent response to the perceived wrongdoing by the teacher. Moving in two directions is verbal and physical abuse, which moves forward to a parent-teacher confrontation. This takes place as a result of the parent's anger.

Confrontational behaviors may include name-calling, escalated voice tones, public intimidation, ridicule, physical assault, argumentative posture, threats, obscenities, accusations, and acts of vandalism, as cited by Benefield (2005). Once the confrontation has taken place, the parent then applies pressure in either an implied or executed manner. Pressures may be considered as political, social, emotional, employment-related, or psychological. The teacher may be impacted negatively. A teacher response may be immediate, stressed, or prolonged intimidation. Teachers may try to resolve the issue(s), but if there is no resolution, the parent may view the teacher response as another trigger, and the situation then moves back around through the cycle. Repeated, unhelpful acts are part of the cyclical nature of bullying.

STATISTICS ON PARENT BEHAVIOR

The ASTI survey (1999) revealed statistics that teachers had experienced bullying by parents. Sixty-eight percent of respondents stated they had experienced verbal abuse; 50% stated they had been deliberately excluded by another person at school; 26% reported that they had been the target of personally offensive graffiti, abusive work related telephone calls or malicious damage to their property; 14% indicated that an immediate family member had experienced abuse or harassment as a direct result of the respondents school workplace; 85% of respondents reported they had experienced positive reinforcement and praise from a parent at some point in their career. Only 14% of schools had in place a support system to deal with incidents of adult bullying; 83% reported that the atmosphere in their school was harmonious or moderate and 16% described the school atmosphere as not acceptable or tense.

CONTEXT FOR THE INQUIRY

Workplace bullying for school is just as traumatic as it is for businesses. Workplace bullying at school has become an issue of concern for educators, policy makers, unions, school officials and government (Field, 1999). Violence to school workers is often extreme and frightening cited Briggs et al. (2004). As a result of this research, inquiry into the implementation of civility policies was explored. Jaksec (2005) pointed out that

there has been an increase in the establishment and enforcement of civility policies in school districts in America. These policies emphasize that any threatening behaviors on the part of members of the public, stakeholders or any party, including school personnel, will not be tolerated and are sometimes punishable. The hope is to create more relaxed conversations among teachers, parents, and students (Delisio, 2001). Policymakers recognize the escalating challenges school personnel face each day in dealing with parents who become frustrated or act in an overly aggressive manner.

Bullying is a real threat in schools. Its gravity has led to threats made by parents to communicate with their attorneys, school board members, and the mayor's office when decisions made were not yielding to their demands (Jaksec, 2005). The issue of confrontational, angry, and hostile parents who bully at school needs to be addressed by researchers. Jaksec (2005) stated that for any school personnel who are victimized by a parent, repercussions should follow to protect victims. These interactions result in an inconvenient disruption of a school day and/or threaten the employee's safety. Parental aggression is a problem not to be ignored.

WORKPLACE BULLYING STATISTICS

The Bureau of Labor Statistics documents that since 1994, workplace homicides have decreased annually, except for the year 2000, which showed a minor increase from the previous year (Bureau of Statistics, 2001). The most recent data available indicates over a 30% decline in workplace homicides over the past 10 years. The U. S. Department of Education (DOE) (1998) and Department of Justice (DOJ) (2000), annually publish *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*, which details episodes of school violence, including school related deaths (homicides and suicides, rape, fighting, battery, injuries, robbery, and theft). This report does not speak of, neither does it include, parent-bullying behaviors.

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association survey (2006), reported that Canadian educators witnessed a parent verbally abusing a teacher 36% of the time, up from 29%. In the same survey, 23% of educators report they have witnessed a parent physically assaulting and intimidating a teacher, up 14% from 2001. In 2005, teachers (82%) reported they feel safe,

down from 93% in 2001. Teachers and education workers (30%) reported a parent or guardian had bullied them. Forty-eight percent of educators report witnessing a violent incident directed at teachers in schools involving injuries, property damage or weapons. Ontario teachers (55%) reported having been bullied by a superior, colleague, parent or student. Statistics shows that bullying is three times as prevalent as illegal discrimination and at least 1,600 times as prevalent as workplace violence. One in six persons experienced bullying at work.

Hoel & Cooper (2001) and the International Labor Organization (1998) found that bullying was particularly prevalent in the following at-risk sectors: prison service (16.2%), telecommunications (16.2%), teaching (15.6%) and the dance profession (14.1%). As well, workplaces and occupations, like taxi cab drivers, health care workers, teachers, social workers and police/prison workers are at-risk of experiencing violence directed toward them. Matsui (2006) reported that more elementary teachers than secondary teachers have been bullied by parents.

OPPOSING VIEWS ON WORKPLACE BULLYING

Denenberg & Braverman (1999) and Ishmael & Ale-moru (1999) elaborated on how there is virtually no evidence that when asked about violence by any of our interviewees and respondents, none of them considered reporting instances of bullying and harassment within the workforce from colleagues or clients. They reported that bullying was only a small proportion of all events reported by the interviewees. This contradicts the view that bullying and harassment within the workplace or that there is the source of violence and menace on the job. They cited that no overt or covert bullying behavior was reported in these studies.

METHODOLOGY

Survey data collected from educators in a medium sized school district in a Mid-Atlantic state using a survey in a face-to-face administration from teachers who served as participants employed with Excellence City Public Schools (ECPS) in grades 9-12. A culturally and ethnically diverse community, Excellence City Schools is made up of 73% of Whites; less than 10% of

Blacks; 11% of Hispanics; almost four and a half percent of mixed or multiple races; about 13% of Asian and Pacific Islanders; one percent of Koreans; about one percent of Filipinos; one percent of Chinese and; about one percent of American Indians.

PILOT STUDY

A sub-group of 40 educators in an intact group of inner city schools where high poverty, crime, drug use, and unemployment rates balloon field tested the survey instrument. They were likely to have experiences similar to the intended sample population. Feedback was requested of educators regarding the overall survey. Changes, additions, and deletions were made to the survey based on the field test to determine possible bullying behaviors by parents. This survey was used to measure the frequency and type of bullying behaviors teachers' experience. An exploratory analysis was conducted prior to conducting the study. Ninety percent of participants indicated victimization through abuse by a parent.

INSTRUMENTATION

This quantitative, descriptive, and exploratory study was conducted to determine the frequency and types of bullying behaviors by parents in an urban high school setting. A forced choice survey was used to collect demographic data from teachers that yield descriptive data. The survey was divided into four parts. Part I employed a scale to measure the number of incidents teachers perceived as confrontational. Part II measured the frequency and type of trigger, location, and results of the parent behavior. Part III employed an Open-Ended response question to describe particular episodes experienced. Part IV measured varying demographics and frequency at which parent behaviors occurred.

The One-Way ANOVA test was used to determine group differences through statistical calculations. Chi-Square tests were conducted to determine frequencies and percentages. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of the constructed scale. SPSS software was used to analyze the data.

FINDINGS

The data collected investigated bullying behaviors by parents toward teachers (at school). The section includes: (a) a description of the population (b) analyses and findings presented by research questions, and (c) a summary of statistical procedures.

Population

At the end of the face-to-face administration, the researcher collected 117 surveys. More Whites than other ethnicity subgroups participated in the survey administration. Of the ethnicities reporting, frequencies reflected the sample was not significantly diverse. Of those surveyed, 36 (30.7%) were males and 81 (69.2%) were females.

The ages of the teachers ranged from 23-66 years. Out of the intended sample, 117 (90%) out of 130 surveys were collected. The average age for the 117 respondents reporting was 44.9 years and the standard deviation was 12.2. The minimum number of years taught by the teachers was one year, while the maximum number of years taught by the teachers was 42 years. The mean years taught was 16.0 (SD = 10.1).

A Summary of the Statistical Procedures

The results of the Cronbach's Alpha test established reliability for survey questions one (1) through nine (9) of Part I on the survey by serving as an unbiased estimator of reliability for each variable. This particular test was used to indicate the extent to which the set of questions measured variables listed in Part I of the survey instrument. It measured categories: verbal abuse, verbally threatened, name-calling, ridiculed in front of students, ridiculed in front of other adults, publicly challenged, physically intimidated, physically assaulted, and has your property been the target of vandalism. The Cronbach's Alpha test was administered on the 20 question survey instrument; the results yielded a score of .874 which is acceptable.

Research Questions

Question 1: What types of parent bullying behaviors at school do teachers experience? In what form and how often? Teachers responded they had encountered aggressive confrontational behaviors from parents. During the previous school year, 50% (60 respondents) indicated that they had experienced bullying by a parent. The data and results of those descriptive statistics reported

during the previous school year under verbal abuse, this level of intimidation addressed parents, who bullied teachers by using profanity, obscenity, and swearing when communicating anger to the teacher.

Verbally threatening behaviors from a parent included terrorizing teachers by scaring, browbeating, bullying, terrorizing, or bulldozing the victim. Ridicule of a teacher by a parent in front of students was viewed. This level of defiance addresses distressed parents, who confronted teachers in the presence of students on the school campus or in public venues. This category of degradation addressed parents, who embarrassed teachers in the presence of other parents, school staff, students, and those who provided services to the school or at sports activities where there is an audience.

Parents publicly challenged teachers by outward demonstrations of anger toward teachers by being oppositional, using strong arming tactics, making demands, and calling into question teachers out in public venues. Parents' publicly intimidated respondents by demonstrating revolt addressed upset parents who resisted teachers by using stand over tactics, face-to-face and toe-to-toe posturing, frightening, balling up fist and demonstrating a scowled look on the face of the parent in view of others.

Respondents report physical assault by parent by this aggressive offense addressed by irate parents who physically attacked teachers; engage teachers by striking, hitting, pushing, slapping, using hands on actions, punching, kicking, posturing, and grabbing the teacher. These results indicated that males were more likely to experience physical assault than females. Consequently, the results of a Chi Square test revealed a statistically significant relationship of $\chi^2 (1, n = 36) = .021$, $p < .05$ for males who were physically assaulted by confrontational parents. Specifically, these results indicated males had been victimized significantly more frequently by an aggressive parent in a physical assault.

The results of a Chi Square Test revealed a score of $\chi^2 (1, n = 6) = .003$, $p < .05$. This indicated a level of statistical significance regarding one's property as target of vandalism by confrontational parents. When the teacher's (your) property was the target of vandalism and ethnicity variables were compared, the results indicated, ethnically, White teachers were more likely

to be targeted and vandalized more so than other ethnic subgroups.

Your property the target of vandalism compared to age revealed frequency scores for ages 51 and 52 as multimodal. The results of a Chi Square Test to investigate the relationship between the variable your property the target of vandalism and age revealed results of $\chi^2 (1, n=6) = .001$, $p < .005$. This indicated a level of statistical significance regarding the teacher's (your) property as the target of vandalism by age of the teacher. Teachers were more likely to experience an increased rate in the number of incidences of bullying by your property the target of vandalism more frequently as teacher's ages decreased.

The location where a parent was likely to confront a female teacher was the Internet. Twenty-five female teachers (21.3%) responded parents confronted them on the internet. The data suggested females were victimized more on the internet than males. A Chi-Square test revealed respondents indicated the Internet, as a location for episodes of victimization was likely to occur as well. The analyses showed a score of $\chi^2 (1, n=25) = .022$, $p < .05$ which revealed a statistically significant relationship between internet and gender (females), therefore, influencing the experience of parents confronting teachers.

The results of ANOVA analyses conducted to access statistical significance of whether the Internet by gender was used to confront a teacher during the previous school year. Females were more likely to be confronted on the internet than males. The results of the ANOVA analyses revealed a score of $F = (1,115) = 5.366$, $p = < .022$ which was statistically significant at the .05 level. The internet is an isolated location where parents are free to communicate negatively through bullying, intimidate and threaten teachers in an unrestricted open arena.

The classroom tended to be one other location where parents are likely to confront teachers. The data revealed that as teacher's ages increased, the likelihood of confrontation in the classroom between parent and teacher increased. A Chi Square test was used to investigate the relationship between locations by age of self-reported aggressive confrontational behaviors by parents toward teachers during the previous school year. The results of a Chi Square test revealed $\chi^2 (1, n = 3) = .001$, $p < .05$ which showed a statistically significant

cant relationship between the classroom and age.

A Chi Square test to investigate the relationship between location as the classroom and years taught of self-reported aggressive confrontational behaviors by parents toward teachers revealed $\chi^2 (1, n = 3) = .045, p < .05$ a statistical significance a relationship. Results suggested that as the number of years taught increased, the incident rate continued to increase in the classroom.

Question 2: What consideration has been given to leaving the teaching profession after a parent-bullying episode? The One-Way ANOVA test was conducted on all items demographically to examine whether respondents considered leaving the profession after a parent-bullying episode. The ANOVA analyses suggested there were no statistically significant findings $F(1,115) = 20.222, p = < 1.00$ between differences by gender, age, ethnicity, grade level and years taught when compared to teachers who had considered leaving the profession after a bullying incident. There were no significant differences found when compared with these variables. Two teachers (1.7%) complimented parents for being supportive although angry.

Question 3: What types of parent-bullying behaviors are seen as subtle or blatant toward teachers? The highest percentage of adjectives which describe parent behaviors was 31.6% ($n = 37$) of parents who bullied blatantly. Thirty (25.6%) respondents indicated parents operated out in the open when bullying. Another adjective likely used to describe behaviors of parents was in-your-face demonstrations. Twenty-eight respondents (23.9%) indicated parents bullied in-your-face. The modal score of frequencies was 37.

A Chi Square test performed to investigate the relationship between "in-your-face behaviors" and ethnicity of self-reported aggressive confrontational behaviors by angry parents toward teachers revealed a statistically significant score of $\chi^2 (1, n = 28) = .010, p < .05$. White teachers were more likely to experience in your face behaviors by confrontational parents.

Question 4: What triggers initiate the parent-bullying incident? Responses reported by the teachers indicated teachers' selected more than one response from the survey list of triggers that led to confrontation to describe what caused parents to become upset and confrontational with teachers. Of this group of respondents, the largest number of triggers, 31 respondents

(26.4%) indicated parents confronted teachers when students had low grades on report the card. This trigger is followed by the next highest number of responses which revealed 24 (20.5%) respondents indicated student discipline referrals caused parents to react and become upset. This resulted in parent confrontation and the victimization of a teacher. The frequency rates of three and five showed multimodal scores. Teachers viewed low grades on report card, removal from a sports team, homework issues, low attendance rates and low test scores as triggers which caused confrontations directed toward teachers by parents. The frequencies showed scores of three and five as multimodal. Overall, the results showed when students are removed from sports teams, had homework issues, and had low attendance rates parents reacted by confronting teachers.

A Chi Square test was performed to investigate the relationship between triggers by gender of self-reported aggressive confrontational behaviors by parents toward teachers during the previous school year. First, the report indicted a significance of $\chi^2 (1, n = 5) = .001, p < .05$ when removed from a sports team and male gender were compared. The results showed that male teachers were confronted more so than females when students are removed from sports team. This group of male teachers may have been serving in dual roles as coaches. These finding suggested that more males possibly serve as coaches. Next, the Chi Square test show a statistical significance in revealing $\chi^2 (1, n = 20) = .001, p < .05$ when students experience homework issues by gender, female teachers. Confrontational behaviors were seen by parents after a student had homework issues directed toward female teachers.

Finally, the Chi-Square test revealed a statistical significance of $\chi^2 (1, n = 9) = .037, p < .05$ on low attendance rates by gender (female teacher). The results indicate that female teachers who report low attendance rates are more likely to experience bullying by confrontational parents. All three of these triggers offer insight into reasons likely to have caused parents to demonstrate inappropriate, negative and abusive behaviors aimed toward teachers.

The results of an ANOVA analyses conducted to assess statistical significance of "removed from a sports team" as it influences a parent who confronts a teacher during the previous school year. Students who were removed from sports teams were likely to have been

done so by a male teacher. These results suggest more males are likely to be victimized. The results of the ANOVA analyses revealed a statistically significant score of $F = (1,115) = 12.841$, $p < .001$.

The results of ANOVA analyses calculated statistical significance on student has homework issues compared to gender as it influences a parent to confront teachers. Female teachers were more likely to be confronted than males concerning homework issues. The results of the ANOVA analyses revealed $F = (1,115) = 11.602$, $p < .001$ which was statistically significant.

As the ages of respondents (3.4%) increased, the number of incidents increased when age and low test grades were measured. The frequency scores revealed two and three incidents as multimodal scores. A Chi Square test were performed to investigate the relationship between low grades by age of self-reported aggressive confrontational behaviors by angry parents toward teachers. The analyses revealed a demonstrated relationship of $\chi^2 (1, n=4) = .033$, $p < .05$. The results indicated that older teachers were more likely to be confronted by parents when low grades and the age of the teacher are compared.

The data suggested that as the number of years taught increased, the number of incidents increased as well. Teachers were more likely to experience an angry confrontational parent trying to bully them when low test scores and the number of years taught increased. Teachers were more likely to experience an angry confrontational parent trying to bully them when low test scores and the number of years taught increased. Teachers with higher numbers of years taught experienced a greater chance of parents becoming aggressive as experience increased.

A Chi Square test investigated the relationship between low test scores and years taught of self-reported aggressive confrontational behaviors by angry parents toward teachers. The analyses revealed a statistical significance of $\chi^2 (1, n = 8) = .04$, $p < .05$. As the number of years taught increased, incidences were likely to increase with triggered confrontation.

An ANOVA analysis conducted to assess low attendance rates by gender as it influenced a parent who confronted a teacher during the previous school year. Female teachers were more likely than males to be confronted by a parent when low attendance rates caused parents to react. The results of the ANOVA

analyses revealed $F = (1,115) = 4.423$, $p < .038$ which was statistically significant between groups.

Low attendance rates triggered parents when measured by years taught to confront teachers. One teacher (.9%) with 33 years of teaching experience indicated two incidents reported when a parent confronted the teacher. The data showed two (1.7%) teachers who taught for 33 years each experienced one incident of being confronted by a parent. The results indicated that as the years taught increased, the incidence rate increased.

A Chi Square test to measure a relationship between low attendance rates and years taught of teachers was conducted. The results revealed the statistical significance of $\chi^2 (1, n = 2) = .03$, $p < .05$. When compared to low attendance rates, teachers with increasing numbers of years taught influenced the behaviors of confrontational parents.

Question 5: Do teachers' experiences of bullying parent vary according to gender, ethnicity, age, grade level and teaching experience? A description of the population by demographic variables showing the frequency and percentages of the participants in each category revealed that 36 (30.7%) were male participants and 81 (69.2%) were female participants. Ethnically, the respondents were not very diverse; the data showed that gender, ethnicity, age, and years taught revealed statistical significance. Grade level taught did not reveal a statistical significance.

A description of the ages of the respondents showed the majority of respondents 37 (31.6%) were in the age ranges of 42-51 years old. At Excellence City High School, 39 respondents (33.3%) between the age ranges of 52-62 years made up the majority of teachers. There were 23 (19.6%) respondents in the age ranges of 21-31 who made up the third highest ranked age group of the teachers.

The frequencies and percentages of years taught revealed 40 respondents (34.1%) teaching 1 - 12 years. Secondly, seven respondents (6.0%) who reported the number of years taught in the range of 33 - 42 years as well reported having experienced abuse by parents. Thirdly, there were 39 respondents (28.2%) who reported years taught in the range of 13-22 years. Lastly, 31 (26.4%) respondents reported the number of years of teaching experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study contributes to the body of knowledge examining school safety precautions, specifically, in urban schools; place a focus on how bullying by parents is a societal problem; and provide educators with a lens to take a closer look at workplace safety. This will assist educators in initiating a greater understanding of the dilemma on parent bullying in the school environment where high poverty, crime, high rates of joblessness, and single parent families. Hewitt (1998) pointed out that by identifying the factors that could be seen to modulate the impact of local environment on behavior in schools and by taking the study of violence in schools beyond the issue of bullying, a better understanding of the full social nature of violence in schools, parent roles and teacher perceptions can provide evidence or future study. This would shed light on the most and least successful management practices employed in schools in dealing with violence and provide a generalizable overview of best practice.

Replication of this study is needed in comparing cities and school divisions by state and national regions. Further, a study is needed to determine and investigate parent bullying at the college level in urban universities. Practitioners may want to determine and investigate if bullying is more evident at the elementary, middle or high school levels in urban schools and if bullying demonstrates different forms at different levels.

CONCLUSION

The content analyses confirmed and supported the data that were collected from the quantitative research questions. Verbal abuse from parents as a means of defying teachers was likely to occur when parents confront. Concurrently, teachers identified possible "hot button" issues in relationship to parent interactions that "go South". Consequently, teachers who avoid locations like Internet use (to communicate with parents), the classroom (where teachers teach) or the school office (where teachers conduct school business) stand a better chance as well of avoiding confrontation. Additionally, teachers feel parents are blatant, out in the open, and in-your-face when it comes to incidents of confrontation. On the other hand, teachers were complimentary of parents even when parents

come to school, shake hands initially, and then come out (to school) fighting when faced with a perceived challenge.

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SONNY'S BLUES, INTERNATIONALISM, AND THE BEAT GENERATION: THE RISE OF URBAN BLACK MODERNISM

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Abstract: The article introduces the query of the Black man's "modern" origins: his introduction to literary theory and intellectual schools of thought, his deracialized association with liberal whites who were "hipsters" or "beatniks," and his profound anxiety at addressing the racism, impoverishment, and narrative doubts arising from the Black man's seemingly implacable American cultural origins in the "Jim Crow" Southern states. T. S. Eliot is also introduced as the prophet of modernism; for Baldwin, Sonny's jazz education realizes Black learnings of preliterate traditions in the modern setting. "Sonny's Blues," like *On The Road* and *Visions of Cody* by Jack Kerouac, also attempts to narrate biography and cultural learnings of knowledge through imaginative and written translations of jazz improvisations. It bears a close relationship with the "white blues" of Kerouac in that Baldwin describes jazz as tantamount to the Black man's epistemological and spiritual redemption, and that it forecasts a Black subject of considerably greater individuation and personal freedom. This can be found through an examination of the "story of jazz," the influence of heroin and alcohol, and Sonny's anxious relationship with jazz icons. A community ethos is implied by the paradigm of cross-racial learning of cultural context; with this in mind, I use the historical period to contrast the racial separation, exclusivity, and "primitive" assignment of Black jazz to the use of the genre as a modern template for self-expression and (inter)national symbolic and ethical possibility, which is also related to the Beat Generation's stress on cultural revolution.

I have taught James Baldwin's short story, "Sonny's Blues," to second-semester freshmen and upper-classmen alike, three times. Student readings of current textbooks for "Composition and Literature," "Introduction To Literature," or simply for "Composition II" inevitably will include this work, but the real challenge seems to be examining and teaching the modern significance of ghettoized Black social anxieties as though the "modern" question still applies to a

very different generation of African-American citizens. The featuring of Sonny's brother, a mathematics teacher, as narrator limits speculation about Baldwin's association with the radical Left, the Beat Generation and possibly, the emerging counterculture: I emphasize again the word "speculation" to forecast a transfigured blackness now in relation to new subcultures whose agency and agenda was not yet recognized or included in the contemporary political-social portrait of modern humanity.

Still, at least the outcomes for both Sonny and his brother project a more affirmative translation of modernity and individuation of Self than anything portrayed in Black novels of the middle decades of the 20th century. This work also manifested T.S. Eliot's "modernism," plus the "earning" of "tradition," in a modern context that erased Jim Crow themes of White-Black separateness and the subjugation implied by a region-specific notion of culture and community.

The erasure of cultural borders and the individuation of Black mankind actually spelled out a growing White-Black anxiety that helped project African-American premodernity onto a world stage, challenging and deconstructing American social geographies. Black moral and social consciousness had moved beyond the passiveness of Richard Wright's *Native Son*, and had reassembled modern agency that Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* had ingeniously dissolved.

Lastly, Sonny's agonizing trek through memory is the basis for expressing "modern" selfhood, where the individual, no longer the territory of an "authentic" domain, vocalizes his ethical and personal values. Thus, "Sonny's Blues" coincides with the rapidly modernizing ethos of Black music, and triumphantly re-stages Black social and political consciousness against the apolitical cycles of urban depression and redemption found in Jack Kerouac's novels.

It is a classic socioeconomic sketch of modern man's anguish and transcendence of the diminutive, depressive characteristics of a godless, tradition-less modernity first viewed on the pages of *The Waste Land*. The "uneasiness" of White-Black relations, drawn from narrative originality and authenticity, would thus synthesize "Black Modernism" anew, looking forward, not backward to Jim Crow origins.

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THE POLITICS OF LITERARY AND CULTURAL ISOLATION: WHY NARRATING BLACK MODERNS APPEARS PROBLEMATIC DURING "JIM CROW"

The modern portrayal of Black culture inheres a greater breadth to express one's intellectual and cultural horizons. Jazz trumpeter Miles Davis, one of the most popular entertainers in America during the 1950s, synopsized cultural change through both personality and (one's sense of) society: "Black and white people were starting to get together and in the music world Uncle Tom images were on their way out. All of a sudden, everybody seemed to want anger, coolness, hipness, and real clean, mean sophistication" (Troupe, 1990, 198). Re-defining cultural "borders" thus manifested the human story of "blackness" against colonial/Jim Crow notions of Black separation and subjugation: Black subjects were no longer married to stereotypes and visible portraits of their inferiority. The "memory" of a rural, Southern past marked by fear, racism, and impoverishment was also the raw text of modern narrative struggle; Davis, a jazz musician known for his imaginative and theory-heavy re-writing of jazz musical form, was reflective and warm about his landmark 1959 album, *Kind of Blue*:

Kind of Blue also came out of the modal thing I started on *Milestones*. This time I added some other kind of sound I remembered from being back in Arkansas, when we were walking home from church and they were playing these bad gospels.

So that kind of feeling came back to me and I started remembering what music sounded like and felt like. That feeling is what I was trying to get close to. That had got in my creative blood, my imagination, and I had forgotten it was there.

I wrote this blues that tried to get back to that feeling I had when I was six years old, walking with my cousin along that dark Arkansas road. (Troupe, 1990, 234)

Pairing rural, traditional "blackness" with complex, intellectualized, narrational theory was not solely the active domain of modern music. It was the subject of post-World War II literatures, dialectically staging the Beat Generation as both anti-racist emissaries and as deeply Europeanized purveyors of the written imagination. Certainly, the Beats superseded, de-authenticizing, popularized, vulgarized modernism for a new generation of social misfits and outsiders. Again, the question: why should Baldwin encourage

such an association, with literary "whiteness"? What ethical sense of Self would identify subjects in this "new" Black community? What could be gained, by robbing blackness of its seemingly immovable "authenticity," which was its confinement to a region of unexceptional poverty in a country of unmatched industrial prosperity? Several Black authors had written about the Black subject's failure to realize the "transcendent" powers of modern intellectual theory or its possible cross-cultural symbolisms. The Harlem Renaissance was set in the same period as the beginning movement towards modernism and included novels of this pretense; Wallace Thurman's *Infants of the Spring*, for example, centered upon an impromptu apartment collective, "Niggerati Manor," where Blacks ashamed of their origins unsuccessfully tried to star in operas, compose classical music, and write books of the "White" sort. They are mostly unsuccessful not because they lack talent, but because of the racist exclusivity of the performing arts: we are led to believe that Blacks were only meant for "primitive" arts such as jazz and blues. In the negative sense, White-Black relationality confines the Negro to primitivity, subservience, and illegitimacy through the rhetorical and historical metaphors of "slave" culture: Blacks had been slaves, their talents were therefore inferior to those of Whites. However, positive appraisals operate narrative tensions between

Whites and Blacks, in the (re)invention of "tradition," foreshadowed through Raymond's derisive criticisms of Eustace, an opera singer:

[Raymond] had no sympathy whatsoever with Negroes like Eustace, who contended that should their art be Negro, they, the artist, must be considered inferior. As if a poem or song or a novel by and about Negroes could not reach the same heights as a poem or song or a novel by or about any other race. (Thurman, 1932, 108)

Because *Infants of the Spring* includes White patrons and collaborating residents at "Niggerati Manor," we should accept the fact that popularizing premodern arts and writing constituted a meaningful modernist anxiety of influence. In their works, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Claude McKay foreshadow similar anticipations of a "home" culture's broadening influence upon the "outside" world and Whites, who are now a significant part of the learning and (re)popularization of "authentic" blackness. Still, Har-

lem Renaissance literatures enforce separateness and inequity in it: according to Thurman, Blacks were either frustrated students of a hostile White culture, traditionalists that find themselves easily colonized in a world of White social-institutional dominance, or disenfranchised moderns with neither the legitimacy of tradition or the capacity of modernity. Hughes's poem, "Harlem Night Song," illustrates the Black subject's incompleted "break" with the rural South, still married intellectually to rural emphases on Nature, emotions, and folkishness. "Harlem Night Song" is merely one of countless "romantic" examples of how the Black literary imagination condensed or limited carefully the cerebral/psychological impacts of modernity:

Come, let us roam the night together,
Singing.
I love you.
Across the Harlem roof-tops, moon is shining,
Night sky is blue,
Stars are the great drops of golden dew.
Down the street, a band is playing.
I love you.
Come, let us roam the night together, singing. (Hughes,
1994, 94)

During the "early" stages of modernism, Black novelists wrote of the relative failure of African-Americans to fruitfully realize White intellectual inundations. Two classic examples are Richard Wright's *Native Son*, and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Wright sets up a very clever paradigm when narrating the impact of Communism among Blacks: Bigger Thomas is confronted by Max, a white Communist attorney, who solicits his defense, yet it is too late. The absolute reduction of human possibility, at the age of seventeen, is realized and addressed posthumously, in Thomas's trial; consequently Thomas does not communicate anything with Max. Rejection of Black "tradition"—Bigger Thomas's mother is a working parent and a devout Christian—held disintegrative characteristics that introduce the "modern condition" as meaningless and requiring superstructural change. Bigger Thomas is a gangster who steals, jacks off in a theater, and eventually beats his girlfriend to death. However, Max's trial defense ignores the possibility of "returning" to Judeo-Christian roots for redemption. Max also makes Bigger the subject of a socioeconomic history of isolation and racialization: he is a symbol of a larger

sickness. Social elements written as Bigger's actions and race characteristics are thus part of a greater civilizational challenge, to find and actualize modern intellectual traditions which can "cure" the socioeconomic antipathies common to both Whites and Blacks.

As a restatement of the breadth, diversity, and intentionality of Black culture and community at the time of World War II, *Invisible Man* relentlessly exposes and destructs the modern Black man's pretense for intellectual validation. Whether it is in politics, as a politics, as a leader, or at the street level through the deceptive eloquence of Ras, through the absoluteness of Jim Crow mistrust held by Dean Bledsoe, speculation concerning the corruption and licentiousness of Reverend Rineheart, or staged graphically in the boilermaker's rage incurred by IM's innocence, the "modern" conditions of Black thought and community organization are disintegrative, presenting the protagonist with an endless façade of falsehoods and improbabilities to the "modern," individuated subject who is locked in the world of self-perception. Yet Ellison is particularly aggressive in targeting culture, the individual's mind, and the artistry of memories, dreams, and illusions. In the exhaustingly degenerative and humiliating bacchanalia of "Battle Royal," through IM's marijuana-induced trip where listening to Louis Armstrong's "Black and Blue" segues into an incomplete dreamed sermon where the minister cannot state or signify the true outcome or legendation of "blackness" through words or speech, and a dream in which a Black man inadvertently has sex with a White woman, modern Black agencies are liminal and unreferential, finding no true point of personal or social mobilization. Because these moments of cultural anxiety are framed through adolescence, they also confirm the phonemic and character uncertainties of modern possibility: "writing blackness" thus attempts to configure unsuccessfully the weight and complexity of modern consciousness, race relations, and knowledges. The final outcome trivializes modern "learning": IM now lives in the gutter shadow of a light filled room, underneath the city and impervious to the city's social workings. To state the anxiety, the anguish, and the failure of the modern Black subject to come to terms with his modernity encourages the rise of a heroic form: Black novelists would continue to create problematic characters dialectically invested with the possibility and uncertainty of modern and premodern myths, legends, and experiences. Such a unique syn-

thesis naturally will draw our attention to a meaningful and intellectually labored re-drawing of blackness, and perhaps a spiritual and ethical momentum which could finally break the imaginative and cultural stranglehold of White-Black separations of selfhood and community.

At A Glance: "Sonny's Blues," White-Black Cultural Revisions, and the Promise of Modern, Jazzed Re-Writings of Ancient Epistemology

In summation, until the mid-fifties very little had been written or recorded that could either demonstrate the break with Black regional identity, or could advance the inter(national) possibility of "blackness" manifesting traditions to be part of a "true" modern agency—one in which s/he was either part of modernity or possessing a modern communicativity. Blackness" had remained a surprisingly inclusive "secret," a Southern cultural-political-epistemological body of experience that could not be hybridized or (re) conceptualized narratively. I choose "Sonny's Blues" because it is analogous to White re-writings of jazz and blues, while proposing an individuated redemption in an urban setting. Sonny ascends a fictional transcendence of both rural and urban subjection and disenchantment derived from socioeconomics, travel, and adolescent realization of the Self as both individual and emissary. "Crossing borders" meant a newfound, original sense of agency, and one that not only shared the (re)writing of "tradition," but that offered Blacks a unique factor, a special sense of message to the outside world, perhaps beyond the United States and certainly outside the walls of American capitalist/military/institutional dominance. Jan Radway contextualizes "American" studies as follows:

Culture needs to be reconceived as a site of perpetual social struggle, as the location where particular forms of power produce opposition and contestation in the very act of trying to control it. From [the nationalist] perspective, ethnic, queer, feminist, or working-class identities cannot be conceived as separate entities sheltered within a more capacious, ontologically prior American identity. (Radway, 2001, 58)

Black political and social agency as found in the primary novels which appeared after "Sonny's Blues" was published—works such as Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977), and Gloria Naylor's *Bailey's Café*

(1992)—and short stories, including Toni Cade Bambara's "The Lesson" (1972), and Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" (1973), considerably project extra-America or anti-American narrative revolution. In other words: could the Black subject, increasingly part of American nationhood, contribute his/her ideas to the outside world, within or even beyond the sociopolitical immensity and possibility of post-World War II "Pax Americana"? It was not merely that "being Black" no longer repeated Americanness, regional limitations of the Self, or creative nonrecognition through avenues of culture, literature, and conversations: "Sonny's Blues" applied socioeconomic critique to destroy the safety and serenity of American class consciousness. Because America was and is middle-class, prosperous, and modern, we attribute "patriotic" appraisals of her success to come from the relative agreement in all vocational and ethical categories. "Sonny's Blues" dismisses this innocuous centralism by accepting ownership of a considerably poorer minority culture: Sonny and his brother are responsible for the positive regeneration of culture, history, and world-views not coinciding with the values of the White middle-class. Both major characters admit and even encourage subversion, antagonism, contestation, of the military-industrial complex. The Black man's relationship with the outside world, his mythologies that defy science and rationalism, and his flirtations with Communism which aggravate McCarthyist xenophobia, become commonplace because Sonny's "rebellion" is narrationally and epistemologically valid. From the 1950s onward, Black America could confidently express itself from a remarkable and refreshed sense of diplomacy—its agency had become increasingly bold and protean in nature because of the international travels of jazz stars such as Charlie Parker, Dexter Gordon, Miles Davis, and Dizzy Gillespie. Reading politics from relationships, cultural styles, and associations with poets, philosophers, and intellectuals far outside the pale of American normalcy marked a unique beginning for Black America's growing world presence.

One example of jazz's cross-cultural interaction that I had the pleasure of participating in was a recent concert appearance by Randy Weston, with a six-piece Gnawa rhythm section, in Tangier, Morocco. Weston, who currently resides in Tangier, has devoted his career to unearthing and staging the African unity of "Christian, Muslim and Yoruba" devotional musics and their highlighting of spirit, memory, and perfor-

mativity. At a distance, jazz has historically reinforced White-Black separateness—and the conscious separateness of musician from audience—through the audience's silence and through the subjectivity of a music which, through both rhythm and improvisation, can mean many different things to a person who frames rhythm as the catalyst for one's memory and intellection, and maybe also his/her private inscription of "spirit."

Weston professes the agenda of an Africanist scholar, perhaps distancing him from affluent consumers of music: "when I go to Africa, I go for the ancestors. I look for the elders. I look for the elder musicians. I read the books of the civilizations, of the spirits, and of the ancestors" (Jung, 2003).

Gnaoua dancing, rhythms, and use of African folk instruments such as the guinbri (a stringed, bass-like instrument) may force us to recognize the separateness of White and Black social and intellectual consciousnesses.

Gnaoua music pays tribute to the spirits and the saints: by contrast, White consciousness is literate and intellectualized. Weston and his band broke this sense of isolation: beginning with jazz standards such as "Hi-Fly," he then turned over the performance to his drummers, players, and dancers, who brought their instruments and dancing out into the audience. We, the audience, clapped out hands and chanted along, hybrid participants in a folk performance traditionally expressive of African community awareness. As if to say: the power and simplicity of Gnaoua beliefs and traditions were "open," that they could be understood commonly, as a commonly, as a universal human story. Such a moment called my attention to the historical changes in jazz: with a traditional music form that was historically confined to rural, Southern, underclass identity, what possible modern agency could be derived from it?

What would be the outcome with de-regionalized associations of jazz and blues with multi-ethnic (re)learnings, including White learnings such as those by the Beats? What, too, to be made of Black social experiences in flourish during the "Jim Crow" period—drugs, alcohol, promiscuity, "blues" travels, ebonic dialects—that confined and subjugated the historicity of "blackness" to inferiority, degeneration, and necessary White moral and intellectual governance?

Again, many of the social and personal details of Black characters in novels were pathetic and diminished: the impossibility of "understanding," plus the possible irrelevance and/or uselessness of Black legends, was confirmed, and perhaps proposed, by these narrative examples: Bigger Thomas's juvenile delinquency, Tea Cake's penchant for stealing and "air-guitaring," IM's glee at finding an underground shelter at the beneficence of "Monopolated Power and Light." Critics were also reluctant to project any truly modern sociopolitical agency to jazz, a seemingly uncharacteristic stream-of-conscious amalgamation of musics which repeatedly defied modern intellectual theory: Amiri Baraka carefully located the musical analogue to "modern" Black tradition in the rise of soul in the 1960s (Jones, 1963, 219);

Baraka and Paul Bowles (who studied and wrote classical compositions associated with jazz music) were quick, too, in associating jazz and blues with "primitive" authenticity, not with any truly modern body of social ideas or consciousness.

Reading jazz through the eyes of Beat Generation and countercultural transcriptions meant a White-Black sharing of the "human story" and agenda which could be derived from jazz, blues, and "the scene": Kerouac's novels were a primary example of this: Kerouac, as does Baldwin in "Sonny's Blues", paired the socioeconomic "gothicism" and "darkness" of modern man's economic and spiritual depression with the possibilities of enlightenment and pleasure to be found in music and culture. "Sonny's Blues," at least in its legendation and iconization of jazz music, coincides with the characteristic rationale of Kerouac: jazz would be individuated, its story and the meaning of it would instruct modern generations to change or dissolve class and racial imaginations tied to money and White-sponsored "respectability," and signaled a growing social diversity which looked forward to greater personal freedom and agency in (re)writing American values. Both writers honor and even mystify the possibilities for the disenfranchised urban subject; both emphasize through (re)learnings of memory and experience a modern interactivity that challenges more conservative American ethics. To say that pleasure, intoxication, and rebellion could be made into the vehicle for writing "tradition"-bound experiences is hotly debated even today: still, Sonny's legendation and agonized search for personal redemption echoed

countercultural ethics. At the same time, it brought the valuation of Black music and narrative out of obscurity and covertness. Jazz and blues stars had been idolized by White and Black for nearly two generations by 1957, but Davis recalls that their actions and lifestyle were safened by comic interpretations. For example, it was accepted that Charlie Parker was an eccentric, promiscuous, and frequently intoxicated oddball because jazz was a carefully racialized social pastime, not a means of sociopolitical action.

Baldwin synthesizes the clash between moral respectability and assimilation (White) versus the ethos of pleasure, rebellion, and liberal-modern configurations of performance culture (Black, Countercultural) in several conversations and personal reflections where Sonny and his brother, an algebra teacher, are in disagreement. At one point Sonny's brother walks out of Sonny's Greenwich Village apartment whistling, "You gonna need me, baby, one of these cold, rainy days" (Baldwin, 1957, 571). The very fact that "success"—materialistic and societal success—is the catalyst for cultural battling over the agency of "blackness," calls our attention to Baldwin's accelerated critique of America's capitalist socioeconomic consciousness. Baldwin's sketches of impoverished

Harlem social and economic life are more adequately so than those of Kerouac—the problems of modern man are related to socioeconomic possibility, not strictly to Kerouac's affinity for poetry or the imagination. Still, we may turn to the imaginative portrait of Sonny's "earnings" of African-American tradition as much through the modern facet of individuation and modern ethics as we may by situating Sonny socioeconomically. Though noticeably disturbed by the poverty, degeneration, and violence of his community—characteristics that encourage Sonny's "learning" of jazz, "making it his," Sonny's development reflects a painstaking individuation and authorship similar to the fashion of the Beats. Three themes are agonized by Sonny and his brother: the iconic jazz legends, the use of heroin and alcohol, and "the story" of "Sonny's Blues" which relied as much upon Sonny's memory as it did his imagination. It is these three themes which contest both White-Black separateness and that transcends Black socioeconomic depression and isolation.

Genius, Degeneration, and the Modern "Story": The Black Jazzman's Social Problems and Redemption: Two Controversial Ethical Landscapes and Blackness

Heroin's identity in the Black social and music culture was unique—it was not, as cocaine and marijuana were, a national-local means of recreational intoxication or symptomatic of the Black man's degenerate social and moral status. It had retained the possibility of agency—it was the drug of choice among jazz stars on the New York club scene. Davis recalled his introduction to heroin while in New York in 1945: "Then the idea was going around that to use heroin might make you play as great as Bird (Charlie Parker). I guess I might have been just waiting for his genius to hit me. Getting into all that shit, though, was a very bad mistake" (Troupe, 1990, 96). Yet let us keep in mind that Davis remembered the experiences and outcomes of drug use and addiction in 1990, from the scientific and ethical certainty of a modern world that could easily locate physical and psychological characteristics of dependence. Let us also allow that his knowledge was privileged, whereas the link between drugs and performativity signaled a real sociological and political sense of possibility among disenfranchised Black and White youths. Sonny's brother's indifference to the genius and fame of Charlie Parker allows Sonny to construct a tenable moral-epistemological defense of drugs, while calling upon the modern possibility of the Black man's human story as the basis for extolling a renegade life of intoxication and contemplation rather than middle-class work and abstemiousness. Sonny's defense of heroin is largely imaginative: to understand and "(with)stand" the suffering and depression of the Black man's history and social experiences marked by racism, violence, and impoverished isolation, the jazz player needed to intoxicate himself. And, "to make it on any level": Blacks who wished to transform the suffering of their culture and community into the beauty and spiritual power of their root consciousness fought the emotional terrors of their suffering: "some guys, you can tell from the way they play, they on something all the time. And you can see that, well, it makes something real for them" (Baldwin, 1957, 574). This conception of "reality," or the "realness" of the social metaphor, makes heroin a legitimate vehicle for social-moral expression: the Black man cannot understand or even learn from his story without the conscious amalgamations and narrative structures made by the jazzman. True, Sonny's brother tells the complete story of his parents' demise, and his emotions do not "shake him to pieces". Yet both Sonny's defense of heroin as a redeeming

agent, and the converse, his brother's assertions of the reasons why Sonny should not take it, are modern in their social outlook, and are friendly with countercultural notions of freedom and individuation:

"But we just agreed," I said, "that there's no way not to suffer. Isn't it better, then, just to—take it?"
 "But nobody just takes it," Sonny cried, "that's what I'm telling you! Everybody tries not to. You're just hung up on the way some people try—it's not your way!"
 The hair on my face began to itch, my face felt wet.
 "That's not true," I said.
 "that's not true. I don't give a damn what other people do, I don't even care how they suffer. I just care how you suffer." And he looked at me. "Please believe me," I said. "I don't want to see you—die—trying not to suffer." (Baldwin, 1957, 574)

Sonny's succeeding point, that Blacks "had to find a way to listen" to the nuances and visible details of urban Black depression, racialization, and disenfranchisement, is not solely the domain of an artist—it spells out the problem of modern man's memories and experiences, and the challenge of making them real and active in one's individual and community life. On this point of modern Black epistemology, Baraka was especially critical of middle-class Blacks that sought to erase the African-American history and identity:

Only Negro music, because, perhaps, it drew its strength and beauty out of the depths of the black man's soul, and because to a large extent its traditions could be carried on by the 'lowest classes' of Negroes, has been able to survive the constant and willful dilutions of the black middle class and the persistent calls to oblivion made by the mainstream of the society. Of course, that mainstream wrought very definite and very constant changes upon the form of the American Negro's music, but the emotional significance and vitality at its core remain, to this day, unaltered. It was one vector out of African culture impossible to eradicate. (Baraka, 1963, 131)

But there is a decidedly modern intentionality for the Black jazzman's themes of self-expression: because Black jazz had been introduced and popularized in the world outside America, and because White Americans who formed the Beat Generation took to jazz as their vehicle for narrative expression of self and ethical certainty, Sonny's localized prophecies are modernly meaningful. After all, Parker and Davis were first-name stars in Paris and Stockholm, part of a mostly race-free circulation of ideas and possibilities. In the

broader context Kerouac's novels, though mostly confined to White synopses of economic and spiritual depression, were also part of the rewriting of the Black man's international sense of ethos. Drugs, then, operate as a deracialized vehicle for modern man's communicativity and "learnings" of the human story, where they had in the past been symbolic of Jim Crow degradations. Jazz also becomes part of the realistic portrait of "blackness" through drugs and through relationships with liberal Whites who also used drugs and alcohol: one's intoxication and other forms of "delinquency" were both inevitable facts of modern life and were vehicles for resistance of the mainstream. Getting someone off drugs, moreover, anticipated a modern moment of rehabilitation: it was the individual, not the community, that would be addressed, spoken to, reasoned with, about the dangers of drug and alcohol use. And: drug use and addiction could no longer be generalized in the Jim Crow fashion, either to deny social empowerment or to sink entire communities into oblivion. Sonny's brother makes the point that every human being was and is a human being deserving of modern ability and educated possibility.

The points did not align exclusive with conservatives or teetotalers: for example, the legitimacy of modern treatment/rehabilitations were repeatedly questioned in William Burroughs's 1953 novel *Junky*, where interdiction and trial methods deliberately dehumanized the addict in a sweeping attempt to eliminate human Others, be they nonwhite or simply Whites who could be classified as "vagrant" citizens. Returning to the jazzman's story, it might seem that Baldwin was assembling the possible freedom of the Black man's consciousness from isolation and nonrecognition of self, an awakening that could finally cross regional and racial boundaries. Thus it is through Baldwin's portrait of Sonny, in a fashion analogous to Kerouac's and Burroughs's self-portraits, that the use of drugs and alcohol became a decidedly modern "question", a question which recognizes modern man's mental and intellectual individuation and which in turn questions the outcomes of that individuation.

Sonny vehemently defends the "story" as a modern agent, yet we should not forget that this story, thanks to Kerouac in particular, was open to all races. It is not, of course, very "open" in "Sonny's Blues," and the White hipsters who live with Sonny in Greenwich Vil-

lage are an idle backdrop. Sonny's focus upon the need "to listen" results in both modernity and timeless mobility: "(they) were up there keeping it new, at the risk of ruin, destruction, madness, and death, in order to find new ways to make us listen. For, while the tale of how we suffer, and how we are delighted, and how we may triumph is never new, it always must be heard" (Baldwin, 1957, 578). In regards to the last of these moments, the Black man's "triumph" includes a look backwards, perhaps suggesting that achievement and redemption will forever remain friendly to the premodern contemplations of selfhood. Yet we would be entirely ignoring the thrust of Negritude: Baraka would point out the considerable fact that literate expressions of Black self and society were new, and that thus no objective historical portrait existed in the past for White consumption. As this was changing rapidly, and the White American literature was beginning to entangle itself with the "legend," the "heroism," the "story" of blackness which Kerouac trumpeted to be America's "salvation" (Desolation Angels 102), it is obvious that "Sonny's Blues" quietly advances the necessity of de-racializing the presentation of Black culture in order to transform all of us emotionally and cerebrally.

Baldwin's portrait of "the gig" asserts communicativity, imaginative genius, and "family" to be metaphors for Black transcriptions of jazz and blues music: through music, blackness could be intuited, heard, felt, inside the soul of the Black musician; there was also a community that felt both its telos and its catharsis: "[Creole] hit something in all of them, he hit something in me, myself, and the music tightened and deepened, apprehension began to beat the air" (Baldwin, 1957, 578). Yet *On The Road* and *Desolation Angels*, which prominently feature Jack Duluoz at jazz gigs, assert White inundation with "madness," with "trances," and with the incompleteness of modern man's concept of "the human story." They also assert Black leadership of White transcendences of "ordinary" selfhood. On an emotional level, "Sonny's Blues" asserts through racial singularity the jazz story's truth, its authenticity, and its ethnic certainty. Yet previous Black novelists had used social/economic depression to show the problematic degradation of the Black story through jazzed avenues: Bigger Thomas's delinquent isolation, Tea Cake's comedism, IM's repeated humiliation. Assertions of the power and beauty of Black jazz, and perhaps Black "pride" through

community and personal belief in "the story," do not constitute a necessary isolation/separation from Whites. They instead signify several modern Black agencies: cross-cultural, international, and finally subversive. True, Whites had frequented jazz clubs for three decades by 1957. The question is, "why? What draws the outsider to something that is not culture, and is not 'open' to any meaningful interpretation?" Davis is clear to demarcate racial separateness even with the super-iconic Parker: "When Bird left New York he was a king, but out in Los Angeles he was just another broke, weird, drunken nigger playing some strange music" (Troupe, 1990, 88). The continuous stream of memories of Parker's drug addiction, his obscene and childish on-stage persona, and his erratic relationships with bandmates, were common motifs of blackness for most Whites during the 1930s and 1940s.

To assert that Black jazz was authentic and a meaningful template of community learning and reflections was to open its constituents' agency to the outside world, making jazz a cross-cultural force for the first time. Reflexively, Kerouac repeatedly idolizes the eccentric, pleasure seeking, and "wild" Charlie Parker, whose penchant for breaking musical and imaginative rules was the continuing weight of his legendation. Sonny, by contrast, rebels against poverty and family expectations not to seek fame or libation, but to recover a distinct authenticity. Problematic Black relationships with White "hipster" culture may cause us to keep them narratively separate, yet beatnik contemplations are both revolutionary in the social sense and teleologically focused upon retaining tradition against the suffocating grasp of modern rationalism and technologism. In short, the Beat Generation and Baldwin approached the possibility for "counterculture" by tapping the same epistemological root: from traditional narratives and means for expression that allowed us to express ourselves emotionally.

While it is true that "Sonny's Blues" focuses upon Black characters and their experiences, Baldwin's emphasis upon a racist society and the redemption from the terrors, rigors, and injustices of that racism places him in the rapidly accelerating messengerism of Black writing. For example, it would become impossible for Whites to read books by Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison without feeling or reacting to graphic examples of racist violence or other forms of prejudice. Baldwin develops racial identity through music: it is "the

blues" which allows Sonny to both recall and react to the tale of his parents' murder by drunken Whites in the South. Yet "compassion" formed only a small part of the technique of race agency: jazz, Kerouac knew, was a form of narrative expression, a means for assembling memory and ideation into a viable communicativity with the outside world.

For the length of "Sonny's Blues," Sonny is haunted by the tale and struggles to find a language that could express his feelings and his sense of himself in the present situation. To find these self-metaphors through a musical form accelerates the tension and the synthesis with countercultural whiteness: blackness could be felt, it could be understood emotionally, without privileged superstructural organizations and/or instructions. It also leaves the configuration of "blackness" rhetorically open to individual interpretations. In *The Classroom: "Sonny's Blues"* and *Young Adult Writing and Thinking* A wide range of students may benefit from reading this story when asked two essential questions: "what is the meaning of a story?", and "how can I explain the characteristics of my experiences?" "Sonny's Blues" suggests interesting readings by not only ethnic immigrants, for whom the sum total of cultural experiences between their home country and America breathe a myriad of differences and anxieties about that difference. It can also be read with a view to inner-city students for whom music and the arts become an outlet, a release from the hardships of poor life. This is because Sonny as "the player" exudes a number of salient characteristics: he is eccentric, talented, and Black.

More importantly, African-American popular music, including rap and hip-hop, (re)develop the intricacies of "the human story" through sound, words, sampling: the "meaning" of complex music narratives validates the truth or "real" characteristics of this medium. "Sonny's Blues" may also appeal to disadvantaged students or to students of an "alternative" sociopolitics, as anxieties and pretenses are common in the relationship between White liberals and Black artists. Yet I found the same essential questions introduced at the paragraph's beginning apply to the form: Composition is, after all, a dialogue that welcomes student voices and opinions. We are always cognizant of questions about a student's "authentic" experience drawn from memory, and are likely to try and answer questions about the "value," "validity," or

"meaning" of student biography. Of course, Sonny's progression as a jazz star vindicates his adulthood and personal stature.

Still, questions about modernity arise: Sonny evolves into the music community in part to resolve the hauntings of his past, both in the South and in New York. His achievement looks forward to the future; could a student who matured through a bad outcome explain, for example, his/her fascination with music, travel, education? Would s/he be able to detail concrete answers to the problem of his/her identity, vocation, background? After all, one unique facet of minority experiences has been the contrast between inside and outside, and the gap between ethnic traditionalism and modern intellectualism and pantheism. Would "not succeeding" at one's ambitions produce an adult-defining inquiry? Would succumbing to the politics of race beget more fruitful ambitions?

Lastly, how do these questions accentuate the importance of outside characters in the student's paper? After all, "Sonny's Blues" is social in the negotiation of learning; Sonny's brother struggles to understand his brother's peculiar yet moving form of development and vocation. We are defined as individuals, but a significant part of this individuation stands in relation to society. Sonny is tormented by questions of the "meaning" of his story for society; he also escapes normative life by choosing the job of musician. He is horrified by the state of education and seeks to avoid any contact with school, choosing his own, individuated, social ambition.

All in all, I am continually struck by the relevance of "Sonny's Blues" to the contemporary classroom. Historically, of course, we often define and profess modernity by devising themes and experiences that involve tradition in some way or form. It is a common technique, for example, in the writing of White American literatures. Yet the Composition classroom routinely explores this idea of "looking back": in context "Sonny's Blues," a narrative of discovery and social-political change, eludes popular stereotyping while constructing a unified set of historical-racial metaphors to help audiences understand the politics of race. Sonny's problems are modern ones: the legend of his family, the struggle to get (and keep) a job, the social and personal possibilities of a changing American world. This work also rhetorically aims at the destruction of Jim Crow, a moment at which Black lite-

rary and social avenues had matured, transcended, expanded beyond a slowly developing modern intellectual focus. These essential characteristics, which result from Black and non-Black cultural context, make "Sonny's Blues" a useful part of the Composition experience, and a barometer for popular student life.

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INTELLECTUAL AND VISUAL PROMPTS: AN ESSAY ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE LINGUISTIC AND MATHEMATICAL LEARNING OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE K-12 STUDENTS

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Abstract: A number of obstacles have impeded the academic success of African American males in the learning of mathematics and language. Among these, the social and historical impact of intellectual bigotry that has evolved from educational research related to the teaching and learning of the use of mathematics and language has put many African American males at a disadvantage. The authors posit that the addition of African American male teachers of mathematics and language to the faculty at high-need schools might be a catalyzing agent for change with regard to African American male students' beliefs about their mastery of mathematics and language. Moreover, African American male teachers in the classroom provide an intellectual and visual prompt that will help elevate the academic achievement of African American males. Programs like Grow Your Own Teachers, QUASAR, AVID, and SEED should be implemented more widely to increase the presence of African American male teachers in classrooms with African American male students.

The election of President Barack Obama instilled a new sense of hope and drive in exam from the verbal section of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) to African Americans and Whites before Obama's election victory. They many Americans, particularly, African Americans. In fact, a New York Times article reported that researchers administered a 20-question discovered that the performance gap between the two on the GRE disappeared when the test was administered immediately after Obama's election

victory (Dillon, 2009). The article used the phrase the "Obama Effect" to describe this outcome. Moreover, a Google© search in the beginning of March 2009 for the phrase, "the Obama Effect" yielded up to 72,100,000 results.

Thus, the phrase "Obama Effect" may come to serve as a reference for many African Americans who want to make changes in their lives. There are many people who are hopeful that African American boys, in particular, will see President Obama as a role model for change.

Obama's exposure to African American male youth potentially has profound implications. The Sentencing Project (2009a) reports that African American males have a 32% chance of serving time in prison at some point in their lives, and 1 in every 8 is in prison or jail on any given day (Sentencing Project, 2009b). The National Prisoner Statistics Program of the U.S. Office of Justice Programs indicates that in 2007 there were 556,900 African American males in the state and federal prisons throughout the United States (West & Sabol, 2008).

However, President Obama's term as commander in chief may only have a short-lived effect on the psyche of most African Americans. Even more important, the Obama Effect is not a panacea for the poor academic performance of African American males. When viewing problems in academia, Meier, Stewart, and England (1989) noted that African American males are more likely than females or students of other ethnic groups to be suspended or expelled from school. They also are more likely to be labeled as mentally retarded or as having a learning disability and placed in special education (Hacker, 2003; Milofsky, 1974). Furthermore, they most often are the least represented in advanced placement courses (Pollard, 1993). Pollard further notes that even when males in other ethnic groups perform at higher levels in math, African American males reflect the opposite in these courses.

Class does not preclude poor academic performance for African American males. For example, Jencks and Phillips (1998) reported that middle class African American males fell behind their White peers in grade point average and on standardized tests. It is important to note that the means by which environmental and cultural forces influence the way African American males perform and behave in school are less un-

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derstood than the structural explanations of their academic performance (Noguera, 2003). Cultural explanations for their academic performance should be given considerable debate in research. In other words, factors such as mentors, role models, a two-parent home, participation in sports, tutoring, and effective teachers may complement the academic performance of African American males, but a profound understanding of their culture is paramount.

Psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, and educators differ as to whether heredity or environment account for the low educational achievement of African American children (Labov, 1972). Proposed cultural deficit and cultural difference models seek to explain why the achievement gap exists for African American children. Labov contends that linguists and many anthropologists view the problem as being in the relationship between African American children and the school system, and not with the children. It is this position that resonates in this article: that is, cultural incongruities exist between the majority of White teachers and their African American students.

Contrary to the belief of some, being African American doesn't necessarily lead automatically to understanding and effective teaching. There are cultural differences between some African American teachers and their African American students. At the same time, there are White teachers who have come to grips with these incongruities and have identified ways to successfully accommodate the cultures of their students of color. However, because of their life experiences as minority individuals living in a White majority culture, African American teachers are more likely to have a gut-level understanding of their African American students' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Labov advocates a linguistic perspective in which schools adapt to the language and learning styles of the students. This approach is tenable if one embraces the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which posits that thoughts and behavior are influenced by language (Sapir, 1921; Whorf, 1956). In this framework, linguists support the use of a child's native language (dialect in this case) as a medium of instruction in the school. Moreover, the acquisition and learning of Standard English and mainstream culture should be the end result and not the beginning of the educational process (Labov, 1972).

The culture of African Americans (males in particular) is different from that of the dominant culture found in most American schools. Since culture encompasses language, it is important that those who attempt to learn the culture of their students also pursue an understanding of their language or dialect. For example, one problem that has been highlighted by Orr (1987) is that African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is an obstacle to understanding mathematical concepts for African American children. However, Baugh (1988) critiqued Orr's claim of AAVE interference in learning mathematics – citing that Orr made her observations at a predominately White, upper middle class school where there was a lack of understanding of African American culture among the teachers as well as a lack of understanding of AAVE by the author and the teachers.

So the debate continues. It is evident that culture influences the way children learn, including the learning of mathematics and language. We suggest that it may be a better use of time for educators and researchers to learn extensively about the culture of African American males in order to accommodate their cognitive and learning styles, rather than struggling to explain their academic inadequacies through the prism of cultural deficit and difference models.

CULTURAL CONTEXT FOR BEHAVIOR

There are apparent similarities in the ways that African American, Hispanic, and White males behave. Yet, Kunjufu (1986) notes that, "The issue of male culture transcends race. These groups differ primarily in degrees" (p. 15). Besides Kunjufu's identification of males' kinesthetic, macho, and egotistical characteristics, respectively, one must take into account the cultural dimensions from which each male originates.

Hall's (1976) book, *Beyond Culture*, helps provide a framework for understanding the culture of African Americans. Hall distinguishes between high context and low context cultures. Although the United States is considered a low context culture and Ghana, West Africa, is considered a high context culture, African American culture is further toward the high context end of the continuum than White American culture. Taylor (1990) contrasts the high context traits of a number of African Americans and the low context traits of a number of Anglo Americans. For example,

he notes that some African American listeners are expected to avert their eyes as an indication of respect and attention, while some Anglo Americans expect listeners to look the speaker directly in the eyes as an indication of respect and attention. In addition, African Americans tend to show emotions during conflict as an indication of honesty and a first step toward resolution of a problem. Anglo Americans, however, view the expression of emotions during conflict as the beginning of a fight, interfering with conflict resolution. This cultural variability may be part of the source for the poor academic performance of African Americans.

Of course, these tendencies are a generalization. There are exceptions and anomalies when encountering people of the same ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Yet the contrasts between the majority of African Americans and White Americans are salient. Hall notes that high context cultures perceive information as "in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted art of the message" (p. 79). Low context cultures tend to have explicit messages in the code itself. Therefore, high context communication is indirect, whereas low context information is direct. Furthermore, members of high context cultures tend to be collectivist, while members of low context cultures tend to be individualistic. Hofstede, as cited in Gudykunst and Nishida (1989), distinguishes between individualistic and collectivist cultural dimensions. One dimension stresses individual goals; the other stresses that group goals take precedence over individual ones. Asante, Gudykunst, and Newmark (1989) and Gudykunst (2003) provide a plethora of research on in-depth traits of high/low context and collectivism/individualism that are beyond the scope of this article.

A contrast between the African American collectivist dimension and the White individualistic dimension is articulated by Kunjufu (1985). He notes that, "The classroom environment for the African American male has transformed from a socially interactive style to a competitive, individualistic, and minimally socially interactive style of learning" (p. 7). Therefore, the collectivist-oriented African American child is involved in a cultural transformation that is causing what Kunjufu calls the fourth grade failure syndrome. That is, the child begins to fail academically immediately after the third grade. This is because collectivism emphasizes

community, shared interests, harmony, tradition, the public good, and maintaining face (Hofstede, 1982). This dimension tends to disappear in the intermediate grade levels in many schools as the learning paradigm shifts more toward individual academic accomplishment. Kunjufu (1986) also notes that many African Americans end up feeling that they are "without culture." This emerges from a stark reality: African Americans have been compelled to grasp White culture in order to survive in a White-dominated social, economic, and political system, while a vast number of Whites are privileged enough to avoid ever having to learn about African American culture.

One way to ascertain cultural differences within the school, between the students and teachers, and among families is to study Taylor's (1990) *Cross-Cultural Communication: An Essential Dimension of Effective Education* (Revised Edition). Taylor's work encompasses communication differences that lead to discipline problems, questions to ask about culture, communicative tendencies between African Americans and Whites, and cross-cultural communication techniques to improve relationships. In any event, whether it is in an English, science, or mathematics class, when teachers make the effort to understand their students' cultures, it can only be an advantage in lesson delivery and bridging gaps.

THE HEGEMONIC NORMALIZATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

Imagine that you are a student walking into a classroom where those in authority do not resemble your race or gender. What expectations do they have? Are you even aware that these expectations exist? Where are their expectations derived from? How can you understand and meet these expectations? How do you value these expectations, if at all?

African American males in America have backgrounds unlike many males of other ethnic groups with which they are frequently compared (Toldson, 2008). Variables that have stymied African American males' social and intellectual growth are built in to the American educational system, and some believe this is by design (Watkins, 2001). Education is as much an emotional and cultural process as it is cognitive (Delpit, 1992). Therefore, an African American male's feelings and cultural interpretations about learning can influ-

ence his desire to gain knowledge. This leaves him at the caprice of his sentiments – sentiments that have evolved under socioeconomic conditions of oppression (Cruse, 1967).

We believe the social contingencies that have impeded the intellectual growth of African American males have logically emerged from the racial discourse in America. These contingencies are synthetic in nature but, oddly enough, have come to be perceived as “organic” and “natural” within the school-based paradigm.

The K-12 teaching profession is dominated by women in general and White women in particular (National Education Association, 2004). White women make up about 83 percent of all elementary teachers and about 66 percent of middle and high school teachers (National School Boards Association, 2005). African American male teachers make up only 2.4 percent of all K-12 teachers. Because there are so few African American male K-12 teachers overall, it follows there are even fewer African American male teachers of mathematics, English, or language.

In the relationship between the dominant White female teachers and their African American male students, the teachers are seen stereotypically as “cultured” and “genteel,” while their students are defined by – and should behave according to – her terms. This synergistic relationship – which is reaffirmed every day in America’s largest publicly-supported social institution, the school – provides her with a platform to continue the White hegemonic authority over racial discourse in America while she simultaneously reaffirms the status quo’s interpretation of African American males’ intellectual and social abilities.

This leads to all types of recursive intellectual machinations. On one hand, the opinion is nourished that African American male students are incapable of being intellectually autonomous from the White female teacher. On the other hand, the African American male is prevented from having an opportunity to explore ideas that are outside the reality of his White female teacher. The African American male student is perceived as not being nuanced or sophisticated enough to offer the outside world a meaningful and accurate analysis of himself. Hence, the teacher becomes his interpreter, perpetuating her over-reaching authoritative role in his life.

We doubt that White female teachers are negatively affecting the intellectual growth of African American males by conscious intrigue. Instead, we posit that myopic interpretations of African American males’ performances on assessment instruments – instruments that lack diversity in what they measure – provide them with “proof” that African American males do not have cognitive elasticity and are not able to grow intellectually beyond a predetermined point. The study of mathematics is a case in point. Issues regarding the learning of mathematics have become a racialized area of educational research. To date, there has not been a study that provides a definitive answer as to why African Americans, particularly African American males, have not done well on national mathematics assessment tests (Martin, 2000, 2009). It is only known that they do not do as well as their classmates on these tests.

This dynamic should not lead to the conclusion that White female teachers are the group that is to “blame” for African American male students’ academic difficulties. White women have clearly faced serious equity and gender issues of their own in this country. But they have also historically and unconsciously benefited from the residuals of White male privilege – residuals that have been naturally bestowed upon them because of their family and cultural ties. So the lives of these educational gatekeepers tend to have little in common with the lives of many of their African American male students.

It is important to mention some of the specific, glaring dichotomies that exist between White women, who represent the largest group among K-12 educators, and African American males, who represent the largest group that has not fared well in America’s K-12 educational system. These dichotomies have been inferred from Health of Black or African American Population (2008) data; from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site; from Public School Graduates and Dropouts from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2005-06 (2008) data; from the National Center for Education Statistics Web site; and from Toldson’s (2008) *Breaking Barriers: Plotting the Path to Academic Success for School-Age African-American Males*:

- African American males are more likely to be incarcerated or under court supervision than White females.

- African American males are more likely to drop out of school, while White females are not.
- African American males are more likely to die from a litany of diseases; White females are less likely to die from these same diseases, or will die at a lower rate.
- White females tend to live longer than African American males; they have a greater opportunity to transmit pertinent historical family knowledge, via eyewitness accounts, to later generations.
- African American males are more likely to grow up in one-parent homes, while White females are more likely to grow up in two-parent homes.
- African American males are more likely to have their first child outside of wedlock, while White females are less likely to do the same.
- African American males are more likely to be younger than their White female counterparts when they have their first child.
- White females are more likely to benefit from a significant intergenerational transfer of wealth; an African American male would be fortunate if his parent(s) has a substantial life insurance policy.
- White females are less likely to be placed in special education classes; African American males are more likely to be placed in special needs classes.

To say that the only thing African American male students and White female teachers have in common is the class space they occupy each day is an unfair, overly simplistic description of their relationship. One of the authors of this paper graduated from a mathematics education doctoral program that, between 1990 and 2007, probably had more African American male students working on doctoral degrees than any two other doctoral degree programs in the United States combined. This program was housed at The Florida State University and during most of that time was coordinated by two White females.

This is just one of a number of success stories, especially in higher education, about White female educators and the African American students they mentor. However, since the days of physical slavery, both African American males and White females have been

affected by a socioeconomic mechanism designed to be beneficial for certain groups and detrimental to others – a mechanism that values light skin color and socioeconomic pedigree.

Historically, the physical proximity of the African American male to the White female, real or perceived, resulted in injury, death, or jail time for the African American male. Because of the psychological remnants of this history, the ontological world views of White female teachers and their African American male students may clash in the classroom – particularly when their perception of reality is derived from diametrically opposed positions on a socioeconomic continuum that has existed in a racially charged environment since American commerce was tied to slavery. Though a number of liberal White females tend to be strong advocates for increased financial support and reform for low-performing schools attended by many African American males, they are also strong advocates for an androgynous learning environment that rationalizes the mitigation of the masculine archetype (Diller, Houston, Morgan, & Ayim, 1996).

We posit that this aspect of what we have termed the “Neo-Suffrage” agenda can have an intellectual and identity neutering effect on African American school-aged males. And these are the students who are most in need of positive African American male role models who take pride in their masculinity, manhood, and fatherhood and have a profound respect for their intimate and public relationships with African American women.

Again, we are not suggesting that White female teachers are the sole cause of African American males’ inability to succeed in this educational environment. There are litanies of variables that also negatively affect the academic performance of African American males. In fact, we feel the development of the intellectual and masculine identity of the African American male is impeded differently under the watchful eye of the African American females. (We have expounded upon aspects of African American male youth and their relationship with African American female authority figures in a forthcoming paper.) There are similarities between African American and White women in their struggle for equality. But unlike White females of the “Neo-Suffrage” movement who often seek to define themselves absolutely independent of the White male, African American women seem to not be

particularly interested in defining themselves as a monolithic being disjointed from the African American male (Delpit, 2002).

We believe that the intentions of White female K-12 professionals are often sincere and noble. But many are products of their home environments, which are often racially-charged environments that have an inability to adequately deal with race. Moreover, instead of face-to-face encounters, many White female teachers often find it more comfortable to engage issues that are related to African American culture, which is an indirect and ineffective way of engaging in racial discourse about the African American male (Case & Hemmings, 2005).

Because of these and other social circumstances, White females teachers bring a cultural-currency discourse to classrooms – a currency that African American male students, perhaps, cannot use to purchase anything in their racialized reality. We liken the high school classroom and the African American male student to an easel that has a blank “White” canvas attached to it. Numerous politicians, educators, and religious figures are clambering for a commission to paint a portrait of the “good” African American male student. African American males are spoken of as inanimate objects in need of an artistic rendition of their psychosocial qualities.

Some research regarding the African American male presents him as a prop or supporting cast member in a macabre play – a play with monologues about him, but without dialogue that includes him as a viable participant in the discussion. African American males have been studied as either this or that, nothing in the middle, undefined by emotions more nuanced than anger or happiness, and his person subject to the definition that is given to him, as is suggested by Corbin and Pruitt (1999). During the last 25 years, the social, educational, and economic outcomes for African American males have been more systemically devastating than the outcomes for any other racial or ethnic group or gender (Noguera, 2003). Even though public school systems are well aware of the status of African American male students, they continue to still be too often ignored, stereotyped, and written off as dysfunctional.

THE RACIALIZATION OF LINGUISTIC AND MATHEMATICAL COMPREHENSION

The Social Darwinists’ influence was so great over the nascent scientific agenda of the post-Darwin era that they were able to issue a fiat, without challenge, declaring fallacious and racist constructs about the superiority of European mathematical and literary intellectualism over the rest of mankind (Joseph, 2000). These constructs have been quantified and used as a litmus test to justify the intellectual ranking of racial groups since the mid-1800s, none suffering more from these constructs than African or “Black” Americans (Gould, 1996). And although it has been more than a decade since the publication of Herrnstein’s and Murray’s (1994) *The Bell Curve* – as well as several published books and articles that offer rebuttal to their theories – how far have we come in engaging issues about the learning of mathematics and language by African Americans in general and African American males in particular?

We know that the inability to access mathematics, to become fluent and dexterous in it, has limited potential social and economic avenues for African American males, thus inhibiting their civil rights (Moses & Cobb, 2001). Although many people of African descent have proven their mathematical abilities, many more have suffered from the social and historical influence of intellectual bigotry that has evolved from educational research related to the teaching and learning of mathematics (Martin, 2009). Whether African American male students go to school in rural, suburban, or urban areas, we believe that their intellectual capabilities are judged from a “deficit model” with regard to their potential for understanding mathematics and the dialect of the privileged (Hale, 2001). This deficit model is couched in the idea that skills-based mathematics and language learning is appropriate for African American male students, as opposed to conceptual-based learning of these two content areas.

Minster Louis Farrakhan once said of El Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X), that Malcolm understood that the ominous use of words could trick a man and that the proper use of words could free a man. That is why Malcolm was a voracious reader. For far too long, too many African American school-aged males have been socially tricked and intellectually enslaved because of their voluntary or involuntary lack of willingness to

engage in the learning of mathematics and language.

Linguistic prejudices are much more tolerated than other forms of prejudice (Milroy & Milroy, 1985) and Standard English speakers may view speakers of AAVE as deficient, although this is contrary to linguistic evidence (Adger, 1993). However, to accommodate this perception, many African American teachers and children have to master the ability to style shift – changing the way they speak according to their interlocutors (friends vs. an English teacher or a White middle class person).

The knowledge of language plays a paramount role for teaching any subject, particularly mathematics because language is the conduit for thought. Moreover, Hilliard (1999) notes that "... all of the tools for mental measurement and achievement are constructed from language" (p. 129). Baugh (2000) states that:

... as long as some teachers continue to believe that nonstandard English or limited English proficiency is a sign of diminished cognitive potential, the future welfare of this nation is threatened not by the more visible forms of racial intolerance that occupy the attention of presidential commissions, but by less visible forms of linguistic intolerance for others who speak in ways that some find unappealing, or worse (p. 80).

Since there is an abundance of research on the legitimacy of AAVE and how teachers lack knowledge of this dialect and its use, an important undertaking includes educating teachers to recognize and overcome educational inequalities tied to language (Baugh, 1999).

IVPs: AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS AND LANGUAGE

The authors of this article attended elementary, middle, or high schools that were predominately African American and had few, if any, African American male teachers. Prior to teaching at a historically Black university, predominantly White universities, and historically White universities, the authors were instructors either at the elementary, middle, or high school levels. These experiences have placed us in the position to provide a professional opinion about the relationship between White female teachers and African American male school-aged students. This opinion is derived from not only professional experience, but also from scholarly reflections integrated with findings from

education and race/cultural based research.

With this background in mind, we posit that the added resource of African American male teachers of mathematics and language to the faculty of high-need K-12 schools might be a catalyzing agent for change with regard to African American male students' beliefs about their mastery of mathematics and language. We believe that a cultural and ethnic milieu exists that provides a salient psychosocially based connection between African American male teachers and African American male students.

Hopkins alludes to such a cultural and ethnic milieu in his 1997 book, *Educating Black Males*. We argue that African American male teachers can significantly facilitate the learning of mathematics and language for African American male students. Both share social contingencies that African American male teachers can validate and articulate in ways that the vast majority of White teachers and females of all of races cannot. Like almost all institutions, social impediments are prevalent in education and their causes are usually attributed to inequities among classes. They are masked in notions of meritocracy, White privilege, marginalization, and achievement gaps; as a result, African American male students will mostly likely encounter them (Ford, Grantham, & Harris, 1997). Thus, our claim is that these shared experiences will enhance comprehension of class content and increase positive psychosocial school experiences for African American males.

In addition to these issues, we believe that opportunities for African American male students to move through K-12 school mathematics and language curricula have been hampered because of the absence of African American male teachers of mathematics and language. We use the phrase "intellectual and visual prompts" (IVPs) as a name for these role models because their very presence in the classroom provides tangible evidence of the mastery of mathematical and linguistic knowledge by African American men. This can be seen first, vicariously, through their physical presence and, second, through cultural/race discourse that permeates the African American community, the medium by which they will share ideas. These IVPs are much like their African American male students; they have been historically antagonized by a social system that has marginalized their intellectual autonomy (Cruse, 1967).

To ensure that African American male students have opportunities to experience success while moving through the school mathematics and language curricula, school districts should actively recruit African American male teachers of mathematics from colleges and universities throughout the U.S. (Ford et al, 1997). These pre-service/new teachers of mathematics and language will have the same training as their White counterparts, but will bring the added variable of experiences unique to African American males. They will be able to enter the classroom ready to effectively integrate into the mathematical and social learning process of African American male students. This will enhance, rather than impede, these students' learning efforts (Murrell, 1999).

We believe that an effort to relieve some of the social ills of the African American male student in this country can be realized with an increase in the number of African American male teachers of mathematics and language. Mathematics and English language usage are the major areas of most states' education assessments. As the research literature suggests, African American students, who have not fared well on standard mathematics and language tests, are likely to have trouble with most of the assessments given to them during their academic lifetime. We think the opportunity to be educated by an African American male teacher of mathematics and an African American male teacher of linguistics can positively affect African American male students' attitudes and inspire them to embrace the learning of mathematics and language.

RECRUITING IVPs

Based on information gathered from the National Education Association (2004), the National School Boards Association (2005), and statistics mentioned earlier about the number of African American males in the teaching profession today, we can infer that there is a modest number of African American male pre-service teachers in schools and colleges of education throughout the United States. We also can infer that many of these African American male pre-service teachers can be found at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). About 95% of HBCUs are located near or in communities that have historically been denied access to equal education and whose school systems serve a percentage of low-performing

minority students who mainly come from the urban or rural south (NCES, 2008). Because of this, African American male pre-service teachers of mathematics and language from HBCUs have unique access to these communities.

During field clinical hours and student teaching, many of these soon-to-be IVPs of mathematics and language from HBCUs have the opportunity to access and provide services to many minority students who are performing below standards. Moreover, these IVP pre-service teachers of mathematics and language are in an explicit position to operate as conduits of data collection or evaluation for researchers in the field of mathematics education. The mathematics or language education majors at these HBCUs have local and cultural facilities that would allow them the opportunity to broach empirical issues related to K-12 minority students' performance in mathematics and language.

Although there is a dearth in African American male teachers of mathematics and language, there are notable achievement/intervention programs in place that can assist African American male students in school. The focus of this article is to advocate for the increase of African American teachers of mathematics and language, but a cursory review of current achievement and intervention programs is appropriate to show some innovative approaches to reaching children of color (Matthews & Williams, 2007).

For example, Oakes, Joseph, and Muir (2004) highlight three such programs that most likely could benefit African American males, among others:

Quantitative Understanding Amplifying Student Achievement and Reasoning (QUASAR) is a successful intervention program that helps minority students in urban middle schools raise their participation and performance in mathematics (p. 476).

Project SEED is an elementary school program that helps low social economic status students acquire and master abstract mathematical concepts for advanced math placement in the future.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is an intervention program that is used to increase participation and achievement among students; its emphasis is on equity.

The QUASAR Project is an alternative teaching instruction to conventional mathematics instruction. Emanating from research through the University of

Pittsburg, Silver and Stein (1996) created QUASAR with the premise that "oft-reported low levels of participation and performance in mathematics for poor urban students in middle grades are not due primarily to lack of student ability or potential but rather to a set of educational practices that fail to provide them with high-quality mathematics learning opportunities" (pp. 476-477). QUASAR instruction promotes thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, communication and other high-level cognitive tasks more so than conventional mathematics; QUASAR instructors and administrators work closely with university resource people to enhance instruction as well. Stodolsky (1988) reported that ninety-seven percent of conventional mathematics classes were observed to deal with low-level cognitive objectives. QUASAR instruction has reflected significant gains by various racial and linguistic student groups, and these students' gains have surpassed demographically similar groups who have not used this instruction (Lane, Silver & Wang, 1997).

Another alternative to conventional mathematics is Project SEED, which also aims to increase the educational options of urban youth (Project SEED, 2009). Unlike the QUASAR Project, Project SEED's primary approach is imploring Socratic methods to promote student participation. Project SEED's staff is trained to implement methods and strategies for engaging students; moreover, parental involvement is strongly encouraged. The success of Project SEED's pedagogy has been validated through both national and longitudinal studies. Furthermore, Project SEED and the QUASAR Project are designed for instruction of students in the early elementary grades through middle school.

Project AVID, which was implemented in 58 secondary schools in San Diego County, promotes academic success in all topics at the high school level (Swanson, 1989). AVID instruction is a student-centered approach that uses tutors and the community to build upon students' aspirations to achieve college. Project AVID is a district-level program, whereas QUASAR Project and Project SEED have been utilized nationally. Project AVID not only focuses on mathematics, it also focuses on all topics at the high school level. In addition, the staff of Project AVID works with businesses in order to expose students to the real world and to help them obtain employment. Overall, each program serves children of color who most often represent a low social economic status. These pro-

grams attest to the need for enhancing the academic development of students of color. Yet, whether they work in a traditional classroom setting or in a special intervention program, we believe that African American teachers provide intellectual and visual prompts that will not only assist African American male students in academic success, but also provide much-needed role models.

Due to the lack of African American male teachers and other teachers of color, states like Illinois have begun to answer the need for teachers of color from within the community. For example, the Grow Your Own Teachers (GYOT) program is comprised of consortiums that identify schools which (a) have substantial numbers of low-income students, (b) have a large divergence in the racial diversity of teachers and students, (c) have high teacher turnover, and (d) have a number of positions unfilled or filled by less than highly qualified teachers (Grow Your Own Teachers, 2009). Communities and organizations that work with GYOT understand the need to have teachers from the community; this lowers high turnover rates, prepares teachers who already are familiar with and share the cultural dimensions of the students and their families, and increases the number of teachers of color in the classroom. Therefore, GYOT is a community-based solution that addresses pertinent problems that might have ominous effects on children of color.

CONCLUSION

Communities and organizations need to encourage African Americans males to pursue teaching careers in mathematics and language because these are precisely the fields that will empower African American children. In a society where strong mathematics skills elevate one's pursuit in many careers, "... misinformation about dialect diversity can thus be devastating for those who do not speak mainstream varieties" (Wolfram, 1999, p. 61).

A parallel issue that must be addressed is the status of the African American male who desires to teach but is prevented from doing so because of a criminal record. In 1995, Edelman noted that more than 30 percent of African American men between the ages of 20 and 29 are either in prison, on parole, or on probation, many for drug offenses. Furthermore, current statistics previously cited from the Sentencing Project (2009a,

2009b) and the National Prisoner Statistics Program reflect that the numbers of African American males who are incarcerated have increased. To overcome this roadblock, teachers' unions and the federal, state, and local governments as well as communities will have to agree to waivers for exemplary offenders who meet established conditions for teaching in community schools.

Hilliard (1999) reports that Herrnstein and Murray's Bell Curve demonstrated some sensitivity to linguistic scholarship; however, they omitted the most powerful work of the best linguists. Moreover, mental measurement and assessment is unscientific without the input of linguists. Therefore, one can easily surmise that the field of mathematics would benefit from the input of linguists since all tools for mental measurement and achievement emanate from language.

Achievement gaps and lack of access to certain mathematics courses (e.g., calculus) are unnecessary and dangerous. African Americans can achieve if given appropriate opportunities and support, which will then allow society to take advantage of their talents (Education Trust, 1998). A thorough library search would yield a cornucopia of research that addresses segregated schools, lack of access to advanced mathematics courses, low-progress schools, intra-school segregation, and achievement gaps. However, mastering mathematics and the language of the culture of power (Delpit, 1995) would greatly assist African American males in closing these achievement gaps. African American male teachers as intellectual and visual prompts in front of classes of African American male students may just be the educational harbingers who can bring this about through their understanding of their students' culture.

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PROMOTING POSITIVE SELF-IMAGES AND ACTIVE LEARNING IN THE YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE: MAKING THE CASE THROUGH THE DISCIPLINES OF COMMUNICATIONS AND AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

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Abstract: Self-concept or self-image is in large part a social product, determined by the attitudes and behavior of others toward the individual," (Porter & Washington 1979). Based on this conceptual framework, one may say that a serious social problem emerged from the embittered fallout of American race relations with the idealization of "whites," and an introjected white ideal. The problem is centered on the weakening of the self-concept or self-image among many young African Americans, particularly African American males, which has continued to undermine their development and performance in schools and colleges in a pervasive manner.

Perhaps the single most important challenge that has garnered recent attention in research reports, policy documents, and public commentary has been the increasing disparity in the educational achievement of African American males relative to their peers (Davis, 2003). During the past decade, a corpus of research output has detailed the precarious nature of African American males in schools and society (Boyd-Franklin & Franklin, 2000; Brown & Davis, 2000; Garibaldi, 1992; Majors & Gordon, 1994; McCall, 1994; Miney, 1994; Polite & Davis, 1999; Williams, 1996). African American males outnumber White male adolescents on suspension and expulsion lists. Therefore, interaction of self-identity and school context is important for our consideration.

Although African American men and women bear

similar sociological and psychological scars of racism and bigotry, most researchers and community leaders are in consensus that the retention of young African American males in schools and colleges is unquestionably and disproportionately beneath African American women (Wilson, 2000). The Schott Foundation Report for Public Education (2004) documented that while non-Hispanic African American students accounted for 93 percent of public school enrollments in 2000-2001, they also received 98 percent of the out of school suspensions. The report also informed that of African American males who enter the ninth grade, a dismal 42 percent complete high school. Add to that figure, the fact that although black males comprise only 17 percent of public school students, they represent a staggering 41 percent of special education requirements. African American males continue to languish at the bottom rung of the academic achievement ladder.

The emphasis of this working paper then, is to look at certain enrichment initiatives in school curriculum and instruction that may better serve young African American male students in promoting positive self-images and active learning. It will use case studies in learning and instruction at Southern University at New Orleans, a HBCU institution whose primary population is local, African American, and mid-to-low income students. Indeed, educational experiences of African American males in school are by far the most important in the developmental trajectory of the positive self-image and educational outcomes. We know that lower achievement levels have damaging consequences for development of self-esteem, social identity, cognitive ability, emotional capacity, and social competence – each negatively influenced by poor schooling experiences (Heath & MacKinnon, 1988). Therefore, we intend to look at how African American males may be encouraged to internalize cultural forms, attitudes, and styles of behavior to boost their self-image and become productive as active learners.

Though we believe that a proactive approach to the development, implementation, and monitoring of teaching and learning strategies in all disciplines is essential, this working paper focuses on the two focal disciplines of Speech and African American History. Teaching communications may change attitudes in some students through a special approach of preparing and personalizing formal presentations, and allow them to take pride in presenting their true self to the audience. Through emphasis on methodology and content, African American History may enhance positive and powerful identities within African American male students in a variety of ways. The

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case studies with particular reference to the HBCU scenario would also imply empowerment strategies through participation in activities designed to promote a positive self-identity, and spending time with adult African American mentors. Finally, the paper suggests that the interactions of young African-American male students with white, predominantly female teachers, will be one of several challenges for present and future school districts, and this is where the ideas reflected in the present paper may merit a serious contemplation.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

The historical connection between language and our culture is deep. Our pasts are carried from one generation to the next through stories which inform our identities. As Ernst Cassirer claimed, "Language taken as a whole becomes a gateway to a new world." This thought has driven the development of the basic public speaking course at Southern University at New Orleans, a Historically Black University (HBCU). Within this article we address the need Boone (2003) and Taylor (1999) discussed for study of communication courses at HBCUs, an element lacking in current literature. This segment explores the role of identity and efficacy in the basic public speaking course at Southern university. The course guides students to examine their identity as they take ownership of their education through awareness, reflection, assignments fostering goal orientation, peer feedback, and a co-created classroom environment. Ultimately, students are encouraged to focus on their personal goals as a pathway to take pride in presenting their true self to the audience. Students' voices and choices serve as tools of empowerment to access Cassirer's new world. These elements drive the pedagogy, activities, and assignments in this course. In this section, the basic public speaking course is examined as a mechanism for young African-American male empowerment and improved self efficacy.

Anokye (1997) noted, "African Americans come from a rich oral tradition. The ability of a person to use active and copious verbal performance to achieve recognition within his or her group is widespread in the African American community, having its roots in African verbal art." (p. 229). Indeed, the history of the spoken word truly runs deep as noted by Carter-Black (2007) who described the African and African American oral tradition by stating, "Storytelling is a long-standing strategy for socializing

the young ones in various societies" (p. 42).

The spoken word, then, is something that has historical roots of pride, power, and recognition in African and African American culture. Iconic figures, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson, Barbara Jordan, and more recently Barack Obama are exalted for their use of public speaking as an avenue for social change. Speaking publically in a way that is praised and recognized by one's peer group can advance one's own self-perception, which may be elevated for young people developing their identities in a time of mixed media messages, continued stereotyping, regional storm recovery, and personal doubt (hooks, 2003).

Learning to communicate effectively can empower (Osborn & Osborn, 2005). Creating a course which embraces the need to focus, motivate, and engage students can indeed improve self efficacy regarding public speaking and further propagate positive self-identity in young African-American males. Moreover, the public speaking course often provides tangible skills for students in future courses and in their careers. As Nance and Foeman (1993) remarked, the basic public speaking course assists "students in organizing their ideas as well as articulating those ideas in a variety of settings. To the extent that the skills taught in the basic public speaking class are central to the critical thinking process, this class often serves as a watershed in students' lifelong learning process" (p. 449). Public speaking courses are often required and serve a wide variety of students. Pearson, Child and Kahl (2006) noted, "Each year approximately 450,000 college students enroll in public speaking courses in the United States" (p. 351). Understanding how students can explore their personal identities in such a class could prove beneficial for them in future endeavors as well as in their personal self-perception.

Sprague and Stuart (2006) stated, "The outcome of any speech situation is a product of what the speaker actually says and how the listeners process and interpret what is said." (p. 63). This details the importance of the audience's perception of the speaker. Further, it explains the pressure many speaker's feel when under the watchful eye of their audience. This pressure makes the public speaking classroom a place where students are uniquely pushed to negotiate their public persona with their personal persona. Students must determine how they want to appear to multiple audiences (their friends, strangers, professor, themselves) in a single speaking assign-

ment. They face the predetermined perceptions of these groups and ultimately choose how they want to come across. It is at this juncture that the course design becomes imperative for our young African-American male students.

When the public speaking students see they can negotiate the identity they want to put forward to their audience – and further that that identity is something they must live up to, it is important for the professor to emphasize student potential while they examine their future life goals. Expectations of a student to deliver mediocre material or to be a class clown will only encourage students to “perform” in front of the class in that manner. They will not grow from the exploration and activities in the course if they are not examining who they are as a speaker and as an audience member. Housing lower expectations of our African American young men, therefore, does nothing but allow them to perform only to that level. This is a disservice in public speaking as the student strives to “perform” in the expected manner. However, if the professor and peers can work together to push a student to consider what he or she wants to be in their dream world, to envision the key concepts to get to that dream, and to take the initial steps to self-presentation toward that identity then the student will strive to meet that envisioned identity.

It is with this thought in mind that we explore the creation of a classroom designed to foster empowerment, to give the African American male student the choice of their persona, and to explore their efficacy in public speaking as a tool to enhanced self-identity.

CREATING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Public speaking is an inherently audience-centered event. Speakers often face anxiety about being “judged” by the audience (Osborn & Osborn, 2005). In individuals with social anxiety or phobia, negative self-appraisals can be enhanced by the perceived expectations of the audience (Rapee & Heimberg, 1997; Moscovitch & Hofmann, 2006). The classroom should foster openness and learning within a safe environment. If a student who experiences speaking anxiety or social phobia already faces an audience they perceive as holding extremely high expectations, they may be driven to critique themselves harshly, hold unrealistic expectations, and avoid public speaking in the future. For this reason, the classroom environment in public speaking is impor-

tant. Creating an environment which is open, responsive, and learning-centered is part of the successful equation in the instruction of public speaking at any educational level, but particularly in those environments where identity construction is being continually pondered.

NEGOTIATING IDENTITY AWARENESS THROUGH PUBLIC SPEAKING

Fostering an environment such as this requires diligence and purpose as well as a focus on a collaborative classroom. From the first day it is imperative to introduce activities that get the students to relax about public speaking while considering how they will orientate themselves toward their classmates/audience and come to consider their public persona. As most students enter the class with anxiety or fear this can be a challenge. Using material the students can immediately relate to can assist with this introduction to the class (movie clips, current events, music, activities that allow them to speak about themselves). The first two weeks we introduce ourselves to one another using questions about these elements (“What’s the most played song on your iPod?” “What movie have you seen more than 5 times?” “If you had a million dollars today, what would you do?”). These questions allow the students to see each other in new lights while we construct the environment that fosters listening, fun, and which piques the audience’s interest in speaking and listening. This lays the foundation for an open class with self-critique, exploring personal goals, and continued self-reflection.

In this course the classroom environment is set the first day to push students to consider their identities. Students introduce themselves by standing and facing their peers. They describe their name, major, and their dream job in their dream location. This is designed to have the student explore their own goals, to see their potential, and to orientate themselves to their peers as goal-driven and as the person they want to be. Their first impression to their peers is based on their future goals. The professor pulls in humor and individual responses to each introduction while fostering the belief that the dream is attainable by illustrating specific ways public speaking prowess can help them meet that goal. For example, if a student wants to own a music production business in New York City, she would encourage the student to see that self-presentation, persuasion, the ability to clearly inform others on a plan, leadership,

confidence, and articulation will help acquire business investors while adding that they will certainly want such skills when dining with Beyonce or dancing with Rihanna. Soon, as the students are relaxed and while listening to the introductions they see links between their current identities and their ultimate goals. We continue with this throughout the semester where we reference specific future goals in classroom examples, projects, and even in the subjects they choose to speak about.

REFLECTION

Continued self-reflection accompanies this initial identity-awareness stage. Self-reflection is essential for identity negotiation. This is done partially through self-reflection journals and peer critiques of student speeches. Peer critiques foster an environment where the students see improvement as a group effort and feedback as a positive part of the learning process. Most importantly, past research showed the use of peer critiques with students of color led to enhanced learning success (Nance & Foeman, 1993; O'Brien, 1989; Okawa, 1988). The peer critiques, in tandem with the professor's evaluation feedback, allow a glimpse into audience vantage and the ability to work toward improvements. The self-reflection creates a forum for the student to explore his or her emotional, mental, and physical reaction to speaking in public with a specific focus on setting goals for improvement in future speeches. It is important they set their own goals for improvement at this stage (Bandura, 1997). Goal-setting can empower students to take ownership and self-direction in their education while developing skills in planning. The African American young male may face lowered expectations and negative stereotypes in education which makes goal-setting necessary so they can envision their future outside of such lowered standards. This activity implies a future where education and success are intrinsically woven together so the student begins to reform their identity around these new personal expectations. Additionally, they may see positive educational responses from peers and in the course, which can foster a positive self-image (Ainley, Batten, Collins, & Withers, 1998).

The course emphasizes the students' future goals as a way to encourage the students to push beyond their comfort levels and critically explore identity, culture, and personal goals. As noted, this is done by asking them to be as specific as possible about their future goals and referencing such goals repeatedly

in the course. This helps the students buy into the intent of the course, see the tangible need for the course, and take the course seriously. More importantly, it allows them to envision their future goals and work toward them in a clear manner all semester. For this reason, students are never given or assigned a speech topic and no topics are prohibited. They choose their topics and, therefore, have more drive to work on something they care personally about. It is strongly encouraged that they link this to the dream job/future they discussed during the first days of the course. The speech assignments serve as an additional component in this reflective process. Students speak on topics as varied as careers, health concerns, musical tastes, social problems, cultural events, and politics. Student development as competent speakers inherently involves a continued internal examination of who they are and how they interact with their larger audience and having a topic they personally find interesting can only serve to improve student engagement with the material and the course. It can get them eager to speak to their peers. They must reflect on their personal identities and as they do so they are building self efficacy in their public speaking environment. Such self-direction in the course allows students to feel ownership of their education (Nance & Foeman, 1993). It also emphasizes critical self-reflection as they continue to negotiate their identities in front of an audience.

It is imperative to show the students that the public speaking course can assist them later in life and in their courses as they are exploring their future. We continue the reflection and goal-setting as an external speaker is invited mid-way through the term. He or she allows the students to see the fruit of hard work, dedication, and polished presentation skills. This can also serve to reinforce the professor's message about the importance of self-presentation. As a Caucasian female teaching at a southern HBCU it is important that the students know there is not a desire to change their culture or erase communication styles—or as bluntly stated by a student last term, "to talk White." The uses of an outside speaker who has success in the local community and who is also African American reinforces the messages in class and adds another facet to the class perceptions of identity. Nance and Foeman (1993) noted that minority students often desire a personal connection with a professor—this speaker can help bridge that connection. Additionally, during the first few class periods the professor purposefully describes her personal

journey from a rural, low income farm area through higher education. She explains and demonstrates how she “talks country” when at home and may talk differently in professional settings. Allowing them to see her language as contextualized in her culture opens a discussion on code-switching as well as how we present ourselves to various audiences. Code-switching, “the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction” (Myers-Scotton & Ury, 1977, p. 7) comes up when we discuss articulation, enunciation, and pronunciation. Green and Walker (2004) noted that most communication courses with African American students should understand code-switching as an element of identity. Forming one’s public identity is a large component of this course and is discussed often in our classes in an open manner. Again, we reference our future goals; we discuss our personalized stories about miscommunication caused by linguistic varieties, and explore what role this has culturally in our lives. “The basic communications course provides an arena for instructors to train students in effective code-switching practices while improving public speaking skills, affirming identity and enhancing self-esteem” (Green & Walker, 2004, p. 440). This line of inquiry in the classroom fosters critical learning with the students while discussing the concept of ethnocentrism as it relates to speech construction. As Williams (2006) explored, such efforts serve as a means to bring co-cultures into the public speaking course where we, “...engage in person-centered communication which acknowledges another person’s perspective and attempting to adapt to that perspective” (p. 193). This basic public speaking course, then, becomes an avenue to continually investigate student identity both as audience members and as speakers as they develop presentation skills.

SELF-EFFICACY AND INTERNAL DIALOGUE

The environment itself is not the only factor to critically exploring student identity and improving a student’s self-perception in the basic public speaking class. As Bandura (1986) noted, self efficacy can play a large role in the person’s performance. Self-efficacy is the confidence one has in his or her ability to perform a certain task (Bandura, 1986). Each classroom activity, then, must facilitate the student’s belief that they are competent and re-focus them on their personal future goals. This may have to be emphasized more for the young African-American males in the collegiate classroom. Too often our young African-American males can face repeatedly negative stereo-

types in the educational arena. Public speaking class can be an environment where these students find their voice, plan for their future goals, and work to promote a positive self-identity.

The use of training tools to increase confidence and decrease anxiety tied directly to improved presentational skills according to Brown and Morrissey (2004). This concept is used throughout the instruction of public speaking. The students study, practice, and incorporate new skills weekly. As they work together, their confidence increases and they experience less anxiety with each speech. They are then required to move this knowledge into their public “face” to the audience—a face we have debated and explored throughout the class by examining our goals, the way we want to be seen in front of different audiences, a close inspection of ourselves as we are in the present and as we hope to be in the future.

Building the open classroom environment becomes imperative as students tackle anxiety about speaking to their audience. Studies of Communication Anxiety (CA) in the past showed that the sense of being evaluated as noted above increases anxiety when one feels dissimilar to their audience. This may come into play in environments where young African-American males’ identities feel uncertain or challenged. In order to prepare our students to better succeed in future work and educational arenas, it is important to consider their CA and making them comfortable in their own identity as a speaker. Ralston, Ambler, and Scudder (1991) discovered that African-Americans attending predominantly Caucasian universities experienced lower CA than their peers. It is important to consider future studies in HBCU settings regarding CA and identity formation. In the current course, a goal is to train the students to see themselves with confidence and to facilitate their management of anxiety. To do this, tools are introduced in the classroom at the early stages of the semester. One tool is the faith and responsiveness of the professor. Showing the students faith in their ability to meet the goals set before them, to live up to their own expectations, and to conquer their anxieties regarding peer judgment, social expectations, and self efficacy issues can lead to a student with increased confidence, self-reliance, and a positive self-perception. This is essential as they present themselves verbally to an audience of either their peers or their future colleagues. It is also part of the foundation for learning internal dialogue which can build efficacy in public speaking. Those who are persuaded to visualize themselves as succeeding at a

task are much more likely to experience increased self-efficacy (Wood & Bandura, 1989). The professor and peer responsiveness can only help persuade the student in this arena as they hone their skills.

The next element, therefore, to this course's goals of promoting positive self-identity for young African American males involves replacing negative self-statements with positive self-statements about performance to calm anxieties and improve self efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Brown & Morrissey, 2004; Saks, 1994). We practice public speaking cognitive restructuring (Osborn & Osborn, 2005), or the process of redesigning our internal dialogue about our upcoming presentations as positive thoughts. We replace the thoughts of "I can't" with "I have prepared and am ready to tell the class what I know." At first this is a guided process where the professor asks the students to share in groups what negative thoughts are running through their heads before a speech. Their peers and the professor share ways to restructure those thoughts more positively. This small process can have a large impact on overall self efficacy and on anxiety (Brown & Morrissey, 2004). This further works to maintain the collaborative classroom environment as the students see that everyone experiences some self-doubt and uncertainty. This can become a very supportive forum for students to be engaged in continued personal reflection of their own internal dialogues and the impact of such thoughts on their performance. As we work through cognitive restructuring throughout the semester the students' anxieties diminish and they can focus on their performance.

A collaborative classroom which embraces self-awareness, reflection and skill building can promote self efficacy in public speaking. This improved concept of presentation before one's peers can further reinforce cultural acceptance as Anokye (1997) showed with the historical recognition of those who are successful speakers in the African and African American cultures.

Instruction and course design which embrace an open dialogue with the students to engage in critical self-reflection can provide an opportunity to promote positive self-identity and a greater awareness of personal perceptions. The basic public speaking course which serves large numbers of students is a promising avenue under which we can push at our future generations of young African American males to better understand who they are and who they want to be as they encounter their varied audiences.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

We see the teaching of African American history and culture as a significant aspect of a school's curriculum and a factor in the promotion of a positive sense of "self" in the African American male. In general, all African American students, male and female, should be involved in such courses and programs as part of the compulsory school curriculum. The subject must be taught in a way that will embrace a new conception of masculinity that shifts from dominate ideas of male socialization to a cultural awareness grounded in the positive experiences and history of African people, particularly, African American men. African American immersion schools and curricula that stress African and African American history and culture are viewed as positive strategies in building self-esteem and self-confidence and promoting dispositions for learning (Brown, 1995; Murrell, 1994, 2002; Pollard & Ajirotutu, 2000).

The ways in which content material in African American history may be taught and how teaching and learning strategies may be construed for effective participation and outcome are open-ended and are subjected to continued analysis. To begin with, African American history ought to be taught ideally by African American teachers, and the content material should include African American political, social, cultural, and biographical history, kinship roles within the African American family, roles of African American community and churches, and ways of teaching and learning African American history and culture. On the other hand, if White, Hispanic, or other non-African American teachers are teaching African American history, those teachers should have a thorough understanding and association with the culture to motivate the student's identification with the subject, as well as with the instructor, in a positive manner.

METHODOLOGY

In teaching African American history, the factor of methodology in delivering content material would play a significant role in the way young African American male students would internalize and apply the learning to their own life process and career development. Some observations emanating from the research conducted may be summarized as follows –

Revisiting Racial Terminology: Most required courses of study on American

Campuses have been filtered through the prism of white male analyses and writings. A first example is the way American history and culture have adopted a color definition in written and oral communication to identify the two chief racial groups as black and white. This terminology is disseminated in the classroom and circulated everywhere across the globe. Referring back to the semantics associated with different colors, one may find that white has a wholly positive connotation as opposed to black, which carries ideas of negativity. In this light, this paper suggests that classification of African Americans as Black originally carried offensive and disrespectful connotations demeaning their racial and cultural background and obstructing the cohesive development of an enhanced self-image among young African Americans, especially, young males.

While the historical progression toward a more positive meaning of "black" as a definition of racial identity is a reality, the paper would suggest that using terminology that would describe ethnic roots and the intrinsic cultural identity as the exclusive basis for racial and social identification may act as both an unconscious and conscious psychological leverage, as well as a stimulant, to the molding of a higher level of group and individual self-identity (knowledge) and self-esteem (evaluation). An interesting parallel for justification which may be mentioned is the way other racial groups in the United States are identified/classified in books and in colloquia, which includes Hispanic Americans, Indian Americans, Chinese Americans, etc.

These ethnic communities are not stereotyped by their skin color, but by their cultural roots and history. Much of the self-identity literature would suggest that positive education outcomes are linked with positive self-identity (Ainley, Batten, Collins, & Withers, 1998; Day 1994), and negative educational outcomes are associated with negative perceptions of self (Cole & Sapp 1988; Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, & Seligman, 1986). Therefore, it may be suggested that identification by color could be negatively affecting the course of the interactive variables of self-identity and educational outcomes.

UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

One of the most important contributors to the development of a positive self-concept and self-image in the African American male within the context of the school environment and curriculum is the extent to

which individual teachers (African American and others) exhibit an acceptance and respect of young African American students and their history and culture. It is up to teachers to let African American males know that they are valued and to recognize their work and potential (Hudspith & Williams, 1994). This objective is attainable by building affiliative relationships with students through the monitoring of progress of individual students in and outside of the classroom, and facilitating positive relations between students through the administration of group projects, field work assignments, etc. There can be a marked difference in the self-perception of African American students, as well as in their retention and matriculation rates in schools with good teachers and a good curriculum/program. As mentioned in the previous section, the development of a positive self-image is intertwined with positive learning outcomes. In teaching African American history and culture, African American, White and other non-African American teachers need to respect the culture, as well as have an intrinsic understanding of its history and social problems in order to make a spiritual connection with their African American student clientele, particularly males, in view of the latter's susceptibility to deviant behavior.

HAVE A PERSONAL STAKE IN THE GROOMING OF THE SUBJECT'S SELF-IDENTITY

It is also essential for the teacher of African American history to elect strategies that would ensure their personal involvement on a deeper scale in the lessons or projects assigned and administered. Classroom instruction has to be designed to accommodate all levels of learners, and the teacher ought to incorporate teaching and learning strategies that are inclusive of all. While regular reading, writing, and examination assignments constitute the standard rubric for evaluation of student performance, such assignments by themselves may not always facilitate a positive growth in the low-performing, disconnected, "at-risk" student, and it may not mitigate his self-identity crisis. For young African American males, a "personal growth project" assignment could be conducive to the shaping of a positive self-image through the identification of a role model from African American history or contemporary local and national African American community. The student would be required to submit his rationale for selecting a historical figure and explain the threads of connection between himself and his perceived idol.

The teacher would monitor a periodic progress report during the year on ways that the student evinces himself as “growing” toward a positive future, and offer additional opportunity for advisement. Furthermore, a periodic review of the “personal growth project” by teacher and student would strengthen their bonding and facilitate the male student’s understanding of life expectations and how he could live into those high expectations under the guidance of his teacher-mentor.

The role and accountability of the teacher is significant in this project. The dedicated teacher would guide the student to ingrain positive self-concepts and may often supplant the distant icon as the active, at-the-scene role model, intimately connected to the student’s individual academic and social growth in school. Since most of the school day is spent in classrooms under the supervision and guidance of teachers, their influence can never be marginalized. On the other hand, a study has indicated that young African American males share the desire for a more personal connection with teachers (Davis, 1999). As the teacher adopts a more active role in the life of the student through the “personal growth project,” the teacher must understand and intervene when necessary with social lessons drawn from past and current events that would cultivate an appreciation for the potential of the student, and the importance of school and achievement in his life. Additionally, this kind of project may constitute a way of understanding how young African American males construct personal meaning of education and achievement inside and outside school. Particularly, insights may be gained as to how they make sense of their own gender/race identity connected with achievement and engagement attitudes in school and the classroom.

Another proactive feature of the “personal growth project” is that it may serve as a useful tool for teaching young African American males and the communities in which they live to embrace education and lifelong learning, in addition to teaching themselves self-discipline in the footsteps of their role model. In the same light, group projects, that would include achievers and at-risk students in a single group, is another teaching and learning strategy to engage low self-esteem students, and also raise their bar of personal achievement expectations through emulating their active counterparts in the group. Such methods of instruction would help to reform the disinterested/disoriented student into developing a new positive interest in his self-worth and the

boundless possibilities of attaining success in school and in life. Moreover, this paper suggests that the “personal growth project” should be a recurring project in every school year terminating as a “senior paper” on comprehensive academic and social development of the student required at the time of matriculation.

USING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE MENTORING AS A TOOL OF INSTRUCTION

The presence of committed and successful African American male adults in educational environments is essential for enhancing academic and social-identity development in African-American males. A study completed on “Self-Identity and Positive Outcomes of Schooling for Indigenous Australian Students” (Purdie, 2003), has established the concept that the presence of same-race/same-gender adults engaged in school activities promoted positive self-identity among the “endangered” or at-risk students. Another study (Davis, 2003) has also argued that consistent and positive males in educational settings provide models for young African American males to emulate. These positive role models are believed to counter inappropriate sex-role socialization and maladaptive masculine identity (Cunningham, 1993). A reason commonly mentioned for the disengagement, alienation, and poor academic performance of African American males is that they perceive most educational activities as feminine irrelevant to their masculine identity and development. It is also believed that schools, specifically teachers, impose a feminine culture on males that induce oppositional behaviors and low self-esteem (Davis, 2003).

Drawing from the above research results, this paper suggests that African American adult males, whether they may be administrators, teachers, and staff, must be used as role models whom young African American male students can better understand and relate to, than they can to white or Hispanic teachers. The positive male presence is meant to diffuse traditional masculine behaviors and counters negative gender role socialization of African American males. The development of conceptions and expressions of masculinity that match positive behaviors and deportment in school settings is the primary objective of these interventions (Davis, 2003).

Given this premise, the white or Hispanic, or even an African American teacher teaching African American history may include guest talks by on-campus

or off-campus African American adults as a part of the regular history course curriculum. History is concerned with real-life events, past and present. Therefore, the guest speaker does not have to be a professional historian but any educated person who may discuss current events relating to African Americans that may inspire them to reflect, participate, and rethink their own development. Moreover, if teachers can promote the inclusion of African American male students who had graduated and gone on to develop successful careers elsewhere as visiting speakers on any aspect of current African American social issues, this would inspire and motivate male students to become productive as active learners.

In other words, this method may activate both the self-identity and the learner-identity of the male student, leading to successful learning outcomes. Promoting mentoring as a tool of historical instruction in and outside of the classroom has its distinct advantages in facilitating the growth of a positive self-image and successful educational outcomes. It should be encouraged by schools, because school success is intimately associated with the African American male's self-perception as an achieving student. It must be mentioned that African American male organizations such as Concerned Black Men, Inc., Black men's church groups, Black fraternities, and Million Man March chapters are at the forefront of several school-based programs (Davis, 2003). Also, PGOTM (Project: Gentlemen on the Move) is currently making massive headway to develop and nurture excellence in African American male adolescents academically and socially (Bailey, 2001).

TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTENT IN AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

History is storytelling. And language is the chief survival tool of humanity. This segment explores giving voice to active learners in African American - and, obviously, United States - history courses. History is a class of readers, writers, and storytellers. Class participation is emphasized from day one through introductions, class expectations, questions and answers, and a brief discussion of the contemporary historical milieu. The environment is open, responsive, and learning-centered. Class participation is suitably rewarded in the final compilation of grades. Finally, an emphasis is placed on the last course objective: to create successful learning outcomes.

African American consciousness legitimated and celebrated ethnic pluralism, promoted women's rights and suffrage, challenged the notions of American civil liberties, and through student pressures created academic studies programs for African Americans, women, white ethnic groups, and other minorities (Quarles, 1988). African American history for the masses should not only reflect "the great man" theory of history; but, a history for the masses should reflect a history of people of African descent becoming an American people.

In 1976, Ivan Van Sertima wrote that the first Africans came to the New World as explorers, traders, and colonizers. In his book, *They Came before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America*, Van Sertima stated that King Don Juan of Portugal was aware of another world just below the equinoctial line, roughly on the same parallel as the latitudes of his domain in Guinea. Due to persistent rumors and reports he was certain of this. Africans had traveled to that world. On March 9, 1493, King Don Juan proposed to Columbus, a week following his first voyage to the New World, the line finally settled on by Spain and Portugal a year later on June 7, 1494 in the Treaty of Tordesillas. The Africans were correct.

On his second voyage, Columbus found proof that the Indians were trading with black people. The natives of Hispaniola had African spears made of gold. On his third voyage he found handkerchiefs of cotton that resembled almayzars-Guinea hairdressers and loincloths. Further proof that Africans came before Columbus was the discovery by Vasco Nuñez de Balboa of African colonizers in the New World.

Ivan Van Sertima (1976) also provided other cultural artifacts, Arabic documents and other evidence including colossal granite head of Africans found in the Canton of Tuxtla from as early as 800 to 700 B.C. among the Olmecs and in other parts of Mexico and Central America. From the start active learners research, read the text, write critical reviews and discuss the true beginning of African American history in the New World. Students must participate in another adjustment to African American as well as U.S. and world history.

Tim Hashaw (2007) wrote in *The Birth of Black America: the First African Americans and the Pursuit of Freedom at Jamestown* that the story began in 1619 when the San Juan Bautista, a Spanish slave frigate, left Angola with 350 slaves for Vera Cruz, Mexico. The Bantu prisoners were captured in the Gulf of Mexico by two English pirate ships, the White Lion and the

Treasurer. Sixty of the stolen human treasure were taken to Virginia and Bermuda. The international scandal over the incident resulted in the end of the Virginia Company's monopoly on North America. Thirteen diverse colonies became the framework of the nation born in the American Revolution a century and a half later (2007).

The names of Granville Sharp, William Mansfield, Jonathan Strong, Thomas Lewis, and James Somerset, Lord Dunmore, General Sir Henry Clinton, Olaudah Equiano, Thomas Clarkson, and William Wilberforce, according to Simon Schama (2006), made the genesis of African American liberty inseparable from the British connection during and after the Revolutionary war. A black barber, Newton Prince, was a witness to the Boston massacre. He testified on behalf of the redcoats in 1770. The war produced the first identifiable African American political leader, Sergeant Thomas Peters. The loyalist Africans created the earliest free Baptists and Methodist churches in and near Shelburne, Nova Scotia and David George was the first black preacher to baptize and convert whites. Also, in the loyalist Diaspora of Nova Scotia they opened the first schools for free black children. And more than a thousand left Nova Scotia for Sierra Leone and experienced for the first time local law and self-government. Freedom and liberty, ephemeral as it was, could only be found at the base of the British flag.

The United States of America became a slave nation. Starting with the privileges and immunities clause of the Articles of Confederation, Southern delegates arrived at the Constitutional convention in Philadelphia when a plan to protect their interests in slavery. That same time (1787) the Northwest Ordinance divided nation into slave and free areas and states. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase more than doubled the size of the country and place no limitations on slavery in the new lands. In 1820, the no-slave zone of the Northwest Territory was continued west of the Mississippi through the Missouri Compromise and by 1854 the national political wheel broke down. The 80 years (1774-1854) of compromise and political accommodation was over. Americans chose war instead of politics (Blumrosen and Blumrosen, 2005).

Fergus M. Bordewich (2006) in *Bound for Canaan: the Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement* uses storytelling to tell of the masses of nameless and famous runaways forcing the national political wheel to break down. He focused on the sixty years leading up to the Civil

War, a war that brought a climax to the country's bitter division. By the 1850s, railroad terminology was "the lingua franca of the abolitionists, slaveholders, politicians, and other Americans alike, as they argued, with heightening violence, about the hemorrhaging of fugitive slaves toward Canada" (239). In the epilogue Bordewich went on to say, "Abolitionism taught the country that the problem of race was not on the margins but at the center of its national story. In the underground, blacks and whites discovered each other for the first time as allies in a common struggle, learning to rely on each of not as master on slave, or child on parent, but as fellow soldiers in the war that most Americans did not yet even know had begun" (437-438). Yet, the abolitionists prepared the nation for the hemorrhaging that was to come in the Civil War. They were imbued by a "higher law" and therefore were the seedbed of religious activism in American politics.

And the black masses continued to leave the plantations forcing military and governmental officials to once again agonize over a people who voted for liberty with their feet. The black masses forced the government to reclassify some of them as "contraband." Also, the diligence of the abolitionists in the North and in Europe forced Abraham Lincoln to take the moral high ground and prevent the British Empire from entering the war. The United States of America was now fighting a war of liberation. The genesis of African American liberty in the United States was now inseparable from the Union connection - a true American revolution had begun. Russell L. Riley (1999) noted, "Emancipation would thereafter not only follow the American flag, that flag would serve quite literally as a beacon to fugitives who now knew that freedom was to be found at its base" (p. 114-115). The genesis of African American liberty in the United States was the result, in large part, of mass active participants.

Benjamin Quarles wrote, "For the black rank and file, the man in the street, the laity, black history's main objective is to create a sense of racial pride and personal worth." He also went on to say, "In a world that has traditionally equated blackness with low aim, Black history serves as a stimulus to success" (1988, 204).

CONCLUSION

Racism, stereotypes, lower expectations, and pervasive peer and popular culture define the "poor self-image crisis" to which a significant number of young

African American males are subjected. Young African American males present major challenges for schools. These challenges are cultural and gender based. The difficulty for schools, in part, rests in their inability to deal with where these young males are coming from and their authentic experiences of being young, African American, and male in U. S. public schools (Davis, 2003). Very little has been done so far in understanding the complex lives lead by young African American males inside and outside the school that negatively impact their self-identity.

Institutionalizing new methods and approaches in teaching and learning styles in Communications and African American history is a valuable first step in reversing the trend of low self-esteem and a questionable future for the young African American male's persistence in education. It is anticipated that a pro-active stimulus to shape a positive self-image through pedagogy in Communications and African American history will enable a well-integrated identity of the young African American male as an individual and as a student. As described, specific activities in the public speaking setting can empower the student while fostering exploration of identity through self efficacy in Communication. The extent to which schools and teachers recognize and infuse the cultural identities and communicative abilities of students into the school curriculum and environment is critical to the development of a positive self-identity among African American males. Furthermore, young African American males need to be cared for and nurtured in responsive schools, and these schools need to be supported in resources to meet the needs of African American males. A critical component of support includes increasing the ability of schools to contribute to the African American males' social, cognitive, gender, and academic development (Davis, 2003).

Additionally, the development of a positive perception of the self is also conceptually contingent on the recognition in the home of the importance of education for young African American males that equips them for life in a complex and competitive world (Purdie, 2003). The school, home, and community are inextricably aligned in this mission. The challenge for educators is to ensure that the school curriculum and programs are so designed to attract and retain young African American males, where their participation is valued, where they feel successful, and where they see value in completing their schooling. Research questions that pay attention to specific

changes in achievement with respect to student characteristics (e.g. socio-economic background, attitudes, and self-identity), grade level, and school culture would benefit from longitudinal studies in this area. It must not be lost from view that growth of a positive self-identity is intrinsically connected to a positive school environment.

It is anticipated that the insights presented in this working paper may contribute toward the effort to renew a positive self-image in young African American males through better teaching and learning strategies in Communications and African American history, which would bolster their self-worth and enable them to break away from the stereotypes of "endangered" and "at-risk" students. Clearly, the school environment and curriculum are critical factors for young African American males as they make meaning of who they are, what they are supposed to do, and how others perceive them. In the final analysis, the concurrent roles of a pro-active school and classroom environment and curriculum, along with that of the family and community, are integral to transforming the young African American male's self-image and educational performance positively in the years to come. A concerted research-based intervention aimed at resolving the low-input, low-output quagmire (self-image vs. educational outcomes) will ensure that young African American males become active learners and reach their highest achievement potential.

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THE ROLE OF RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES IN YOUTH EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: The rise in computer usage, internet access, and online teaching have confined youth to indoor activities more than ever, which has led the youth toward a diminished understanding and appreciation for the great outdoors and physical activities. Low interest in renewable natural resources can be attributed to the same reason. To promote youth development through renewable natural resources and outdoor education, the Urban Forestry Program at Southern University has developed a series of youth education and development programs that provide opportunities for youth to explore and understand their environment, both the urban and natural aspects, through forestry field trips, summer urban forestry institutes, and school tree planting activities. Through these teaching and learning programs the faculty members provided meaningful outdoor hands-on activities to youth in Louisiana. The activities help youth to connect with the natural resources in the forests and wilderness settings. The activities are also helpful in the youth team building, strengthening self-esteem, and fostering a sense of overall well-being. Meanwhile, the activities serve as a vehicle for Southern University to reach out to high school students and to develop their interests in urban forestry and forestry.

Since the 1970s, youth have spent a decreasing amount of time outdoors in nature and the trend quickly is worsening (Louv, 2005). Disconnection from nature, disconnection from others through increased use of indoor enticements such as video games, television, and internet, give today's youth a lack of free outdoor time to explore the nature, to learn about natural resources, to observe life, and to contemplate the grandeur of the world. In their book "Reconnecting Children Through Out-

door Education" Foster and Linney (2007) remind us that children thrive in outdoor settings. The converse of this once-simple truth, is that deprived of time outdoors, they are subject to obesity, increased levels of ADD/ADHD, and other serious health risks. Foster and Linney ask a profound question: "Could it be that, through losing their connectedness with the outdoors, children are becoming disconnected with themselves as well as suffering severe health consequences?" (p. 14).

A diminished understanding and appreciation for the great outdoors and physical activities by youth has led to the low interest in natural resources. Natural resources refer to the untamed natural essence of the environment. They contain a significant amount of material as well as aesthetic values. Natural resources can be categorized into renewable, flow, non-renewable sources. While renewable natural resources primarily involve living sources such as forests, animal species, plants, etc., flow resources consist of wind, tide and sunlight; and non-living sources like water and soil. The basic characteristic of renewable resources is that they are sustainable if used with sense and discretion. Thus it is very important to draw the lines between how much to be used and how much to be left in order to give nature the time and chance to reproduce the used-up resources. The conservation and preservation of natural resources is of paramount importance not just for the sake of the production of commodities, but more so because of maintaining ecological balance and environmental reasons.

The study of natural resource conservation and preservation is conspicuously absent from general curricula while man continues the accelerated abuse of his environment (Kranzer, 1986). Academicians, particularly biologists and natural scientists, must break the traditional bounds of the several disciplines and assume responsibility for developing ecological literacy in the liberal education of all students.

CONTACT WITH NATURE CAN BENEFITS YOUTH IN NUMEROUS WAYS

Studies by Taylor, Kuo and Sullivan (2001) have found that green outdoor spaces may foster creative play, a form of play that is especially valuable for children's development. Green spaces also seem to improve children's access to adult interaction. The researchers found that the children's ability to concentrate, complete tasks and follow directions improves dramatically after play in green, natural settings. While outdoor activities in general help, set-

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tings with trees and grass are the most beneficial. In their studies, they found that ADD symptoms in children are relieved after spending time in nature, the greener the setting, the more the relief. The dramatic results of their study suggest an alternative way to relieve ADD symptoms that has virtually no side effects or costs.

Scientists are finding that contact with nature can benefit kids in numerous ways (Stiffler, 2007). For example, kids in California performed better on science tests after a week in the woods. A survey found that conservation-minded adults traced those concerns to time spent in the wilderness when they were kids. Exploring forests, learning animals, birds, and plants, should all be part of the youth education. Students should all be encouraged to explore and physically interact with nature because they are the future stewards of the Earth.

Contact with nature is something that people, specifically children, need (Louv, 2005). Human beings are a part, not just interested observers, of the natural world. Having no contact with nature is a real deficit in one's life. We should have an increasing concern for the health risks, physical, psychological, and emotional, that being predominantly "indoor children" can pose. It is educators' obligation to help build a movement that would reconnect children with the great outdoors and natural resources.

PROMOTING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THROUGH RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCE AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION

To promote youth development through renewable natural resource and outdoor education, the Urban Forestry Program at Southern University has developed a series of youth education and development programs that provide opportunities for youth to explore and understand their environment, both the urban and natural aspects, through forestry field trips, summer urban forestry institutes, and school tree planting activities. Our vision is to inform and educate youth about their surrounding natural and cultural resources, and take positive actions toward their care and management. Our goal is to educate a diverse people to take actions to improve the quality, productivity, and sustainability of natural resources. Our objectives are to provide opportunities for youth involvement in practical outdoor environmental experiences, to stress the importance of the natural and cultural resources, and to disseminate

information that foster youth responsible behavior in order to achieve the highest possible environmental quality for our communities. Through teaching and learning programs, the faculty members provided meaningful outdoor hands-on activities to youth in Louisiana. The activities help youth to connect with the natural resources in the forests and wilderness settings. The activities are also helpful in the youth team building, strengthening self-esteem, and fostering a sense of overall well-being. Meanwhile, the activities serve as a vehicle for Southern University to reach out to high school students and to develop their interests in urban forestry and forestry. Ultimately, the activities ignite curiosity and inspire students in renewable natural resource management for the future.

Planting trees in school yard: a first step in outdoor education and sustaining the natural resources

Over the years, the Urban Forestry Program and our partners have hosted many tree planting events with the help of elementary and high school principals and the participation of teachers and students. By encouraging both kids and community members to be part of the planting process, we help to instill a feeling of stewardship and responsibility for our natural environments. We found that youth take great pride in their contributions, simply by planting a tree. Over time, these trees and new habitats preserve and improve their schools natural beauty and help the youth to stay connected to the natural environment that supports our community and is essential to their long-term physical, emotional and spiritual health. Through tree planting, not only do youth gain self-confidence in their roles as community members, but at the same time they also learn about the importance of trees, water, and native species to air quality, water quality and quantity, natural systems, and human health. Youth are the future of the community and the environment and we must encourage a sense of civic pride and spirit of participation among the community's youth. We strongly advocate recess in green schoolyards. It may help all children refresh their ability to concentrate. Our message to youth is that value and care for the trees and vegetation in the community, because caring for trees means caring for people and the environment.

The use of forests as outdoor classrooms

Collaborating with the USDA Forest Service Kisatchie National Forests in Louisiana, the Urban Fore-

stry Program created the outdoor "living laboratories." The Kisatchie National Forests and wetland areas are places where students can see, feel, sense and experience the natural systems within which we all live. Educating people, especially young people, about protecting the Earth's natural resources is one of the most important things. Nothing beats a hands-on learning experience; therefore we create opportunities for young people to interact with their environment and getting in touch with the natural world. We provide field experience and on-site learning in the forests. Through field trips to the forests, high school and college students increased contact with the forests and the Forest Service field offices and officers. The field studies enhanced students understanding of forestry and natural resources. These experiential learning activities also enhanced career development in forestry and natural resource management. The learning activities and subjects that we designed for students include Trees and Plants: identifying and learn about the native and non-native plants and their services and benefits to the environment.

Wildlife: introduce participants to the diversity of animals and insects native to local environment through hands on activities and hikes throughout forests.

Habitats and Animal Traces: Introduce participants to the animals in the area.

Water: Importance of water to human, animal, plants, concept of water conservation.

Aquatic Life: Walk to near by streams and water to observe, catch (and release) aquatic life to analyze, discuss, draw, and learn about.

Watersheds: Through experiential activities discuss and introduce participants to the concept of local and regional watersheds.

Do Not Litter: Provide participants with information about the principles of Leave No Trace by games, initiatives, drawing, and practicing the principles during all of our activities, and the danger and damage of littering and forest fire.

Navigation: Introduce participants to navigation and compass skills, and Global Positioning System (GPS).

Nature Hikes: learn the natural resources around us, the trees, flowers, and living world.

Fire Prevention: On site education on fire prevention and hazardous fuel reduction.

Summer Institute as a tool for renewable natural resource education

A youth experiential learning summer urban forestry enrichment program called the Urban Forestry Summer Institute is a unique education tool and learning process at SU. The yearly Summer Institute consists of high school juniors and seniors. We provide training for teens to develop skills in environmental issues identification, community problem-solving, youth organizing, communication and media, diplomacy, and cross cultural outreach. Each year, our Summer Institute addresses conservation issues, such as global warming, and pressing environmental health concern, for example, pesticide spray on subsistence lands. The Summer Institute is a powerful vehicle for uniting youth from diverse cultural, socio-economic, and geographic backgrounds and getting them involved with conservation and stewardship. The Urban Forestry Program forms strategic partnerships with USDA Forest Service and youth development entities to build our capacity to support youth from diverse backgrounds.

The Institute aims to introduce youth to the profession of urban forestry and the management of natural resources. During the four-week period the Institute participants discover the joys of urban forests, the importance of conserving natural resources, learn about sustainable communities, watersheds, and wildlife management, the human dimension, GIS and remote sensing, etc. The Institute participants are also introduced to college education and career opportunities. In addition, the program participants reside on SU campus in Baton Rouge, providing them with glimpse into campus life. The Institute is marked with exciting field trips to the state parks, national forests, and is capped off with an awards ceremony and a graduation certificate. The Institute serves well as a recruitment tool for the Urban Forestry Program and Southern University.

YOUTH EDUCATION IS A COLLECTIVE EFFORT

It is without a doubt that educational programs for the public and youth lead to a better understanding of natural resources and ecosystem management (Morrissey et al, 1994). Their understanding can lead to increased public support for natural resource and ecosystem management. Youth have always been an important audience for Federal agencies renewable natural resource extension through its youth education programs. The US Renewable Resources Extension

sion Act (RREA) supports renewable natural resource ecosystem management extension, outreach and education activities. The purpose of RREA is to provide for "an expanded and comprehensive extension program for forest and rangeland renewable resources". Extension education programs in many subjects over many years have resulted in significant benefits to the Nation when its citizens know how to make better decisions. Youth, the future leaders, will use their knowledge of ecosystem management to redirect our Nation toward a sustainable future.

Educating youth in sustainable natural resource management should be an international effort. The United Nations Environmental Program on Youth and Sustainable Consumption is one of such efforts (United Nations, 2008). This program provides elementary and high school students in many countries with hands-on-experiences and education aimed at encouraging youth to connect to their environment. The programs foster and build upon the children's natural interest in the outdoors. This is particularly challenging, though, in an urban context. As such, the program is a potential model for comprehensive urban environmental education. The programs not only foster environmental awareness and eventual professional development, but it also allows urban youth to engage with their natural surroundings, and foster communication and community among people of different environmental perspectives.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Southern University Urban Forestry Program's efforts in promoting youth development through renewable natural resource and outdoor education have been highly successful and resulted from significant planning, presentation preparation, and dedication to the tasks by team members. The programs have become a much-anticipated regular feature on our annual work plan, and it is particularly rewarding that students, especially in the younger grades, look forward to our visits and to learning more about renewable natural resources and what scientists do. We received very positive feedback from the school students, teachers, and principals.

The Urban Forestry Program at Southern university is well-positioned to expand its renewable natural resources and ecosystem management youth education and outreach programs. We will continue motivate school teachers to incorporate natural resources and ecosystem management in their classrooms. We will enhance our effort in assisting the teachers to

modify their teaching materials in favor of sustaining ecosystems. Increase awareness of ecosystem management by the public and youth through ongoing education programs are dynamic and cost-effective. Our expanded programs are expected to be equally dynamic, cost-effective and responsive.

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EFFECTS OF MODERNITY PRINCIPLES AND ATTENDANCE IN RELIGIOUS SERVICES ON THE ATTITUDES ABOUT RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR BOYS AND GIRLS AMONG MUSLIMS

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Abstract: This study examines the influences of the Islamic religiosity and Western concepts of modernity principles, expressed as rational/secular and self-expression values, on the belief that the higher education is more important for boys than girls. The Islamist intellectual group blames modern-rational values, hence capitalist mentality, for promoting adverse effects on their societies while the neoclassical development camp refutes this stand arguing that the lack of modern values and the excessive religiosity among Muslims is responsible for the negative outcomes in their societies. The study divides modern values into two parts: rational/secular and self-expression values. Using World Values Survey data for 1999-2004, the study conducts path analysis to test both claims mentioned earlier. Preliminary findings are mixed, and conclude that the directions of the effects of the religious practices as well as modern values on the belief about the relative importance of higher education are mixed. More precisely, while the direct effects of religiosity on the belief about higher education promote conservative views, the effects mediated by modernity principles could largely reduce the conservative views by ensuring that the higher education should NOT be more important for boys than girls. Also, findings present significant results for the effects of demographic variables.

There is a popular claim that the Muslims inherently rely on gender inequality to enforce patriarchal social system. The present paper examines this claim in relation to the belief pertaining Muslim boys and girls' relative access to higher education. The objective of the study is very simple. Education is the main tool in promoting access to resources, and any unequal access to this social institu-

tion is backed by certain values and beliefs. One such belief is that the higher education is more important for boys than for girls. The present paper investigates whether greater levels of religiosity among Muslims promote this belief, because the Muslim religiosity entertains gender inequality in social spheres (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). The scrutiny of this relationship also involves the inspection of the effects of the opposite social forces of religiosity, such as modernity principles, defined by secular/rational and self-expression values, developed in the Western historical context, in promoting beliefs pertaining the equal importance of higher education for both girls and boys. The major task of the present paper is to show the huge matrix of variation among Muslims, as the same is true for other religions, and thus the label "Muslims" is not unique while assessing the effects of their commitments to the modernity principles as well as their religion. Religiosity may have indirect effect through modernity principles; by testing for this effect, it is possible to check whether religiosity's effect is moderated by modernity principles. Using data from World Values Surveys, the present paper investigates the effects of two major factors on the attitude about the relative importance of higher education for girls and boys. The issues addressed include: (1) the effects of one's religiosity measured as the frequency of the religious service attendance; (2) the effects of modernity principles; and (3) whether the effects of religiosity is moderated by the effects of modernity principles.

CULTURAL DETERMINISM, MODERNITY PRINCIPLES, AND RELIGIOSITY: A BRIEF OVERTURE

The sociological underpinning of Islam can be traced back to Weberian cultural determinism (Weber, 1969). Weber declares that Islam, as well as other non-Protestant religions of Asia, is incompatible with rational thinking and modernity. The Weberian approach is followed by several scholars (Harris, 2004 & 2007; Huntington, 1993 & 1996; Lewis, 1990, 2002, 2005, 2008). They basically identify the lack of modernity principles among Islamic countries as the factors fuelling the "clash" between the West and the Islamic world. The present research defines modernity-

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ty principles as a composite of rationality ideals and self expression values. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) measured the two sets of values for modernity principles. The rationality ideals include the values that reflect one's high commitments to religion, to ethical values such as denial of abortion, and to authority. In the same vein, the self expression values include the issues such as respect for other views, support human rights, and the participation in the movement for the society's well being. The just mentioned scholars show how Islam is disrespectful about the rights of others (e.g. rights of women), distrustful about fellow members of societies, marginalizing other beliefs (e.g. homosexuality), and disallowing any opposition. They argue, however, the opposites are common in the West.

Taking the corollary from Huntington (1996), Islam both as a religion and a cultural construct can be tracked as a "fault line" between the West and the Islamic world. This corollary also suggests that the lack of modernity principles indicates the existence of attitudes that deny gender equality in every sphere of society of which education is a major social institution. Huntington claims that the Western civilization is unique from its other regional counterparts in that the modernity/rationality values and principles are necessarily Western. Huntington mentions "All civilizations go through similar processes of emergence, rise, and decline. The West differs from other civilizations not in the way it has developed but in the distinctive character of its values and institutions. These include its Christianity, pluralism, individualism, and rule of law, which made it possible for the West to invent modernity, expand throughout the world, and become the envy of other societies" (Huntington, 1996, p. 311). Also, he declares the West as "the unique source" of the "ideas of individual liberty, political democracy [emphasis added], the rule of law [emphasis added], human rights [emphasis added]", and "These are European ideas, not Asian, nor African, nor Middle Eastern ideas, except by adoption". Huntington, as well as Harris (2007) and Lewis (1990 & 2008), disparage Islam's "irrationality", "incompatibility" with the lack of human rights. Therefore, following this camp, it can be argued as a corollary, the pluralism and individualism embedded in the rule of law, human rights, and political democracy formed

the liberal social ideology towards education, while this was completely opposite in the East, particularly in the Islamic societies. The opposite to rationality ideals and self expression values can be traced as traditional and survival values respectively (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Scholars largely blame the lack of modernity principles, defined by secular/rational and self expression values developed in the Western historical context, among Muslims for the prevalence of "disrespect" for human rights, such as the rights for women in several social spheres, such as education. These scholars do not, however, address how modernity principles can have soil in the Muslim minds, and therefore, they failed portraying the complex matrix of effects of modernity principles and religiosity on "(dis)respect" for human rights among Muslims.

The orientalist view is also supported by several other scholars, both Muslims (e.g. Fatah, 2008; Warraq, 2007) and non-Muslims (e.g. Irwin, 2006). The clash thesis, however, is strongly criticized by Said (2001) and others (Hunter, 2005; Inglehart & Norris, 2003a & 2003b; Voll, 2005). In general terms, however, it can be argued that before declaring any culture as incompatible for any cultural construct, such as gender equality, it is important to see whether the members of the culture or society in question see the construct as incompatible. Referring to the earlier Muslim scholars, an Egyptian writer (al-Fanjari, 1973 cited in Voll, 2005, p.85) clearly demonstrated that "what is called freedom in Europe is exactly what is defined in our religion as justice ('adl), right (haqq), consultation (shura), and equality (musawat). This is because the rule of freedom and democracy consists of imparting justice and right to the people, and the nation's participation in determining its destiny". Therefore, it is not very clear whether modernity principles are really absent or opposite among the Muslims. Following others (e.g. Ahmed, 1986), it can be argued that modernity principles are present in various levels among Muslims, as these are among the members of other denominations. Since the modernity principles are somehow posed as against religious commitments, the just mentioned stand necessarily points to whether strong religious commitments among Muslims deny human rights, such as the rights of women.

The present paper examines a complex matrix of ef-

fects: whether modernity principles have positive effects on the attitudes about gender equality in social spheres, such as education, and whether religiosity promotes the belief supporting gender equality. The hypothesis addresses the negative effects of religiosity is somewhat opposite to the Islamic thinking, because Islam argues for egalitarian distribution of resources of which education is a part (El Fadl, 2007). If this is so, the Muslim minds with strong religious principles can hold the beliefs that support the communitarian wellbeing (Davis & Robinson, 2006), such as favoring the equal importance for girls and boys in educational sphere. While Inglehart and Norris (2003a) argue that religiosity in general, the Muslim religiosity in particular shapes the gender norms that are against women in most cases, although the Muslim minds are not unique (Hassan, 2008). Therefore, combining Inglehart and Norris (2003a) with Voll (2005), it can be argued that while the extensive religious practices and religious services does not necessarily deny the positive effects of modernity principles on the attitudes about communitarian wellbeing, for example gender equality in every social sphere, the excessive religiosity itself may deny the belief to promote gender equality.

Any cultural or political construct is created and operated under a broad social and cultural consensus. These consensuses are formed in the socio-historical process of a society, and this process may interact with the causal chain in evaluating the effects of a particular set of values and beliefs. Therefore, the caution should be taken while predicting the effects of Islam on any belief system, such as women's access relative to men to higher education; otherwise, there is a strong chance of overgeneralization. While scholars (Harris, 2007; Huntington, 1993 & 1996; Lewis, 1990, 2002, & 2005) portray "anti-modern" Islamic societies as against women, it can be argued in a different way. Drawing on Davis and Robinson (2006) the present paper contends that the religious commitments reflected in one's religious participation favor communitarian wellbeing, but this promotes traditional set of beliefs, which may ensure the beliefs for gender inequality in resource attainments, such as access to higher education.

Figure 1 presents some facts about relative enrollments in higher education for both boys and girls.

Here, all six Western countries were among the first 12 countries in Human Development of 2005 (United Nations Development Program, 2005), whereas 8 Islamic countries were ranked between 31 and 107. Also, the top achievers in human development are also the top achievers in modernity principles while the Islamic countries are very low in these scores. However, in terms of women's access to higher education, most Islamic countries have better achievement records than the Western top achievers in modernity principles. This structural scenario cannot occur without the support of the publics, meaning the attitudes need to be favorable for such structural outcome. A provoking research (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007) conducted on a billion individual Muslims of the world suggests that Muslims favor gender equality in various spheres of society, and many universities of the Islamic countries are full of female students. This panorama really points to the question whether the effects of modernity principles towards promoting the beliefs for gender equality in education is minimized by higher level of religiosity.

The above stand is scrutinized by Hassan (2008) considering the variation in the Muslim minds. When there are both "high" and "low" Islamic brands (Gellner, 1994), the modernist Islam advocates for gender equality while the opposite is true for fundamentalist or orthodox Islam (Moaddel 2005). In this vein, agreeing with Hassan (2008), the present paper examines whether the modernist Muslim minds have influences from religiosity in supporting or opposing gender equality. These, largely, motivates investigation to assess the effects of modernity principles as well as the religious commitments of Muslims on the beliefs about the relative access of girls to basic social institutional resources, such as higher education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data

The present research tests hypotheses using data drawn from national values surveys carried out in eighty countries during 1999-2004. Questions about the impacts of religiosity and the values relating modernity vs. tradition and self expression vs. survival on the attitudes pertaining the girls' relative to

boys' access to higher education held by ordinary Muslim men and women can effectively be investigated with data from the World Values Survey (WVS). The data are based on national representative samples of the adult population of each respective country. A total of 33216 respondents were drawn from the population who claimed themselves as Muslims (al hadis, muslims, shia, and sunni). Among these respondents, the study has almost equal number of males and females (51.2% males and 48.8% females); 26% of them are below the age of 26 while 74% are 26 and above 26. Also, there are 65% married people compared to 35% single respondents. As per social attainments, the data includes 46% people with lower education, 37% with mid-level education, and 17% with higher education. Also, 36% respondents are from lower income level, whereas 39% belong to the group representing medium level income, and 25% are from the group that has higher income levels.

Variables

Dependent Variables: This study determined that the dependent variable is Gender Biased Belief About Relative Importance of University Education for Boys than for Girls Largely, the support for gender biasness is reflected in respondents' attitude towards certain socio-cultural constructs. Theoretically, the modern aspect relates to individualistic premise, and the orthodoxy relates to communitarian view that makes traditional authority rationalized, of which patriarchy is one of the manifestations of the authority. Taking modernist view (e.g. Huntington, 1996; Lipset and Lenz, 2000) into consideration, one proposition may suggest that the orthodox or traditional cultural beliefs may approve gender biasness that restricts liberal gender perspective to the hegemonic cultural forms, e.g., the rule of men. Therefore, gender friendly ideals are necessarily considered as an external force, which break the harmony of an Islamist society. By the same token, at the extreme form of beliefs, it may not be unlikely that one wants elimination of rival forces promoted by social ideology, such as gender equality. However, gender biasness in the belief about the relative importance of university education for men and women is a very hard issue to measure. Without going into much debate, the present research used the simple measure provided

by the World Values Survey. The respondents were asked to mention their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement "University is more important for a boy than for a girl". Their responses were coded on a 1 through 4 point scale, where 1 was coded as "strongly disagree", 2 referred to "disagree", 3 meant "agree" and 4 was coded as "strongly agree". This measure is suitable since it is based on a direct question about gender biased social ideology.

Independent Variables: Religious Service Attendance. To capture the spirit of religiosity in appropriate way, the current study uses the frequency of religious service attendance following Inglehart and Norris (2003a). The reason is obvious. While most research includes church attendance as a measure of religiosity, this does not necessarily reflect on the promise and commitment of one to religion. The better aspect of religiosity is the religious service attendance since this captures the idea of communitarian values in serving the community. In other words, while Islam advocates for the service to all, the religious services are one that reflects one's commitment to the community, and therefore, this measure is appropriate for understanding religiosity.

The religiosity among Muslims is considered as one of the predictors of endorsing gender biasness by several scholars. This variable is measured by the question pertaining how often one attends religious services. The respondents were asked to mention how often they attend religious services. The answers ranged between 1 and 8, where 1 is coded as "practically never", 2 denotes "less often", 3 is used for "once a year", 4 is coded for "other specific holydays", 5 denotes "special holydays (e.g. Christmas, Easter etc.)", 6 is used for "once a month", 7 denotes "once a week", and 8 is coded as "more than once a week". The hypotheses are as follows:

Null Hypothesis - H1: The more one attends religious services, the more one endorses gender biasness in the subjective determination of the importance of the university education for boys than for girls.

Alternative Hypothesis - H1: The more one attends religious services, the less one endorses gender biasness in the subjective determination of the importance of the university education for boys than for girls.

The definition of modern values presented above

captures two components: principles of rationality and self expression. The opposite values, such as beliefs in traditional ideas and survival principles respectively represent traditional principles in society. To test the propositions outlined above, a set of two hypotheses have been formulated. The first hypothesis requires the test for the effects of rational-secular-modern vs. traditional-conservative values on the opinion pertaining whether university level education is more important for boys than for girls. As indicated earlier the modern-traditional dichotomy relates to rational-“non-rational” world views about life. Rational thinking is an outcome of enlightenment, which is largely called modernity in literature. Weberian thesis confirmed that the spirit of capitalism was inherent in Protestant ethics, and this prevailed in Europe to enhance capitalism. Although this specific type of values originated in Protestant ethics, the prevalence of Protestant ethics in Catholic and other European societies (e.g. France, Belgium) spread gradually. Thus, people adhering to rational values are more likely to have less inclination towards religions, values related to religion, and authority of any sort, as claimed by scholars supporting modernity principles in society. As the Weberian scheme suggests rational-secular-modern values move people towards actualizing ideological realm by using effective tools. Therefore, the hypothesis formulated here tests whether the modernity values, compared to the opposite values, motivate Islamic publics, irrespective of the context, to endorse gender biasness in determining the importance of the university level education for boys compared to girls. The measure of value orientation around secular-modern-rational vs. traditional scheme is illustrated as the following.

Secular/ Rational vs. Traditional values: Inglehart and Welzel (2005) use five items from World Value Surveys, and calculate factor scores to measure Secular/ Rational values vs. Traditional values. The positive pole indicates Secular/Rational values. The items that are emphasized by traditional values are as follows (secular/rational values emphasize the opposite): “God is very important in respondent’s life”, “It is more important for a child to learn obedience and religious faith than independence and determination (Autonomy index)”, “Abortion is never justifiable”,

“Respondent has strong sense of national pride”, and “Respondent favors more respect for authority”. The factor loadings are adequate. The data on these items are collected at individual levels in four waves between 1981 and 2004 in 78 societies. To ascertain the prior occurrence of the independent variable, and to allow a lag time to have effects on the dependent variable, the present study uses the averages of factor scores from the wave of 1990. Data are available in Inter Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) website. (For details, see Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

For interpretational purposes, the study takes one mainstream camp’s stand as the first hypothesis to compare this with the alternative one. So, the hypotheses regarding the relationships between the rational/secular vs. traditional values and the belief about higher education in relation to gender are as follows:

Null Hypothesis - H2: When one holds more traditional than modern values, one’s endorsement for gender biasness in relation to the importance of university education is higher than others.

Alternative Hypothesis - H2: When one holds more traditional than modern values, one’s denial for gender biasness in relation to the importance of university education is higher than others.

The second part of the hypothesis pertaining modernity principles requires self-expression vs. survival values to be explained. The self-expression values also relate to modernity principle of social life. These values promote humanistic approach that overrules egocentric approach, and therefore self-expression or post-modern attitudes correspond with quality of life as well as satisfaction of life. These also relate to “bridging ties” instead of “bonding ties”. The bridging ties make people more conscious about social wellbeing, and thus oppose any centralized ideology, such as gender biasness in the sphere of education. When one has these values, one accepts values from all corners, even from outside. Since people with self-expression intend to construct bridging ties among people of the society, they accept all orientations in society, such as all sexual orientations. By the same token, trusting people is another component of self expression. In constructing bridging ties, the mem-

bers of society should have trust for each other. The opposites to the aspects of the propositions for self expression outlined here denote survival values, because these opposites necessarily reflect egocentric instead of humanist aspect of social life. Therefore, survival values support ideology with communitarianism, such as Islamism, of which gender biasness is a part. It is egocentric in the sense that it encompasses only a group with a high level of superiority complex among the believers compared to others, and thus maintain gender biasness is a result of survival values. Based on the above description, the values of survival vs. self-expression values can be measured as follows:

Self-expression vs. Survival values: Inglehart and Welzel (2005) use five items from World Value Surveys to calculate factor scores to measure Self-expression values vs. Survival values. The positive pole indicates Self-expression values. The items that are emphasized by Survival values are as follows (Self-expression values emphasize the opposite): "Respondent gives priority to economic and physical security over self-expression and quality of life (4-item Materialist/ Postmaterialist Values Index) ", "Respondent describes self as not very happy", "Homosexuality is never justifiable", "Respondent has not and would not sign a petition", and "You have to be very careful about trusting people". The factor loadings are adequate. The data on these items are collected at individual levels in four waves between 1981 and 2004 in 78 societies. To ascertain the prior occurrence of the independent variable, and to allow a lag time to have effects on the dependent variable, the present study uses the averages of factor scores from the wave of 1990. Data are available in Inter Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) website.

The hypotheses regarding the effects of the self expression vs. survival values on the belief are as follows:

Null Hypothesis - H3: When one holds more self expression than survival values, one's support for gender biasness in relation to the importance of university education is higher than others.

Alternative Hypothesis - H3: When one holds more self expression than survival values, one's denial for

gender biasness in relation to the importance of university education is higher than others.

INDIRECT EFFECTS OF RELIGIOSITY THROUGH MODERNITY PRINCIPLES

Literature (e.g. Inglehart & Welzel, 2005) on modernity principles indicates that religiosity is negatively associated with these values. As a corollary, it can be derived that religiosity may have an indirect influence through modernity principles on the belief that higher education is more important boys. This corollary can be tested as two separate set of hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis - H4: The indirect effects of religiosity through rationality values do not promote the belief that the university education is more important for boys than girls.

Alternative Hypothesis - H4: The indirect effects of religiosity through rationality values promote the belief that the university education is more important for boys than girls.

Null Hypothesis - H5: The indirect effects of religiosity through self expression values do not promote the belief that the university education is more important for boys than girls.

Alternative Hypothesis - H5: The indirect effects of religiosity through self expression values promote the belief that the university education is more important for boys than girls.

Other Variables: Drawing on scholars (e.g. Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Moaddel, 2007), it can be contended that the demographic features, such as age, sex, education, income, and marital status, may have influence on one's beliefs and attitudes. Furthermore, these characteristics may have strong bearing on the beliefs in modernity principles and the participation in religious services. Thus, the nature of the hypotheses formulated so far for the current research requires the inclusion of the just mentioned demographic variables in the analyses.

In general sense, old people are thought to be more conservative, and more inclined towards religiously centralized beliefs. However, in the present day world situation, it is tough to stand on such claim while we see the most militants are young people, mostly below 25. Also, an increase in Muslim con-

sciousness (Hassan, 2008) may contribute to the more conservative trends among the young relative to the old. To test this relationship regarding age and gender biasness in believing that the university education is more important for boys than for girls, the research measures, following Moaddel (2007), age by young and not-young, where young are considered at or below 26 years old, and age above this range is considered otherwise. Thus, age is a dichotomous variable that codes young as 1 and not-young as 0. Based on the above, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Null Hypothesis - H6: Young than old people are more likely to endorse gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than women.

Alternative Hypothesis - H6: Old than young people are more likely to endorse gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than women.

Since married people are more cautious securing life, they do not want change in society, and therefore, they prefer conservative thinking to progressive one. The study tests the effects of marital status where 1 denotes "married", and 0 means "all other" groups. The hypotheses based on the above discussion can be presented as follows:

Null Hypothesis - H7: Married than single people are more likely to endorse gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than for women.

Alternative Hypothesis - H7: Single than married people are more likely to endorse gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than for women.

Sex is another variable that is important to predict the view about the relative importance of the university education for boys and girls. Inglehart and Norris (2003a) show that women are more likely than men to be left leaning when they are on below 65. Drawing on them, it can be argued that women are more against the idea that the university education is more important for boys. For sex, male is coded as 1, and female is coded 2.

Based on the above, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Null Hypothesis - H8: Women than men are more likely to deny gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than for women.

Alternative Hypothesis - H8: Women than men are more likely to endorse gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than for women.

To assess the impacts of one's socio-economic background, two variables are considered: education and income. This test is required since there is a prevalent claim that the educated people are less ethnocentric, and thus they do not believe in men's rule that necessarily leads to the belief that the university education is more important for boys than for girls. Others (e.g. Narvey, 2005; Rubin, 2005; Schwartz, 2005) argue that the educated and upper class elites of the Islamic communities may promote gender biasness to maintain their interests.

The WVS measures education by 1 through 3 point scale, where highest educational attainment is coded as 3, mid level educational attainment as 2, and the lowest level of attainment is coded as 1. The lower level of educational attainment includes "inadequately completed elementary education", "completed elementary (compulsory) elementary education", and "incomplete secondary education, technical/vocation type); the mid level includes "complete secondary, technical/vocational type", "incomplete secondary: university preparatory type", and "complete secondary: university preparatory type"; the highest educational levels have two categories: "some university without degree/ higher education" and "university with degree/ upper level tertiary". Since the categories seem little clumsy, the study keeps them under three broader institutional labels, such as lower, middle, and upper, to capture the basic meanings of educational attainments that are common in most societies of the world.

Null Hypothesis - H9: Higher educational attainment does not endorse gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than for women.

Alternative Hypothesis - H9: Higher educational attainment endorses gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than for women.

Income is also measured by low to high scale with the values 1 through 3. It is an idea that the higher-ups in income group Muslim publics do not promote gender biasness since this is an obstacle in making their way of life more enjoyable. By contrast, another view suggests that higher income groups in those countries endorse gender biasness to maintain their rule in society. The high income group is coded 3, the medium is 2, and the low is coded as 1. This variable was also recoded from the original variable of a 10 point scale, of which 1 denotes "lowest step", and 10 denotes "10th step". The first belief can be put as the hypothesis while the contrasting argument can be at place as alternative hypothesis.

Null Hypothesis - H10: Higher income attainment does not endorse gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than for women.

Alternative Hypothesis - H10: Higher income attainment endorses gender biasness in the belief about relative importance of the university education for men than for women.

ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

As the discussion indicates, individual level values pertaining religiosity, tradition vs. modernity, and self expression vs. survival are the major independent variables. Therefore, it is very important that the study examines how both individual and socio-cultural constructs pertaining modernity principles as well as religious services influence values regarding

gender biasness in higher education. As the hypotheses suggest, the study has two considerations: models showing direct effects of religiosity and modernity principles, and the indirect effects of religiosity through modernity principles.

The current research conducts path analysis to test these effects outlined above. The study reports the fit statistics to assess the strengths of our model. Because the variables have missing values, the analysis is based on maximum likelihood for means and intercepts.

RESULTS

While the modernity principles are low among Muslims, the higher levels of these principles promote favorable attitude towards the relative importance of the university education for girls. Also, giving a more careful look into the issue suggests that the means of the frequencies for the attendance of the religious services are associated with the favorable attitude about gender inequality in higher education sphere.

Figure below and Tables 1 through 3 present significant paths with standardized coefficients derived from the AMOS analysis. The exogenous variables are allowed to co-vary because they are significantly correlated (the matrix is not presented here) without being multi-collinear. The model is a good fit ($\chi^2 = 1801.723$, $p = .000$, $NFI = .910$, $CFI = .911$, $RMSEA = .07$, $Hoelter = 363 \& 456$ at .05 and .01 respectively) for the current analysis. However, one concern might be the significant chi-square value. Although the chi-square

Table 1. Standardized Direct Effects

	RELSERVICE	INCOME	EDUCAT	GENDER	YOUNG	MARRIED	SELF EXP	RATIONAL
SELF EXP	.080	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
RATIONAL	-.143	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
UNIVEDWO	.036	-.066	-.096	-.144	.011	.037	-.045	-.051

NOTES: Except for youngness, all other coefficients are significant at <.001 level. Youngness is significant at <.10.

SELF EXP= Self Expression vs. survival Values; RATIONAL= Rational vs. Traditional Values; RELSERVICE= Religious Service Attendance; EDUCAT= Education; UNIVEDWO= The statement that "University Education is More Important for Boys than Girls"

being significant in SEM implies the model's poor fit, it is not unlikely for large sample size (e.g. >200), because large sample size may inflate the chi-square (Kline, 2005; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Since other than chi-square, all fit indices are within the acceptable limits, the present study accepts the model as a good fit. For other fit indices, the scores for AIC (1887.723 compared to 20999.700 for independence model) and ECVI (.057 compared to .605 for inde-

pendence model) for the current models are smaller than the independence models. Overall, the proposed model is a good fit for analysis.

religious services through these values variables on the belief about the importance of higher education for boys and girls are minimal (Table 3). Thus, the total effects of the religious services do not increase (only .003) much compared to direct effects. To be precise, the standardized indirect effects of religiosity through rational values on the belief about education are about positive .007 (direct effects are multiplied), when the same through self expression values is neg-

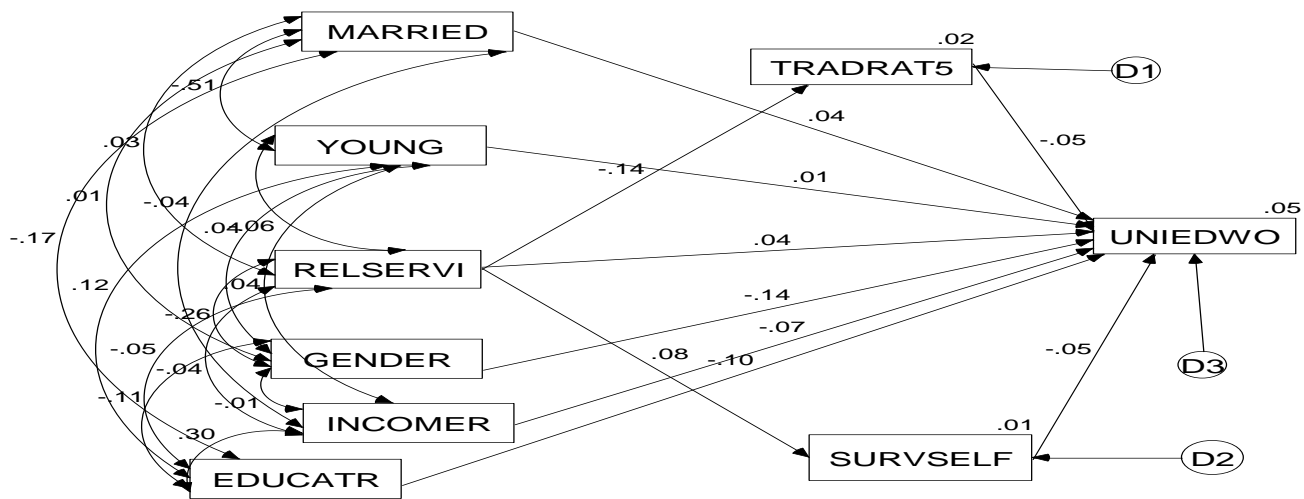


Figure 4: Path Analysis (Standardized Coefficients) for Testing Hypothesis Relating Religiosity, Modernity Principles, and the Opinion Among Muslims About Whether Higher Education Is More Important For Boys than Girls

pendence model) for the current models are smaller than the independence models. Overall, the proposed model is a good fit for analysis.

Hypothesis Pertaining to the Attendance of Religious Services and Dependant Variable

The model depicts two important aspects of the hypotheses stating the relationships between the attendance of religious services and the attitude about the importance of the university education for both girls and boys. First, the level of attendance in religious services promotes the view that the university education is more important for boys than the girls. Therefore, the attendance in religious services actually denies the belief in gender equality in higher education. Second, the religious services are negatively and positively associated with rational and self expression values respectively (Table 2). Because of these two opposite trends in effects, the indirect effects of reli-

gious services through these values variables on the belief about the importance of higher education for boys and girls are minimal (Table 3). Thus, the total effects of the religious services do not increase (only .003) much compared to direct effects. To be precise, the standardized indirect effects of religiosity through rational values on the belief about education are about positive .007 (direct effects are multiplied), when the same through self expression values is neg-

Hypotheses Pertaining Modernity Principles and Dependent Variable

The direct paths (Table 1) from both the components of modernity principles to the belief whether the university education is more important for boys than girls are significant. Clearly, the more one holds these values, the more one disagrees with the view supporting gender biasness in assessing the importance in higher education, meaning the modernity principles are conducive for the support of gender equality in social spheres, such as education.

Furthermore, although both modernity principles variables are important, the rational/secular values appear to be little more important (standardized beta) than the self expression values in promoting the be-

lief that denies that the university education is more important for boys than girls. Based on the above, both second and third hypotheses are supported.

Hypotheses Pertaining to the Effects of Control Variables

The paths from all control variables (Figure 4) show significant standardized coefficients. Among these controls, except for youngness or age, the effects of others are statistically significant at below .001, whe-

education is more important for boys than for girls. The more interesting finding we have explored is that the effect of the attendance of religious services as indicative of religiosity mediated by self expression values opposes the beliefs that the university education is more important for boys than for girls. In a nutshell, religiosity promotes self expression values, and thus the indirect effects deny the idea that the university education is more important for boys than girls, whereas religiosity negatively affects rationality values, and thus the indirect effects support the idea

Table 3: Standardized coefficients derived from the AMOS analysis

	RELSERVICE	INCOME	EDUCATR	GENDER	YOUNG	MARRIED	SURVSELF	RATIONAL
SURVSELF	.080	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
RATIONAL	-.143	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
UNIEDWO	.039	-.066	-.096	-.144	.011	.037	-.045	-.051

NOTES: The significance level for total effects can be assessed by scrutinizing the the significance levels of direct and indirect effects outlined above. Since the direct and indirect effects of Religious Services on the belief about university education are all significant at <.001, the significance level for total effects can be assessed at <.001.

SELF EXP= Self Expression vs. survival Values; RATIONAL= Rational vs. Traditional Values; RELSERVICE= Religious Service Attendance; EDUCATR= Education; UNIEDWO= The statement that "University Education is More Important for Boys than Girls"

reas the effect of youngness or age is significant at below .10. Thus, hypotheses 6 is supported at below 10% level while hypotheses 7 through 10 are supported at below .001.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results presented above clearly indicate that the modernity principles do not endorse the belief that the university education is more important for boys than for girls. This observation is somehow well supported in literature. Also, there are significant positive effects of religiosity on the belief that the higher

that the university education is more important for boys than girls. Thus, the relationships between the Islamic religiosity and modernity principles are not linear as argued by the clash thesis.

Also, the confirmation of the claim that the Islamic values deny human rights depends on the values structure pertaining modernity. Thus, religiosity measured by the attendance of religious services is not necessarily inimical to modernity principles among Muslims. In the same vein, it is clear that the religiosity in general, and the Muslim religiosity in particular, may have positive attributes, if mediated

Table 2. Standardized Indirect Effects

	RELSERVICE	INCOME	EDUCAT	GENDER	YOUNG	MARRIED	SELF EXP	RATIONAL
SELF EXP	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
RATIONAL	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
UNIEDWO	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

NOTES: The significance level for indirect effects can be assessed by scrutinizing the the significance levels of direct effects. Here, only Religious Services have indirect effects on the dependent variable through Self Expression and Rational values. Since the direct effects of religious services on rational and self expression values, and the effects of self expression and rational values on the belief about university education are all significant at <.001, the significance level of indirect effects can be assessed at <.001.

SELF EXP= Self Expression vs. survival Values; RATIONAL= Rational vs. Traditional Values; RELSERVICE= Religious Service Attendance; EDUCAT= Education; UNIEDWO= The statement that "University Education is More Important for Boys than Girls"

by self expression values, in promoting liberal social ideology in society. Extending Davis and Robinson (2006), it can be argued that the effects of the Muslim religiosity are instrumental when mediated by self expression values in promoting communitarian well-being of which the perception of gender equality in social spheres is a part. By another token, even though the effects of religiosity on the belief regarding higher education in terms of gender mediated by rationality values still endorse gender inequality, it is much smaller than the direct effects of religiosity (.036 vs. .007). Therefore, more modernization in Islamic societies would bring more liberal views in society even though the publics are more religious. Overall, the mainstream discourse supporting inverse relationships between the Islamic religiosity and the modernity principles is not tenable. Hence, the clash thesis requires modification in this line.

Also, the significant coefficients for education and income clearly indicate that the socio-economic attainments work as a leverage towards liberal thinking in society. These attainments increase the positive effects of religiosity in promoting liberal views about gender equality in society. Furthermore, the findings for the current study also suggest that the idea that the young people endorse liberal views is not tenable anymore, while the relationship is really opposite compared to what is popularly thought. There are multidimensional causes of such out

come in the analysis. However, one possible reason is that the consequent identity crisis among Muslims after 9/11 promoted conservative views among the young Muslims. In addition, the effects of gender is also important as it is clear that the Muslim women have constructed their own gender consciousness in promoting liberal views about the importance of the university education for themselves as well as for the boys within the community. Also, married people are more conservative than single. One reason is that any the married members of society want to follow the social order as it is, and therefore, any change breaking the social values may not be supported by the married people.

The findings of the present paper were derived on the basis of micro-level analysis. These could be verified by extending the inquiry both at micro and ma-

cro level investigations. To do so, two attempts can be made. First, a cross-national comparison can be conducted to test how the Islamic societies vary from others both at infinitesimal and macro levels. Second, among the Islamic societies, the effects of cultural and contextual variations can be tested to check for the view that the Islamic countries are not unique. This test would help better to verify whether the clash-thesis is really tenable. If a research can show that the effects are not significant by contextual variation, then the clash-thesis can be taken as supported, while the opposite conclusion rejects the clash-thesis.

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FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE COUNTRY: ENGAGING MARGINALIZED YOUTH IN RESEARCH FOR EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

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Abstract: Project POWER (Promoting Our Will through Education and Research) utilizes participatory action research to critically examine issues facing students in a historically failing, large urban high school in the southeastern U.S. The researchers have engaged high school students in projects through community building, dialoguing, and meaningful and respectful relationships. Over the course of engagement, the work has brought about a positive shift in classroom climate. The Project will culminate in a dialogue between high school students and pre-service teachers at a local university. This project sets the stage for the co-creation of spaces for student-teacher dialogue where youth can be voices for social change in their schools, communities, and institutions of higher learning responsible for educating future educators.

I got [a] paper that said "congratulations" in [class]. That's my first time, I don't never get none of these stuff. My sister brings them all the time, but my parents get mad at me 'cause I don't never get no type of paper says "congratulations." - Larry, a Haitian American 11th grader at Miami Edison Senior High School

Larry's comment above was captured during a classroom dialogue about the significance of supportive teachers, particularly in large urban high schools. This dialogue is part of an on-going research initiative called Project POWER (Promoting Our Will through Education and Research), a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project aimed to engage one classroom of youth in social justice oriented research projects. This paper seeks to articulate the following: 1) examine the ways in which PAR methodology and pedagogy emerges within the context of a

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historically struggling urban high school and provides insights into how youth can be meaningfully engaged within the school context, 2) describe how university researchers can collaborate with local high schools, and 3) provide examples of engagement within the classroom. Implications for quality education as a right are discussed.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The struggle to provide equitable educational opportunities for historically marginalized children remains to be a significant challenge to the nation. A cursory look at the largest and most racially and economically segregated school districts shows a 50%+ dropout rate among high school age youth of color (Orfield, Losen, Wald & Swanson, 2004; Swanson, 2004). In particular, urban high schools tend to be large and overcrowded whose conditions often deny students adequate opportunities to learn (Fry, 2003). Most low-income schools also struggle to provide equitable resources, high expectations, and have a difficult time resisting the counterproductive tendencies of zero-tolerance policies, particularly for youth of color (Advancement Project, 2006; Brown, 2007; Kozol, 2005). Outside of the school context, communities are typically characterized by concentrated poverty, violence, and political disenfranchisement (Noguera, 1996). And, within the public discourse, youth of color are often criminalized and demonized through increased police presence in schools, "no-sagging pants" ordinances in several communities across the country, and even discussions of installing GPS monitoring devices under the skin of truant youth (Author & Brown, 2007).

Within the everyday realities of the work of teachers and students, schools serving low-income youth of color are increasingly finding themselves at the mercy of meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind legislation. In this new era, these top-down policy mandates have in many ways determined what is taught and to a degree, how content is taught, has intruded on the possibilities to forge meaningful relationships between students and adults, and has transformed how parents and communities engage with schools (Author, 2008). With regard to the latter for example, parental involvement in schools has been re-conceptualized around the state-wide high-stakes exit exams, such as the FCAT in Florida. Within this era of what I call "Test-Prep Pedagogy" (Author,

2008), our system has marginalized creative pedagogies by enforcing systemic and cultural restraint on educators and students. In recognition of these challenges, the current paper describes an initiative that embraces the struggles of urban schools by transgressing pedagogical boundaries among a classroom of students that has been all but ignored by the structure of urban schooling. Below we describe the pedagogical principles that guide our work, the research methodology employed for data collection, and share some findings that help articulate the impact that such engagement has on the pedagogical experiences of students involved.

METHOD

The classroom is comprised of twenty, eleventh graders who volunteered to participate on the project that meets two to three times per week for seven hours. With the permission of the district and school administration, researchers were granted access to a classroom of students and teacher who is committed to engaging youth in social justice oriented projects for change. The research team consists of a university professor, a graduate research assistant, the teacher on record at Sunny High School, and the student researchers.

Given the challenges associated with teaching and learning within the context of historically struggling urban schools, our epistemological approaches to research is rooted in justice and equity. That is, we aim to create a process whereby the youth are direct agents throughout the research process. Thus, we use Participatory Action Research (PAR) whereby the youth identify problems and issues that are directly relevant to their lives (Cordova, 2004).

Once issues are identified, the researchers guide the student-researchers in possible data collection techniques, data analysis, and presentation possibilities. In much of our work, student creativity is vital and the role of researchers involves support and critical questioning to compliment and strengthen the analysis, skill-building, and social and intellectual development of the participants. Equally central to PAR work with youth is its aims to effect social change by engaging in projects that youth define as socially significant (Minkler, 2000)

In efforts to realize the principles of Critical Race Theory, PAR researchers believe that student-researchers possess expert knowledge and experiences in their everyday social contexts that are too often denied or subtracted within the school context. Thus, we concur with Córdova (2004) who explains, "it is in direct interaction with those experiencing the 'issue' that [researcher] practitioners are able to determine the contours of that issue, the problems, the needs, and thus, the appropriate research questions" (p. 46). Not only is the researcher-"researched" relationships transformed through the process of PAR work, but the relationship between the student-researchers *and* content of the research is also significantly different.

Parallel to the principles of PAR work, we also draw on Freirian pedagogy and focus our work on consciousness-raising for the purposes of realizing the liberatory possibilities of education (Freire, 1970). To do so, we draw on the realities, challenges, and experiences that are most familiar to their lives and because such knowledge is legitimized within the space of school, we aim to dream *with* youth by forging new pedagogies that can in fact use schools as vehicles for engaging in the pedagogy of the oppressed. For example, one of the first exercises involved a lively debate about the reasons why students dropout of school. Using Freire's problem-posing pedagogy (Solorzano, 1989; Author, 2004), the students in this course used their own theories about school dropout/pushout as a theoretical basis to examine other issues in schools and communities for the remainder of the project. To this end, we share some of our insights, processes, and outcomes during the early stages of data analysis.

FINDINGS—INSIGHTS, PROCESSES, AND OUTCOMES

Over the course of several months, we have found three core dimensions vital to our work in creating a classroom culture that is conducive to PAR work for the purposes of engaging youth in social justice oriented projects. Below we discuss how dialoguing, the development of positive relationships, and the role of deliberate community-building efforts play within our research project.

Dialoguing is Vital

The overemphasis on test-preparation in the lowest-performing schools across the country has in many ways stifled opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue. In fact, our observations have demonstrated that dialoguing has become a subversive and revolutionary act given the lack of will or opportunity to do so within the current testing environment. However, we have also observed that when given the opportunity, the students are ready to engage when researchers and educators have created an environment that is genuinely committed to fostering dialogue and student engagement.

One of the first questions the class addressed related to the role that public schools play in low-income communities serving historically marginalized youth. The initial question was, *How has the school system worked for us and how has the system worked against us?* Grounded in students' knowledge and experiences, an incredible number of testimonies and reflections emanated from the students' experiences. The students spoke of inspiring teachers and discriminatory teachers. Student spoke about their appreciation for having access to a free public education but questioned the opportunities that really exist to them. The students also began to question how their social context impacts what actually happens in schools and the degree to which state-level and district-level policy-makers understood this connection. It quickly became clear that the inequitable schooling conditions they faced now was just a continuation of their schooling conditions as young children. A frequent theme that arose from the reflections was the role of teachers, particularly those that engaged in counterproductive practices that students attributed to retention, failure, and general engagement with school (to be discussed below). It quickly became apparent that not only has the current era of "Test-Prep Pedagogy" denied students' opportunities to explicitly tell their stories, but these dialogues also demonstrated to the participants in the class that their stories are not unique and the students had more in common with one another than they had previously recognized.

As a group, we also explored the history of educational inequality by examining the struggles facing African Americans, Latinas/os and Native Americans have had throughout this nation's history. We have examined the controversial Boston desegregation case in

the 1970's, as well as the Chicana/o student walkouts in Los Angeles in 1968. Students have also investigated how education reform and policy has impacted historically struggling schools using their own school as a case study. Additionally, we have examined the impact that the sub-prime housing crisis and the 2008 presidential election may have on their school and community. The idea is to demonstrate how one classroom of youth can be easily engaged in critical issues facing them and the country when a classroom environment provides opportunities for rich dialogue, driven by teachers who believe in and foster the significance of relationships, and in an environment that recognizes the power of high expectations coupled with support.

One of the most significant projects involved a youth-driven endeavor examining the definition of "quality teachers," particularly in the context of NCLB legislation. Using problem posing pedagogy, we asked the youth, "What kinds of teachers do we want?" After engaging the group in an open brainstorm about effective and ineffective teachers, students were assembled into work groups by topic of interest. Students agreed that the following characteristics are vital to being a good teacher, (a) being supportive, (b) being motivating and inspiring, (c) being respectful, (d) knowing how to keep a classroom "alive", and (e) knowing how to keep a classroom safe and comfortable. The students were charged with creating a twenty minute presentation that incorporated creative pedagogies such as interactive discussions, multimedia, and skits/plays/scenarios. The purpose of the dialogues are to explore how the K-12 system and universities can collaborate to improve urban schools locally and nationally. In addition to dialoguing with local pre-service teachers, we plan on visiting schools and other universities responsible for teacher development.

Commitment to Relationships

The research has convincingly shown that student-adult relationships are vital to student learning, development and engagement in school, particularly with historically marginalized youth (Nieto, 1999; Author, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Thus, relationship-building driven by respect is a central form of engagement and practice exercised by the researchers in the course.

A key element to forging relationships with students is

acknowledging every student as they walk through the door. Although such a practice may seem commonsensical, it is amazing how rare such opportunities are, especially in large urban high schools (Conchas & Author, 2007). Because of the focus on testing, the social climate of the school is typically tense, driven by rules and regulations such as new time and bell schedules, stricter hallway rules, and new procedures for granting bathroom passes to students. Thus, these new restrictions on human engagement have had a negative impact on opportunities to engage or prioritize relationships. In our classroom, we make a deliberate to forge relationships.

The research team typically shakes each student's hand or ensures that they are acknowledged at the door or at their desk. Students tend to appreciate the attention. For example, one student named Eric was absent 45 school days by mid-January. Aware of Eric's sporadic attendance, we made it a point to check-in with him everyday he was present, extended our support and relayed the message that his presence is valued. After a couple of months, Eric now goes out of his way to say hello to the researchers and share some personal stories and struggles. After talking about how school seems like a "seven-hour prison sentence," he has repeatedly said that our PAR research course is a central reason why he continues to come to school.

Eric's experience is unique and each relationship we have with each student varies. Nonetheless, we have demonstrated that it is possible to engage with students in a unique way and the quality of their engagement is in part, a function of our commitment to relationship-building.

Deliberate Community-Building

Integral to the success of the project is the ability of the students to work together in small groups. In order to develop this classroom culture, the researchers initiated a series of community-building exercises. An example of one such exercise is a task where teams of four students are asked to work together in order to create a pyramid of plastic cups: Each student holds one string attached to a central rubber band. This is the only instrument that may be used to arrange the cups. During the task, the students soon realize that individual efforts were worthless without group cooperation and most importantly, communication. Students and research-observers also learned a tremend-

ous amount about individual leadership styles through an alternative form of classroom engagement. We spent an entire block of classroom time on the activity and a healthy level of competition between groups emerged from the activity. After the activity, students addressed some questions about their involvement in the activity, any observations, and lessons learned.

Another community-building ritual involves a progressive unity clap that has roots in the farm worker struggle in the southwestern part of the U.S. as part of the larger civil rights movement in the 1960's and 1970's and an community-building strategy used during the Chicano Movement around the same time. Each classroom meeting begins and ends with a gradual building of applause, starting with one person clapping and continuing until the classroom gels into a simultaneous rhythmic ovation. The progress of the "clap" can be viewed as a metaphor for an observed shift in the classroom climate. Early in the project, the clap was off beat and disjointed, and the classroom was less than cohesive. Critical student dialogue was sometimes countered with "that's stupid," or other similar remarks from peers. Through dialoguing, relationship development, and community-building exercises, the classroom climate took a positive turn. Before long the clap came together as one rhythmic entity, as the class developed a collective identity. Remarks such as "that's stupid," were replaced with "let's hear her opinion." The class became self-regulating, as one student put it "if we don't let [student's] talk, they are not going to want to participate and we will never hear what they have to say." Over the course of the project, students began to realize that in the context of the PAR project, individual and collective action was vital to the success of individual groups and the collective classroom.

Reminding Us of the Realities of Urban Education

However, our efforts have not gone without challenges. Just like any other large urban high school that has been struggling for years, we have experienced the realities of urban education head on. On numerous occasions, we have been disrupted by "homeless" students who for one reason or another don't have a teacher and need a place to sit for an hour. Often, these students engage in our dialogues and find themselves wanting to stay. We have also had three stu-

dents transfer to other schools, a reality facing many large urban districts across the country. Just when we establish a strong classroom culture, someone ends up leaving, but we charge forward. And, probably the most significant, we have witnessed the impact that high-stakes standardized tests have on the school culture and students' dispositions in school. Students have been overwhelmingly critical of the exam and in many ways share many of the critiques that are put forth by educational scholars such as, "how can one test determine your high school fate?" All the while, the classroom culture has developed into something special and we intend on using these challenges as fodder to bring even more cohesiveness within the group.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A PEDAGOGY FOR QUALITY EDUCATION AS A RIGHT

To a large degree, this work is setting the foundation for building a larger dialogue about the intersection of education and rights in the U.S. By engaging youth directly in action research projects and co-creating spaces for critical dialogue, our nation's youth will demonstrate their will and struggle for their position as agents of social change in their schools and communities. We firmly believe from our experiences that despite the constraints and pressures facing the most marginalized schools serving the most marginalized youth, liberatory engagement is and has to be possible. We close with some words of wisdom that drives our philosophy behind our work from the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire: "...the starting point for a political-pedagogical process must be precisely at the level of the people's aspirations and dreams, their understanding of reality and their forms of action and struggle." In this project, we aim to set the foundation so we can build aspirations and dreams *with* our youth.

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SCHOOL VARIABLES AND TEST PERFORMANCE: ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS IN READING OUTCOMES ON THE TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN 9TH GRADER

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Abstract: Despite the continual push for the decreasing achievement level differences in all areas of education as they relate to certain school populations, there is still a need for more effort. There are a variety of researched based probable causes and solutions for testing outcome variance but educational researchers are constantly trying to find a “fix-all” solution. Test scores continue to reveal that there is a difference between the expected outcomes for minority students in Texas public high schools and the actual outcomes. If expenditures are leveled and resources are plentiful in high schools across Texas, why are certain student populations continuing to be underserved?

Early research concerning the education of culturally diverse student populations reveals that many factors have contributed to an inequality in the education of certain groups. These factors would be considered a part of the deficit model of education, which asserts that some students, because of genetic, cultural, or experiential differences operate with a “deficit” and are inferior to other children (Nieto, 2000). Among the theories in this model is the concept of biological determinism. Sir Walter Galton coined the Eugenics Movement. This movement sought to establish a biological basis for the superiority of European Americans in all areas of life, but particularly intelligence. Other theorists such as Terman (1916) and Jensen (1969, 1973) maintained that genes are ultimately responsible for the differences between the cognitive ability of racial groups.

There has been a tremendous amount of attention given to differences in achievement levels between African American students and European American students. The reasons behind these achievement level variances have been well researched (Achilles et.al.,

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2002; Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2001; Ferguson, 1998). Additionally, there has been candid discussion concerning the nature and cause for achievement level variances between the two populations. While there has also been research conducted to analyze the role school characteristics play in achievement level variances, a specific study which uses Texas Education Agency data to identify school characteristics and which closely examines the reading scores of 9th grade students versus averages in reading has not been documented. Most recent studies are concerned with each school characteristic as a separate variable.

The information in this portion of the study is an effort to contribute to the literature surrounding the testing achievement level variance dilemma for various student populations and the theoretical and conceptual framework related to this variance.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While there has been extensive research on the nature of state tests and the levels of achievement on these assessments attained by both African American and European American students, research that is focused on a collective set of contributing school related factors and reading outcome variance on state tests is needed. The levels of achievement are often studied as they relate to economic and social resources. This is both a worthy and legitimate starting point for most conversations about student assessment and success. However, a study of the relationship between test scores on state assessments and specific school characteristics is needed as a basis for understanding the challenges particular student populations face. In addition, other factors that are not related entirely to a students’ economic and social background need to be researched.

This study attempted to identify the nature of reading achievement, define reading achievement, and make connections between reading achievement and specific school characteristics. Essentially, this research sought to comprehend how varying levels of reading achievement for demographically diverse high school populations are potentially affected by selected school characteristics.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study investigated the levels of achievement in

reading outcomes on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills for African American 9th grade school populations in relationship to school characteristics. School characteristics included teacher ethnicity, student ethnicity, teacher gender, and teaching experience. Research such as this is needed in order to reveal how such school characteristics contribute to the achievement level variance among diverse student populations. It is expected that the findings will assist in identifying the nature of reading test score variations and in intensifying the focus of school characteristics and their contribution to these variances. The findings hope to assist educators, administrators, and curriculum specialists in identifying possible solutions and interventions to narrow reading outcome differences. Finally, it is anticipated that the findings will spark more research in the area of reading achievement; thus, perpetuating more effective English Language Arts curricula and instruction for students in the population where the test outcome variation exists.

More specifically, this study strove to achieve the following in relation to reading test score outcomes, student and teacher ethnicity, teacher gender, years of teaching experience, and state averages.

- Increase awareness of how the racial composition of students in a school impacts school averages on the TAKS exam.
- Understand the connection between the racial and gender composition of teachers in a school as related to school averages on the TAKS exam.
- Explore how teaching experience influences school averages on the TAKS exam.
- Propose possible explanations for achievement level differences in culturally diverse student populations.
- Contribute to literature focused on reading achievement and school characteristics.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The history of African American education is full of both positive and negative research accounts. Researchers paint a picture of a people imbued with racism, lack of opportunity, and despair. From the moments Africans first set foot in this United States, there

has been a continuing debate about why and how to educate them. The common misconception about the education of African Americans is that in some ways it has been less or inferior to that of European Americans. However, one of the biting realities is that the education of African Americans has not been easy and certainly economic and social resources are center stage to the problems African American students still face today.

In James Anderson's (2004) honest account, *The Historical Context for Understanding the Test Score Gap*, a discussion of the struggles African Americans have faced to obtain an education is illustrated. As the abstract illustrates, the progress of achievement patterns of African American students from the 1700's to the present is one in which this population has the capacity to overcome educational and racial barriers. Anderson (2004) begins the piece by redefining what has been commonly and now historically known as the "achievement gap." He points out to the reader the importance of shifting paradigms to understand that the Black-White difference is not one of inherent attitudes or cultural norms on the behalf of African American families and communities; rather it is one in which American education has failed to address the concerns of students of every race, creed, and nationality. Anderson explains in detail the numerous achievement level differences that African Americans have faced and overcome as a basis for his argument that the current focus on test score differences is timely.

The scholar discusses at length the various differences between African American students and European American students present "before the contemporary debate over the test score differences" (Anderson, 2004, p. 1). All termed by Anderson in his text as "gaps," the literacy gap, elementary school attendance gap, and the high school completion gap were issues that plagued African American education long before the test score gap. Anderson (2004) concludes his essay with a word of advice concerning the elimination of the test score gap; he notes that in order to eliminate the gap there must be a "recognition of the various achievement gaps that minority students have overcome or closed significantly in past decades and an appreciation for their capacity to also overcome on the test score gap" (p. 20).

A summary of the history of African American educa-

tion would not be complete without discussing the landmark 1954 United States Supreme Court decision in *Oliver L. Brown et. al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka (KS) et.al.* Researchers assert that this case was one of the most significant events in American history, in general, and specifically in the educational system (Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005). The road towards the equitable treatment of all American citizens, in various facets of life, was pioneered by this controversial case. In essence, *Brown v. Board of Education* "dismantled the legal basis for racial segregation in schools and other public facilities" (Brown v board Summary, 2007).

The history of the journey to *Brown* began with the case of *Plessey v. Ferguson* which proclaimed that schools should be "separate but equal." *Brown* asserted that segregated schools denied African American students their constitutional rights as guaranteed to them in the 14th amendment to the United States Constitution (Blanchett, Mumford & Beachum, 2005). In challenging the separate but equal doctrine of *Plessey v. Ferguson*, *Brown* aimed to challenge white supremacist ideology and the moral injustice of forced segregation (Ferguson & Mehta, 2004). Despite the gusto and hope which *Brown* incited in African Americans around the country, its implementation was deliberately slow and limited.

Most integration took place in the South after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and after other court orders during the late 1960's and early 1970's (Ferguson & Mehta, 2004). In the mid-1970's there was finally evidence of school desegregation. After nearly two decades, the South finally began to break the walls of segregation and move towards physical integration.

THE CURRENT STATE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and

anything except me (Ellison, 1952).

This opening paragraph of Ralph Ellison's profound exploration of the African American experience in the United States, *Invisible Man*, sets the stage for honest and heartfelt conversations about the state of education in the United States for African Americans. As it stands today, United States education yields a bleak picture when taking into consideration achievement level variances for African American students versus European American students (SEDL, 2007). While widespread efforts continue to be made to identify probable causes and solutions to achievement level variances for African American students, standardized test data and classroom observations of learning reveal a need for more research (Jencks & Phillips, 1998).

In what is considered the Post-*Brown* Era, urban schools serving African American students are now "in a strange and paradoxical state" (Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005). Despite the goals of *Brown* to integrate American education, most cities in the United States feature concentrations of African American and many other people of color in large urban and/or metropolitan areas. As a result, Ferguson and Mahta (2004) note that schools in these large urban areas are also high poverty schools and are less likely to offer college-preparatory courses, have higher teacher turnover, higher rates of unqualified teachers, and lower test scores. To add insult to injury, mandates like the *No Child Left Behind* initiative are viewed as quick solutions to a persistent and misinterpreted issue (Meyers & Nidiry, 2004).

Students spend a great proportion of their time in a school setting; therefore, it is not ironic that certain school characteristics can influence them. In the late 1990's Ferguson conducted research to determine whether tracking was beneficial or detrimental to African American students. He concluded that ability is not based on race, but rather on ability and achievement. Ferguson (1998) further found that having teachers of the same race did not necessarily help African American achievement, an argument this current research study attempts to refute. Ferguson found that African American teachers of low socioeconomic status and White teachers of high SES were associated with marginally positive effects on African American student test scores but only in mathematics. Tyson (2002) found in her study of middle class Black students that negative attitudes toward school were more

likely linked to low performance.

The aforementioned issues in African American education are by far not the only issues that impede the success of ethnically diverse students. This research reexamined past theories and research and attempted to make a contribution to the literature through a more focused study of the state of Texas education and test outcome differences.

THE ACHIEVEMENT VARIANCE IN READING

Current NAEP research illustrates key findings which support the assertion that the reading test score variations among school populations is not narrowing. According to NAEP (2006) research, in 2005 at both grades four and eight, White students scored higher on average in reading than Black and Hispanic students. Further, narrowing of the reading variance by two points between 2003 and 2005 was not statistically different between 1992 and 2005.

Based upon the research conducted for this study, it is believed that reading achievement has caused some concern for educators, parents, administrators, and government during the past 20 years (Manzo, 2007). In fact, Manzo reported that on the NAEP reading test for 12th graders in 2007 average scores have declined significantly since the first NAEP reading test was administered in 1992. Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003) note, "For a dismayingly long time, the racial gap in reading has not been narrowing at all" (p. 23). Phillips, Crouse, and Ralph (1998) reported these sentiments several years earlier noting that "race" appears to have a stronger negative effect on reading growth than on math growth; additionally, Blacks are often taught fewer reading skills than Whites during middle school and high school. On the other hand, when the understanding that "schools have a culture" (Pang, 2001) is acknowledged than educators can begin to find culturally responsive ways to improve the reading achievement of diverse student populations and challenge deficit models such as the reports researchers have used to explain African American achievement outcomes. The subject of reading is, according to Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003), the single most significant skill that can be tested. According to these researchers, the data show a series of fluctuations in reading gaps starting in 1971 when Black students at the ages of nine, thirteen, and seventeen

were far behind Whites, ranking in only the 14th, 13th, and 11th percentiles. Only slow gains in reading achievement were evident in the late 1980's when Black nine-year olds ranked in the 23rd percentile, thirteen-year olds in the 30th percentile, and seventeen-year olds in the 29th percentile (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Unfortunately, this small improvement was the ceiling for reading achievement scores of African American students for the next eleven years.

Addressing reading test score variances are much debated and defined yet only receive what Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003) call "disproportionate attention." Thomas Newkirk (2003) asserts that in order to close reading test score differences on state and national standardized tests among racially diverse students groups, a critical examination of social and educational factors affecting pre-adolescent students should to be addressed. In particular, for African American student populations, culturally responsive techniques for improving reading achievement might include using rhythmic language, being highly emotional and animated in teaching, using creative analogies, engaging in nonverbal gestures, encourage spontaneous and lively discussions, integrating students' everyday personal and historical experiences into the curriculum, and developing strong interpersonal relationships with students (Irvine & Fraser, 1998).

CULTURAL DEFICIT VERSUS CULTURAL DETERMINATION MODELS

Achievement level variance would not be complete without a critical glance at models that attempt to define it. Nieto (2000) defines the cultural deficit model as the one that makes assumptions that some students, because of genetics, cultural, or experiential differences, are operating at a deficit and are, in fact, inferior to other students. The deficit models assert that "disadvantaged people have underlying deficiencies, attributable to genetic and/or social pathology, which limit the probability of their achievement and social adjustment" (Bennett, 1979, p. 90). Further, proponents of the deficit model believe that students representing diverse cultures fail academically due to inadequate parenting, poverty or a combination of these (King,

2004; Nieto, 2000). When such inadequate impressions of student achievement are formed, especially for African American students, the results are catastrophic (Irvine, 1990). As a result of such beliefs, African American students often find themselves on the perimeters of education, struggling to reach their academic goals. It is no surprise that new teachers have been trained in the deficit model (Nieto, 2000) and that a school's culture is based primarily on European American culture and power (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004).

On the contrary, models of resilience or difference models understand that African American students have an outstanding cultural heritage, are capable of learning and possessing knowledge of content (Milner, 2005). Teachers must begin to build on, study, and internalize models of resilience that celebrate the strengths of all students and focus on high expectations for all students (Carter, 2003). One such way to accomplish this task is to understand the concepts of culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is a framework for understanding that there must be a connection between various racially and ethnically diverse student populations and the curricula endorsed by policy and taught in schools. By definition, "culturally responsive teaching is using the cultural knowledge, prior experience, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant" (Gay, 2000, p. 29). According to Gay (2000), culturally responsive teaching bridges the cultures between a pupil's home and school. Culturally responsive teaching is best shown through the following characteristics:

Acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, building bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experience, using a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to diverse learning styles, teaching students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritage, and incorporating multicultural information in all subjects and skills commonly taught in schools. (Carter, 2003, 89).

Teaching that "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 382) is by far most valuable to students of diverse cultural backgrounds. Thus, the assumption is that when deficit models are replaced

with models of resilience and hope, African American students will begin to find themselves on the other side of the achievement scale. Culturally responsive teachers will provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful academically without placing blame on environmental factors that indeed contribute to their achievement rather than explain their lack of it.

Another deficit model theory about learning and test score gaps is based on the idea of cultural determinism. The basis of cultural determinism places the blame for the low achievement of racial minorities on a culture of poverty. Cultural determinism is an umbrella term for other theories that fall under this category. In the cultural deprivation theory the underachievement of racial groups such as African Americans is due to negative self-image, low self-esteem, and self-fulfilling prophecies. This theory asserts that African American parents fail to provide their children with the necessary skills and educational opportunities that stress the value and importance of success in school (Deustch, 1967). To counter this theory, models of resilience for the education of African American students note that while "children come to school with different cultural backgrounds," (Gay, 2000, p. 29) there is no one set of beliefs that govern the way in which they will perform in school. Even though African Americans might share a common language, music, signs, and some understandings, this does not mean they share the same values and beliefs regarding education. It is a gross assumption to believe that all African American parents fail to value education and academic success. Social class and labor values are the more important issues related to cultural differences.

Ogbu (1983) noted that African American students reside in a culture of oppression whereby their educational and occupational opportunities are determined by larger mainstream society. His argument claims that while African American students understand the importance of education and value it highly, they often disengage in the educational process when they perceive that opportunities are limited. Ogbu termed the issue "effort optimism." Ogbu theories would support the deficit model notion that African American students do not feel capable of performing at the same levels as their European American counterparts. However, several studies such as Cook and Ludwig (1998) note that indeed African American students do

not feel like outsiders and spend on average about the same amount of time on school work as do their European peers. Another theory related to variance in education for racially diverse students is based on the idea of structural contexts. This body of literature and research suggests that while a critical examination of biological and cultural factors is needed, structural contexts related to the inequality in resources between groups such as African Americans and European American students is important as well.

The issue of socioeconomic status is part of this theory. The fact that some minority students attend schools with White students and that the school resources are adequate to support student achievement, is enough to set this population of students apart who attend racial and socially segregated schools. Realistically speaking, "there is more potential for a poor child to thrive in a school that is mixed by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status than in one where teachers and administrators are overwhelmed by a high concentration of children who are poor and socially isolated from the mainstream society" (Coleman et al., 1966, p. 325). According to Rumberger and Palardy (2005), researchers have long recognized that individual background characteristics of a student coupled with the compositional characteristics of their school's student body can affect individual student achievement.

These researchers claim that because social composition is often related to a variety of school characteristics, it is difficult to identify a causal relationship between social composition and student outcomes. However, the work of Jencks and Mayer (1990) suggested that students with high achievement and motivation help to create a "culture of success" in schools; students with low achievement and motivation levels

lending curriculum, and greater populations of ethnically diverse students. The final theory examined in this study was the socio-cultural theory of cognitive development, imbedded in which is the theory of culturally responsive teaching. In brief summary, Vygotsky noted that learning is the construction of knowledge; the mind stores information, organizes it, and revises previous conceptions. Second, Vygotsky asserted that the mind operates from birth; children learn about their culture and the varieties within their family and communities from birth through early childhood.

Finally, the theory of socio-cultural cognitive development posits that knowledge is not only transmitted to a student by teachers and parents, but is inevitably created as a student responds to the information in the educational environment. Zones of proximal development or the understanding of a students' level of development and arranging cognitive tasks to elicit student academic growth must be an integral part of education (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2004). Vygotsky's work challenges that of deficit models because it supports the concept that African American students, in fact all students, are born with the ability to learn and grow. Biology, culture, and social theories alone cannot explain academic disparities among diverse populations of students. Pang (2001) further notes that students learn within social and culture contexts as they interact with other people, ideas, and objects.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The type of design for this research was a multivariate, correlational design. This design was used in order to study the relationship among exogenous and endogenous variables by using structural equations. More

precisely, this research study utilized a path model which investigates the influences three independent variables (ethnicity, gender, and teaching experience) have on TAKS 9th grade Reading

scores. A Pearson R correlational design was used to show relationships between variables and is often used in social science studies. Additionally, a visual

Table 1 Means of Percentages and Standard Deviations of Independent and Dependent Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
TAKS Reading African American	73.20	23.12
White Teachers	35.54	28.35
Female Teachers	68.69	6.93
5< Years of Experience	27.37	7.48

create an atmosphere of deprivation and despair. It is not, however, ironic that Jencks and Mayer would come to the conclusion that in general poorer, lower achieving schools have lower expectations, less chal-

path model was created to display the relationships between and among variables.

POPULATION

The total population for this study consisted of 131 high schools serving 9th grade students within Texas Region IV school districts. The schools are located in urban, suburban, and rural locations within the city limits of Houston, Texas. The majority of the schools have similar socioeconomic status. However, many differ in terms of school characteristics such as student ethnicity and teacher ethnicity. The schools chosen for the study demonstrate varying levels of achievement on the 9th grade Reading TAKS test.

SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The schools chosen for this study were selected based on a convenience sample. A convenience sample was best suited for this study because the data needed to explore the research questions is made readily available through the Texas Education Agency website. This

and computing the path coefficients for each of the structural models. Linear equations represent the structural equations while the path coefficients are standardized beta coefficients.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES

Table 1 reports the overall mean and standard deviation for each of the measures in the study. A mean value indicates the overall average percent of a school characteristic in the study. School characteristics included student and teacher ethnicity, teacher gender, and years of teaching experience. For the one hundred and thirty one schools represented in the study the average percent of European American students was about 35%. The standard deviation for European American students was about 28%. This indicated a large disparity in the percentage of European American students at the different schools in the study. European American teachers on average represented about 69% of the schools sampled. The standard deviation for European American teachers was about 25%. This also indicated that a large disparity existed in the

Table 2 Pearson Product-Moment Correlations of School Characteristics

Effect	White Students	White Teachers	Gender Female	Teaching Experience
TAKS Reading	-.104	.017	.040	-.145
White Students	1	.836**	.275*	-.219
White Teachers	.836**	1	1	-.156
Teaching Experience	.217*	-.156	-.085	1

**Correlation significant at the .01 level (2-tailed); * Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

public access information system permits researchers to extrapolate data from the Academic Excellence Indicator Reports for use in educational studies. In this manner, the confidential information for each student, such as name, date of birth, age, and test scores, remains confidential while still permitting the researcher to use school reported data to conduct valuable research.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The statistical procedures performed consisted of calculating the correlations between each of the variables,

schools population of European American teachers. The average percentage of female teachers was about 60%. The standard deviation for female teachers was about 7%. This indicated a small disparity existed in the percentage of female teachers at the different schools in the study.

Finally, teachers with five or more years of teaching experience represented about 27% of the schools sampled. The standard deviation for teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience was about 7%. This also indicated that a small disparity existed in the percentage of teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience in the schools represented in the study.

CORRELATIONAL RESULTS

Table 2 reports the results of the zero-order correlations among five constructs. The final results of the bivariate correlations produced two statistically significant relationships at the .01 level and two at the .05 level. The following relationships were significant at the .01 level: the percentage of European American students and European American students ($r = .863$) and European American teachers and female teachers ($r = .275$). At the .05 level the following relationships were significant: the percentage of European American students and female teachers ($r = .217$) and European American students and teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience ($r = .219$).

There were no significant relationships between the percentage of African-American students that passed

tions, two areas were examined. These included a measure of fitness for each structural equation and the individual effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

The good of fit or measure of fitness of each structural equation measures the amount of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the structural equation. An R-square value or coefficient of determination was computed for each structural equation. In order to measure the individual effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, the correlation coefficient was decomposed into direct, indirect, total effect, and non-causal effects between two variables. The results of the findings are reported in Table 3 below.

The ultimate question presented in this study was re-

Table 3 Decomposition of the Effects from Path Model ($R = .09$)

Effect	Correlation	Direct	Indirect	Total Effect	Non-Causal
White Students	-.104	-.466**	0	-.446	-.103
White Teachers	.017	.370**	0	-.370	-.353
Gender Female	-.040	-.030	0	-.030	-.07
5<Years of Exp	-.145	-.182	0	-.182	.037

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

the TAKS Reading test and any of the associated school characteristics. In this case, the correlation between the percentage of African-American students that passed the TAKS Reading test and percentage of European American was $-.104$. The correlation between passage rates and the percentage of European American teachers was $.017$. The correlation between passage rates and the percentage of female teachers was $-.040$. Finally, the correlation between passage rates and the percentage of teachers with five or fewer years of experience was $-.145$.

RESULTS FROM THE PATH MODEL

The results from the computations of the path coefficients for the causal model are presented in Figure below. The four research questions presented in this study investigated the relationships among independent and dependent variables. To address these ques-

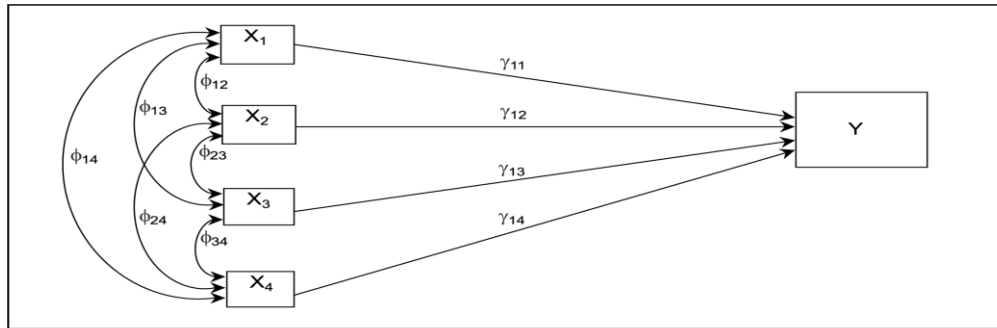
lated to the relationship between school characteristics and TAKS 9th grade Reading scores for African American school populations. The results indicate that school characteristics which include student ethnicity, teacher ethnicity, teacher gender, and teaching experience, account for 9% of the variance in the scores. Specifically, European American students, European American teachers, and five or fewer years of teaching experience indicated a significant relationship to the outcomes of the 9th grade TAKS Reading test for African American school populations.

The first question presented in the study was how the relationship between student ethnicity affects scores on the Reading TAKS scores. The direct effect of student ethnicity (White) was $-.398$. The noncausal effect was $-.104$.

The second question posed in this study was related to the relationship between teacher ethnicity and average

scores on the 9th grade TAKS Reading test for African American school populations. The effect of teacher ethnicity on Reading TAKS scores was divided into three effects, direct, indirect, and causal. The direct effect of teacher ethnicity (White) was .370. The non-causal effect was -.353. The third question examined

tests such as TAKS are not fading from the fabric of education in the United States, teachers need to be equipped with the pedagogical methods for teaching 9th grade students to be successful on the TAKS Reading test.



Note: X₁: Physician Concern
 X₂: Staff (other than physician) Concern
 X₃: Convenience of the Care Process
 X₄: Tangibles
 Y: Patient Satisfaction

in this study related to the relationship between teacher gender and its influence on the Reading TAKS scores. Female teachers displayed a direct effect of -.030 and a noncausal effect of -.07.

The fourth and final research question in this study was how years of teaching experience affected Reading TAKS scores. It was found that teachers with five or fewer years of experience had a direct effect of -.182 and a noncausal effect of .037.

CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions can be determined from this study. In regards to teacher ethnicity, the data reveals that the presence of European American teachers affected test scores for school populations. Several conclusions can be drawn. First, because of the overwhelming percentage of European Americans in the teaching workforce, it is easy to conclude that if a quality teacher is instructing students his/her ethnic background is not a primary concern. Regardless of ethnicity, educators need to have the same goals and expectations of their students; they must foster an environment of learning that nurtures yet exhibits academically auspicious pupils. The issues seem to be related to teacher training rather than issues concerning teachers of certain ethnic backgrounds. Because

The issue of student ethnicity is a trickier subject. While the research indicates that the presence of European American students has a negative correlation on the TAKS Reading achievement, this does not mean African American populations cannot achieve in more “integrated” learning environments. In fact, several

publications, such as that of Lorraine (*Nothing's Impossible*) Monroe and Samuel Carter (*No Excuses*) support the fact that African American students can achieve in schools noted as “high-poverty” and “high success.” The conclusion can be drawn that school milieus do not require European American students to increase their achievement; schools need high quality educators and administration, rigorous and relevant curriculum, high expectations, and economic as well as social resources. In addition to these needs, a focus on parental accountability, the nature of state tests, and curriculum which examines new pedagogy versus basic skills, should be examined in relation to African American populations and reading achievement (Carter, 2001).

One of the reasons female gender might have a negative correlation on outcomes of the TAKS reading test for the African American school populations in the study is logical; females are the more prevalent gender in the profession (NCES, 2006; Banks, 2005). Another conclusion that can be drawn is because females have been socialized to perform well in English/language arts curricula, they have the ability to transfer this knowledge to students with relative ease; however this is often an issue when attempting to reach African American males in new millennium classrooms.

The final variable in the study, years of teaching expe-

rience, indicates that the longer teachers are in the profession the more effective they are in helping students attain their academic goals. However, individuals who are new to careers in teaching need the support to continue their growth as educators because they also showed a significant impact on the 9th grade TAKS Reading scores. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) note that new teachers are needed primarily to address increased student enrollment and the percentage of teachers reaching retirement age. However, teacher attrition, which is highest in the first five years, with 40 to 50 percent of teachers leaving during this short time span is noteworthy data (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Darling-Hammond (1985) found that experienced teachers are more effective than beginners in handling student motivation and adaptation of instruction to address diverse learners. Carter and Merchant (2004) note that while novice teachers are expected to perform at the same level of effectiveness as veteran teachers, novice teachers often exhibit limited practical knowledge and experience to use in addressing classroom problems. The issue is compounded when novice teachers, who are often trained with limited background in teaching diverse student populations, find themselves in "diverse classrooms across the nation" (Carter & Merchant, 2004). Years of teaching experience and quality teaching should become a winning combination for meeting the needs of diverse student populations. Whether an educator has been in the classroom for two years or twenty-five, his/her effectiveness is based on knowledge of subject matter and quality instruction, student outcomes which veteran teachers have most likely mastered.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY

The first recommendation for policy is that writing needs to be tested at the ninth grade level to obtain a more complete picture of ELA achievement.

Due to the overwhelming numbers of female teachers in the profession, more aggressive recruitment of male teachers is an urgent need in order to level the gender demographics in education.

Next, administrators need to carefully examine, hire, and place quality, veteran teachers in classroom environments where students can benefit from their experience and wisdom. Too often novice, poor quality teachers are placed with student populations who ex-

hibit the most need for culturally responsive pedagogy. There is a need for more experienced teachers in America's classrooms.

Furthermore, there is a critical need for administrators and teaching staff on campus across the country to have professional development training in multicultural education. The training must go beyond acknowledging Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage month, or Multicultural Weeks and must extend to training in culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching. This is especially needed due to the astronomical numbers of European American, female teachers working in school populations that are increasingly more culturally diverse.

Finally, administrators must increase their awareness and inclusion of bilingual components in school. While English Language Learners (ELL's) were not the focus of this study, the more teachers who are bilingual and trained in teaching for a diverse population of English language learners, the more students will be reached.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This research study only used high schools in Texas Region IV. A similar study could be conducted using all Texas high schools. Such a study would be more representative of Texas high schools and would provide more generalized results for the state as a whole. A similar study could also be conducted regarding other populations such as the Hispanic community. The continual influx of Hispanic students in the state of Texas and across the country would make this a worthwhile research study.

If and when the TAKS test is ever replaced by the End-of-Course Exams, a study could be conducted to assess how this measure in conjunction with school characteristics predicts outcomes for African American students. An number of gap exit that may required investigation. To name a few:

- The AEIS reports other school demographic information. Research that focused on class size, level of teacher education, poverty, and/or school funding might assist in answering questions about achievement levels of students of color.

- This current research study could be used to assess how school characteristics affect TAKS scores for the exit level ELA test given in the eleventh grade.
- A qualitative study could be conducted in which the researcher examines the school characteristics in order to answer underlying questions about the differences in African American and European American test scores.
- A global study of how teacher gender affects student achievement in reading and ELA would be helpful in comparing norms of teaching and learning in the United States versus other countries around the world.
- A study of how school characteristics affect students enrolled in Advanced Placement English Literature or English Language would assist in dialogue about students on the opposite ends of the achievement spectrum—gifted and talented student populations.
- A study of student gender and its relationship to achievement on tests such as TAKS would be beneficial in balancing issues of teacher gender.

SUMMARY

This research provided recommendations that warrant further examination as relative to the complex issue of achievement level variance and diverse student populations. Many other studies, theories, and models have focused on the issue of “deficit” rather than “resilience,” and have thus created an academic culture for diverse students which proves to be stereotypical and defeating. Instead of echoing and supporting negative explanations for disparities in success, the goal of this research was to concentrate on school characteristics that explain achievement level variance, specifically on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills 9th grade Reading test.

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BOOK REVIEWS

HOW FOLK AND FAIRY TALES AIDS CHILDREN'S GROWTH AND MATURITY. AN ANALYSIS OF THEIR NEED FULFILLMENT IMAGERY

By Munir Muztaba Ali and Kirstom L. Squint. New York: Lewiston, 2009. 182 pages, \$87.96 (paperback), ISBN-13: 9780773447066

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How Folk and Fairy Tales Aids Children's Growth and Maturity delivers a perspective on the nature and value of folk tales and the existence of basic human needs and their portrayal in folk tales. In reviewing this book it addresses an extensive study on 40 folk tales and analyzes their evolution over time and how they have impacted children's growth and maturity. The period of folk tale discovery was during the years of 1964-1989. It has been noted that all forty books were picture books and suitable for children of all ages.

The author, Munir Muztaba Ali, does a great job disclosing how folk tales play a role in meeting the basic human needs of children imaginative lives and references pros and cons of folk tales despite popularity of its' readers. He does a comparable analysis of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs with each folk tale and discloses how they provide answers to those identified needs.

The organization of the work gives the reader an introduction suggesting what children should experience while reading literature with supporting theory. The Review of Related Literature discusses the understanding of folktales through exploration of the genre's nature. The author does an analysis of the selected folktales answering a series of questions about basic human needs. Finally, a summation of findings is shown in multiple tables according to those basic human needs.

The construction of the book interlocks well with its organization and lends itself successfully to its qualitative research design. This book could be a viable resource in a Children's Literature or Children's Psychology course with appropriate guidance from an instructor who supports the author's point-of-view.

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CLOSING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Alfred P. Rovai, Louis B. Gallien, Jr., & Helen R. Stiff-Williams, Editors, Teachers College Press, New York, (2007), \$49, 212 pages, (hardcover Book), ISBN-13: 9780807747780

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Almost three decades ago the classic in a series of many by Jawanza Kunjufu, *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys* was written with the belief that the major challenges facing African American boys, both in America's educational institutions and society is the lack of the critical role that both parents and educators have to play to ensure the success of African American male children. Beginning with the hyper criminal justice systems of the early 1980 that created a prison boom the dawn of a new millennium, black men behind bars outnumbered their peers enrolled in colleges or universities on a ratio of 3 to 1. These statistics are alarming and disheartening and much less is said about the ever-widening achievement gap which plays integral role in the cradle-to-prison pipeline. In inner cities across the country, more than half of all Black men do not finish high school, limiting their ability to access higher education or even find meaningful employment.

Whereas educational research efforts in the United States have given focus to educational achievement trends in the K-12 sector, higher education and the performance of African American continues to attract limited research with regard to closing the achievement gap. The academic performance of minority students, specifically Blacks, continues to lag behind that of White students. The achievement gap is not a new problem but, rather, one that has plagued the field of education for decades.

Closing the African American Achievement Gap in Higher Education is comprehensive work that pulls together research and ideas about one of the most urgent contemporary problems in education and society--the gap in the academic achievement of Black and other minority students. The editors, all members of faculty at Regent University, compile contributions from various scholars who lay out the data, facts and theories in clear, balanced language, accompanied by numerous tables and charts. Each chapter concludes with provocative discussion topics and reference citations. Of particular benefit to the possible solutions of reducing the achievement gap are the strategies, sample lessons and resources for assessing progress. These provide a succinct description of the role of diversity on learning, challenges in the traditional classroom and methods of designing and teaching traditional courses, challenges in the virtual classroom and methods of designing and teaching distributed courses, assessment for learning, and organizational strategies for success.

Addressed in this profound anthology research based anthology are topics that confirm works previously addressed by authors including Angela Love and Ann Cale Krueger (2005), who pointed out that research (Boykin, 1983, 1994; Willis, 1992, 1998) has consistently indicated that African American students might learn best within a controlled environment whose style is relational and personal, like an extended family (Ladson-Billings (1994). Many parents of African American students at risk of academic failure have themselves had a less than rewarding educational experience. This is important because research shows that there continues to be a link between educational experience and attainment of parents and that of their children. In contrast, Jonathon Kozol in *Savage Inequalities* calls this "a caste society." He observes that "the immense resources which the nation does in fact pos-

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sess go not to the child in the greatest need but to the child of the highest bidder—the child of parents who more frequently than not, have also enjoyed the same abundance when they were school children.”

What might have been missing from *Closing the African American Achievement Gap in Higher Education* are define strategies that African-American students can adopt as individuals to help themselves overcome obstacles to academic achievement. However, the major conclusion of this book seems to be that policy makers, administrators and educators must focus on inequities in their institutions by removing obstacles that block the progress of African-American students to ensure that these students have equitable opportunities to achieve academic success. This book can serve as both a text for university courses on education - albeit, multicultural education - as well as a functional reference for higher education faculty, administrators and designers of both traditional and distributed courses. I look upon this book as a laudable must read contributor to the field of higher education.

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EDUCATING THE OTHER AMERICA: TOP EXPERTS TACKLE POVERTY, LITERACY, AND ACHIEVEMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS.

By Susan B. Neuman (Ed.), Baltimore, MA: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2008, 356 pages, \$ 39.95 (papercover), ISBN-13: 9781557669063

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Educating children in high-poverty and culturally diverse communities demands a reconsideration of teacher education curricula and the integration of components related to social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2004; McCarthy et al., 2000). The issues related to relationships between race, class, culture, literacy, and language are especially complex for the majority of pre-service teachers, who are primarily represented by white young adults from middle class backgrounds (Lazar, 2007). To address the need for teachers in urban and high-poverty communities where many teachers quit within five years (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996), teacher educators seek the best practices for structuring their programs and for enriching teacher education curricula with a variety of experiences in urban settings (Lazar, 2007). The effort course instructors put into searching for resources to develop a theoretical framework and present research-based approaches to teaching will impact preservice teachers' preconceptions of students from high poverty backgrounds and ensure effective practices of teaching these students.

Educating the Other America: Top Experts Tackle Poverty, Literacy, and Achievement in Our Schools offers a thought-provoking collection of studies that provides insights into the social and cultural contexts of teaching and learning in high-poverty communities. Findings of these studies explain ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, and believing, all of which are essential for understanding the factors that influence student learning. Continuous consideration of these factors will help preservice teachers as they shape their own philosophies, which they will utilize as teachers of students from high-poverty backgrounds and develop-data-driven approaches to teaching these students.

In the *Foreword*, Jackson, the former director of Title I Programs (which are associated with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education), explains the meaning of the term *poverty* as it relates to the recent demographical trends that influence society and education. After recalling that the war on poverty was declared in 1965, Jackson analyzes the changes that have occurred since then. Education, Jackson posits, is an important piece in solving the complex puzzle of poverty. Jackson introduces this book by highlighting its focus on literacy, the cornerstone of all learning that occurs in school and in life. Jackson praises Neuman's book for its presentation of the current and relevant research in a way that is accessible and relevant for nonresearchers and researchers alike.

Susan Neuman, the editor, is a well-known researcher in the field of early childhood policy, curriculum, and early reading instruction. She introduces the book with a discussion of the effects of poverty on reading achievement. Neuman conceptualizes the framework for understanding the effects by stating that family poverty means reduced human and social capital, which is expressed in the limited access to fewer material resources for language development. This scarcity of resources leads to a delay in the development of vocabulary, phonology, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics in children and, combined with the lack of family support, increases the developmental gap as students grow. By presenting the current research that traces poverty's influences on reading achievement, Neuman advocates a more comprehensive system of support – "a 360-degree surround to ensure that children start school ready to learn and succeed in reading" (p. 12). Neuman presents her research-based opinion that schools alone cannot accomplish all of the goals of reading education. Therefore, educators and poli-

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cy makers should consider the following essential components of effective education for students in poverty: (1) high-quality, content-rich instruction should start in informal early child care settings and then make a transition to quality instruction in preschools and elementary schools; (2) children should receive parental support aligned with in-school learning; (3) children should receive scientifically based literacy content from television and other multimedia resources; and (4) communities should develop a strategic approach to support children, parents, and teachers in their effort to utilize a variety of accessible resources in order to promote literacy learning. Neuman believes that consideration of these four components will produce powerful long-term effects and benefit children who live in poverty.

The book presents the most current research conducted by top experts in instructional design, technology, and intervention as they address the question of how to fashion language and literacy experiences that could potentially mediate the ill-effects of poverty and, in turn, affect children's literacy outcomes.. A discussion of the adverse outcomes of poverty on literacy learning is built around a number of central themes, including:

- Students from the high-poverty background require a different path than the current reading methods for struggling readers.
- Instructional design features that promote both content knowledge and skill based instruction simultaneously can significantly improve students learning.
- Integration of media and technology in instruction make a difference.

Educating the Other America is relevant for several different audiences. First, preservice teachers will find the information helpful in their preparation to understand the sociological roots and developmental consequences of the high-poverty background on children. This book will provoke reflective discussions on preservice teachers' own experiences. Similarly, teachers working in urban schools will find that the book invites them to reflect on their personal journeys toward improving their practice. Furthermore, professional development providers will find that Chapters 7 – 17 offer practical suggestions for facilitating case discussions not only with the research findings from these chapters, but also with information from other sources. Finally, those interested in conducting their own studies and writing reports of their own project findings will draw relevance from chapters that address comprehensive approaches to understanding the complex processes of educating students from impoverished communities.

Journal of Urban Education is a Publication currently hosted by the College of Education
Southern University at New Orleans
6801 Press Drive
New Orleans, LA 70126

ISSN 1546-3206