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JUST US: A CASE STUDY OF A BLACK EDUCATOR'S INTRARACIAL EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING AN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS UNIT

presented by

Pamela Louise Ross

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

___Ph.D.___ degree in ___Teacher Education___

Douglas R. Campbell
_____
Major professor

Date _August 22, 2001_

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JUST US: A CASE STUDY OF A BLACK EDUCATOR'S INTRARACIAL
EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING AN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS UNIT

By

Pamela Louise Ross

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Teacher Education

2001

ABSTRACT

JUST US: A CASE STUDY OF A BLACK EDUCATOR'S INTRARACIAL EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING AN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS UNIT

By

Pamela Louise Ross

There has long been a rich legacy of the oral tradition in the African American community. Slavery and Jim Crow segregation forced African Americans to be discrete about how to prepare their children for the harsh realities of racism while at the same time instilling a sense of self-dignity and hope. *Just Us* was used in the title of this dissertation to capture the essence of communal privacy, which is crucial for African Americans when trying to prepare Black youth for the harsh realities of modern day racism.

This dissertation takes the form of a self-study. It takes a micro-look at the pedagogical practices and learning outcomes of an African American educator who taught a Civil Rights unit to African American middle school students. While the students were certainly an important part of the study, they are not the primary focus of the research. The focus of the study was the African American teacher who experienced a personal transformation as a result of navigating through the various stages of racial identity development (Cross, 1991). This journey of self-discovery is important in that the teacher served as a guide for students who exhibited behaviors that are characteristic of the early stages of racial identity development.

The study chronicles the challenges that were faced when attempting to teach Black History as a means to empower Black students. By looking at the teacher as reflective practitioner and learner, valuable insights are revealed about how racial identity shapes the

decision making process, teaching strategies, and curriculum development in an intraracial learning environment.

The study drew upon ethnographic research methods such as journaling, personal accounts, and narrative genres. Data collection included interviews, focused group discussion notes, audio recordings, teacher reflection journal, dialogic (student/teacher) journals, lesson plans, student assignments, and other documents that illustrate teacher thinking, decision making, and classroom practices.

The major findings of the study reveal that shared culture and background/racial identity between African-American teachers and students often affect teacher beliefs and practices. These effects are most salient in areas of communication styles, disciplinary methods, views on cultural heritage, and practical applications of historical content to everyday life. Furthermore, this study illuminates ways in which an intraracial learning setting fosters the development of culturally relevant teaching strategies (Ladson-Billings, 1992). The case study approach allows this dissertation to serve as a window into the mind of a Black educator who is engaged in the process of making Black history relevant to African American students.

DEDICATION

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my sister

Sharon Ross-Blackmon for her unwavering support and

inspiration. When I thought, "I can't," she assured, "You

will." She said, "Together we are genius." Thank you for

having faith in my ability to complete this project.

I am...because We are...

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Douglas R. Campbell, my dissertation chairperson, for making time in his busy schedule to counsel me and guide my research. I am most grateful for his close reading and editing of the dissertation drafts. His insightful guidance and kind spirit made a most difficult process bearable. Most importantly, he believed in the merit of my scholarship and my ability to complete this study.

I would like to acknowledge the support of Dr. Susan Melnick, my graduate committee advisor, who took an interest in me early in my doctoral studies and always encouraged me. She inspired me to hold my head high and believe that earning my doctorate degree was more than a dream. She carried me over the hurdle of the dissertation proposal even when her schedule was extremely demanding. Nonetheless, she forced me to push my scholarship to a higher level. I appreciate her sense of humor, candid honesty, and powerful teacher presence.

I would like to thank Dr. Lee June and Dr. Geneva Smitherman for serving on my dissertation committee in spite of their busy schedules and tremendous obligations. Each of them offered thoughtful questioning, which forced me to refine my research questions and narrow the scope of my research. They stepped forward in my time of need to offer their scholarly support and wisdom.

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THE RACE PERSON?

> America's sorry racial state of affairs is like a deep and abiding wound. If
> left untreated, it will continue to ooze and fester...We have run away
> from race for far too long. We are so afraid of inflaming the wound that
> we fail to deal with what remains America's central social problem. We
> will never achieve racial healing if we do not confront each other, take
> risks, make ourselves vulnerable, put pride aside, say all the things we
> are not supposed to say in mixed company. (Dalton, 1995, pp. 3-4)

A very distinguished professor once gave me the heartfelt advice - "Don't let them
turn you into the race person." This statement has echoed in my consciousness for years
and I regret that I did not question him about his foreboding words. I might have asked
him, "Who is the 'them' of whom I should beware?" I could have further inquired, "How
do I know if I've become the "race person?" Better yet, I might have even asked - "What
is the race person?" All of my instincts tell me that my professor's advice was well
intentioned. While I may never know his responses to my unasked questions, I can only
surmise that he was trying to tell me not to allow others to cast me as their token
spokesperson for Black America while belittling my expertise on issues that do not concern
race or racism.

After several years of teaching experience in predominately Black educational settings,
I am afraid that I have become a race person. I would like to think, however, that I am
not the "race person" that my professor's mysterious "them" would have exploited. I am

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not concerned with promoting "White tolerance." I prefer teaching Black tolerance and empowerment so that Black youth might overcome the pervasiveness of oppression which continues to limit equal access to opportunities for future success.

I am of the belief that there will always be inequality in the world, and unlike Rodney King, I do not hold the illusion that we can "all" get along. I believe that issues of race, class, and gender, among others, will always be factors that determine the extent to which people have access to power. I maintain that once disempowered groups collectively understand the interconnectedness of racism, classism, sexism, and other forms of subordination which limit access to "the culture of power," there is hope for liberation (Delpit, 1995, p. 24).

There is a saying, "The more things change, the more they stay the same." I recognize that as persons of African descent, Black youth face many of the same challenges as their ancestors. It can be said, however, that the struggle for racial parity has generated new subversive warfare strategies aimed at the present generation because today's youth must contend with covert racism. In the past, the glass ceiling was made visible by the clearly posted sign, "For Whites Only." Today, the sign has been removed but the ceiling remains barely cracked and the outcomes often remain the same.

Having had the opportunity to study the Black experience, both formally through undergraduate and graduate studies and informally through the stories entrusted in me by family members and community elders, I have become a "race person" of sorts. Despite the warnings of my most respected professor, I do not dread my charge. In fact, I welcome it because it is one of the most revered honors that can be bestowed upon a member of the African American community. The teacher, griot, storyteller, historian, has often served as

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the caretaker of the collective wisdom which each generation has preserved in order to leave a road map from the past and beacon for the future. I am committed to helping African American people to remember not to forget.

CHAPTER 1

THE JOURNEY BEGINS WITHIN

> The scholar is the clock-watcher of history and the keeper of the
> compass that must be used to locate his or her people on the map of
> human geography: where they have been and what they have been,
> where they are and what they are. Most important, the scholar should
> be able to prophesy where his people still must go and what they still
> must be...The scholar should be able to find the special clock that tells
> his people their historical, cultural, and political time of day. Part of our
> tragedy is that we have been, figuratively speaking, telling time by our
> oppressor's clock. (Clarke in Turner, 1984, p. 33)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: EXPLORING INTRARACIAL INTELLECTUAL DISCOURSE IN THE ABSENCE OF "OTHERS"

John Henrik Clarke challenges Black scholars to become caretakers of Black history

and leaders of their people. Unfortunately, there has been a dramatic decline in the

number of Black college students who are opting to pursue a career in the teaching

profession. "According to the 1990 Census, Black teachers represented 8% of all teachers.

Their numbers are declining at the same time that Black students comprise the majority in

many public school districts" (Foster, 1997, p. xlix). Knowing this, it becomes increasingly

important to have examples of successful African American teachers, who may be

emulated by teachers of Black students (Ladson-Billings, 1994a).

The inspiration for this study occurred long before I formally proposed research on

my own teaching as a dissertation topic. My master's thesis, Black Students, *Black Studies:*

Education for Liberation (Ross, 1991), looked at the development of Black Studies in predominately White institutions of higher learning, using Cornell University as a case study. During my review of the literature, which chronicled the debate over Black Studies, I was struck by the fact that prospective teachers of Black Studies courses were being accused of promoting subversive agendas. Allegations were made suggesting these teachers wanted to militarize their students by exposing them to an emotionally charged and racially sensitive curriculum.

Even though Black Studies programs have been established for quite some time, there have been few research-based attempts to address early accusations of Black Studies programs as a form of planned political dissidence. This research is in some ways a response to the allegation of intended academic misconduct. The study was limited by design to one instance of an African American teacher's journey in teaching a Civil Rights unit in an intraracial setting. It examines my experiences as a teacher of Black history at a community center where I instruct African American middle school students. Teaching the Black history class is like embarking upon an adventure with my students. While I serve as the guide, I recognize that, together, we construct the travel itinerary. My charge, as a proactive Afrocentric educator, is to prepare Black youth to be productive citizens in a multicultural world. I maintain, however, that it is difficult to appreciate multiculturalism without self-knowledge. Even the Bible says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). This would imply that the ability to love others is somewhat contingent upon the ability to love one's self. Consequently, before I take my students abroad to teach them how to love others, I propose that they must first journey within (Nieto, 2000). To this end, it stands to reason that the teaching of Black Studies is an appropriate point of

departure for me as an African American educator who teaches Black youth in an urban community center setting.

There was a time when I believed that all that Black youth needed in order to become more engaged in their schooling was a color-coated curriculum. However, I am no longer under the false impression that an Afrocentric curriculum, in and of itself, is the "silver bullet" for school systems which appear to be failing miserably at meeting the academic needs of African American youth. In my four years of teaching Black history to African American students, I have noted that students have often resisted the curriculum, finding it depressing and embarrassing. There were many instances where it was obvious that the students had internalized stereotypical beliefs about African Americans and the Black experience. They often had difficulty relating to the curriculum, which expected them to feel empathy for Blacks who were victims of slavery, beatings, lynchings, and Jim Crow segregation. Perhaps their detachment from the curriculum was in fact a defense mechanism?

One cannot assume that racial and ethnic minority students will automatically connect with and see the relevance of a curriculum simply by virtue of the fact that the content focuses on people who share their skin color. To presume that Black youth will embrace Black history because they are Black is just as stereotypical as assuming that all Black people are skilled dancers and basketball players. Experience has taught me that Black history is no more relevant to African American youth than any other history. In an article "A Deafening Silence: History Textbooks and the Students Who Read Them," Richard J. Paxton surmises,

> Perhaps the jagged world of popular, adult history is not appropriate for
> the developing minds of our children. However, would those who assert

that personal interpretation should play no role in historical writing also maintain that readers abandon their agency while reading history? In other words, should we teach our K-12 students to read uncritically, without keeping variables like authorship, bias, context, or trustworthiness firmly in mind? ...The singular world of history textbookese must be considered an important contributing factor to the growing body of research that shows our high school history students (even our best high school history students) approach to reading history in an uncritical and unrefined manner. (Paxton, 1999, pp. 332-333)

Without the guidance and support of a knowledgeable teacher who is committed to helping Black youth become critical historical analysts, they are unlikely to discover the connections between the past and present, or how Black history is relevant to their everyday lives.

The purpose of this study was to explore my teaching practices as I improvised to make information about the experiences of Blacks in the United States accessible to African American adolescents. This study focused on my teaching about the African American experience during the American Civil Rights era. All of my students were Black and I believe that they would gain much from learning recent Black history. Initially, I had some apprehensions about including racially charged or emotionally sensitive information in my course; I subsequently decided that this content provides an important exposure for Black students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM: LIBERATORY EDUCATION AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

Black students must develop a deep understanding of the political, racial, economic, scientific, and technological realities that confront the very survival of African people locally, nationally and internationally...It is our responsibility as African American parents, educators, and citizens to develop educational settings - formal and informal - where cultural understandings are not transmitted accidentally, but by design. (Madhubuti in Shujaa, 1994, pp. 5-6)

What should persons of African descent teach their children about how to cope with modern day racism? Clearly, there is no one correct answer. Ironically, much of the academic discourse which addresses issues of race and racism is directed at how to improve relations between the races. In the meantime, the age-old problem of racism continues to persist. This problem is not a new phenomenon. Even the slaves, who could possess nothing, owned the responsibility of rearing their children in a way that would allow them to survive in a racist society.

Despite the fact that they were denied the privilege of learning to read and write, slaves developed an intricate system to record their family history and generational wisdom. In *Oral Tradition: Legacy of Faith for the Black Church*, Mitchell states,

> The oral tradition continued to transmit African American culture even after emancipation. The enforced intimacy of slavery did not change dramatically under sharecropping or even urban living for the freedmen. There was a new emphasis on the formal education. However, reading, writing, did not take the place of the oral tradition in the deeper matters of how to cope with oppression and in the development of an adequate belief system. In fact, formal education itself was often fused or blended with oral traditional forms of instruction in many creative ways. (Mitchell, 1986, p. 105)

Like Mitchell, I recognize that African Americans established an inter-generational link, which allowed them to teach their children how to cope with racism. These coping strategies formed a "hidden curriculum" which teaches Black youth how to deal with the White superiority complex, as well as with denigrating views of Blacks (Kincheloe, Slattery, and Steinberg, 2000). Unlike Mitchell, I believe that over the years, the intergenerational link, which has traditionally been sustained by the oral tradition, has eroded because many parents and community members have failed to tell their children about their struggles to overcome discrimination (Tatum, 1997). Consequently, it can be

said that many of today's youth are growing up with little or no knowledge of both their family history and the modern day record of American racism and classism.

I believe that the study of Black history can serve as a wake up call for Black youth (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994). Through it, they can better situate their lives within a historical context that will allow them to make a more informed analysis of their present status in American society. I want my students to gain an awareness of the amazing resiliency of African Americans. I want them to understand and take ownership of Black history in such a way that it can fortify them against modern day racism and inspire them to excel despite its persistence. I hope to show them that in the process of developing one's racial identity, we must transform bitterness into motivation and productively channel anger into self-empowerment (Seltzer, 1995, p. 127).

Ironically, much of what my students learn about Black history is either completely new information to them or is in conflict with what they think they already know about American history. Although my Black history class is voluntary, I have discovered that many of my students harbor an apathetic disposition toward learning Black history. They have little or no prior knowledge of Black history. They lack an awareness of the larger power structure from which they are likely to be barred, if they are not awakened to the reality of its existence. Interestingly, they are much like the British working class youth of Paul Willis' *Learning to Labor* in that they contribute to the reproduction of their impoverished socioeconomic statuses by exhibiting self-denigrating and counter-productive behaviors toward schooling (Willis, 1977).

The heart of this study emerged from the dialogue that occurs between my students and me as we try to make sense of Black history and connect with it in meaningful ways.

Likewise, I believe that there is something to be gained from the openness that occurs

within the privacy of intraracial discourse on issues of race and racism. I concur with the

sentiments of a teacher, Leonard Collins, who is featured in Michelle Foster's *Black

Teachers on Teaching* (1997), when he states,

> I want Black students to learn about themselves from a Black
> perspective. Usually what we learn is from a deficit point of view. We
> learn that we were slaves, that we picked cotton, and that we didn't
> contribute anything to the world...I want my students to learn to love
> themselves and I want them to love each other. We don't understand
> each other because we don't know ourselves. The lack of knowledge is
> the cause of most of the problems among Black people. Much of the
> conflict that we see in the community starts in school because we don't
> learn about ourselves or see our selves in the curriculum. (Foster, 1997,
> pp. 178-180)

Like Mr. Collins, I am concerned about the schooling that African American youth receive.

I truly believe that there something unique that occurs in an intracultural setting that

affirms and validates Black youth.

Now that we are amidst the age where multiculturalism is more prevalent, schools

have the opportunity to promote the importance of cultural diversity. Unlike the archaic

approaches to the social sciences where there was one "correct" vision of the collective

human experience (usually male-dominated and Eurocentric), multicultural education

forces us to honor the multiplicity of our nation and world. At first glance, this honoring,

celebrating, embracing, valuing, and/or tolerating diversity appears to be less complex than

it is in reality. When planted within the context of a real school setting, many dilemmas

arise for a conscientious educator.

As a novice teacher, I struggle to awaken a Black consciousness within my students.

They seldom have to think about their race because they live in predominately Black

communities. I am convinced that teaching students to recognize their connectedness to a people, culture, and history is an important first step toward preparing them for full participation in mainstream society. I believe that Black students will be in a better position to participate in the "culture of power" while maintaining a healthy racial identity when they know about and feel pride in what they bring to the table of American diversity (Delpit, 1995, p. 24).

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY: IN SEARCH OF EXEMPLARY BLACK TEACHERS OF BLACK STUDENTS

This study explored the role of the African American teacher as a cultural representative. Michelle Foster asserts that scholarly portrayals of Black teachers are often negative. She suggests,

> Black teachers' unique historical experiences are either completely overlooked or amalgamated with those of White teachers. In those few instances where Black teachers are visible, their cultural representations are biased by society's overarching racism. For the most part these cultural represen-tations continue to render Black teachers invisible as teachers of their own or of other ethnic backgrounds... (Foster, 1997, p. xlix)

Foster goes on to say that few scholars have adequately considered sociocultural context when studying African American educators. Foster's assertion is evidenced by the works of Pat Conroy, Ray Rist, and Dee Ann Spencer.

Conroy used first-person teacher accounts in *The Water is Wide*. He explained how he came to teach in Yamacraw, an island off he mainland of South Carolina. He described the *island*, saying, "It is populated with Black people who depend on the sea and their small *farms* for a living. Many White families live on the island in a paternalistic, but in many

ways symbiotic relationship with their neighbors" (Conroy, 1972, p. 3). He went on to say that life on the island is reminiscent of the pre-Emancipation Proclamation era.

Conroy chronicled his journey of going from a youth who was entertained by a game called "nigger knocking," to a teacher in a predominately White school who became ostracized because he elected to teach Black history. This experience leds him to his position as a teacher on Yamacraw Island where he taught Black students in lieu of joining the Peace Corps or the military.

Conroy explained how he came to work in Yamacraw, after meeting with the Superintendent and expressing his desire to teach. At first introduction to Conroy, a young White male, the Superintendent, with no knowledge of his credentials, decided immediately that he was a "godsend," the perfect candidate to teach the "poor colored children" (Conroy, 1972, p. 1). It seems that Conroy easily joined the paternalistic class, which he criticized prior to joining their ranks.

Conroy came to Yamacraw to replace a Black teacher, Iris Glover, who is described as the local "witch doctor" who was being forced into retirement. She had taught for thirty-nine years on this island but was not represented as being a good teacher because it was said that "she should have been fired" forty years prior. The other Black teacher, Mrs. Brown, prided herself on the fact that she was not a native islander and described herself saying, "I am a missionary over here helping these poor people. Only Jesus and I know how much they need help" (Conroy, 172, p. 22). Mrs. Brown came equipped with a leather strap which she brandished on her desk to assist her in her missionary efforts.

Conroy's book is one in which he is cast as the hero of needy Black youth. He described a scene in which his students were attempting to play football at recess,

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expressing, "I'd never seen anything so brutal, so dangerous, and so insane in my whole life." He went on to say, "I decided to teach them rules, fair play, and sportsmanship: the essence of this noble game, the proper manner in which gentlemen and athletes conduct themselves in a field of honor" (Conroy, 1972, p. 112). Despite his efforts, he failed to displace old habits and the youth reverted to "barbarism." Like many other well-meaning Whites, Conroy cast himself as the civilized "savior of the savages." He criticized Mrs. Brown, his Black co-worker, using her own words as weapons against her. He explained that he attempted to expand his students' horizons by planning a trip off the island. In stark contrast, Mrs. Brown attempted to block his efforts to plan the trip, which may be seen as her effort to limit the youth and proliferate their sub-standard education as a means to protect her position and stature.

Conroy expressed that his primary goal from the first day he arrived on Yamacraw Island did not change. His goal was to "prepare the children for the day when they could leave the island for the other side" (Conroy, 1972, p. 248). Conroy failed to recognize that his goal would surely lead to the ultimate demise of the island. If all the youth eventually left, who would remain to forward the survival of the island and its culture? As was consistent throughout his book, Conroy failed to acknowledge the extent to which Blacks can adequately educate their own children.

Dee Ann Spencer interviewed fifty female teachers, focusing on eight primary interviewees. One of these teachers is an African American female, Valerie, who grew up in a poor family who viewed education as a means of upward mobility. Although Valerie holds an advanced degree in education, she was very discontent with current profession. Valerie is described as teacher who presented "programmed lessons," which required no

lesson plans. She is further described as a very strict disciplinarian of both her students and her own biological children. Her students were instructed to address her as "ma'am" and were admonished if they did not comply. Valerie taught at a predominately Black school and had a low regard for the community, although it is much like the one where she grew up. According to Spencer,

> Despite Valerie's own poor background, she always blamed parents for children's problems and had little sympathy for the poor. She was concerned that people on welfare did not really use the money for needed items and that said that a friend of hers who owned a grocery store said the only time you see Cadillacs was on the day welfare checks can in. Valerie's animosity toward the poor reflected her own frustration at having to teach not far from where she grew up - the same cultural milieu. (Spencer, 1986, p. 136)

If a White teacher had made the same comments that Valerie made to Spencer, they would have been viewed as denigrating to the Black community and perhaps even racist. This leads me to wonder why, of the fifty teachers interviewed, Spencer chose Valerie, a disgruntled Black teacher who opted to leave the teaching profession. Spencer's depiction of Valerie challenges my theory that teachers who share the ethnic and/or socioeconomic background of Black students might be well equipped to address the needs of these students. I do not doubt the fact that Black teachers like Valerie indeed exist. However, I am concerned that this negative portrayal may be over generalized and used to allege the incompetence of the vast majority of African American educators.

Ray Rist's article, "Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education," is based on an ethnographic study conducted in urban classrooms. Rist's study examined the effects of the social economic status of Black students and differential access to equality of educational opportunity. Rist's study included the portrayal of two African American teachers whose middle class status left

them ill-equipped to identify with or relate to their poor Black students. Consequently, these teachers became major players in promoting prejudicial instructional practices, which perpetuates a vicious cycle of social reproduction.

Although there may be some credibility in the characterizations of the Black teachers described by Conroy, Spencer, and Rist, it stands to reason that in the absence of positive representation of Black teachers, these authors have sent a powerful message. In the characterizations presented by these authors, Black teachers are seen stereotyping children, expecting them to fail, perpetuating educational inequality, and reproducing the status quo. These three negative portrayals do not take into account the subtle cultural nuances that occur between Black teachers and their students, and they are often over-generalized, becoming the stereotypical trademark depiction of all African American teachers.

Perhaps the greatest challenge that exists for all teachers is for them to recognize that they bring their culturally rooted values, beliefs, and viewpoints to the classroom. Many "majority" teachers do not realize that they in fact have a culture. They believe that they evaluate all of their students in the same manner, when in actuality they are making judgments about their students using white middle-class students as a model. Likewise, as an African American educator, I recognize that shared ethnicity does not necessarily mean shared values. I must use introspection as a means to uncover my own biases, values, and culturally rooted judgments.

There used to be a time when teachers could argue that they lacked the resources necessary to provide their students with multicultural instruction. Today we have a wealth of knowledge on racial and ethnic minorities which can easily be infused in the content areas. We are lacking, however, concrete examples of secondary public school teachers

who are engaged in the process of teaching multicultural education while being engaged in a formalized process of self-study which includes elements of both reflection and introspection (Shujaa, 1994).

This study focused on my teaching of an American Civil Rights unit. Studying this era often includes racially sensitive topics and elicits discussions, which often involve sharing views that are primarily subjective. My self-study provided a perspective which may have been lost had I opted to focus primarily on the students, or to study other teachers of Black history in practice. It is only through introspection and reflection that I can unravel the many strands of multiple purposes that are woven together to make up my teaching.

My study focused primarily on my role as teacher, decision-maker, and cultural representative. I examined the instructional and curriculum decisions that I made while teaching an American Civil Rights unit. I was particularly interested in learning more about the academic and experiential information that I share with my students, either formally through lessons or informally through casual discourse about African American culture and issues of race and racism. This study took the form of a case study, drawing upon ethnographic research methods that include elements of action research, personal accounts, and narrative genres.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: INTEGRATING THE IVORY TOWER

It is important to understand the historical context that gave birth to the Black Studies movement. The Sixties were a time of massive social unrest and social change. African Americans and allies took to the streets and ushered in a new decade of vigorous civil rights protests. As the American Civil Rights Movement progressed, however, it became

clear that the desegregation of the busses, restrooms, schools, and lunch counters would not resolve the nation's mounting racial tensions. It is one thing to modify the laws that dictate people's actions. It is another thing to change the mindsets that govern people's lives. Indeed, segregation was just one of the many symptoms of a nation diseased with racism.

As Black youth became involved in the American Civil Rights Movement, it seemed only natural for them to challenge the public school system, which was one of the most significant socializing forces in their lives. The demand and subsequent development of Black Studies can be seen as one of the greatest legacies of the Black student movement. Black Studies sprouted from the desire of Black students to use their education as a means of self-determination and social change. These students had a desire to maintain a strong link with their home communities and culture. These cultural ties, however, were often undermined or weakened by the American educational process. According to Harry Edwards,

> The dominant group--the group that has power in a society--establishes
> an educational institution to meet its needs. This is to say that in
> American society whites have established educational institutions to
> meet societal needs as they are viewed and defined by white society...
> Subsequently, white supremacy is achieved in several ways. First, whites
> maintain dominant control of almost all American institutions. Second,
> they must instill the righteousness of a Eurocentric belief system. Third,
> they assimilate other culture and value systems into a common
> civilization only insofar as they are able to maintain the dominant
> position of power. This strategy of dominance cannot be achieved
> without discrediting the worthiness of contrary cultures and ways of life.
> (Gordon, 1979, p. 36)

Dr. James Turner furthered this point by suggesting, "White students are educated to be rulers and makers in their society. Blacks are taught to synthesize the experiences and

memorize conclusions of other people" (Turner, 1971, p. 13). Turner further proposed that Black students need to be exposed to an educational program that is specifically designed to counteract the Eurocentric belief system. He believes traditional American education indoctrinates and debilitates Black youth, leaving them of little use to the Black community. This type of liberatory education, as proposed by Edwards, Turner, and others poses many challenges to the American public education system.

Black students took on what seemed to be an insurmountable task in trying to argue the case for Black Studies. They took a major step in shaping their educations and futures. These students were rejecting the traditional educational process. They no longer were satisfied with merely having access to an "integrated" education, which deemed itself integrated by virtue of the bussing of a small cadre of Black students. Black students wanted an institution that was integrated in the sense that

> Integration [should be] a sharing of mutually reaffirming educational experiences by students of varied ethnic, religious, social and economic backgrounds including curriculum modifications, changes in school structure, redistribution of decision-making roles, abolition of track systems. Attention [is given] to enabling students to acquire skills to participate in solving problems in society. Here, both Black and white exercise leadership. (Wilcox, 1969, p. 4)

With this in mind, it seems reasonable to assert that minority students could potentially serve as the vehicle for transformation within an educational system which had historically been grounded in Eurocentric/male dominated paradigm. Black students wanted an educational experience that would be equitable both in culturally relevant curriculum resource materials and in academic rigor. They sought to insure that the American educational system would be reflective of a diverse and pluralistic society. They believed that they had the power to bring about a change. In so doing, they were challenging the

Eurocentric value system, the status quo, historical inaccuracies, and the entire American educational system (Sleeter, 1995, p. 83).

Black students were victorious in the sense that several universities and school districts adopted plans for Black Studies programs or course offerings (Giles, 1974). In most cases, the disciplinary backgrounds and scholarly interests of the faculty shaped the Black Studies programs that were developed. Institutions of higher learning have taken various approaches on how to situate Black Studies within their universities. Some have developed separate programs or departments, while others simply have course offerings within several different departments through the university. Most often in the K-12 public school system, Black Studies is seen in the form of a history class, literature class, or perhaps during a special unit most likely to be taught during Black History Month.

While the demand for Black Studies seemed to be met in a rather expedient manner, one can argue that it is only recently that we have begun to see the fruits of the seeds planted by Black student activists. These seeds sprouted into Women's Studies, Latino Studies, Native American Studies, Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Studies, and a variety of other programs which focus on under-represented populations.

When Black students brought forth the demand for Black Studies, they created needs that had largely not been seen prior to their demand. It became apparent that educational institutions (at all levels) would have to evolve to meet the growing needs of diverse student populations. Simply put, this means that, if America is to draw upon the strength of *E Pluribus Umum*, it must nurture the uniqueness and support the autonomy of under-represented racial/ethnic, religious, and social groups. Consequently, opening the doors of academia to Black Studies would also mean fundamental institutional change. The most

urgent of these needs would be a supply of qualified educators who had expertise in Black Studies and could develop and implement a Black Studies program. According to Harold Cruse, Professor Emeritus of History and Afro-American Studies at the University of Michigan, "It will take many generations of students and teachers to develop Afro-American Studies to the academic level of a traditional discipline. Afro-American Studies is going to demand a high order of intellectual creativity. It cannot fit into the functional educational mold at all" (Gordon, 1979, p. 23).

It should be noted, however, that like any other educational reform, it is much easier to propose change than it is to implement the change. Change does not spring forth from the idealistic visions of student activists or the well-intentioned promises of policy makers. Meaningful educational reform occurs at a gradual and sometimes painstakingly slow pace. It is ushered in by the concerted efforts of teachers who are committed to seeing the reforms actualized.

TERMINOLOGY

Many terms used throughout this dissertation are worthy of definition. I relied on a variety of sources; however, two are worth mentioning since I relied more heavily on them. Many of the terms are taken from *Racism: An American Cauldron*, written by Christopher Doob (1996). This book has an excellent glossary, which contains many terms which are relevant to this study. Gloria Ladson-Billings book, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (1994), is also referenced. Although her book does not include a glossary section, Ladson-Billings does include several definitions which are relevant to my research.

In defining the following terms, I attempted to clarify their intended meaning and usage in this research.

> **African American/Black**: Black and African American are used interchangeably throughout this paper. In general, I prefer the term Black as a way to categorize my racial identity. Black is my term of preference because it is reminiscent of the Black Power Movement, a time during which African Americans sought to redefine blackness by transforming it into something that should be seen as beautiful and powerful. Black is capitalized because it used as a proper noun. I use the term in formal reference to persons of African descent who reside in the United States. Likewise, I like the term African American because it is a liberatory term, which encourages me to embrace my African ancestry and retain a connection to Africans throughout the Diaspora.
>
> **Afrocentricity**: This theory is relevant to my research because I like to think that I espouse an Afrocentric philosophy, one which consciously affirms African American culture. Critical to Afrocentricity is the reclaiming and embracing of what Asante terms the "African Cultural System." He sees Afrocentricity as "a transforming agent in which all things that were old become new and a transformation of attitudes, beliefs, values and behavior results" (Asante, 1988). For me, Afrocentricity means analyzing the world through the lens of the Black experience.
>
> **Black consciousness**: Knowledge of the implications of membership in the Black race. An awareness of one's racial identity and the stigma and power associated with it.
>
> **Black pride**: A healthy self-image which is rooted in knowledge of cultural heritage and history.
>
> **Code-switching**: The ability to shift between standard English and Black English Vernacular or some other ethnic dialect based upon social context (Doss and Gross, 1994).
>
> **Cultural congruence**: "Signifies the way in which teachers alter their speech patterns, communication styles, and participation structures to resemble more closely those of the students' own culture" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 16). It means aligning instruction-al style with the culturally rooted learning styles of students.

Cultural relevance: "Uses student culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture. The negative effects are brought about, for example, by not seeing one's history, culture, or background represented in the textbook or curriculum or by seeing that history, culture, or background distorted... The primary aim of culturally relevant teaching is to assist in the development of a "relevant black personality" that allows Black students to choose academic excellence yet still identify with African and African American culture" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17).

Discrimination: The behavior by which one group prevents or restricts a minority group's access to scarce resources.

Empowerment: Self-determination. A sense of personal competence; belief in one's own ability to control one's life outcomes (Callender, 1997).

Hidden curriculum: Implicit lessons that are learned from the experience of schooling.

Home culture: The cultural norms which are established at home.

Intraracial: Social interaction that occurs amidst members of the same cultural group.

Prejudice: "A highly negative judgment toward a minority group, focusing on one or more characteristics that are supposedly uniformly shared by all group members" (Doob, 1996, p. 248).

Race: A socially constructed classification of people into categories falsely claimed to be based in a distinct set of biological traits (Doob, 1996, p. 248).

Racial identity: A self-concept identity that emerges from one's racial/ethnic categorization (Allen, M., et. al., 1995).

Racism: "The belief contending that actual or alleged difference between different racial groups assert the superiority of one racial group" (Doob, 1996, p. 248).

Stereotype: "Exaggerated, oversimplified image, maintained by prejudiced people, of the characteristics of the group members against whom they are prejudiced" (Doob, 1996, p. 248).

Vicious cycle of poverty: "A pattern in which parents' minimal income significantly limits children's educational and occupational pursuits, thereby keeping them locked into the same low economic status" (Doob, 1996, p. 249).

White supremacy: The belief that Whites are superior to other racial ethnic groups.

My desire to define terms which are relevant to my research was punctuated by the difficulties I have experienced when trying to facilitate discussions with my White university level students. I cannot recall the countless number of conversations in which I have participated which have digressed into semantic debates because my students did not have words to critique issues of race and racism. My students often did not know how to refer to Black people. They said that they felt confused by the many name changes that had occurred in the Black community, including labels such as Negro, Colored, Black, Afro-American, African American, and so forth. They also used words such as discrimination, prejudice, and racism interchangeably. They failed to see the power dynamic involved in fully understanding these words.

These discussions with my students have taught me that words are powerful. It is difficult to discuss the topics of race and racism without some consensus on terminology. Gloria Yamato wrote in "Race Something About the Subject Makes It Hard to Name" that even when the definitions are agreed upon, it is difficult to talk about racism (Yamato, 1995). This topic is often avoided because most people would rather remain anonymous in silence than to risk being vocal and viewed as a racist. It is as if a creed of silence has become the "politically correct stance" for those who want to avoid being offensive to others." Ironically, the once bold and boisterous representations of racism have been replaced with a covert form of silent cynicism.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY: A CASE OF ONE - THE QUESTION OF OBJECTIVITY

Traditionally, the legitimacy of academic research rests on an objectivity that distances the researcher from the "researched," out of fear that the results might be contaminated by the researcher's bias or predispositions. Most academic research casts the researcher as an omnipresent, non-intrusive on-looker who reports findings in a distant, impersonal manner, most likely delivered in a third person, past tense, passive voice. This dissertation is written in the first person. The use of "I" is found throughout the study. In some instances "I" is used to describe past experiences while other times it is used in the present tense. Yet other times, "I" is used to express my new understanding as a result of reflecting on the past. I attempted to clarify the temporal context at various intervals throughout the research. In general, the past tense is used to report the research findings.

David Hobson writes about the sterile nature of academic writing, saying,

> Researchers have been accustomed to distancing themselves from their work as if such separation would somehow render the work more plausible, credible, and perhaps even more "scientific." We teachers often possess narrow notions about doing research from our university experiences where use of the word "I" was forbidden and we were taught such expressions as "the researcher noted ..." and "the investigator found..." were more appropriate. (Hobson, 1996,p. 1)

Because I have chosen to study my own teaching, I was not able to distance myself from the research. This research did not attempt to camouflage the presence of the researcher. I understand that this will raise questions about the generalizability of my research. This does not mean that this research cannot serve as an impetus for other teacher-generated research, which can further expand what is known about teacher learning and Afrocentric education.

This research was based on a case study model which used reflection, introspection, journaling, interviewing, and focus group discussion. This study was limited by design to one case. While the study illuminates one instance of an African American educator's journey in teaching an American Civil Rights unit to Black students, there is no attempt to generalize the findings to all teachers of Black history. This does not mean however, that there is nothing to be learned from this research. Since the study is informed by a conceptual framework, analytical generalizations can be made.

This study is situated in the growing genre of teacher research. It poses problems in the sense that traditional ethnographic methodologies discount the capability of cultural participants to sustain the detached impartiality which has long been considered the cornerstone of valid research (Hubbard and Power, 1999). As an insider immersed within the setting of my study, it was difficult for me to defamiliarize myself to satisfy the norms of classical ethnography. I would like to think my familiarity was a strength instead of a weakness because, as James Clifford (1986) argued, "Insiders studying their own culture offer new angles of vision and depths of understanding. Their accounts are empowered and restricted in unique ways" (Clifford, 1986, p. 9). Although my research is what might be characterized as an unconventional study, I believe I have an important story to tell and no one can tell it in the same way.

The intent of this study was to document the decision-making and instructional practices of an African American teacher who is committed to teaching Black history to Black students. Increased self-esteem, a greater sense of community, and heightened social responsibility are often cited as potential outcomes of an increased cultural awareness which results from an intraracial exchange. I attempted to build a profile of the challenges

that an Afrocentric educator faces which might be usable in teacher preparation and professional development.

This study relied heavily on classroom dialogue rather than pre- and post-tests which can be easily duplicated. "Dialogue implies talk between two subjects not the speech of a subject to an object. It is a humanizing speech, one that challenges and resists domination" (Hooks, 1989, p. 131). Recording and analyzing the dialogue that occurred in the context of a Black setting allowed me to learn much about how African Americans perceive the Black experience in American history.

Since this is a self-study, the matter of objectivity is likely to be questioned. This research departed from the traditional modes of educational inquiry where objectivity is the primary concern. Instead, this research was concerned with capturing the authentic voice and multiple realities of a Black educator's teaching experience. This is particularly important when we lack substantive examples of Black educators in practice (Ladson-Billings, 1994), and Black educators are often silenced when they attempt to join mainstream discourse on the state of African American education (Delpit, 1995). These impediments add to the difficulties I faced in conducting this research. Some might assert that I had a personal stake in painting myself in a favorable light. Others might argue that I was too close to the topic of my research. I agree with David Hobson, who asserted that

> Sometimes we are so close to a subject or an activity we can scarcely see it. One of the fundamental benefits of doing teacher research is the opportunity it affords for perceiving our world a little more freshly. One of the purposes of the research process is render the familiar a little strange. We want both things at once, to be close to the matter at hand, but also to develop the perspective that comes from a degree of distance. This is especially problematic in the world of classroom teacher where what one *does* is so close to who one *is*. (Hobson, 2001, p. 8)

This study provided an optimal opportunity for me to explore who I am, as an Afrocentric educator, and how my cultural identity shapes what I do in my classroom.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND UNRESEARCHABLE QUESTIONS

Teaching is such an intimate enterprise that it is difficult to demarcate where the teaching and learning intersect. Consequently, it is hard to talk about teachers without some mention of the students. The intent of this study was to focus on the teacher with the students in the backdrop. This study attempted to understand the decision-making process that occurs in a Black history class. The primary questions guiding the research were:

- How does a self-proclaimed Afrocentric educator's racial identity/self-concept shape instructional practice when teaching a Black history class to African American adolescents?

- What curriculum decisions does an African American teacher make about how to plan an American Civil Rights unit?

- How are discussions about the sensitive issues of race and racism facilitated?

- How does an African American teacher of Black history promote relevancy and bridge the gaps among school culture, the student's home culture, and the culture of power?

These guiding questions hinge on the premise that the teacher is a decision-maker. Teaching is not a random act. It involves ends and means. It involves knowing variables at work in planning and implementation. It involves assessment, evaluation, and alternatives. The research question for this study holds much promise in shedding light on how conscious educators might encourage Black adolescents to make connections between Black history and contemporary America.

Conceptual Framework: Making Meaning

Teaching is not an art to be perfected. While perfection may well be an admirable goal, it forever eludes us because of the constant need to adapt and tailor the artistry of teaching to address to ever changing needs of students. Grossman's (1990) model was useful to this study because it speaks to the various domains of knowledge that converge to inform teacher decision and instructional practices.

In order to conceptualize fully the decision-making process that occurred in this research, it is important to understand the various domains which inform the teacher's knowledge base. According to Pamela L. Grossman, "While researchers differ in their definitions of various components, four general areas of teacher knowledge can be seen as the cornerstones of the emerging work on professional knowledge for teaching: general pedagogical knowledge; subject matter knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; and knowledge of context" (Grossman, 1990, p. 5). Teachers draw upon each of these components when making decisions about their instructional practices.

Figure 1.1 is an adaptation of Grossman's (1990) work which served as a conceptual model that represents the four domains that overlap and influence an Afrocentric educator's decision-making process regarding instructional practices and selection of Afrocentric content in an intraracial setting. This model differs from Grossman's (1990) work in that it considers self-knowledge, Afrocentric philosophy, racial identity, and cultural congruence. It characterizes the various domains which overlap to form the basis for instructional decisions and practices. These domains include Afrocentric Philosophy and Racial Identity, Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Afrocentric Pedagogy, Knowledge of Learners and Community, and Subject Matter Knowledge. As reflected in

the Afrocentric Teacher Decision-Maker Model, the decision-making process occurs

within the context of an intraracial setting, which is conducive to introspection.
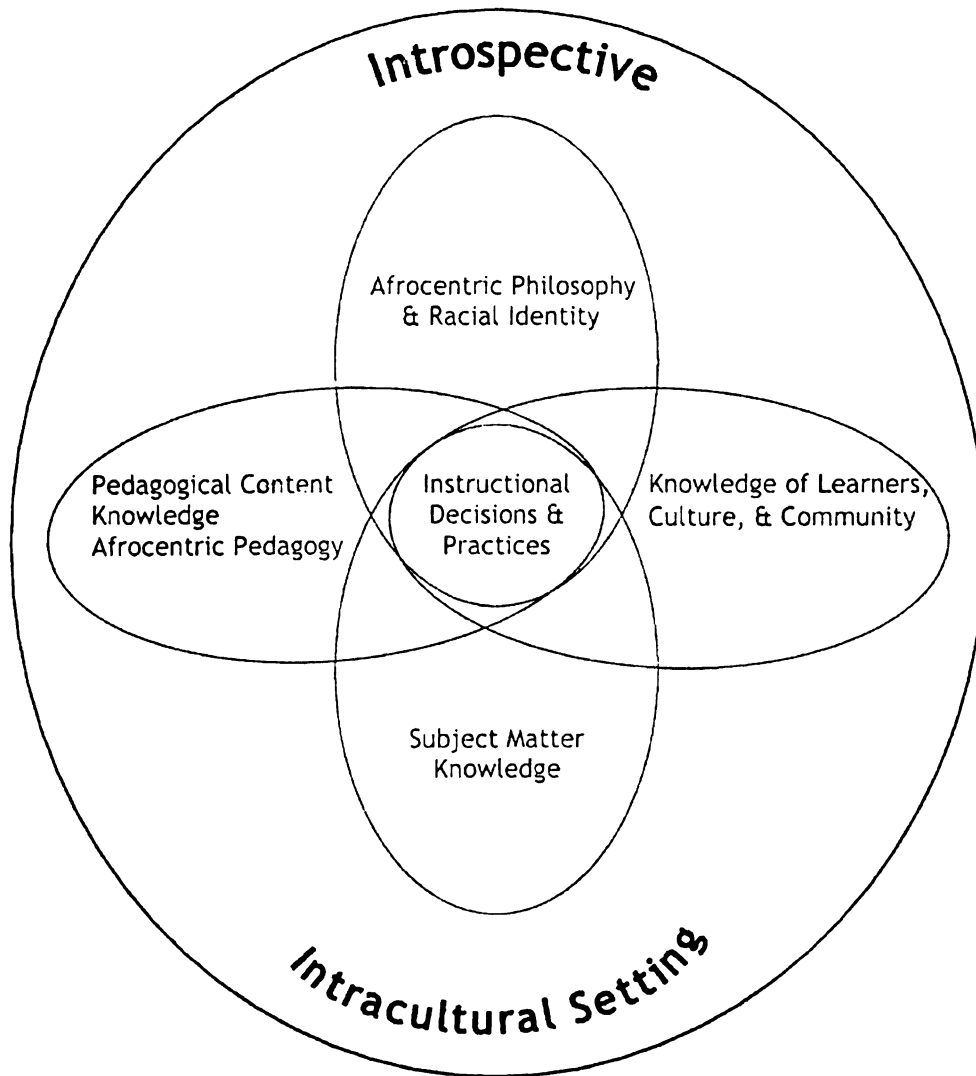
Figure 1.1: Afrocentric Teacher as Decision-Maker Model

For the purposes of this research, each domain of the Afrocentric Teacher As

Decision-Maker Model is defined as:

> **Afrocentric Philosophy and Racial Identity:** For the Afrocentric
> educator, the Afrocentric philosophy is one that is based on the "African
> Cultural System." It places the culture of persons of African descent at
> the center of one's worldview and teaching. It seeks to negate the

negative imagery which surrounds the African experience. This philosophy is tied to the teacher's racial identity. Racial identity refers to the teacher's self-concept, which is based on their racial or ethnic heritage (Cross, 1991).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Afrocentric Pedagogy: Pedagogical content knowledge addresses the teacher's ability to combine the content knowledge of an Afrocentric curriculum with instructional practices which are adapted to the learning styles of African American students. Pedagogical content knowledge, according to Wilson, Shulman, and Richert, "goes beyond knowledge of the subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching... Pedagogical content knowledge also includes a knowledge of what makes the content difficult; the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them" (Wilson, Shulman, and Richert, 1987, p. 8). Afrocentric pedagogy is defined as "a pedagogy that empowers student intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impact knowledge skills and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17).

Knowledge of Learners and Community: It is important for the teachers to have knowledge of their students and the communities that they represent. According to Peter Murrell, "Good teachers are trusted and respected by the community. They share the parent and students' common cultural assumptions and experiential background" (Murrell in Perry and Fraser, 1993, p. 241). A shared cultural background is ideal; however, a knowledge and respect of the learners experience, culture and community values is sufficient.

Subject Matter Knowledge: It is important for the teachers to have expert knowledge discipline and related disciplines. This allows them to plan developmentally appropriate lessons which may be interdisciplinary and thereby taught more comprehensively.

Together, these domains shed light on how an Afrocentric educator approaches the

difficult topic of teaching about issues of race and racism. As a scholar of Black Studies

whose interests lie both in teaching the rich curriculum and in empowering my students, I

believe that much can be learned from the teaching of Black history from the teacher's

perspective. It would be quite difficult to embrace such a program without a personal

investment and openness to experiencing an internal transformation (Nieto, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1992).

I adapted Grossman's (1990) model because I feel strongly that teachers do not arbitrarily make decisions about what happens in their classrooms. While Grossman (1990) provided valuable insights into teacher knowledge, I believe that knowledge is rooted in culture and philosophy and, therefore, I modified her model to address my Afrocentric philosophy and racial identity. I coupled Grossman's (1990) model with Wilson, Shulman, and Richert's Pedagogical Reasoning Model (1987) in order to understand better how teachers operationalize decisions and learn from those decisions.

Wilson, Shulman, and Richert's Pedagogical Reasoning Model (1987) informed this study as it offers a framework to analyze the decision-making process that I experienced in teaching the American Civil Right Movement to African American adolescents. The *Pedagogical Reasoning Model* occurs in six stages - comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and new comprehension. The following figure is a diagram of the model as presented by Wilson, Shulman, and Richert in *150 Different Ways of Knowing* (1987):
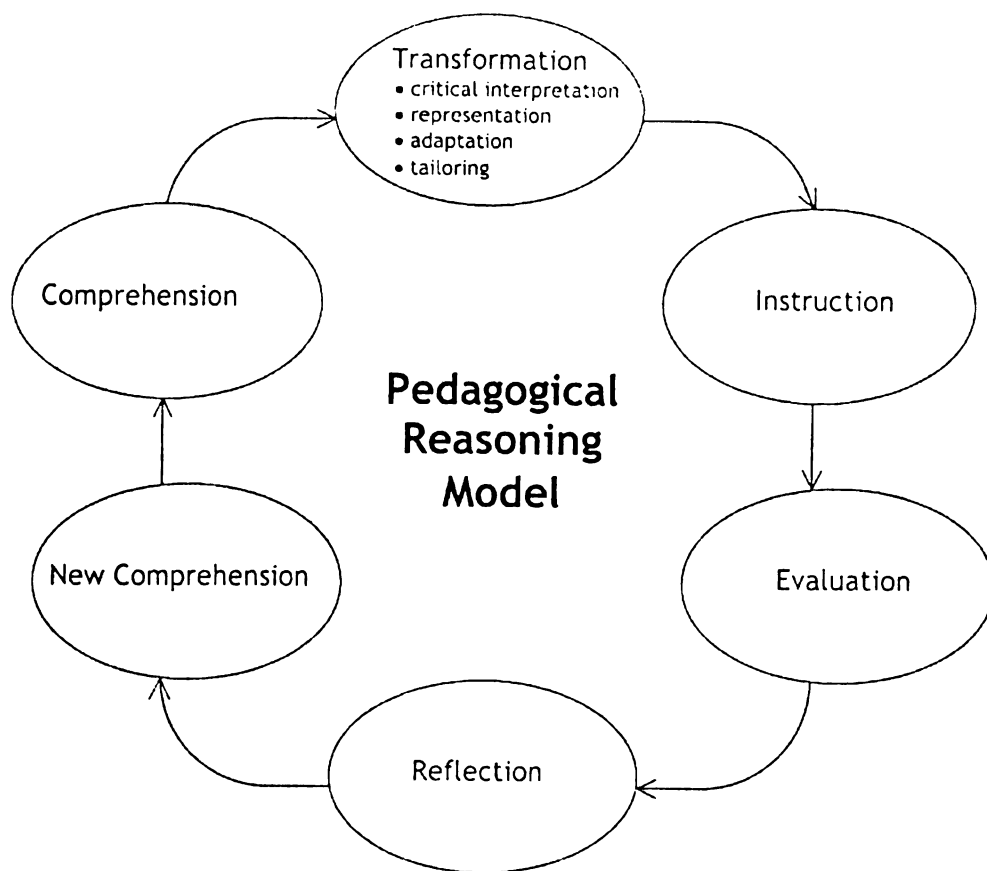
Figure 1.2: Wilson, Shulman, & Richert's *Pedagogical Reasoning Model* (1987)

According to this model, comprehension occurs first, which calls for the teacher having a good grasp on the subject matter being taught. Second comes transformation, which means teachers must decide on how they can best present the subject matter to students in such a way as to promote comprehension of the content being taught. During the transformation phase, the teacher must take into account what they know about their students as learners and tailor instruction to meet their specific learning needs. After thoroughly planning for teaching, instruction occurs, after which the teacher evaluates the students' understanding. The cycle nears a close, with the teacher reflecting on instructional practices and

everything that occurred during the lesson. Finally, the lesson ends with the teacher's new comprehension, which informs future lessons. The *Pedagogical Reasoning Model* (Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987) helped me better to examine my instruction practices and decision-making, as well as map my learning as a result of teaching the Civil Rights unit.

This report chronicles my story as I attempted to guide my students through the rough terrain of racism in order that they might be inspired to excel despite its existence. No one benefits from teaching hate; however, due to the emotionally charged nature of Black history, it stands to reason that an exploration of this curriculum will inevitably unearth feelings of frustration and hostility. I contend that most responsible educators do not want to lead their students to a place of discomfort and leave them there. To that end it is important for teachers to have a framework for understanding how one might responsibly impart emotionally charged and potentially volatile information to African American adolescents.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEWING THE LITERATURE:

JOINING THE CONVERSATION

This study is informed by four bodies of literature that address different yet related aspects of the challenges embedded in teaching Black Studies. First, it is important to understand the historical context which fostered the development of the field of Black Studies, as well as how it has evolved over the span of four decades. Second, one should consider the Multicultural Education Movement, which can be seen as a one of the legacies of the Black Studies Movement. Third, one can examine the literature on nigresence to understand how racial identity might impact the pedagogical practices and decisions made by an African American educator who teaches Black Studies in an intraracial class setting. Finally, this study draws upon a fourth body of literature which addresses Afrocentricity and culturally relevant teaching strategies and the impact that this teaching/learning experience has on both the teacher and the student.

The Black Studies Movement: Proponents and Opponents

In reviewing the literature that surrounds the development of Black Studies, one will find that when Black students mobilized themselves and demanded Black Studies, they were met with a great deal of opposition. It is typical with the development of any new field that many issues will need to be resolved. Due to the controversial nature of Black

Studies which challenged much of the traditional curriculum, it comes as no surprise that it was met with a great deal of opposition. It is apparent that the acceptance of Black Studies would expose the omissions of a purely Eurocentric perspective, which has been held up as the "entire" truth for centuries.

Scholars have debated nearly all facets of Black Studies, including its structure, content, aim, definition, scope, and relevance. Despite variations in how different institutions define Black Studies, in general Black Studies programs have similar objectives. As stated by Stephen J. Wright, the specific objectives for Black Studies should include:

> Acquainting the students with the history, literature, art, and music, of Black men, African and American.

> Providing young Black Americans with valid and reliable information concerning the social, economic, educational, and political problems confronting Black people in the United States as a basis for leadership responsibilities in and for the Black community.

> Providing young white Americans with essential the same type of information indicated in No. 2 above as a demythologizing experience and as a basis for the understanding they need to live responsibly in a multi-racial society.

> Examining the extent, causes, nature of, and possible remedies for racism in America.

> Developing teachers and stimulating scholars in the field of Black Studies.

> Stimulating research in the field of Black Studies. (Wright, 1970, p. 365)

One can glean from these expansive objectives that when Black students indicted the American educational system and demanded Black Studies, their demands raised questions of academic legitimacy, philosophy, theoretical framework, and intellectual ideology. These issues had to be addressed and resolved in order to facilitate the development of an

acceptable Black Studies program. Due to the fact that most educational institutions had not addressed the importance of the Black experience, critical questions became both how to develop Black Studies and who was qualified to resolve issues regarding the structure and focus of a Black Studies curriculum.

Although the critics of Black Studies varied, most tended to be very conservative. They insisted that if Black Studies programs were to be created, they must not be developed too hastily. They feared that altering the traditional school curriculum too much too quickly would be detrimental to their institutions. They criticized Black Studies, arguing that it lacked intellectual substance. E. Vontress, Associate Professor of Education at George Washington University, stated that "As an academic discipline Black Studies is a lot of mumbo jumbo. The objectives are elusive, the content weak, the methods questionable, the materials pitifully inadequate, and the assessment procedures totally inappropriate ... They [Black Studies programs] are in danger of becoming revival meetings which may have some therapeutic value but little intellectual substance" (Vontress, 1970, p. 200).

One can see from these types of statements why Black Studies was so controversial. Professor Vontress dismissed Black Studies as "mumbo jumbo" without fully exploring its potential as an interdisciplinary field that could open the doors of inclusion for Blacks and many other underrepresented groups in American academia. Like Vontress, other critics further argued that Black Studies lacked academic substance and was often too community oriented. Some of these opponents of Black Studies went so far as to say that the strong community orientation encouraged Black students to become agitators in mainstream society.

In listing some of the major objections to Black Studies, Donald Henderson remarked in an interview that "Black Studies programs are the core efforts in the training of militant revolutionary agents to do battle with the white university community on a local level and the larger white community on a wider level" (Richards, 1971, p. 11). It should be noted that while Black students were widely criticized for their militant tactics, few of these critics fully grasped the injustice being done to Black students as they received an education that had no direct relevance to their lives. Black students were often forced to sit in classrooms that either ignored or misrepresented the Black experience. They wanted an education that would prepare them to become proactive leaders in their communities.

Dr. James Turner asserted, "Black education must make students consistently conscious of struggle and commitment... Black Studies programs must develop youth with a revolutionary sense of identity. Therefore, any Black Studies program which purports to be educating Black students for fuller participation in the American mainstream is counter productive to Black peoples' needs for development and self-control. Moreover, it is essential to our liberation that Black youth are motivated to resist-not accept-the mainstream of the system that oppresses and destroys our people" (Turner, 1971, p. 15). As one can surmise from Dr. Turner's comments, he contended that Black students who are solely educated with mainstream philosophies cannot adequately address the needs of Black community. While this may not be generalized to "all" Black students, the fact remains that Black students unearthed a deficiency that had not been addressed in predominately white institutions.

While one would think that educational institutions would have encouraged students to try to make meaningful and positive changes in their communities, when Black students

attempted to use their education as a means of social change they were accused of "politicizing" education. Professor Sidney Hooks maintained this position, saying, "Black Studies has been politicized, partly by threats and partly by actual coercion. In various places where Black Studies are controlled and taught by Black students, we find only one point of view expressed" (Hooks, 1969, p. 40). While Hooks saw the danger of expressing only one point of view through Black Studies, he failed to acknowledge that the traditional school curriculum has been expressing only one point of view for centuries. This point of view is that of the dominant culture, and it has seldom made room for alternative viewpoints.

Hooks (1969) further warned against the danger of politicizing universities. He failed to acknowledge that universities were already very much tied into politics. James Turner challenged Hooks' (1969) assertion, saying,

> The university, in America, like other cooperative bodies is a political microcosm of the society at large. Black educators and students should understand that in situations of oppression education is fundamentally political. Through interpretation of the past, and evaluation of the present, education has great influence on the consciousness of the people. (Turner, 1971, p. 15)

Since one can see that institutions of higher learning are already tied into the political process, one is left to believe that the opponents of Black Studies feared that it might introduce the "wrong" type of political agenda in schools.

Unlike the most staunch and outspoken opponents of the inclusion of Black Studies who refused to concede that Black Studies should be included in the curriculum, there were those who believed that the call for Black Studies was legitimate as long as it was instituted properly. These people feared that asking for a separate Black Studies program would segregate the curriculum. Furthermore, they maintained that the fact that these

programs would be separate would allow them to fail without having an impact on the reputation of the university. Critics such as Kenneth Clark and Bayard Rustin further argued that by asking for a separate Black Studies program, Black students were reversing the gains of the American Civil Rights Movement. They contended that Black students naively gave white administrators the opportunity hastily to design inferior courses and programs that were doomed to fail. Rustin and others maintained that Blacks must receive the same education as Whites in order to be able to compete in American society. In agreement with Wilkins, Clark, and Rustin, Clemmont E. Vontress contended,

> ... There is something unfortunate about Black Studies. Instead of mollifying racism in this country, Black Studies appears to be schismatizing further the races. This is done by emphasizing racial differences; it is done by endorsing and instituting campus separatism. Instead of taking the leadership in bringing about a more racially harmonious society, colleges and universities are inadvertently contributing to two separate and unequal societies. (Vontress, 1970, p. 200)

Vontress fails to take into account that racial autonomy does not necessarily translate into racial inferiority. Embedded in his statement is the underlying assumption that separate (in the case of Black and Whites) will inevitably mean unequal. He seems to suggest that anything created by and for Blacks is likely to be inferior to something that is designed by and generated for Whites.

Nathan Hare addressed the criticisms of the integrationist. He expressed a resentment to their accusations and commented,

> Appalling is the only word I know that begins to describe the sneaky way in which critics like Roy Wilkins accuse us of separatism. Our cries for more Black professors and Black students [as well as Black courses] have padded white colleges with more Blacks in two years than decades of whimpering for integration ever did. (Hare, 1969, p. 56)

The integrationist scholars refused to acknowledge the merits of autonomous Black Studies programs or accept the notion that these courses were not being proposed to merely be "rap sessions" for Black students. Black Studies courses could potentially be a powerful vehicle for helping Black students to understand the many dynamics of the unique oppression that Blacks have experienced in this country.

The integrationists seemingly did not take into account that many Black students would not leave their universities like their White counterparts to enter white middle class lifestyles. Likewise, Black students were likely to experience racial prejudice that made it necessary for them to have the same education as White students, as well as a supplemental education. This point is argued by Ewart Gunier, who in 1969 organized the first Afro-American Studies program at Harvard University, saying, "It is in Black Studies that our Black youth, especially those on white campuses, have been learning the great lessons needed to survive in a hostile environment: how to combine the training of the mind with struggles for justice, equality and above all else for some measure of control over one's destiny" (Gunier, 1975, p. 19).

It is interesting to note how critics of Black Studies often distorted its objective. Rather than concede that Black Studies programs were a needed corrective for an otherwise inadequate and biased education, they sought to diminish the legitimacy of Black Studies. Despite strong objections, it has become apparent that in order for American history to be complete, it must offer a holistic presentation of the experiences of all American people. Critics of Black Studies must acknowledge that their Eurocentric perspective fails to convey the entire story. James Turner best emphasizes this fact by saying,

White studies is a system, which defines the activities and experiences of white Western people as the universal yardstick of human existence. Black Studies challenges this assumption and asserts that white is not now, nor has it ever been intrinsically right or complete. (Turner, 1971, p. 13).

Black Studies might best serve as an impetus for further studies of other marginalized groups.

Much of the development in the field of Black Studies has occurred in higher education. It seems that a parallel movement in the K-12 system has not been prevalent. Knowing the history of this developmental process is useful in setting goals for today's Black Studies classes at all levels. One can see that the objectives established by university scholars are not always easily transferable to the K-12 educational system. The higher education objectives are likely to be developmentally inappropriate for a secondary educator.

It appears that in most instances, Black Studies efforts have been folded into multicultural or Ethnic Studies programs, which originally sprang forth from the adamant demands of Black students for inclusion. There are, however, vestiges of the Black Studies movement in the public school system, churches, and community centers. These remains may exist in the form of a Black literature or history course, Black history programs and celebrations, and on a larger scale, African-centered schools.

One can argue that in order to insure its forward progression, Black Studies must strive to empower Black students. This means that Black Studies courses must consider the needs, interests, concern, and input of Black students. This is in keeping with many constructivist efforts, which seek to acknowledge that the acquisition of knowledge is an active and interactive process. Students are no longer expected to swallow the conclusions

of others and regurgitate prepackaged viewpoints. Today's students should be empowered to construct meaning by integrating that which they already know with that which they want to learn. Consequently, decisions have to be made about age appropriate subject matter and behavioral objectives which are developmentally appropriate for adolescents.

If one looks at the literature surrounding the development of Black Studies as a field, it becomes apparent that the call for Black Studies was met with many apprehensions. Arguments that Black Studies lacked intellectual substance and could potentially have the affect of militarizing students were actually statements that were aimed at unnamed teachers of Black Studies (Asante, 1991a, 1991b). In light of the controversy which surrounded the development of Black Studies in its early stages, it stands to reason that teachers of Black Studies are a rich source of data. This is likely because it is these teachers who are the visionaries and enactors of the Black Studies curriculum. Likewise, the racial identity and philosophical belief of the teacher who implements the Black Studies curriculum is apt to have a great impact on the contour of the given courses. This study seeks to shed light on how a Black educator might approach the teaching of Black history to adolescents in an intraracial setting. Black Studies programs are in need of investigation as they are a potentially rich source of data on what is being done to address the cultural needs of African American students.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

A retrospective analysis of the development of Black Studies reveals an interesting

relationship between Black Studies and multicultural education (Banks, 1992, 1993). It is

difficult to look at Black Studies as merely one aspect of multicultural education. This

would fail to acknowledge the extent to which the development of Black Studies led to the

subsequent development of other ethnic and gender studies, which have combined to

provide a more holistic view of the human experience. The multicultural literature

informed this study because multiculturalists have done a more extensive job of rethinking

objectives within the field to be more inclusive, age appropriate, and implemental in the K-

12 system.

Today, it is more common to hear discussions about the inclusion of diverse

populations in the K-12 educational system than demands for Black Studies. There is also a

wealth of multicultural curriculum resources to enhance classroom instruction. Some

might even go so far as to say that most public school educators are receptive to the notion

that affirming diversity is important even if they feel ill equipped to do so. Despite these

advances, there is still a great deal to be learned about how multicultural education, in its

many forms, is enacted in the classroom.

According to Banks (1995), the birth and evolution of multicultural education is

directly linked to the early Black history movement. Banks (1993), Gay (1990), and Grant

(1994) have each played significant roles in the formulation of multicultural education in

the United States. Banks analyzed the historical development of multicultural education

and discerned that from 1970 to the present, the field has gone through four phases:

> **Phase 1:** The first phase of multicultural education emerged when
> educators who had interests and specializations in the history and

culture of ethnic minority groups initiated individual and institutional actions to incorporate the concepts, information, and theories from ethnic studies into the school and teacher-education curricula. Consequently, the first phase of multicultural education was ethnic studies.

Phase 2: A second phase of multicultural education emerged when educators interested in ethnic studies began realizing that inserting ethnic studies content into the school and teacher-education curricula was necessary but not sufficient to bring about school reform that would respond to the unique needs of ethnic minority students and help all students to develop more democratic racial and ethnic attitudes. Multiethnic education was the second phase of multicultural education. Its aim was to bring about structural and systematic changes in the total school that were designed to increase educational equality.

Phase 3: A third phase of multicultural education emerged when other groups who viewed themselves as victims of the society and the school, such as woman and people with disabilities, demanded the incorporation of their histories, cultures, and voices into the curricula and structure of the schools, colleges, and universities.

Phase 4: The forth and current phase of multicultural education consists of the development of theory, research, and practice that interrelate variables connected to race, class, and gender. (Banks & Banks, 1993, p. 11)

It should be noted that educational institutions across this country define their programs differently. Despite Banks' aforementioned framework, there is no universal definition for multicultural education. The definitions provided in the next section are from the experts in the field. According to the experts, the definition of multicultural education has changed with the evolution of the American society. Covert and Gorski (1997) stated that multicultural education is a formative movement in education that produces critically thinking, socially active members of society. It is not simply a change of curriculum or the addition of an activity. It is a movement which elicits new attitudes, new approaches, and a new dedication to laying the foundation for the transformation of society.

Ideally, multiculturalists maintain multicultural education promotes learning for "all" students (Banks, 1996). They believe it produces socially conscious, critically thinking members of society. It honors diversity while teaching all children to become effective and participating members of a democracy. It represents individuality while promoting respect for others. It emphasizes the contributions of the various groups (e.g., ethnic, gender, religious, sexual orientation, etc.) that make up the population of the world. It focuses on how to learn rather than on learning specific information (Perry and Fraser, 1993).

Tesconi (1995) provided analyses of multicultural education that has been shaped by several assumptions. Among the most noteworthy are:

1. The term multiculturalism, as typically used in educational literature, speaks to the reality of group diversity, cultural and otherwise;

2. Advocates of multicultural education are in pursuit of a generally valued, but ambitious ideal;

3. The theoretical/social philosophical foundations of multi-cultural education are derived from the ideology of cultural pluralism;

4. Any assessment of the multicultural education movement and proposed educational policies and practices favoring multiculturalism must begin with an analysis of cultural pluralism ideology; cultural pluralism ideology emphasizes ethnic group diversity, while multicultural education addresses diversity in virtually all its forms, ethnic and otherwise;

5. Multicultural education is more broadly based than education for cultural pluralism;

6. Cultural diversity and equal opportunity could be eroded, given the rush to practice multi-cultural education in the face of ambiguities and unknowns.

Tesconi (1995) also stated that individuals all know, or should know, that homogeneity has not and does not characterize American society. He further elaborated, saying that

they know how great a myth the "melting pot" turned out to be. Nevertheless, everyone should also be aware of how much assimilation actually occurred.

According to Gollnick and Chinn (1983a, 1983b), before educators are given the responsibility of a classroom, they need the knowledge and the skill for working effectively in our culturally diverse society. An education concept that addresses cultural diversity and the provision of equal educational opportunity in schools is multicultural education. This concept is based on the following fundamental beliefs and assumptions:

> The U.S. culture has been fashioned by the contributions of many diverse cultural groups into an interrelated whole.

> Cultural diversity and the interaction among different groups strengthen the fiber of U.S. society.

> Social justice and equal opportunity for all people are inalienable rights of all citizens.

> The distribution of power should be distributed equitably among members of all ethnic groups.

> The education system provides the critical function of molding attitudes and values necessary for continuation of a democratic society. (Gollnick & Chinn, 1983b, p. 29)

According to Katz (1995), multicultural education has been developed as one methodology to counter racism and enhance interracial attitudes, but a decade has passed and rhetoric rather than reality prevails. Katz continues that multicultural education, as a concept and form of curriculum, raises skepticism on the part of many educators. Often people infer a bias when the issue of teaching from a multicultural perspective is raised.

Beyond simply defining multicultural education, it is important to understand the philosophical underpinnings upon which the field rests. Multicultural education is based on the belief that all people should be given respect for their social, ethnic, religious or

cultural background. Cultural pluralism in American society is the foundation of multicultural education. The concept of cultural pluralism is based on the promise that individuals and groups should maintain their pride, dignity, and identity in their own cultural heritage. Therefore, a primary focus of multicultural education is to help students develop a positive self-concept and self-image.

The process of multicultural education should provide a setting for diverse groups to learn about different cultural heritages while feeling pride in their own culture. Likewise, multicultural education aims to reduce racism and discrimination, through planning classroom educational experiences, which include information about the customs, heritage, and contributions of various ethnic groups to society (Banks, 1991). The development of interpersonal skills, which will assist the growth of increased understanding and acceptance, should be a part of the multicultural classroom experience. These teaching strategies are based on multicultural principles, which should encourage positive interaction and human behavior between individuals of different ethnic or racial groups.

Equally important to this basic tenet of multicultural education is the nature of teacher/pupil interaction, the quality of teacher attitudes, and expectations toward diverse students. The concern for positive interaction, attitudes, and expectations relates to another major goal of the multicultural program, that all students reach their highest academic potential and mastery of basic skills in order to succeed in life (Nieto, 2000).

What then are the goals of multicultural education? According to the Michigan Department of Education (1998), the following recommendations of goals on multicultural education were developed in order to provide educators with a framework for planning instruction that reflects the vast diversity that exists in public schools:

A positive self-image in understanding one's owns culture and an appreciation for culture of others;

A clear understanding of one's value systems, cultures, customs, and histories as well as those of others different from oneself;

An appreciation of the individuals and cultural differences;

A sound preparation for a productive participation in one or more cultures;

A desire to contribute to and thrive in a culturally diverse nation and world;

A respect for the freedom and dignity of all individuals, an acceptance of the responsibilities of sustaining and enlarging the institutions of all people in a complex, multicultural, independent society, which will contribute to greater freedom; and

A wide spectrum of choices for careers and of culturally evolved lifestyles choices, which are based on each student's desires, aspiration, and capabilities.

I cannot speak to the extent that the Michigan Department of Education's aforementioned framework impacts what goes on in schools in the State of Michigan around the issue of diversity. However, in my many years of public school teaching I was never introduced to this framework.

One can argue that nationally, school curriculums have undergone much revision but there is need for more. There have been attempts to reform the public school curriculum in order to make it more representative of all of America's racial and ethnic groups (Mattai, 1992). Most reform has been implemented through additives, which include content about racial/ethnic minorities, women, and physically challenged persons. Often we see the celebration of heritage months take the place of innovative curriculum reform, which might be seen as the first step toward multicultural education reform.

Sonia Nieto urges the public to be leery of multicultural education packages which promise a quick fix. She believes that multicultural education must be responsive to the needs and readiness of the community. Consequently, multicultural education should be evolving alongside our society. She warns that pre-packaging multicultural education would underscore the extent to which multicultural education must be tailored for specific communities.

Nieto's Model of Multicultural Education contrasts a monocultural perspective with a range of four levels of a multicultural education that include tolerance; acceptance; respect; and affirmation, solidarity and critique. The first level, tolerance, is the lowest level of acceptance, which basically rests on the premise that individuals have the right to be different and exist without harassment. Tolerance is often directly linked to political climate and contemporary social ethos. The second level, acceptance, acknowledges and in some ways embraces differences. An attempt is made to recognize culture as manifested through language, learning styles, family dynamics, etc. The third level, respect, means that culture differences are honored and seen as an asset. Finally, the fourth level, affirmation, solidarity, and critique, is based on the premise that cultures may clash but, nonetheless, we cannot avoid conflicts. We should accept them as a natural part of the learning process.

Nieto's "Levels of Multicultural Education" framework (2000) is worthy of examination when trying to operationalize a multicultural education program. Nieto expressed reluctance to present a model out of fear that it may be misconstrued and "it will be viewed as static and arbitrary, rather than as messy, complex, and contradictory..." (Nieto, 2000, p. 354). The following table is Nieto's framework:

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Table 2.1: Levels of Multicultural Education (Nieto, 2000, pp. 342-343)

	Characteristics of Multicultural Education				
	Monocultural Education	Tolerance	Acceptance	Respect	Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique
Antiracist/Anti-discrimantory	Racism is unacknowledged. Policies and practices that support discrimination are left in place. These include low expectations and refusal to use students' natural resources (such as language and culture) in instruction. Only a sanitized and "safe" curriculum is in place.	Policies and practices that challenge racism and discrimination are initiated. No overt signs of discrimination are acceptable (e.g., name calling, graffiti, blatantly racist and sexist textbooks or curriculum). ESL programs are in place for students who speak other languages.	Policies and practices that acknowledge differences are in place. Textbooks reflect some diversity. Transitional bilingual programs are available. Curriculum is more inclusive of the histories and perspectives of a broader range of people.	Policies and practices that respect diversity are more evident, including maintenance bilingual education. Ability grouping is not permitted. Curriculum is more explicitly antiracist and honest. It is "safe" to talk about racism, sexism, and discrimination.	Policies and practices that affirm diversity and challenge racism are developed. There are high expectations for all students; students' language and culture are used in instruction and curriculum. Two-way bilingual programs are in place wherever possible. Everyone takes responsibility for challenging racism and discrimination.

Table 2.1: Levels of Multicultural Education (Nieto, 2000, pp. 342-343)

		Characteristics of Multicultural Education				
	Monocultural Education	Tolerance	Acceptance	Respect	Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique
Basic	Defines education as the 3 R's and the "cannon." "Cultural literacy" is understood within a mono-cultural framework. All important knowledge is essentially European American. This Euro-centric view is reflected throughout the curriculum, instructional strategies, and environment for learning.	Education is defined more expansively and includes attention to some important information about other groups.	The diversity of lifestyles and values of groups other than the dominant one are acknowledged in some content, as can be seen in some courses and school activities.	Education is defined as knowledge that is necessary for living in a complex and pluralistic society. As such, it includes much content that is multicultural. *Additive multiculturalism* is the goal.	Basic education is multicultural education. All students learn to speak a second language and are familiar with a broad range of knowledge.
Pervasive	No attention is paid to student diversity.	A multicultural perspective is evident in some activities, such as Black History Month and Cinco de Mayo, and in some curriculum and materials. There may be an itinerant "multicultural teacher."	Student diversity is acknowledged, as can be seen not only in "Holidays and Heroes" but also in consideration of different learning styles, values, and languages. A "multicultural program" may be in place.	The learning environment is imbued with multicultural education. It can be seen in classroom interactions, materials, and the culture of the school.	Multicultural education pervades the curriculum; instructional strategies; and interactions among teachers, students, and the community. It can be seen everywhere: bulletin boards, the lunchroom, and assemblies.

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Table 2.1: Levels of Multicultural Education (Nieto, 2000, pp. 342-343)

	Characteristics of Multicultural Education				
	Monocultural Education	Tolerance	Acceptance	Respect	Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique
Important for All Students	Ethnic and/or women's studies, if available, are only for students from that group. This is a frill that is not important for other students to know.	Ethnic and women's studies are only offered as isolated courses.	Many students are expected to take part in curriculum that stresses diversity. A variety of languages are taught.	All students take part in courses that reflect diversity. Teachers are involved in overhauling the curriculum to be open to such diversity.	All courses are completely multicultural in essence. The curriculum for all students is enriched. "Marginal students" no longer exist.
Education for Social Justice	Education supports the status quo. Thinking and acting are separate.	Education is somewhat, although tenuously, linked to community projects and activities.	The role of the schools in social change is acknowledged. Some changes that reflect this attitude begin to be felt: Students take part in community service.	Students take part in community activities that reflect their social concerns.	The curriculum and instructional techniques are based on an understanding of social justice as central to education. Reflection and action are important components of learning.
Process	Education is primarily content: who, what, where, when. The "great White men" version of history is propagated. Education is static.	Education is both content and process. "Why" and "how" questions are tentatively broached.	Education is both content and process. "Why" and "how" questions are stressed more. Sensitivity and understanding of teachers toward their students are more evident.	Education is both content and process. Students and teachers begin to ask, "What if?" Teachers empathize with students and their families.	Education is an equal mix of content and process. It is dynamic. Teachers and students are empowered. Everyone in the school is becoming a multicultural person.

Table 2.1: Levels of Multicultural Education (Nieto, 2000, pp. 342-343)

	Characteristics of Multicultural Education				
	Monocultural Education	Tolerance	Acceptance	Respect	Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique
Critical Pedagogy	Education is domesticating. Reality is represented as static, finished, and flat.	Students and teachers begin to question the status quo.	Students and teachers are beginning a dialogue. Students' experiences, cultures, and languages are used as one source of their learning.	Students and teachers use critical dialogue as the primary basis for their education. They see and understand different perspectives.	Students and teachers are involved in a "subversive activity." Decision-making and social skills are the basis of the curriculum.

Although Nieto acknowledged the limitations of her model, it provides an important framework for understanding multicultural education at its many stages.

Changing demographics makes it increasingly more important for public schools to adopt a framework for action which will help to expose educators and students to issues of cultural diversity. Even in those rare instances where we find viable examples of multicultural education in the K-12 educational system, there are few examples of case studies of teachers. There is definitely a need for studies of teachers who are grappling with the practical issues of how to plan and implement a multicultural program of study which is liberatory and relevant to today's students. Afrocentric/multicultural education can potentially improve the quality of schooling for all students. This dissertation sought to understand how the teacher incorporates personal beliefs and curriculum goals to shape classroom instruction on Afrocentric topics.

Nieto's model covers a broad range of levels. There is no excuse for anyone to be not to be able to commit to some level of multiculturalism. Many diverse groups have blended to make American culture. Students must be challenged with well developed critical thinking activities, primary sources, and people resources which will enable them to construct their own meanings and draw their own conclusions. All students must be culturally literate in order that they might be more knowledgeable of the diversity that makes up America and the world.

RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

This study also draws upon a third body of literature regarding racial identity development to determine the extent to which racial identity shapes curriculum

development and pedagogical practices in a Black history class. Racial identity theories were developed by a small pool of psychologists who identified several discernible features which are characteristic of African Americans as they heighten their self-awareness and gain a better understanding of the role of race and racism in shaping their life experiences. The evolution of racial identity can best be described by William Cross' nigresence model, known as the Negro-to-Black Conversion Experience. This process was described in detail in his book, *Shades of Black: Diversity in American Identity* (1991). Cross identified five stages of development, which include the Pre-Encounter stage, the Encounter stage, the Immersion-Emersion stage, the Internalization stage, and the Commitment stage.

The Pre-Encounter stage is a stage of innocence wherein little is known about racial issues. The Encounter stage is generally marked by some eye opening experience that forces an individual to accept the fact that racism exists. The Immersion-Emersion stage is an intense period where an individual begins to reject her old uninformed identity in order to take on a new more radical identity. Hypersensitivity to issues of race is generally characteristic of this stage. The Internalization and Commitment stages are overlapping stages. During these stages, individuals are able to channel their frustrations into productive self-reflective activities and rethink the notion that "all Whites are evil." This stage is similar to the initial encounter stage in the sense that individuals are able to rejoin society and appreciate racial and cultural diversity. It is during these stages that individuals can become dedicated to bringing about social justice within the Black community. Becoming aware of the stages of racial identity development has provided a fundamental understanding of how my life and racial self-concept have affected my teaching practices.

While the nigresence models by Cross (1991) and others are useful in explaining modifications in racial attitudes over time, the within group variability reflected in the consciousness of African Americans poses some limitations. More specifically, while these models suggest that they are process oriented, their "development over-time" focus is usually prevalent in the late adolescence and early adulthood period of the life cycle. The stages suggested by Cross identify how a person's racial identity could change from one stage of life to another during late adolescence/early adulthood periods. However, they fail to detail how various stages of racial identity may be revisited throughout the life cycle.

White and Parham (1990) offer a life cycle nigresence model based on an adaptation of the Cross' stages. Parham sought to determine the earliest possible stage of life that a person might experience racial identity development. Cross surmised that anything prior to late adolescence is likely to be nothing more than an imitation of parental attitudes and beliefs. Perhaps the most profound issue Parham raised is not so much that aspects of the initial nigresence episode vary with age, but that once nigresence is completed, the pressures of adulthood make it likely for a person to recycle through the stages. According to Parham, recycling does not mean the person reverts to the old (pre-encounter) identity and then traverses all the stages. Rather, he was inclined to believe that the challenge or trauma acts as a new encounter episode that exposes small or giant gaps in a person's thinking about blackness. The person recycles in order to fill such gaps (White and Parham, 1990, pp. 51-52). Like Parham, I believe that stages of racial identity can be revisited. I also believe that one can actually navigate between the stages at will rather than simply wait for some catalyzing experience. In this way, teachers who are aware of their

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racial identity can reacquaint themselves with developmental stages as they serve as a guide

for their adolescent students.

Parham raised another valuable point which suggests the encounter stage does not

necessarily have to be prompted as a reaction to an oppressive experience. I concur with

Parham's position that "African American cultural identity is an entity independent of

socially oppressive phenomenon" (White and Parham, 1990, p. 52). This distinction is

relevant to my research because I believe that studying Black history can promote an

evolution in racial identity.

The nigresence models discussed here pertain specifically to the Black experience;

however, other minorities may also experience a similar transformative experience.

Following is a Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model (R/CID) which can be applied

to any racial/ethnic.

Table 2.2: Racial/Cultural Identity Development				
Stages of Minority Development Model	Attitude Toward Self	Attitude Toward Others of the Same Minority	Attitude Toward Others of Different Minority	Attitude Toward Dominant Group
Stage 1 - Conformity	Self-depreciating	Group-depreciating	Discriminatory	Group-appreciating
Stage 2 - Dissonance	Conflict between self-depreciating and appreciating	Conflict between group-depreciating and group-appreciating	Conflict between dominant-held views of minority hierarchy and feelings of shared experience	Conflict between group-appreciating and group-depreciating
Stage 3 - Resistance and Immersion	Self-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Conflict between dominant-held views of minority hierarchy and feeling of shared experience	Group-depreciating
Stage 4 - Introspection	Concern with basis of self-appreciation	Concern with nature of unequivocal appreciation	Concern with ethnocentric basis for judging others	Concern with the basis of group-depreciating
Stage 5 - Integrative Awareness	Self-approaching	Group-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Group-appreciating

This model provides a useful framework for understanding how racial identity develops

and evolves. It defines five stages of development that oppressed groups experience as they

struggle to understand themselves in terms of their "own culture, the dominate culture,

and the oppressive relationship between the two cultures: conformity, dissonance,

resistance and immersion, introspection and integrated awareness" (Sue and Sue, 1990,

p. 96). These stages can be defined in the following manner:

> **Conformity Stage:** In stage 1, minority persons are distinguished by their unequivocal preference for dominant culture values over their own. (p. 96)

> **Dissonance Stage:** In stage 2, no matter how much an individual attempts to deny his/her own racial/cultural heritage, he or she will encounter information or experiences inconsistent with culturally held beliefs, attitudes and values... The individual is in conflict between disparate pieces of information or experiences that challenge his or her current self-concept. (p. 101)

> **Resistance and Immersion:** In stage 3, the culturally different individual tends to completely endorse minority-held views and reject the dominant values of society and culture. The person seems dedicated to reacting against White society and rejects White social, cultural, and institutional standards as having no validity for him or her . (p. 103)

> **Introspection Stage:** In stage 4, the individual begins to discover that the intensity of feelings (anger directed toward White society) is psychologically draining and does not permit one to really devote more crucial energies to understanding themselves or to their own racial group... A need for positive self definition in a proactive sense emerges. (p. 104)

> **Integrative Awareness:** In stage 5, the minority individual has developed an inner sense of security and now can own and appreciate unique aspects of their culture as well as those in U.S. culture. Minority culture is not necessarily in conflict with White dominant cultural ways. (p. 106)

This study examined the extent to which an African American educator's racial identity/self concept shaped what went on while she was teaching an American Civil Rights unit to African American middle school students. Likewise, this model can be helpful in assisting teachers to understand the attitudinal changes that students might experience as a result of exposure to Afrocentric curriculum. Equipped with the knowledge of racial identity development, teachers are in a much better position to help students make a healthy transition between the five stages of racial identity development.

AFROCENTRICITY AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

A brief discussion of Afrocentricity is relevant to this study because I classify myself as an aspiring Afrocentric educator. Afrocentricity is a term used by African American scholars to describe the African-centered view as it can be applied to education. This view of education draws upon the strengths of African and African American culture without discrediting the contributions of any other culture. Afrocentricity focuses on the study of African and African American history and reveals the contributions of African descent in virtually all disciplines. The discussion of Afrocentricity herein is coupled with an exploration of culturally relevant pedagogy. This pairing is appropriate because discussions of Afrocentricity focus primarily on curricular content, while it is equally if not more important to understand the pedagogy of African-centered content.

Long before the term Afrocentricity was coined, African American scholars created a blueprint from which modern day representations of Afrocentricity are fashioned. In the United States, scholars such as Cheikh Anta Diop, Martin Bernal, Carter G. Woodson, and W.E.B. DuBois, laid the foundation upon which many contemporary scholars have built

the case for Afrocentricity. Today, the works of scholars such as Maulana Ron Karenga, Leonard Jeffries, Molefi Asante, Frances Cress Welsing, and Yosef Ben-Jochannen fuel the fires of controversy over Afrocentricity. Critics have accused them of promoting historical inaccuracies and of being guilty of the same ethnocentric/extremist academic misconduct as the Eurocentric scholars that they criticize (Schlesinger, 1998; Bloom, 1987; Lefkowitz, 1996). The aforementioned scholars repudiate the legitimacy of these criticisms. They further assert that their aim is not to denigrate any other racial/ethnic group. Rather, they claim merely to seek to elevate Africans and their descendants to their rightful place of honor in world history. Asante suggests that "Afrocentricity is 'not' a Black version of Eurocentricity. Eurocentricity is based on White supremacist notions whose purposes are to protect White privilege and advantage in education, economics, politics and so forth. Unlike Eurocentricity, Afrocentricity does not condone ethnocentric valorization at the expense of degrading other groups' perspectives" (Asante, 1991a, pp. 111-112).

Molefi Kete Asante is perhaps the most widely known and highly quoted among contemporary Afrocentric authors (Howe, 1998). Asante currently chairs the African American Studies Department at Temple University. He was also instrumental in the establishment of Afrocentric school curricula throughout the United States. The works of Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (1987) and *Afrocentricity* (1988), suggest that an Afrocentric perspective can serve as a corrective for an educational system which is failing Black youth. Despite his assurances, Asante has not offered educational models to support his assertions.

In looking for concrete examples of "Afrocentricity in action," I discovered that

Afrocentricity has been most active as a theme of scholarly debates. According to Walter

Gill (1991) of Morgan State University,

> The Afrocentric perspective can be traced to several psychologists who
> recognized the importance of broadening the context of mental health
> for persons of African descent (Akbar, 1974). Proponents of Afrocentric
> and multicultural education, from Woodson (1933) to Hilliard (1978,
> 1991) to Asante (1991), generally have emphasized the infusion of the
> traditional curriculum with more information about non-European
> ethnic and cultural groups. Holistic perspectives such as those offered by
> Banks (1990), Comer (1985), Edmonds (see Bates & Wilson, 1989),
> Hare and Hare (1991), Hill (1989), and Hilliard (1988), which suggest
> ways the nation's public schools might be overhauled to facilitate the
> socialization, self-concept, and educability of students of African
> descent, have received a great deal more attention in recent years. (Gill,
> 1991a)

There have been initiatives to create Black Male Academies, Independent African

American Institutions, and African Immersion Schools which implement an Afrocentric

curriculum. Much of the evidence that reports the outcomes of these schools is

ethnographic, with a focus on student self-esteem and academic success. Indeed, there are

Afrocentric programs which have been successful but these programs step outside the

traditional mode of instruction. Gill (1991a) highlighted one such program, saying,

> One Afrocentric program in the public schools, an alternative public
> high school called Ujamaa Institute, has been proposed to be situated on
> the campus of New York City's Medgar Evers College (Bradley, 1991).
> The Afrocentric program of familyhood and communalism in an attempt
> to instill the values of responsibility and caring in its students... The
> goals of Afrocentric curricula in schools like Ujamaa is to provide
> African American children with a "duality of socialization" (Hale, 1982)
> such that they can effectively come to grips with the dual social and
> personal consciousness of self alluded to by DuBois (1903).

If the positive aspects of these Afrocentric schooling initiatives are to be emulated in other school settings, it is imperative to have teacher narratives that delineate their experiences in delivering a Black Studies curriculum.

Rather than restate the arguments in favor of and against Afrocentricity, for the purposes of my research it is more useful to ask the question, "What purpose does Afrocentricity serve?" Asante suggested that we have yet to see the best that Afrocentricity has to offer. He envisioned the ultimate impact of Afrocentricity to be far reaching and said, "What is revolutionary is the movement from the idea (conception stage) to its implementation in practice, when we begin to teach teachers how to put the African children at the center of instruction. In effect, students are shown how to see with new eyes and hear with new ears" (Asante, 1991 p, 174). Asante's rhetoric is inspiring and compelling. What teacher would not want to be able to inoculate Black youth with an instant cure, resulting in their school success? Unfortunately, Asante has not explained how the teachers of Black youth will put them at the center of instruction other than by prescribing them with an Afrocentric curriculum.

Asante further asserted, "If African American children were taught to be fully aware of the struggles of our African forebears, they would find a renewed sense of purpose and vision in their own lives" (Asante, 1991a, p. 177). Asante may well be correct in his assertion; Afrocentricity holds much promise. Despite its potential, when placed within the context of real school settings, the problematic aspects of Afrocentricity are revealed.

As with any academic movement, there is a broad range of philosophical beliefs. Likewise, when one examines the proponents of Afrocentrism a great deal of diversity exists in what might fall under the umbrella of Afrocentricity. Howe suggested that

"Afrocentrism may, in its looser sense or more moderate forms, mean little more than an emphasis on shared African origins among all "Black" people, taking pride in those origins and an interest in African history and culture - or those aspects of New World cultures seen as representing African "survivals" - and a belief that Eurocentric bias has blocked or distorted a knowledge of Africans and their culture" (Howe, 1998, p. 1). This moderate definition of Afrocentricy best represents the version that I espouse as I try to teach in a manner that is informed by Afrocentric theory and philosophy.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is equally as instrumental in engaging Black youth in the educational process as is an Afrocentric curriculum. Ladson-Billings suggested that there is pedagogical knowledge that has been mastered by successful teachers of Black students. This knowledge is manifested in culturally congruent instructional approaches, which

> ... signify the ways in which the teachers alter their speech patterns, communication styles, and participation structures to resemble more closely those of the students' own culture... The primary aim of culturally relevant teaching is to assist in the development of a "relevant black personality" that allows African American students to choose academic excellence yet still identify African American culture. (Ladson-Billings, 1994a, pp. 16-17)

Few people would argue against the likelihood that youth thrive in an environment that reflects their culture.

The following diagram, Figure 2, was created by Agyei Akoto, Executive Director of National House Positive Action Center. This "Interactive Roles in the Enculturation Processes Model" suggests that teachers serve as cultural representatives who should support family and community values.

Interactive Roles in Enculturation Processes

FAMILY

Foundational parenting.
Provides cohesive & nurturing social unit.
Initiates spiritual & moral development.
Provides initial models in character development.
Reinforces social norms & expectations.
Centers personality in family & national culture.
Reinforces family continuity

COMMUNITY/NATION

Maintains clarity & vitality of national identity.
Collective culture.
Rewards culturally/socially creative behavior.
Provides opportunity for spiritual,
intellectual development and appreciation
of skills.
Maintains productive enterprise in proximity
to learning environment.
Provides rehabilitation sanctions for
destructive behavior.
Provides strong leadership.

Physical proximity with substantial interaction

MWANAFUNZI AND ENCULTURATION PROCESSES

Cultural alignment & Involvement

SCHOOL/CURRICULUM

Extended Family.
Facilitates meaningful family involvement.
Simulates community environment.
Facilitates social role identification.
Mediates transition to independent community role.
Facilitates identification with community/nation.
Reinforces national continuity.
Facilitates skill/content mastery.
Advances spiritual/moral development.
Provides comprehensive cultural environment.
Provides early social reinforcement of moral values.

Ideological alignment & mutual growth

TEACHER

Provides extended or secondary parenting.
Exemplifies ideal character
(conscious, competent, committed).
Facilitates cultural internalization.
Identifies & stabilizes potentialities.
Provides expert guided experience.
Generates enthusiasm for learning & growth.
Engenders broadened social consciousness
and responsibility.

Mutual commitment & accountability

Figure 2: Interactive Roles in Enculturation Processes

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Shared cultural/racial background of teacher and student is apt to be of benefit to African American youth. These factors alone, however, are not sufficient to insure the academic success of African American youth. It cannot be assumed that being Black, in and of itself, is a sufficient credential for being qualified to teach for cultural relevance.

Black youth benefit from culturally relevant pedagogy, sometimes also referred to as "African-centered pedagogy (Lee in Shujaa, 1994). This instructional approach closely resembles the cultural patterns that exist in the homes and communities of Black youth. Lee suggested, "An African-centered pedagogy is needed to support a line of resistance to the imposition of Eurocentric bias. It is needed to produce an education that contributes to achieving pride, equity, power, wealth, and cultural continuity for Africans in America and elsewhere" (Lee in Shujaa, 1994, p. 296). This type of pedagogy leave Black youth feeling equipped to become leaders rather than feeling estranged from the Black communities at the end of their educational process.

African-centered pedagogy is closely aligned with progressive pedagogical frameworks such as liberation pedagogy and critical pedagogy; however, it has a cultural distinctiveness. Lee suggested that African-centered pedagogy:

1. legitimizes African stores of knowledge;

2. positively exploits and scaffolds productive community and cultural practices;

3. extends and builds upon indigenous language;

4. reinforces community ties and idealizes service to one's family, community, nation, and race;

5. promotes positive social relationships;

6. imports a positive world view that idealizes a positive, self-sufficient future for one's people without denying the self-worth and right to self-determination of others; and

7. supports cultural continuity by promoting critical consciousness.
    (Lee in Shujaa, 1994 p. 297)

The challenge to teachers and teacher educators who attempt to master an African-centered or culturally relevant pedagogy is to figure out how to honor the home culture of Black youth, teach for relevancy, promote bi-culturalism, and prepare students for full participation in mainstream society.

There is an African proverb that says, "It takes an entire village to raise a child." This diagram illustrates an Afrocentric "entire village" conception of education with the teacher as a central player. Teachers are entrusted by the school, family, and community with the charge to inculcate the cultural values of community and thereby play a significant role in guaranteeing its continuation (Gill, 1991b).

This research looked at the case of one teacher who is attempting to fulfill the aforementioned obligations to African American community and culture. It was informed by four bodies of literature that emerged as one faces the challenges inherent in teaching Black Studies. Understanding the historical development of Black Studies informed this research because the Black history curriculum is shaped by current trends in the field. Secondly, the Multicultural Education Movement is relevant because much of the contemporary discourse on Black Studies occurs with the field of multicultural education. Thirdly, racial identity theory is relevant because the focus of this study is on pedagogical practices and decisions when teaching in intracultural setting. Finally, this study drews upon a fourth body of literature which addresses how Afrocentric philosophy and African-centered pedagogy impact the discourse in an intracultural setting.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY:

THE WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW

GENRE OF THE RESEARCH

Teacher research is a part of a growing trend in qualitative research. David Hobson

suggests that

> Happily, times have changed, and today the idea of *teacher-as-researcher*
> has gained greater value, not only in the educational research
> community, but also among classroom teachers who realize that
> investigations conceived, implemented, and eval-uated by actual teachers
> in real classrooms among live school children promise to better stand
> the tests of practicality and personal relevance. (Hobson in Burnaford, et
> al, p.1)

In some ways teacher research is still in its infancy as a legitimate qualitative research.

Ruth Hubbard and Brenda Power (1999), authors of *Living The Questions: A Guide for*

Teacher Researchers, note however, that educational historians have identified traces of

teacher research as far back as Comenius (1592-1670), who correlated child psychology

with observational data to develop teaching methods. Likewise, Rousseau (1712-1778)

promoted child observation to better understand learning. Other historical antecedents of

modern teacher research include Herbart (1776-1841) and Montessori (1870-1952), both

of whom used observation of children to inform curriculum development and the

understanding of students. Hubbard and Power (1999) maintain that teacher research has

had a tumultuous past marked by dramatic highs and lows in levels of acceptability. They cite Lucy Sprague Mitchell, who founded a consortium in 1916 to support teacher research, The Bureau of Education Experiments which later became the Bank Street of College of Education in 1903. Hubbard and Power also mention Lawrence Stenhouse, who initiated an international teacher research movement in England which took root in school research communities and still exists today. Hubbard and Power further express optimism because it has recently "received significant support and validation from existing education research communities" (Hubbard and Power, 1999, p. 7).

Models of qualitative/action research appeared to be an appropriate match for my particular study because teaching Black history to African American students poses many interesting dilemmas. Susan Jungck (1996) writes on ethnographic research in *Teachers Doing Research* that qualitative methods "utilize the power of subjective experiences of the participant to inform all stages of research, emphasize the process of constructing knowledge within a context, and focus on conditions and processes of change." John W. Best and James V. Kahn (1993) also make note of qualitative data, which they describe as "detailed, thick description; inquiry in depth; direct quotations capturing people's personal perspectives and experiences." This study was written from my perspective as the teacher-researcher using qualitative methods. The research allowed me to immerse myself in the research to gain deeper knowledge about my conscious and unconscious rationales for pedagogical decisions.

This case study is best characterized as a single-group self-study. This research design resembles that of an emerging genre of teacher research, which relies heavily on case studies. Nieto explains that

The purpose of case studies is not to generalize to all students in U.S. schools. No research, whether qualitative or quantitative, can expect to do so. The issue of sampling provides one of the major differences between qualitative and quantitative research...Qualitative approaches render very distinct but equally crucial data to influence educational practice, but no case study of a single individual can adequately portray the complexity of an entire group of people. (Nieto, 2000, p. 12)

Case studies may not be generalized to all populations; however, they can be used as evidence for theories. According to researcher Robert Yin, "In analytical generalization, the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to a broader theory (Yin, 1993, p. 44)." This means that one can generalize to a theory by providing evidence that supports but does not necessarily prove the theory (Firestone, 1993). Furthermore, researcher Firestone argues that "Generalizing to a theory differs from generalizing to a population more when the theory is intended to apply across a wider range of specific populations and settings... When one generalizes to a theory, one uses the theory to make predictions" (Firestone, 1993, p. 17).

This study explored racial identity theory and the impact of cultural congruence on instructional practices. It captured the patterns and routines of the classroom. It provides a model for other teachers who are interested in studying their teaching of Black history, and it provides a case from which comparisons and contrasts can be derived. Case study research empowers teachers to be the focus of research generated by them, to be the creators of theory rather than the objects. Although this research cannot be used as an extrapolation from a sample to a population, it is grounded in theory and offers a glimpse into one teacher's instructional practices when engaged in the difficult task of delving into the issues of race and racism.

The single-group concept is derived from Sleeter and Grant, who coined this term to describe a particular branch of multicultural education that focuses on a single-group - for example gay people, disabled persons, African Americans, Hispanics, women, etc. Proponents of single-group studies most often adopt this approach to counterbalance the Eurocentric-male dominated emphasis in traditional curriculum. The single-group study seeks to provide students with a positive self-image by giving them an accurate historical portrayal of their foreparents.

> From the perspective of single-group studies, thus, schools should develop in students what Freire (1970) calls a "critical consciousness." When students learn about their heritage and contributions to society, they participate in a process of self-discovery and growth in social consciousness. This development results in the realization that, contrary to the myth of their inferiority, their actions can be a transforming process in the United States and in the world. (Sleeter and Grant, 1994, p. 137)

Like the single-group study approach, this research sought to empower Black students in such a way that they can be inspired by the legacy of their ancestors. Sleeter and Grant suggest, "Most advocates of the single-group studies approach to multicultural education hope to reduce social stratification and raise the status quo of the group which they are concerned" (Sleeter and Grant, 1994, p. 123). They offer the following table to describe the goals and objectives of the single-group study:

Table 3.1: Single-group Studies (Sleeter and Grant, 1994, p. 124)	
Societal goals:	Promote social structural equity for an immediate recognition of the identified group
Schools goals:	Promote willingness and knowledge among students to work toward social change that would benefit the identified group
Target students:	Everyone
Practices:	
Curriculum	Teach units or courses about the culture of a group, how the group has been victimized, current social issues facing the group - from the perspective of that group
Instruction	Builds on student's learnign style, especially the learning style of that group
Other aspects of classroom	Use decoration reflecting culture and classroom contributions of the group; have representative of the group involved in the class activities, (e.g., appearing as guest speakers)
Other school-wide concerns	Employ faculty who are members of the group being studied

The single-group study design, in the case of this study, focused on African Americans.

In choosing to study my own teachings, I was by no means attempting to cast myself as a pedagogical expert on how to impart Black history to African American youth. I was simply showing that an intraracial approach to teaching Black history is worthy of study. This is especially true in light of the many unanswered questions about what takes place between Black teachers and students when discussing issues of Black history, race, and racism within the context of communal privacy.

As a novice secondary teacher, I am "learning in action." I interacted with my students in a spontaneous manner and constantly adapted my teaching to meet their needs. Together, we co-constructed the course and each time I teach the class it is different. I have spent a considerable amount of time pondering how I can best meet the needs of my students. Shor writes that "The dialogic teacher researches the students to learn their themes, cultural conditions, speech, and ways of learning. This knowledge is basic for

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problem-posing and for integrating formal bodies of knowledge" (Shor, 1992, p. 171). I

used reflection and introspection to record and analyze my classroom instructional

practices. I integrated strands of my pedagogical autobiography in which I traced my

learning to teach experience and the parallel development of my racial identity.

The ideologies of reflective practice have widely influenced inquiry conducted by

teachers and teacher educators. Action research in education is most frequently defined as

teachers designing research about their own classroom to improve instructional practices

(Burnaford, et. al, 1996). Classroom-based research provides valuable insights into the

daily routines which exist in schools. Researchers look favorably upon action research as a

highly effective method for aiding teachers in resolving problems within their classrooms.

Goswani and Stillman (1987) contend that teacher research has a transformative effect on

teachers. They surmise that teachers who conduct research of their own teaching benefit

because

> They collaborate with their student to answer questions important to
> both, drawing on community resources in new and unexpected ways.
>
> Their teaching is transformed in important ways: they become theorists,
> articulating their intentions, testing their assumptions, and finding
> connections with practice.
>
> Their perceptions of themselves as writers and teachers are transformed.
> They step up their use of resources; they form networks; and they
> become more active professionally.
>
> They become rich resources who can provide the profession with
> information it simply doesn't have... Teachers know their classrooms
> and students in ways that outsiders can't.
>
> They become critical, responsive readers and users of current research,
> less apt to accept uncritically others' theories, less vulnerable to fads,
> and more authoritative in their assessment of curricula, methods, and
> materials. (Shor, 1992 pp. 173-174)

The notion that teachers should "reflect in action" is not a new conjecture. Schon popularized the term "reflective teaching" in *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (1987). The concept of reflective teaching has antecedents which date as far back as Dewey (1933), who wrote extensively about the interconnectedness of experience and education. There are countless techniques for how one might initiate the reflective process in order to capture the discourse that occurs between my students and me, as well as how we might represent our authentic voices.

DATA COLLECTION

My data was generated from the classroom interaction between my students and myself with a primary focus on my instructional practices. After teaching Black history to Black students for two years, I decided that in order to address the issue of student apathy and disinterest, I needed formally to study my pedagogical practices. This study is a culmination of many years of study in both the fields of Education and Black history.

The study was designed to take place over the span of eight weeks. Data was gathered during one-hour class sessions, Monday through Thursday. Fridays were reserved for special meetings, field trips, guest speakers, and activities. Field trips included excursions to historical sites, museums, ethnic festivals, restaurants, libraries, Afrocentric bookstores, and novelty shops. Guest speakers were called upon to give students first-hand exposure to local history and the oral tradition.

The following chart details my primary research questions as well as the data sources used to answer the given question.

Table 3.2: Research Questions and Data Sources	
Research Questions	**Data Source**
How does a self-proclaimed Afrocentric educator's racial identity/self-concept shape instructional practice when teaching a Black history class to African American adolescents?	Teacher Reflection Journal Lesson Plans Audio Recordings
What curriculum decisions does an African American teacher make about how to plan an American Civil Rights unit?	Teacher Reflection Journal Lesson Plans Audio Recordings
How are discussions about the sensitive issues of race and racism facilitated?	Teacher Reflection Journal Notes on Lesson Plans Audio Recordings
How does an African American teacher of Black history promote relevancy and bridge the gaps among school culture, the student's home culture, and the culture of power?	Student Assignments Focus Group Discussions Interviews Teacher Reflection Journal Lesson Plans Audio Recordings

These questions have proven to be very enlightening for educators interested in trying to teach Black history in such a way that it empowers rather than embitters African American students. By design, this study is limited because it simply provides one case of one teacher who teaches an American Civil Rights unit to African American students.

SOURCES OF DATA

Data collection for this research included interviews, focused group discussion notes, audio recordings, teacher reflection journal, dialogic (student/teacher) journals, lesson plans, student assignments, and other documents which illuminate the teacher's thinking, decision making and classroom practices.

This study integrated strands of my pedagogical autobiography (learning to teach experience) in order to better understand how my life experiences inform my decision-

making process relative to how I conducted the Black history class. Lewin suggests that "The person stands at the center of his or her own life space, and an understanding of that life space can only be accomplished by beginning with the perspective of that individual" (Lewin, 1948). Teachers often draw upon their past schooling experiences to make decisions about instructional practices (Grossman, 1990). My story continually evolves as I continue to grow as a teacher and learn from my students as they react to an Afrocentric curriculum and my teaching style. The pedagogical autobiography included the story of my racial identity development. This research sought to determine the extent my racial identity may have shaped my instructional practices while teaching the Black history unit.

All class sessions were recorded on cassette tapes and transcribed. The tapes were labeled with the date and lesson plan number. Vignettes from these tapes were used in the research in order to convey the authentic voice of both my students and me. Evidence of code switching (between standard English and Black English) was prevalent in many of the tapes.

A course overview/syllabus was presented to the students on the first day of class. This document served as a contract between my students and me. It provided direction and order for the class. It included a course calendar, assignments and behavioral expectations. The syllabus told my students both what I expected of them and what they could expect of me. Parents were given a copy of the syllabus so they were aware of what the class entailed. See Appendix A for a copy of the course overview/syllabus.

Journals produced a rich source of data throughout this research. I recorded students' responses to the course content, organization, and assignments in my teacher reflection journal. My reflective journal was a very important part of this study because the research

focused primarily on my pedagogical practices and decision-making. The journal allowed me to reflect in writing about my perceptions of whether or not my students attained my desired learning outcomes.

I opened each class with a journal writing exercise. The journals allowed me to communicate privately in writing with my students about course themes and their interpretation of historical events. Students also used the journals as a way to relate their life experiences to the course content. I responded to these journals daily in order to give students instant feedback.

I used the unit plan provided in *The Teachers' Resource Manual for The African American* (Harley, S., et. al., 1992b). Appendix B: Civil Rights Era - Time Line represents the time span covered the unit plan. I wrote a total of thirty-two lesson plans (see Appendix C: Lesson Plans and Notes) which were developed and tailored to meet my students' needs, as well as to record any changes which might spontaneously arise. I also recorded how I planned to achieve my desired learning outcomes. The lesson plans were often augmented with notes taken during or after the class session. Notes on my lesson plans included comments about difficulties that students experienced with the readings. Other notes focused on personal vignettes, which I shared with my students in order to convey a point. The most important function of the notes on my lesson plans was to show that the plans were often adapted in response to the students' reactions to the contents.

Three formal interviews were conducted during this study. The first interview was designed to get background information on each student. They were asked about their interest in the course prior knowledge, and about their course expectations. Students were also asked questions about their racial identity. The second interview focused on the

students' perceptions of the class, their assessment of the learning, and their progress on the autobiographic project. The final interview served as an exit interview. Students were given feedback on their performance in the course. They were allowed to make comments on their experiences in the course, as well as discuss any changes that they might perceive in the self-concept or racial identity. A detailed list of interview questions is listed in Appendix D. These questions were most often open-ended. They were not written prior to the research; rather they emerged from my observations of the class.

Students were given a final course evaluation at the end of the class. The evaluation was designed so that they could anonymously share their perceptions of the class, texts, and assignments. Most of the questions called for a simply reply to objective questions. Some questions required a written response. The comments gathered from these evaluations are likely to be useful when I teach the class in the future.

Student assignments, which were collected during this study, included chapter exercises, special projects, and action-project proposals. These assignments were used to assess student knowledge and perceptions. Assignments were not given a letter grade; instead, students received written comments. Collecting student assignments showed that students still experienced difficulty with the content in spite of the fact that it reflected their cultural heritage.

Data Analysis: Delving Below the Surface

As a writer, I have often found that I must distance myself from my writing in order to see mistakes and shortcomings, which are invisible when I am too close to my topic. So

is the case with this research. I had to develop a plan that allowed me to pace my analysis in such a way that I could step back and scrutinize the data:

Plan for Analyzing Data

A. Analysis of the Teacher Reflection Journal for:

   1. Representations of racial identity, self-concept, and Afrocentric philosophy

   2. Reporting/Reflections of dilemmas and problems

   3. Evidence of decision-making process

   4. Indications of attempts to promote relevancy and prepare students for the culture of power

B. Multiple reviews of the tapes of class sessions, focus group discussions and interviews, listening for:

   1. Content delivery

   2. Use of culturally relevant teaching strategies

   3. Affective responses to racially sensitive topics

   4. Linguistic code-switching

C. Examination of student artifacts looking for:

   1. Evidence of racial identity development

   2. Misconceptions about Black history

   3. General impressions of the course and its content

D. Critique of lesson plans looking for:

   1. Evidence of critical pedagogy

   2. Afrocentric philosophy/rationale

   3. Content development

   4. Emergent themes

The Afrocentric Teacher as Decision-Maker Model, an adaptation of Pamela Grossman's (1990) framework, was very useful in allowing me to proceed with the above plan for data analysis. This model challenged me to be introspective about the extent to which my instructional decisions and practices were shaped by Afrocentric philosophy racial identity, subject matter knowledge, knowledge of learners, culture and community, pedagogical content knowledge and Afrocentric pedagogy.

Table 2.1 (Levels of Multicultural Education) was useful in understanding my instructional practices because it provided a framework for how one delivers multicultural content at various levels of intensity. I would have liked to think that I used critical pedagogy at the Affirmation, Solidarity, and Critique level. However, in reality I found evidence that I visited all four levels, Tolerance, Acceptance, Respect, and Affirmation, Solidarity and Critique depending on the readiness of my students.

Figure 2 (The Interactive Roles in Enculturation Processes) was also useful to this study in that it offered guidelines for what the Afrocentric teacher should do as a cultural representative. This model states that the teacher should:

> Provide extended or second parenting, exemplify ideal character
> (conscious, competent, committed), facilitate cultural internalization,
> identify and stabilize potential, provide expert guided experience,
> generate enthusiasm for learning and growth, engender broaden social
> consciousness and responsibility.

This model casts the teacher as a primary partner in a relationship between the family, school, and community. The model presents a utopian vision of schooling in which the teacher is given an expansive job description. My research does not address the teacher's role in the Interactive Roles in Enculturation Model; however, it is useful in analyzing my instructional practices and decision-making.

I analyzed my reflection journal by color-coding my entries using yellow, pink, blue, and green highlighters. Yellow was used to code entries that spoke specifically about my instructional practices. Pink was used to code entries that focused on student responses and attitudes toward course content that revealed racial identity development. Blue was used to code questions or dilemmas that arose during instruction. Green was used to code my reflection on spontaneous vignettes that I shared with my students, as well as my analysis of student responses.

I analyzed transcriptions of the tapes of class sessions, focus discussion groups, and interviews, looking for evidence of how my racial identity might have shaped my decision-making and instructional practices. I also looked for evidence of racial identity development of my students. The tapes were also useful in capturing my code-switching patterns as I attempted to model the language of my students. I looked at interview content, as well as student assignments as a way to better understand how my students processed the difficult and sometimes racially sensitive course themes.

I analyzed the tape transcriptions by color-coding the passages, using yellow, pink, blue, and green highlighters. Yellow was used to code entries that offered evidence of my racial identity. Pink was used to code entries that focused on student responses and attitudes toward course content that revealed racial identity development. Blue was used to code evidence of dilemmas and decision-making that occurred during instruction. Green was used to code evidence of my code-switching patterns.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of twenty-two students who reside in Saginaw, Michigan. All of the students were African American middle grade students. Their ages range from twelve to fourteen years old. Nineteen of the students reside in predominately Black neighborhoods. Two students reside in ethnically diverse communities. One student lives in a predominately white community. Sixteen of the students attended predominately Black middle schools. Three of the students attended racially diverse schools. There was little diversity in socioeconomic status. Twenty-one of the students received free or reduced lunch.

All students reported that they had never participated in a Black history class. Information they had learned about Black history had come by way of Black history programs, television documentaries, independent reading, or the oral tradition. All students participated in this study on a voluntary basis.

Coding Data

The reporting of direct quotes of the data in this study is followed by a parenthetic annotation. I used a different tape for each day of the study. The acronym BHCT-# stands for Black History Class Tape #. The number represented after the BHCT is the number of the class session. I also used the acronym SWS-#, which stand for Student Work Sample followed by a number which was allocated to the assignment depending on when it was turned in. I also used the acronym TRJD# for Teacher Reflection Journal Day#, with the number referring to the number of the class session. At times I also used the acronym TRD

plus the date for relevant journals that I wrote before this study. TRD stand for Teacher Reflection Journal with the date being the date that I wrote the entry.

SETTING

This research was conducted at First Ward Community Center, which is located on the Northeast side of Saginaw, Michigan. This center is a non-profit United Way agency, which provides youth and family support services. At-risk youths and families are the target population for services offered by this center. There is no fee for services or program participation.

Throughout the school year, the center offers youth programming Monday through Friday after school. During the summer, the center is open to youth Monday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. I coordinate a youth program which is aimed at drug and violence prevention. Most of the youth that participate in my program would be classified as "at risk." I prefer to think of these students as "high-potential" youth because we are optimistic about their chances for future success. I introduced the Black history class as a means to help youth see that pride is in one's culture; community and history can be a deterrent for self-destructive behaviors such as drug usage and violence.

These data sources provided a detailed description of my instructional practices and outcomes. I looked specifically at the prior knowledge that my students brought to the classroom as well as the meanings that they constructed as they learned more about African American history. Capturing this interactive process (through teacher-research) has unfolded into a rich case study which illustrates how a Black Studies curriculum can be implemented in a non-traditional setting.

CONSENT PROCEDURES

Students and parents were given a consent letter and consent/assent form that introduced them to the Black history class. Participation in the program did not affect a child's eligibility to take part in any of the others programs or activities offered at the community center. The consent/assent forms allowed the parents and youth participants to decline participation in any or all aspects of the study. Parents and youth participants were also made aware that participation was voluntary and could be discontinued at any point in the study. The consent forms were kept separate from the data throughout the research process in order to insure the privacy of the participants. See Appendix E for copies of the consent letters and forms.

The privacy of the youth participants was protected by the use of pseudonyms. Confidentiality was honored; however, there was a small risk that the student participants may be identifiable to persons who are familiar with the setting and gain access to the final research report. Demographic information that could have been revealing was omitted from the dissertation and kept separate from any data collected from the students throughout the duration of the study. There were a sufficient number of students involved in the study such that individual participants cannot be easily distinguished. Finally, comments that could be potentially damaging were excluded and confidentiality was protected within the limits of the law.

Very few risks factors were involved in this study. For example, students might have feared that if they chose not to participate in the study, they would be excluded from other activities; however, this was not true, since the community center is always eager to increase student participation in all programs. Students were not given grades and

participation in the study did not affect their academic record. There was a small risk that some students might reveal information that could have potentially been embarrassing. I did not seeking that type of information, and I did not use it in the final report.

Although class sessions and interviews were taped, the recording was stopped at the request of any of the participants in the study. Participants could decline to take part in any aspect of the study or to answer any questions.

The benefit of participating in this study was the knowledge gained from study the American Civil Rights unit as well as the sense of empowerment that often comes along with studying content that presents a positive image of your racial/ethnic group.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH NARRATIVE:

UNPACKING THE MEANING

BEGINNING WITH SELF

This study represents the many lessons that I have learned in order to teach Black

history to African American adolescents in a way that makes learning history relevant to

their everyday lives. I attempted to use this research to provide an accurate depiction of

my feelings and experiences while teaching a Civil Rights Movement unit to African

American adolescents; however, I realize that my interpretation of the past is skewed by

my current vantage point. The following section is my attempt to reconstruct the

educational experiences that led me to the teaching profession and more specifically to the

teaching of Black history.

According to James G. Henderson,

> Good teaching comes from the heart, from the true identity of the
> teacher, from a long arduous journey of self-examination... It *is* reliant
> on passionate teachers who are engaged in self-discovery and their own
> continuous growth...Good teaching is reflective of the teacher as a
> person in a very holistic way. (Henderson, 2001, p. 136)

Reflection and introspection hold much promise for helping teachers to develop intuition

and draw wisdom from the past. Life history often shapes instructional practices. Nitza M.

Hidalgo suggests, "Before we can begin to understand others, we need to understand

ourselves and what we bring to our interactions with others. For this reason, it is important for teachers interested in learning more about other cultural groups to first look inward" (Perry & Fraser, 1993 p. 99). Begin with self. It seems like such a simple task but when forced to put pencil to paper, it is often difficult to find words which best describe the person that we believe ourselves to be.

Author Dennis Kimbro writes, "We seen things not as they are, but as we are. Our perception is shaped by our previous experiences" (Kimbro in Bell, 1995, p. 127). When looking inward at the past, the past appears to be etched in stone, while in actuality, it is a malleable substance. The past is constantly in motion like the blood that runs through our veins, bringing life and beckoning the future. Humans interact with time in a cyclical fashion. The past gives birth to the present; the present anticipates the future; and the future thrives on reinterpretations of the past. The past is simply a collection of perceptions that change as we grow and expand our worldviews.

When I try to assimilate the many critical incidents that came together to bring me to the juncture in my life where I felt powerfully compelled to teach Black history, there is no one distinct experience that comes to mind. But my life history provides an important backdrop for understanding my research.

I grew up in a military home where both of my parents expected me to excel in school. When I entered the first grade, I had no concept of race. I didn't know that I was different from my White counterparts until my classmates nicknamed me "chocolate." One day, I left school crying because one of my classmates had brought to my attention that in addition to being chocolate, there was something wrong with me because one side of my hand was chocolate and the other side was not. When I compared my cocoa colored hands

to the cream colored hands of my classmates; which was the same color on both sides, my hands seemed deformed. I went home in tears. My mother had to explain that I was "normal" for a Black person. She showed me her deep chocolate hands as proof that I was not a mutant.

During those early years of childhood innocence, it was difficult being the only chocolate child. My teacher did not know how to handle my taunting, so she ignored the situation. It was only after my mother came to my rescue by visiting my classroom, with a tray of chocolate treats, that being the only chocolate child began to seem more bearable.

In 1972, my father retired from the Air Force and decided to start his own business. We left Spain, a place where race was seldom an issue, and moved to Alabama, a place that was often divided by race. It was in Alabama that I first heard the word "nigger." We moved into an integrated neighborhood that consisted of working-class Blacks and Whites. I can distinctly remember going to the neighborhood drug store and seeing a little white girl who appeared to be the same age as me. As the girl approached me, her mother said, "Get away from that nigger!" I wasn't particularly insulted at the time because I didn't know what the word "nigger" meant. I went home and innocently asked my mother, "What's a nigger?" This became my first lesson in race and racism.

School in Alabama held very few rewards. Years after my family left the South, I managed to see my CA-60 folder, which contained my school records. When I looked at the race categorization on my transcripts it was not Negro, Colored, Black, Afro-American, or African American. It was "non-White." This term characterized the five years that I spent in Alabama schools. For the first four years of my formal schooling, I felt like a "non-person." I was hampered by what is often called the stigma of blackness or the

notion that being Black means to be less than, deficient, or lacking in something. I was not motivated to strive for excellence. Under conditions such as those, it comes as no surprise that I was at best an average student.

My life changed the summer of 1976 when my family moved to Michigan, where the racism was less overt, but nonetheless it still existed. I began the fifth grade at a school which consisted of mostly African American and Hispanic students, along with a few White students. Most of my teachers were White. Initially, my parents were apprehensive about putting me in a school that was predominately Black and Hispanic. Several people had told them that I would receive a low quality education. Fortunately, my mother decided to investigate and make her own assessment of the school. During her visit, she met the teacher who would be my homeroom and science teacher if she decided to enroll me. He convinced her to let me spend one year in the school, and if she was not satisfied with my progress, she could put me in a private school. I feel a debt of gratitude to this teacher because I received the best educational experience I've ever had and the beginning of what turned out to be a wonderful journey.

During the latter years of my elementary school experience (grades 5-6), all my teachers were invested in my education. They convinced me that I was a brilliant little girl. I am not sure if they encouraged me because I spoke Standard English, because I came from a two-parent nuclear family, or because I represented dominant culture more than the other students; but the effect was tremendous. The two years that I spent at the predominately Black and Hispanic school gave me a new perspective on education. I went from being a "B/C" student to being an "A/B" student. The most valuable lesson I learned during those two years was not found in a textbook; it was found within me. My teachers

planted seeds of confidence within me, which later sprouted and allowed me to reach my greatest potential.

When the time arrived for me to go to junior high school, my parents wanted to insure that I continue to receive a quality education. Having grown up in the segregated South, my parents were all too familiar with the far-reaching impact of racism. They had been spit upon, Jim Crowed, and ridiculed. They were relegated to sub-standard schools where they received hand-me-down textbooks from White schools. This experience left an indelible impression on my parents. Despite my positive experience at a predominately Black school, my parents were still influenced by stereotypes. They decided to put me in an Open Enrollment Program that allowed students from the predominately Black side of town to attend school on the predominately White side of town. I was forced to leave the familiarity of my friends and community to attend a school where I would be seen as the "minority" again. Fortunately, the positive attitude that had begun in elementary school carried over into my secondary experience.

During my middle school years, I continued to get high grades and I began to take on student leadership roles. I was not intimidated by a predominately White school setting. I felt very comfortable. Ironically, it was my Black peers who gave me the hardest time. They did not like the way I talked, saying I sounded too white. They were also disturbed by the fact that I did not limit my social interactions solely to other Black students.

Throughout my secondary education at predominately White schools, I experienced academic success, but found little cultural relevancy. I began college at the University of Michigan in the Fall of 1984. I spent the first year fulfilling basic requirements. In the Fall of my sophomore year, I took Afro-American Studies 100 and my entire world changed. I

can remember sitting in that class with at least one hundred other African American students, and thinking, Wow! There is a whole world out there that I haven't seen. Thus, I began a journey of self-discovery. I was literally in search of myself, the part of me that had been immersed in a sea of miseducation and misinformation.

By the time I graduated from the University of Michigan, with a dual major in Afro-American Studies and English, I knew that I was going to continue my education at Cornell University's Africana Studies and Research Center. I decided to pursue my passion for Afro-American Studies because I felt that my undergraduate studies were merely a small drop in the bucket of knowledge that I desired.

My years at Cornell were influenced by a deep-seated cynicism that I felt toward society. I saw racially motivated conspiracies everywhere and I could trace all the evils in the world to racism. I became invisible to people who forced me to refute their stereotypes before seeing me. During this time, I was unable to distinguish between being *"pro-Black"* and *"anti-White."* I became a different person, yet I was not fully conscious of the metamorphous that I had undergone as a result of my studies.

I graduated from Cornell University during the Summer of 1990. After completing an advanced degree in African American history, I assumed that I was well prepared to teach this content to anyone. I immediately began teaching African American history at a community college in my hometown. Aside from having worked as a teaching assistant, this was my first real teaching assignment. I loved teaching and that I was just as much a student as an instructor.

After a summer of teaching Black History, I began my doctoral studies at Michigan State University, in the Fall of 1990. I was somewhat ambiguous about why I had chosen

Teacher Education, especially in light of the fact that I was not a certified teacher. I knew I wanted to make a difference in the way teachers were being prepared to teach minority students. After completing my doctoral course work, I realized that before I could teach others to teach in a K-12 setting, I had to experience teaching public school for myself. Consequently, I spent two years pursing a teaching certificate at Saginaw Valley State University and two years teaching in a predominately Black urban middle school.

My first experience with teaching Black history to middle school students occurred in the Fall of 1997. I can remember feeling disappointed at the lack of interest that my students showed for learning Black history. I wrote in my journal:

> How could I be so naïve? What made me think just because my students are African American that they would naturally be drawn to Black history in the same way that I was? Have I imposed my experience in them? Are my expectations reasonable? I'll have to find some way to make this content relevant to the everyday lives of my students. My challenge is to figure out meaningful ways to help them "experience" the course content. (C.M.S., TRJ 9/97)

Although I'd anticipated that my passion for learning Black history would be contagious and my students would naturally be drawn to the content, I discovered that was not the case. I am not sure that I ever successfully met the challenge that I set for myself in wanting to create opportunities for students to "experience" African American history; however, I have concluded that my knowledge of Black history has increased dramatically as a result of having the opportunity to teach it.

In retrospect, I realize that part of the reason that my students did not appreciate learning Black history in the same way that I initially did has to do with our age difference. I was a young adult when first introduced to Afro-American Studies at the university level.

In addition, I grew up in a predominately White social setting that increased my desire to learn Black history as a means to fill a void in my life.

When I was first presented with a culturally relevant curriculum, it felt like I was finally receiving the education that I had been denied at predominately White schools. In contrast, the vast majority of my students resided in predominately African American communities where they were constantly immersed in Black culture. Though they may not have "formally" studied Black history in an academic setting, the homogeneity of the culture of their communities often made the issue of race a less salient one than in integrated communities. My students were accustomed to being exposed to positive representations of Black culture, in the general school culture, while at the same time their school curriculum was often devoid of culturally relevant content. Teaching Black history in a middle school was one of my greatest learning experiences. It led to my current research on teaching Black History to African American students in an intraracial setting.

RACIAL IDENTITY AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Years ago, I heard Malauna Karenga speak at Michigan State University, and he said that all conscious Black people should ask themselves three questions: Who am I? Am I really who I say I am? And, am I all that I should be? I believe that answering these three questions is a lifelong endeavor because in the fast pace of today's world, by the time we figure out who we are, we're already someone else.

In answer to his first question, who am I? I was inspired to write a poem, entitled, I Am. The poem reads as follows:

> I am the African who chose to survive
> I am the one they sought to deprive.

I am the co-creator of all life.
I am the product of the slaves' strife.
I am a million shades of Black.
I am the one who was pushed to the back.
I am the mother of every nation.
I am the voice of the next generation.
I am the first but never again the last.
I am caretaker of the past.
I am the pearl that was cast to the swine.
I am part human and part divine.
I am God's breath wrapped in clay.
I am the promise of a better day. (Ross, 1994)

This poem was my attempt to think about who I am and how I am connected to past and future generations. There is also a strong undercurrent of racial pride and an emphasis on the collective history of African Americans in this poem. These themes are important because they are also evident in my teaching. I want my students to feel connected to African American history in a way that strengthens them in the face of adversity and motivates them to achieve, in spite of the odds. I hope that they can draw upon the resiliency of their ancestors in the absence of positive role models.

I believe that my racial identity had a lot to do with the way in which I taught the class. Because I have a positive racial concept, I was able to honor the culture that my students brought to the classroom. I wish I could say that I have always had a positive self-concept. I can remember at times when I had been so thoroughly indoctrinated by my education in predominately white schools that I felt out of place when in predominately Black settings. It seemed that the minute I opened my mouth to speak, I was labeled as different and seen as somewhat of an outsider because I "sounded White." How could I ever have a healthy self-image while being self-conscious and uncomfortable in the presence of others like myself? I came to the realization that I could not live with the

feeling of discomfort around people of my same racial origin. As a result, I decided to

submerge myself in African American settings so that I could face my fears.

After several years of work experience in both a predominately Black middle school

and community center, I have carved out a comfort zone that allows me to be myself and

fit in. I have become a person who has used her education as a means of self-upliftment,

while at the same time not allowing my education to leave me feeling alienated from my

own community.

FRAMING THE STUDY

Research on African American teachers who teach Black history in an intra-cultural

setting is not widespread. As a result, I was not able to find research that mirrored my

research interest. I used several qualitative methods of inquiry, including journaling,

interviewing, and extensive observation notes. I drew upon various bodies of educational

literature, as well as my own beliefs and conjectures.

Wilson, Shulman, and Richert's (1987) Pedagogical Reasoning Model was invaluable

as I attempted to make sense of what occurred in my Black history class. Wilson, Shulman,

and Richert (1987) suggest that pedagogical reasoning begins with comprehension. This

led me to ask what I needed to know in order to teach the Black history class. In thinking

about what I brought to my teaching, I coupled Wilson, Shulman, and Richert's (1987)

model with Pamela Grossman's (1990) work, which asserts that teachers enter into the

venture of teaching with knowledge that falls into the domain of subject matter

knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and

knowledge of the context. I adapted Grossman's (1990) work to include racial identity and

teaching philosophy. When paired with Wilson, Shulman, and Richert's (1987) model, Grossman's (1990) work explains the "what" teachers need to know (comprehend) in order to teach.

I used Wilson, Shulman, and Richert's (1987) and Pamela Grossman (1990) in order to analyze my teaching throughout this research. Wilson, Shulman, and Richert's (1987) model begins with comprehension then transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and new comprehension. I developed a series of questions that I asked myself after each class session that enabled me to chronicle my pedagogical reasoning using Wilson, Shulman, and Richert's (1987) model. These questions included:

Comprehension

- What did I need to know about the subject matter in order to teach this lesson?

- What, if any, Afrocentric pedagogical practi-ces were used in this lesson?

- How was Afrocentric philosophy and or my racial identity reflected in this lesson?

- What did I need to know about my students, their culture and/or community in order to make this lesson relevant?

Transformation

- How did I adapt and tailor the content in order to make it accessible to my students?

Instruction

- What Afrocentric pedagogical practices, if any, were used in this lesson?

Evaluation

- How did I assess student comprehension?

Reflection

- What did I discover about the lesson upon reflection?

New Comprehension

- What did I learn about myself, my students and the content being taught?

These guiding questions allowed me to reflect upon and analyze my pedagogical practices and decision-making.

This dissertation represents my journey of self-discovery. It is written in vignettes which offer glimpses into my past, present, and projected future. It examines the socialization process that I experienced in order to prepare myself to become a teacher and teacher educator. You will find that the child, the student, the teacher and the researcher within me have entered into a conversation in an attempt to better understand the many transitions that I have undergone in order to become the teacher that I am today.

PRE-PLANNING

A great deal of consideration went into planning my Black history class. The type of instruction that I wanted to deliver is relatively uncommon in schools, because of both the subject matter and the pedagogical approach that I adopted. I have taught Black history both at the community college and middle school levels. Each experience rendered valuable lessons, which shaped my plans for how to deliver future instruction. I wanted my students to experience African American history rather than memorize a collection of names, dates, times, and facts.

In planning this course, I had to figure out how to take advantage of the rich community and home culture of my students. I had to help them see that they are not

merely the subjects of history; they may also be the authors of history. In thinking about the purposes of multicultural education and how it might be used as a means to empower students, I wrote in an early journal,

> Black youth need multicultural education, which will equip them with the tools needed to think critically about contemporary and historical social problems. Even though we supposedly have made significant progress in the field of multicultural education, it seems as though we have only scratched the surface of the progress, which is so desperately needed. To merely augment White male heroes with a few select Black male heroes is a great disservice to students who need to learn how to think from a different perspective. (C.M.S., TRJ 2/98)

My teaching experiences left me feeling determined to make sure that I presented my Black history curriculum in such a way that both empowered my students with a positive self-esteem and raised their cultural consciousness.

Prior to beginning my Black history class, I made sure that everyone had filled out the proper paperwork. I also contacted the students to confirm their enrollment and to make sure that no student felt coerced to participate. Before the class began, students and their parents were given the syllabus, which provided an overview of what could be expected from the course. Although it is not customary to provide middle school students with a syllabus, I felt that it was important for my students and their parents to have written documentation of what the class would cover as well as assignments that students were expected to submit. The class took place over the span of eight weeks, meeting Monday through Friday for a total of thirty-two class sessions (fifty minute each).

The course syllabus begins with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which states, "I want young men and women who are not alive today but who will come into this world with new privileges to know and see that these privileges did not come without somebody suffering and sacrificing for them" (King, in Young, 1996, preface). I selected

this quote because Martin Luther King Jr. is a person who is likely to be easily recognized by my students.

Some critics argue that Martin Luther King Jr. is often overused. They contend that this sends the message that there are no other African Americans worthy of recognition. I agree with this sentiment and feel strongly that the study of Black history should not become an exercise in hero worship. I selected the quote from King because it captures one of my underlying goals, which is to help my students to recognize that they cannot take their currently held privileges for granted. They must understand the great price that was paid for their freedom, as well as understand that they should have a commitment to improve the quality of life for future generations.

My class was offered during my students' summer vacation. Knowing their lack of fondness for homework, I tried to design assignments and projects that they would find interesting and fun. The three major projects for the class included the autobiographical photo journal, oral history project, and action project proposal.

The autobiographical photo journal was designed to provide learning through reflection and introspection. First, the students reflected carefully to determine how they wished to represent themselves to their peers. The second task was the careful selection of autobiographical materials (e.g., pictures, words, keepsakes etc.) most likely to accomplish that portrayal. Third, students wrote captions to tell the story of their lives.

Students were given a disposable camera and they were required to take fifteen (15) pictures in the following categories:

1. Self-portrait

2. Family portrait

3. Friends

4. School

5. Support agencies (i.e.- churches, clubs and community centers)

6. Hobbies

7. Home

8. Favorite room

9. Bedroom

10. Significant adults (i.e. - teachers, counselors and mentors)

11. Neighborhood

12. Recreational activities

13. School

14. Favorite place

15. Favorite activities

Students had additional pictures that they could use at their own discretion. The pictures were compiled in a scrapbook and labeled with captions.

This assignment magnified the importance of the common aspects of my students' every day lives. Students also included a family tree/map. This encouraged them to explore their family history as a means to let them see how they might be inspired to be authors of their own history. Students tried to trace their family history as far back as possible; they also attempted to look for migration patterns that bought them to live in the city where we currently reside. They also focused on family achievement so that they might be challenged to continue a family tradition or spearhead a new trend.

The objective of the second major project was to locate an African American individual who was fifty years of age or older and who could be interviewed in order that they might share their historical perspective on how race relations in the United States have progressed over time. This was done so that students might elicit stories that were steeped within the context of the Civil Rights era. We were fortunate to have access to a senior citizens' program so that students who may not have had access to an elder could easily be paired with an adult.

Finally, the class was to culminate with the group presentations of the action project proposals. The action project proposals allowed students to select a critical issue which they would like to address. Students were required to use the Internet to research the topic, as well as develop a proactive plan for educating the public about their chosen issue. Action project proposals included the topic, rationale, and advertisement strategy. Students were encouraged to use strategies that they learned about from the Civil Rights Movement. Students were required to develop a means to educate the community at-large about their topic through a newsletter, public service announcement, newspaper ad, brochure, magazine article, poster, flyer, and/or other media.

In addition to completing the major projects, students completed chapter assignments and homework assignments that required them to interact with an adult in order to elicit information, which the students in turn shared with their classmates. Structuring assignments that maximized productivity and relied on the assistance of an adult served many purposes. It allowed students to share course content with a significant adult and it drew upon the oral tradition as adults shared their perceptions of history with the

students. These activities also encouraged students to be crafters of history who could discern their own historical truths.

THE STORY BEGINS: INTRODUCING THE CLASS

Day one is probably the most critical time of any course. This is a time for teachers to get to know the students while allowing the students to get to know their expectations and course requirements. From the very beginning of the class, I sought to elicit as much feedback from the students as possible. My purpose was to avoid the traditional lecture style presentation of historical content in order to achieve my goal helping students to see the relevancy of Black history to their everyday life experiences.

After giving my students a sense of what they could expect from my instruction and the course, I attempted to learn from them what they hoped to gain from the class. I have also used the K-W-L strategy in planning instruction. This allowed me to find out "K" – what my students knew, "W" – what my students wanted to know, and "L" – what my students learned from instruction (Ogle, 1992). Gaining this information is an invaluable resource when trying to modify instruction to better adapt to the needs of my students.

On the first day of class I asked, "What do you know about Black history?" Students seemed reluctant to answer the question. I called on Derrick, who was usually very vocal; he responded by asking, "What do you mean when you say – What do I know about Black history? I know a lot." Having gotten a request for clarification, I probed deeper, explaining to my students that I would be in a better position to teach the class if I knew what they knew about Black history already. One of my students answered by expressing

his frustration with the fact that Black history is seldom talked about until the month of

February. His sincere concern was evident, as is evident in the following:

> Derrick: Well, Ms. Ross to be honest with you, the thing I hate
> most about Black history is the fact that we only really
> hear about it in February. I mean at my school, it's not
> until February that everybody starts wearing African
> clothes and showing pride in Black culture. I think that's
> stupid.
>
> Ms. Ross: Derrick, I agree with you but let's think about this some
> more. Have you ever heard of Carter G. Woodson?
>
> Derrick: No, not really. Is he the Black man who invented peanut
> butter?
>
> Ms. Ross: Not quite. I think you're thinking of George Washington
> Carver. In any case, Carter G. Woodson is the man who
> founded Black History Week. He did so as a way to give
> African Americans a special time to learn about our rich
> heritage and feel pride.
>
> Derrick: Excuse me Ms. Ross, I don't know anything about Mr.
> Woodson, but I just can't believe that he wanted Black
> History Month to be like it is now. I mean think about it. I
> didn't even know about him and he invented Black History
> Week. The reason I didn't know about him is because we
> only hear about Martin Luther King. Don't get me wrong,
> I respect what King did for Black people, but there must be
> other Black people who made a difference! (BHCT-01)

The discussion continued with several students agreeing with Derrick. Many seemed

indifferent. Other students shared their knowledge of slavery and the Civil Rights Era.

When asked where they had learned what they knew about Black History, the students

responded that they had learned in school, in church, and from their parents.

Derrick's comments on the inadequacy of Black History Month as he perceived it was

reminiscent of an ongoing debate among historians about how we should represent Black

history. I am reminded of the words of Ali Mazuri, a renowned African scholar and

historian, who explores two brands of African history that he calls the perspective of "romantic gloriana and romantic primitivism." Mazuri states that

> Romantic gloriana looks to the pyramids as validation of Africa's dignity, takes pride in the ruins of ancient Zimbabwe, and turns to the ancient empires of Ghana, Mali, and Malawi for official names of modern republics. Romantic primitivism seeks solace in stateless societies, finds dignity in village life and discerns full cultural validity in the traditions and beliefs of the people. (Mazuri and Levine, 1986, p. xv-xvi)

Mazuri goes on to say that his work attempts to reconcile these warring schools of thought by emphasizing both the simple and the complex and valuing them as equally important. Like Mazuri I am apprehensive about teaching Black history in a way that only values the leaders and movements. I am interested in exploring the many contributions of the common people, without whom the Civil Right Movement would not have existed.

Rather than assume that what I thought was important would also be important to my students, I decided that I needed to know what they wanted to learn. I asked, "Knowing that we are going to be studying the Civil Rights Movement, what would you like to learn more about?" Most students seemed to be in deep contemplation. Finally, LaKisha raised her hand and asked, "I want to know why White people hate Black people?" This comment sparked an interesting conversation which generated a lot of discussion. The following exchange occurred:

Marisa: Ms. Ross I think that LaKisha is wrong when she says that White people hate Black people. I mean you just can't say that. I am bi-racial. My mother is White and my father is Black. We live in a White neighborhood and no one has ever been mean to me. Maybe that happened a long time ago but things have changed since then.

I was momentarily taken aback by Marisa's revelation that she was bi-racial. Questions raced through my mind about how I might have to alter my presentations so as not to offend or exclude her. I responded to her point that White people do not hate Black people by telling her that her points were valid and society has changed for the better in many ways. I also warned my students that we should avoid stereotyping people. LaKisha, the student who had originally raised the question about White people, felt the need to defend her position:

> LaKisha: Ms. Ross, you asked me a question and I gave you an honest answer. I understand that things have changed but most of us in here don't have no White parent or even any White friends. We're from the Projects. When we are around White people, they treat us like they're afraid we're gonna steal something. That's why I asked the question, where does all their hate for us come from? If you think about it we're the ones who should hate them because we were slaves.

I felt strongly that both Marisa and LaKisha had raised valid points. I wanted to take on the role of an impartial mediator so as not to shut down either student. I explained that while LaKisha's points may well be legitimate, Marisa was also correct in the sense that I did not want to leave my students with the impression that all White people hate Black people. I explained that they would learn in the Civil Rights Movement that many Whites fought for the rights of Blacks and even lost their lives in order to make changes in our country. I hoped that this would encourage them to be cautious when making broad statements about White people. Although my students listened intently, they still seemed to hold the conviction that race relations were far from amicable. Derrick vigorously expressed this sentiment:

Derrick: I just want to say that I agree with LaKisha but I think that Whites are afraid of us more than they hate us. They're afraid that we might just snap one day and go to killing White people for all the stuff that they did to us during slavery. I guess Marisa may have a point. Some White people aren't so bad. But Marisa doesn't really live in the same world that we live in. Maybe she's accepted, but I bet most of us who live in the Projects don't feel accepted. (BHCT-01)

The discussion of White people segued into a further discussion of other things about Black history that my students wanted to learn. I reinforced the point that we were likely to encounter many questions in our course of study for which there are no clear answers. I wanted my students to know that they all have had experiences which are valuable and worth hearing.

Other students commented that they wanted to know why Martin Luther King was killed. They also wanted to know about things that were invented by African Americans that they don't know anything about. One other area of interest was racial profiling. I promised students that we would address each of their areas of interest in subsequent class sessions.

Students were asked to complete a homework assignment for the second class period. They were asked to bring in an item which represented African American culture, as well as to be prepared to explain why the object is a good example of their culture. Many students asked for clarification and suggested that they did not have anything. I instructed them to be creative and to make use of the library if all else failed.

After the first day of class, I felt relieved to have the class underway. I was especially pleased at the level of interest in the course. There was a greater age range than I had initially anticipated when I envisioned the prospective participants in the study. My

students ranged from the seventh to tenth grades. I was concerned that it might be difficult to plan lessons with such a broad spectrum of ability levels. This turned out to be less of a concern than I anticipated because my students were equally unknowledgeable of the course content.

When recapping the occurrences of the first day of class, I wrote in my reflection journal:

> Day one turned out to be a very successful start. The students seemed to be very vocal and somewhat interested in the course content. I wish I'd known that Marisa was bi-racial. Perhaps I could have been a better mediator when the discussion of White people arose. When Marisa's grandmother approached me about having Marisa and her brother in the class, I understood that they were just visiting during their summer vacation, but it didn't dawn on me that the grandmother might have purposefully put them in my program so that they could be exposed to African American kids and culture.
>
> One of the things that I appreciated about having the opportunity to teach this class to Black youths was the fact that it would be an intraracial setting that allowed the youth to speak freely and feel uninhibited by the apprehension of offending some White person. I never factored in the possibility of having a bi-racial student. On the one hand I usually see bi-racial students as being light-skinned Black people, but Marisa's comments forced me to re-think my position. (TRJD1)

At the time I wrote this journal, I was torn between my desire to protect all the students and my goal of creating an environment where African American youth could freely express themselves without having to experience what W.E.B. DuBois terms "double consciousness." DuBois writes,

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, the sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amuse, contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness – unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (DuBois in Franklin, ed., 1965, p. 215)

In *The Souls of Black Folks*, DuBois proposes that African Americans developed a duality in order to reconcile perceptions that they hold of themselves with the perceptions of larger society, which are imposed on them. Initially, I had hoped to safeguard my students from having to think about how their feelings and beliefs might be perceived by a non-Black person. I felt strongly that students would better be able to experience the Civil Rights curriculum if they were constrained by a fear of being misunderstood or judged by someone that did not share their racial background. Perhaps I was naïve in thinking that the privateness of an intraracial setting would remove my students' apprehensions. Joseph L. White and Thomas Parham suggest that

> Black youth cannot completely avoid the reality of the social
> contradictions inherent in American life. Those who have been
> protected from the reality of social contradictions are going to come
> into contact with other Blacks at this stage; they cannot be permanently
> isolated from the fact of oppression in America... Duality is at the heart
> of the identity struggle and generates powerful feelings of rage and
> indignation. (White and Parham, 1990, p. 46)

I sometimes wonder if the duality of African Americans is so deeply rooted in our psyches that it remains intact even in the absence of Whites.

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

One of my goals for promoting relevancy was to show my students that their home culture was valued. Often times, Black students find that their home life is out of synchronization with their school life. This often has a detrimental impact on this academic achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Gloria Ladson-Billings suggests that,

> Teachers who practice culturally relevant methods can be identified by
> the way they see themselves and others. They see their teaching as an art
> rather than a technical skill... They see themselves as part of the

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community and they see teaching as giving back to the community. They help students make connections between their local, national, racial, cultural, and global identities...They believe that knowledge is continuously re-created, recycled, and shared by teachers and students alike. They view the content of the curriculum critically and are passionate about it. Rather than expecting students to demonstrate prior knowledge and skills, they help students develop that knowledge by building bridges and scaffolding for knowledge. (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 25)

I agree with Ladson-Billing's conjecture about teachers who practice culturally relevant methods. Consequently, the Cultural Item Show and Tell seemed like an interesting activity for my class. Unfortunately, many students did not bring in an item, which I found to be very disappointing. Of the twenty-two students who participated in the class only eight students did their assignment.

Although I was frustrated by their apathy, I decided to proceed with the activity in spite of their irresponsibility. I began the class by sharing my own item with the students. I brought in one of my favorite pictures by an artist, Gilbert Young. The picture is entitled *He Ain't Heavy*. I purchased it some years ago because I believe it symbolizes a powerful message.

Figure 4.1: Gilbert Young's *He Ain't Heavy*

I asked the students to look at the picture and tell me what they think it represented. I did

not tell them the title of the picture because I did not want to influence their

interpretations. Two interesting and divergent interpretations arose:

Calvin: Ms. Ross, I think that this picture represents one brother
            trying to help another brother to make it to freedom.

Ms. Ross: That's interesting Calvin. Do you have any idea where
            they're going?

Calvin: To be honest, I don't think that they're going to a place. I
            think they're trying to help each other get ahead in the
            White world. This picture is about Black people pulling
            together.

Ms. Ross: Interesting Calvin. Would anyone else like to comment?

Derrick: Yeah, I would Ms. Ross. I think the picture shows one
            brother dropping another brother. That would make sense
            to me. I mean if you ask us how many of us live with both
            parents, I bet most of us live with our mothers and don't
            even hardly see our fathers. That's why I say he's dropping

the brother because nobody never gave me no helping hand.

Ms. Ross: Wow Derrick, No one has ever interpreted the picture like that.

Calvin: Ms. Ross, what do you think of the picture?

Ms. Ross: I think that art is open to inter-pretation and it will mean many things to different people. It's not my place to say who's right. I can tell you that the picture is entitled *He Ain't Heavy*. The picture is doing just what the artist intended. It's making us think. (BHCT-02)

After our discussion about my picture the students, the following dialogue occurred when I asked my students to share their cultural items with the class:

Gerard: I brought in my congos.

Anthony: Don't you mean bongos, man?

Gerard: No, these are congos. Bongos are two small drums that are connected. They sit between a musician's knees when played.

Ms. Ross: Gerard, if I might interrupt, those are pronounced conga drums.

Gerard: Well anyway, in my family everyone plays an instrument. I chose to play the congos. They relate to Black culture because Africans invented drums and used them to send messages, even during slavery.

Ms. Ross: Could you elaborate on what you mean when you say drums were used to send hidden messages?

I encouraged Gerard to say more about the drums and what he meant when he said that Africans used them to send hidden messages. He used the analogy of a fire alarm alarming which sends the message that there's a fire. He went on to explain that Africans could hit their drums in a certain way to convey messages to other slaves. I thanked Gerard for his

insights and called for the next person who had something to present. Nathan volunteered and explained that he'd brought in a poem written by Langston Hughes entitled, *A Dream Deferred*. He said that he chose the poem because Blacks have always been able to use poetry and music as a way to tell the world about the Black experience. He felt that the poem talked about what happens to Black people when we are not allowed to reach our dreams. I complimented Nathan on his selection of the poem and asked the class what they thought the poet meant when he talked about dreams exploding.

JeT'aime explained that she thought that the explosion was people breaking under the pressure of knowing that they cannot reach their dreams because of racism. She went on to say that her cultural item was what served as a source of inspiration for many African Americans and an outlet to help keep them from exploding. JeT'aime presented a Bible and explained that she chose that item because of the prominent role that religion had played in the lives of African Americans. I praised JeT'aime for her selection and explained that in all of my years it using this activity, no one had ever presented a Bible as a cultural artifact. JeT'aime's bible was especially appropriate because her family had used it as a means to record family history, births, deaths, anniversaries, marriages, and other significant family facts. JeT'aime's presentation renewed my optimism that the Cultural Item Show and Tell was indeed a worthwhile activity.

The next student to present was Kendall, who explained that he'd brought in a Black Heritage stamp which had a picture of Malcolm X on it. He explained that his mother believed that all Black people should buy Black Heritage stamps because they honor the many contributions of Blacks in American society. I agreed with Kendall and expressed

that I purchased the Black Heritage stamps because I didn't want them to be discontinued for lack of demand.

One of my most articulate students asked if he could present after Nathan. Although he had actually forgotten the assignment, he figured out how he could compensate and explained:

Derrick: Ms. Ross, I actually forgot to bring in something, but as I was listening to other people, I remembered something my father told me. I would like to share the dollar bill and how it relates to Black culture. If you notice on the back of the bill there is a picture of a pyramid. These pyramids exist in Egypt. Notice how the top of the pyramid is removed and is represented with a triangle that has an eye in it. This eye is the eye of Osirus, who was an Egyptian God. The fact that the pyramid is on our money shows Whites know that Black people had great civilizations. (BHCT-02)

I thanked Derrick for his insights and explained that I had heard his theory about the dollar bill but has never researched enough to know if was in fact credible. Nonetheless it was interesting food for thought. Four other students shared items, including a Black doll, a picture of Martin Luther King, a cotton ball, and a piece of kente cloth. These items were not discussed in detail.

The second day of class came to a close with me giving the students a general overview of what they could expect from our first chapter, *Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1941–1945)*. They seemed anxious to begin their actual bookwork.

The Cultural Item Show and Tell was somewhat disappointing because many of the students did not bring in their item. I wondered why my students had such an apathetic attitude about completing assignments. I reflected on my feelings of frustration in my second journal by writing the following:

> Although the students who did not complete the homework assignment disappointed me, I was very impressed by the students who did do the assignment. All the students were interested in seeing the items that were brought in. I gave the students that did their homework a candy treat. This is probably a dangerous precedent to set as I cannot afford to dole out twenty-two candy bars a day in order to bribe them into compliance. I suppose I just wanted them to know that in life you have to be responsible. Someday they will have jobs and if they don't show up for work, they won't get paid.
>
> Perhaps I will have to rethink the way I approach assignments because it maybe difficult to get students to do work outside of class, especially since this is their summer vacation. (TRJD-2)

A great deal of preplanning went into my Black history class, so I felt assured that I knew how to make the course content accessible to my students. I wanted my students to begin the class on a positive note. Consequently, I did not bombard them with questions to determine their prior knowledge. Instead, I took an indirect route to learning about their prior knowledge by asking all of them to bring in a cultural item and explain why it represented their culture. This allowed me to get a better sense of what aspects of Black culture were valued by my students.

Although I was a bit disappointed by the lack of participation, we did manage to have a rich discussion about the few items that were brought in. When my students showed up without their homework assignment, it forced me to think about my assumption that all of them would be eager to participate. Once again I had imposed my personal perspective. That is to say, when I was introduced to Black history and culture, I developed a passion for it that overflowed into all aspects of my life. If I had had a teacher that gave me a chance to share my cultural heritage in school, I would have gladly embraced the opportunity. Perhaps this more true for me because talking about Black culture was a rare while occurrence attending predominately white schools. Talking about Black

history/culture, for my students who live their lives immersed in the culture, was nothing to marvel at.

Fascinatingly, my students seemed more eager to participate when we started reading the textbook. It was as if they had not been taught to develop and value their own thoughts and perspectives. They seemed to gain a sense of accomplishment from being able to read aloud with fluency. Unfortunately, I discovered that while they were competent readers, they often had difficulty understanding the concepts they read. On several occasions we would read passages out of the book, after which I would ask them to tell me, in their own words, what they had read. As the course progressed they came to appreciate my expectation that they would have to read for comprehension.

TEACHING THE CIVIL RIGHTS UNIT

This study could have focused on numerous aspects of African American history. I chose the Civil Rights era because I appreciated the central role that youth played in the movement. At the same time, this history is recent enough that I thought it would likely be easier to build a case for relevancy. Finally, I hoped to use the history of the Civil Rights Movement to inspire my students to be pro-active change agents in their own communities. According to Caesar L. McDowell and Patricia Sullivan:

> Movement history is taught to tell the story of how one struggle against oppression - that of African Americans in the United States – was mounted, maintained, resisted, and challenged. The story is told:
>
> 1. as evidence of how social change occurs .
> 2. to capture the context in which social change can occur.
> 3. to convey the story of the people who engaged in that struggle, and
> 4. to provide insight into how the lessons of the past can inform the future. (McDowell & Sullivan in Perry, 1993, p. 197)

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Powell and Sullivan go on to suggest that the study of history might be used to inspire today's youth.

My class studied the Civil Rights Movement using the *African American Experience: A History*, which was published by the Globe Book Company in 1992. We covered five chapters of Unit 9, including: *Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1941–1945)*, *Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in Postwar Years (1945–1960s)*, *Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights (1954-1963)*, *Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement (1964-1972)*, *Chapter 32: Marching Off to Vietnam (1963-1982)*. The chapters were supplemented with in-class activities, which were designed to create experiential learning.

A TIME TO KILL OR BE KILLED

Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans looks at the impact of World War II on African Americans and the battle for Civil Rights. This chapter introduces the "Double V" campaign launched by African Americans who sought to gain a victory over prejudice, segregation, and discrimination in both the military and in American society at-large. The chapter discusses the millions of African Americans who enlisted in the military to fight in the war. Ironically racial discrimination existed in the U.S. military even though the United States and allies were fighting against a racist Nazi enemy. The chapter presents how life for African Americans changed because of both the large number of African Americans who were drafted to fight in the war and the large number of Blacks who moved to the Northeast and Midwest to take jobs in the defense industries. In sum, this chapter provides the backdrop for students to understand the political climate which gave birth to a spirit of

protest among African Americans. The performance objective for *Chapter 28* was to have students compare and contrast the treatment of African Americans on the home front and in the military services.

After reading *Chapter 28* aloud, the students answered the *Critical Thinking* Questions at the end of each section. One question that generated a great deal of discussion asked, "How do you think African Americans who served in the war felt when they returned to a still segregated nation?" Many students expressed that they did not understand how America could expect Black soldiers to fight for freedom for our allies, but still not be free themselves. A student named Mekael argued this point eloquently:

Mekael: I think it is so unfair that Black soldiers had to go out and fight for people who didn't even respect them. I mean think about it, it's not like these men volunteered to be in the war. They were forced to sign up. So, how can you force someone to fight for people who treat them like dirt? That just seems unfair to me.

Ms. Ross: Mekael, you are right. It was a difficult thing for the soldiers, but many of them actually welcomed an opportunity to fight for our nation. I think somewhere in the back of their minds they thought if they fought hard enough and showed their bravery that one day they would be respected and treated as equals.

Derrick: Ms. Ross, didn't we read that Black soldiers were segregated in the military? If that's true why would they think that anything was going to change when they got back to the United States? I believe the only reason that Black men were allowed to fight is because they needed people to die.

Ms. Ross: Derrick, you're probably right. Segregation did exist in the military; however, segregation was eventually ended in the military. I should mention that we will have two special guest speakers visit our next class. My uncle, Albert Ross, who fought in World War II, and my father, John Ross,

who fought in the Korean War, will share their
experiences about being in battle. I want everyone to write
at least three questions that you would like them to
answer. (BHCT-06)

I decided that my students would benefit from a visit from war veterans. Many of them

held the misconception that World War II took place in the very distant past. I asked my

father and uncle if they would make themselves available to talk about what they

experienced during the war, as well as answer a few of the students' questions. My

students' post presentation comments indicated that they greatly benefited from having

exposure to two real primary sources because it made the war seem more real.

I introduced my uncle and father to the class by telling the students a their ages,

former branch of military, and number of years of service. I asked them if they would tell

the students a little bit about their lives in the segregated South and how they felt about

being in the military. I also asked if they would answer questions that the students had

written as a part of one of their journal entries. The following passages share excerpts

from the dialogue that occurred between the students and our guest speakers.

Not surprisingly the students were interested in the gory aspects of being a soldier in

wartimes. Sheldon raised the first question and asked if they had had to kill anyone in the

war. My father, J. Ross, explained that the war isn't like in the movies and he probably did

kill someone. He said, "Sometimes you don't even see your enemies. You're just out there

shooting and trying not to get shot." My uncle, A. Ross, added that he really never thought

of it as if he were killing someone. As he said, "In war you do what you're told. It's kill or

be killed."

The second question was more in the spirit of what I had expected. I had anticipated that students would be interested in the state of race relations during my father and uncle's time. The following exchange got to the heart of this issue:

Nathan: Did you experience racism in the military?

A. Ross: Yes. I did experience racism in the military. The Black troops were segregated from the White troops and we also heard them call us out of our names. This wasn't anything unusual to us. But, when you're about to go to battle, name-calling is the least of your worries. You just want to come back home alive and well.

J. Ross: Like my brother, I experienced racism too. When I was in the Korean War, we were in segregated units. A Black commander led our unit, but we had a White advisor. We all believed that the White advisor was there to watch us and make sure we weren't trying to organize against the Whites. Even after the war was over and I had an opportunity to get out of the military, I decided to re-enlist because I needed a job. The thing that hurt me about the Air Force was that I often trained White guys who would eventually end up being my boss. (BHCT-07)

As a follow up question, Derrick asked whether or not they thought that White people were afraid that you might try to kill them and say it was an accident. J. Ross responded that he didn't think that Whites were afraid because during a war, everyone was on the same team. As he said, "We were Americans." A. Ross added that he thought that Whites were more afraid that when Black soldiers went back home to the United States, they wouldn't want to stay in their "place." He further explained that "The thought of a Black man with a gun scared the hell out of a lot of White people."

As a follow up Simone asked if they felt like they had gotten the respect that they deserved when they got back home from the war. A. Ross explained that Black people did respect the military men for their service to the country. He added that most Whites didn't

really feel any debt of gratitude. He felt that they just wanted Black soldiers to go back to the same old oppressed way of life. To further illustrate this point, J. Ross shared a story from his family history:

J. Ross: Where we came from respect was never something that was freely given to Blacks by Whites. You had to know when to stand up for yourself. Take my father for example. He fought in World War I and managed to save enough money to purchase his own land. This made our family more independent because we didn't have to live on the White folks' land. A lot of Whites didn't like the fact that we had our own land, because many of them didn't have their own land.

Anyway, the word got out that the KKK was going to burn a cross in our front yard. My father sent back word that if the Klan burned a cross in our yard, everybody was going to know who the Klan was because they'd be found dead in the front yard, next to a burning cross.

Now, on the night when the Klan was supposed to come, we stayed up with our shotguns all night. The Klan rode pass our house early the next day, but they didn't stop because they got the message that we wouldn't be bullied. (BHCT-07)

The students seemed amazed that my father's family was willing to fight against what appeared to be unbeatable odds in order to keep their dignity.

The final question asked my father and uncle to make a comparative assessment of whether or not they felt that times had changed for the better since they were young men. They responded,

A. Ross: I would have to say that times have changed for the better. You kids have opportunities that we never had. I had to move to the North in order to get a decent job. Now with an education, you can become anything you want to be.

J. Ross: Well, I agree with my brother. Things are better in some
             ways. But on the other hand, things are a lot worse too.
             For example, today we see young people being slaves to
             drugs and violence. It makes me sick when I think about
             all the Black males who are either in jail or in graveyards
             because this society was never designed for them to get
             ahead. So when you ask, are things better or worse, I'll just
             say that that depends on what kind of life you decide you
             want to live. (BHCT-07)

My students warmly received the guest speakers. They seemed to be very impressed by the

fact that the speakers had actually fought in and lived through a war. I felt extremely

proud because of my personal connection to the speakers. Although it took some coaxing

to come to the class, in the end their visit was very worthwhile. When I reflected on this

class session in my journal, I wrote,

> I was touched by the stories that my father and uncle shared with the
> students. Their presence in my classroom made the World War II
> chapter seem so much more tangible. Often times I think my students'
> imaginations have been distorted by the television. They seemed to
> believe in that which is unreal while being skeptical of that which is
> historical truth.
>
> This has been my first real feeling of success relative to giving my
> students an opportunity to *experience* the curriculum. My students asked
> thoughtful questions and seemed to have genuinely appreciated the
> opportunity to speak with someone who'd fought in a war. Likewise, my
> uncle and my father left with a feeling of pride having had the
> opportunity to give something back to the community. (TRJD-08)

In order to teach *Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1941-1945)*, I had to

know how to make the content accessible to my students, even though this War occurred

long before many of their parents were even born. I used Afrocentric philosophy and

pedagogy by enlisting the support of community elders, who shared their experiences

through the oral tradition. I tailored and adapted the content to make it comprehensible to

my students by allowing them to develop questions of interest, which they were allowed to

ask our guest speakers. In this way they could compare and contrast what the text offered with real life primary sources. I assessed my student's learning by looking at the depth of the questions that they asked during the presentations. I also reviewed their journals to see how their perspective of World War II had changed after having the opportunity to talk to War veterans.

Upon reflection I discovered my students really did not understand the proximity of historical events that occurred before their birth. Many of them found it hard to believe that my father and uncle had actually lived through wars they read about in their textbook. Teaching this chapter taught me that I couldn't rely on the textbook to create relevancy for my students. It will take my ingenuity and resourcefulness to develop the curriculum in such a way that it becomes more than memorizing names, dates and facts.

THE BATTLE CONTINUES

Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in Postwar Years examines the 1940s and 1950s, a time when we witnessed a mass migration of Blacks from the South. Both World War II and the invention of the mechanical cotton picker promoted this huge migration. The chapter explains how Black migrants found housing in the cities in the Northeast and Midwest and how the swift arrival of so many unemployed migrants drained cities' resources. Additionally, many Whites fled the cities because of racist attitudes. Consequently, "White flight" further diminished the tax base, which led to the rapid deterioration of cities. On a more positive note, the chapter shows how the increased numbers of African American voters in cities led to heightened political power to elect representatives to all levels of government. During this time many African American authors, musicians and artists used

their urban experiences to generate themes for their work, which earned them national acclaim. This chapter debunks the notion that upon leaving the South, African Americans no longer were faced with racism and discrimination. The performance objective for *Chapter 29* is to have students identify historical trends and their causes. In addition, they analyze how prominent African Americans artists of the 1950s and 1960s challenged stereotypical images of African Americans with more accurate and positive portrayals of the African American community.

We explored *Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in the Postwar Years* by having students think about what might be the causes for African Americans to migrate from the South to Northern cities. They were given the journal prompt, "Imagine that you are an 65 year old African American living in a Northern city in 1968, write a letter to a young relative explaining the differences you see between life in the South and North." Students were told that their letters should be at least three paragraphs long and in an appropriate letter format. My desire was to have students understand the changes that African Americans experienced as a result of migrating to Northern cities.

Many students wrote letters that discussed their new life in the North. They bragged about their better jobs, nice cars, and fine homes. One letter that was particularly well written included a poem about being Black in America. The letter read,

> Dear Cousin,
>
> How are you? I am writing because I wanted to let you know about some of the changes that I have seen in the North since when I was a boy in the South.
>
> I have been following the progress of the Civil Rights Movement. I know you think you got it bad in Alabama, but life is hard for a Black man whether you are in the South or North. Things were even worse when I was a boy in the South. You could be lynched for looking at a

White the wrong way. We knew what the White folks thought of us. Everyday, I saw signs in the South that said-WHITES ONLY. In the North the signs aren't there, but we know where we're not wanted.

The other day I wrote a poem that I thought I would share with you. It's called, *Black in America*

> *Being Black in America is like living in hell.*
> *More bad memories than I can tell.*
> *They told us in the North that we would*
> *find the land of milk and honey.*
> *But that's such a lie till it ain't even funny.*
> *The South had lynchings by the KKK.*
> *In the North the White folks won'*
> *give us fair pay.*
> *In the South they'll call you*
> *a nigger to your face.*
> *In the North they hide from the issue of race.*
> *Being Black in America is like living in hell.*
> *More bad memories than I can tell.*

Well cousin, I hope you liked my poem. Keep the Faith.

Sincerely,
Travis (SWS-06)

Another letter that was well written shared a different perspective:

Dear Luke,

I'm writing this letter to let you know how great life is in the North. I have a job in the plant and I'm making more money than I've ever made in my life. I even bought my own home.

I don't know why you're still down there with those crazy White people. They aren't going to let you get ahead.

I am sending you a bus ticket so that you can come up here. You can live with me until you save enough money to get your own place. Well, I gotta go, but I hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,
Sheldon (SWS-17)

Upon discussion of the letters, the students agreed that the conditions of life for African Americans were difficult whether in the South or in the North.

Upon reading my students' letters, I thought that they could benefit from having an opportunity to see if their perceptions of the differences between life in the South versus the North were accurate. I decided to ask them to complete an oral history project with an adult that could serve as a primary source. We were fortunate to have a senior citizens' program housed in the our community center, so students had easy access to adults that were likely to have been alive during the post World War II era.

The students and I made up a list of interview questions. The questionnaire included five questions for the senior citizens: Did you participate in the Civil Rights Movement? Did you believe in the teachings of Martin Luther King or Malcolm X? If you could live in the past or present, which would you chose? Do you believe race relations are better today than they were in the 1960s? Have you experienced racism? The students were also asked to write five additional interview questions about differences between their experiences in the South and North.

Nineteen senior citizens were interviewed and given the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to elicit simple responses, which could easily be tabulated for the entire class. We sought to find trends and patterns in the answers that were given by respondents. Twelve respondents answered that they had participated in the Civil Rights Movement while seven indicated that they had not. An overwhelming eighteen respondents said that they believed in the teachings of Martin Luther King while only one indicated Malcolm X. Seventeen respondents indicated that they preferred living in the present while two thought that the past was better. Sixteen respondents said that race

relations are better today than they were in the 1960s while three disagreed. All

respondents indicated that they had experienced racism.

The surveys showed that the overwhelming majority of senior citizens who were

interviewed had experienced racism firsthand at some point in their lives. Many of them

participated in the Civil Rights Movement, although their involvement may not have been

direct. When asked about their perceptions of the past and present, the general consensus

seemed to be that race relations had improved and the majority of them preferred living in

present times.

The student interviews rendered many interesting findings. Students were given time

in class to share something significant that they learned from interviewing a senior citizen.

Derrick reported that when he asked his senior to give an example of racism they had

experienced, the senior expressed, "As a boy, I lived in the South and we had to address all

White people as Sir and Ma'am. Even when I became an adult, I still had to refer to all

Whites in that way, even if I was older than them" (SWS-22). My students found this hard

to believe. Another student, Lakisha, asked why the senior felt that Whites resented Black

so much. The senior responded,

> Well to be honest with you, there were a lot of good White people, just
> like there were bad White people. People don't realize that they there
> were a lot of White people who stood with Blacks during the Civil
> Rights Movement. I've heard stories about bags of money being sent to
> the NAACP headquarters and we knew that it probably came from
> Whites. Those White people, who tended to hate Black people, were
> usually just afraid and evil. They were afraid that one day we might do
> to them, what they did to us. (SWS-25)

I was pleased that this senior offered some proof that not *all* Whites treated Blacks poorly.

Some students asked the seniors questions that called for them to offer their own

personal beliefs and values. For example, Marisa asked her interviewee what he thought of

interracial dating. The senior responded, "In my day a Black man could be lynched for just looking at a White woman. Things have changed today, but I think mixed couples still have a hard time (SWS-27)." Another student asked a similar type of question in that he wanted to know if their senior thought that light skinned Blacks had it better than dark skinned Blacks in their time. The senior responded, "Everybody had it bad. But, the light skinned Blacks did have certain advantages. For example, I attended Alabama State and you never saw a homecoming queen that was any darker than a brown paper bag. So, it wasn't so much as the White folks treating the lights better, it was us against ourselves" (SWS-31).

Finally, one student asked the question which has been the topic of many debates lately, "Do you think the Black community was stronger during segregation?" The senior responded, "Segregation was a bad thing and I'm glad that it has been ended. But, in some ways we were better off. For example, when we were segregated we had our own stores, restaurants, schools, and churches. When integration came along we lost a lot of Black businesses. We've never been able to recover from those losses" (SWS-32).

The students were astonished to discover the range of responses that they gathered from the senior citizens. They were also very pleased to find out that people were still living that had experienced the history that they were reading about in their history books. Upon reflecting in my journal about the oral history project, I wrote,

> I'm pleased with the success of the oral history project. One of the
> senior citizens came up to me today and said how much they
> appreciated being interviewed. She said, 'Kids today don't usually have
> time to talk to old people. I have so much that I would like to share, but
> no one has time to listen anymore.' Her words left me wondering if
> there had been a breakdown in the oral tradition in the African
> American community. I referred back to Dr. G's book *Talking and
> Testifying: The Language of Black America* (Smitherman, 1977). In this

book she states, 'In Black America, the oral tradition has served as a fundamental vehicle for gittin' ovuh. That tradition preserves the Afro-American heritage and reflects the collective spirit of the race. Through song, story, folk sayings, and rich verbal interplay among everyday people, lessons and precepts about life and survival are handed down from generation to generation. Until contemporary times Black America relied on word-of-mouth for its rituals of cultural preservation (Smitherman, 1977, p. 73).' This quote reaffirms my desire to forward the oral tradition by connecting my students with people who can add creditability to what they are learning in my class. If they leave with nothing more than an appreciation for the oral tradition, I know that they will be equipped with the tool that they need to continue their learning. (TRJD-12)

Having completed two chapters in the text, which provided valuable background information, and providing my students with two valuable experiential learning activities, I felt confident they were ready to delve into the heart of the Civil Rights Movement.

Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in the Post War Years explores the mass migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North. To teach this chapter I needed to know that many of my students came to live in Saginaw because at some point in the past their family migrated from the South. I used this chapter as a way to get my students to explore their own family histories. Once again I drew upon the oral tradition by requiring my students to identify and interview a senior citizen who could discuss the difference between their lives in the South versus in the North. This chapter was made accessible to students because they were able to survey their interviewees and collect data from primary sources that allowed them to learn first hand how many African Americans came to live in the North. The students also completed creative letters, which they wrote from the perspective of a person who had moved from the South to the North. I assessed their comprehension by looking at how they characterized their newly found life in the North. I also looked at how they presented the data from their interview.

Upon reflection I discovered many of my students had a warped perception of race relations in the South. They assumed Blacks were treated as equals in the North but were consistently terrorized by racist Whites in the South. They also believed that all Blacks were involved in the Civil Rights Movement and espoused the non-violent philosophies of Martin Luther King. Overwhelmingly, the data gathered from the interviews showed that most African Americans migrated North for economic reasons. While many of the interviewees admittedly believed they would be treated better in the North, in actuality many of them were faced with poor living conditions and second-class treatment.

Teaching this chapter taught me that I was very concerned about the perception that my students had of Whites. I found that I was relieved when some of the senior citizens reported positive experiences with Whites. I wanted my students to have a balanced perception of Whites. To leave them with the belief that all Whites were racist and abusive of Blacks would be a distorted characterization.

RIGHTING CIVIL WRONGS

Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights explores the many critical incidents that initiated a Civil Rights Movement intended to shake the very foundation of U.S. society. The chapter chronicles the battle for Civil Rights, which began in the courts with NAACP lawyers' landmark triumph in the historic case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which overturned the long standing *Plessy v. Ferguson* that had established the legal precedent for segregation. The chapter shows how African Americans used the Brown victory to make the case for full civil rights. It shows how Blacks mobilized through campaigns to integrate schools, public facilities, and public transportation. The chapter shows how African

Americans sought to remove racist voting restrictions, which had overwhelmingly disenfranchised African Americans. In this chapter we met new African American leaders such as Martin Luther King and E. D. Nixon, who were pushed to the forefront. We saw how they enlisted the support of the federal government to protect their rights as full American citizens and how their efforts were met with a great deal of resistance. The chapter ends by showing how, despite much adversity, by 1964 a new Civil Rights Law promised African Americans and other minorities greater protection. The performance objective for *Chapter 30* is to have students understand the historical significance of the early 1960s and analyze the tactics of non-violent resistance.

Chapter 30 did a good job of presenting the various protest strategies used by African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement in that my students were able to read about and model some of the protest strategies presented. Many students felt that they could not have espoused non-violent philosophies. We held a lengthy discussion about the merits and drawbacks of non-violence. Several interesting points were raised when I asked the students if they thought that they could have been nonviolent in the face of being hosed down, kicked, hit spit upon, and sent to jail because they wanted to be a part of a movement that would change the quality of life for African Americans. Derrick, who was generally always vocal and somewhat militant, replied,

Derrick: Ms. Ross, I ain't the one to be letting nobody hit me while I just stand there. You have to fight for your rights or people will think that they can just walk all over you. If you think about it, those people went through all that abuse and in the end; it still took a long time for them to finally get their rights. The saddest part about it is that White people killed Martin Luther King even though he was preaching non-violence. That just goes to show how much they respect people who don't fight back.

Despite the strong convictions that were expressed by Derrick, there were other students who held opposing views. Mekael expressed,

> Mekael: I totally disagree with Derrick. How can you say that Martin Luther King wasn't respected? I mean we have a national holiday that remembers his life. Every person in America knows who he is. The people who don't respect him are racist people, who don't respect anybody. I think most people know that what he was trying to do was right.

I always tried to remain neutral whenever divergent opinions arose in class. I explained that both students had made good points and asked the entire group to focus in the primary question at hand - Did they think that you would have been able to allow others to attack you without fighting back? Anthony responded that for them it might be hard to think about what they would have done in the Sixties from a new millennium perspective. He went on to say that it was easy to say what you will not do when you are not in the historical context that allowed such injustice to prevail.

I reiterated what Anthony had said by telling the students the notion that most Blacks were non-violent during the Civil Rights era was a misconception. The media wanted the world to think that all Black people were following Martin Luther King and his non-violent protest campaign. This was a much more comfortable image than the image of angry militant Black people. I shared a part of my family history with the students and told them that when Martin Luther King marched from Selma, he passed by my grandfather's land. Although my grandfather went to meet him, he said he could not march with him because he couldn't afford to be non-violent in a place where he knew White people would not respect him if they didn't know that he would fight for his rights. Interestingly, on an occasion when my family was watching the *Eyes on the Prize* we saw my uncle and my grandfather in the video footage from the march to Selma. Seeing my immediate

ancestors in the video made me feel proud and it taught me something about history...You can't believe everything that is in the history books. Although my family supported King in spirit they were not non-violent in practice.

I showed my students footage from the *Eyes on the Prize* (Williams, 1987) series, thinking they would be moved by the abuse that Civil Rights activists endured so that they might experience a greater degree of freedom. Unbelievingly some of my students actually found humor in the video footage of African Americans being kicked and hosed down. I couldn't understand how they could be so insensitive. Rather than make a big deal out of their inappropriate responses, I merely called aside the students who were being disruptive and admonished them, saying, "This video is not make believe. These people put their lives on the line for you to be able to sit on the bus wherever you want to sit, or shop at the mall, or eat at your favorite restaurant. What could you possibly find so funny about this video?" The students responded that they were sorry, but they'd never seen anyone hosed down with fire hoses and it just seemed funny at the time. Their comments launched an invaluable discussion in the class that allowed me to express some of my feelings and concerns relative to how my students might have been perceiving the Civil Rights curriculum. I explained to my students that no matter how many times I watch *The Eyes on the Prize*, I always feel an emotional surge as I see my ancestors suffer so that I could have privileges that they never had. My students looked at me with looks of shame mixed with indifference. Toryon attempted to justify their behavior, saying, "Ms. Ross, you have to understand that we're just kids. It's kinda a trip to see people getting kicked in the butt without even trying to fight back. We're not laughing at the people, we're laughing at the situation" (BHCT-14).

I tried to understand their awkward sense of humor. Afterall, this generation has often

been desensitized to violence by shows like *Ripley's Believe It or Not, Cops, America's*

Most Wanted, Jerry Springer and so forth. I made a final attempt to help my students

understand the implication of the actions by telling them that the people that they were

laughing at didn't have to put themselves in the positions of being the object of their

ridicule and violence. They could have sat back in their cozy little segregated communities

and kept themselves out of harms way. They could have stayed in the "proper place."

Instead, they chose to take a stand because they wanted to assure that future generations

would have a better way of life. I understood that many of my students thought that

ending segregation did not make much of a difference because many still lived in

segregated neighborhoods and attended segregated schools. Nonetheless, I tried to impress

upon them that there is a big difference between de facto segregation and legal

segregation. Today we sometimes choose to be around other people who share our race

but no one is telling us where to sit on the bus or where to shop, eat, or live. Furthermore,

I wanted my students to know that when they laughed at the people in the video they were

laughing at people who made the ultimate sacrifice for them. By the time we finished

Chapter 30, I think I had impressed upon my students the importance of respecting the

past. I still wasn't sure that they understood the personal sacrifice involved in being apart

of a protest movement. Perhaps this was a concept that was too complex for their

developmental stages as many of them had not lived long enough to be the objects of

racism and be conscious of it.

As fortune would have it, during the time we were reading *Chapter 30*, a huge dispute

over the closing of several branch libraries in our city was taking place. Library officials

argued that they needed to close the libraries because of the low number of patrons being served. They suggested that it was not cost efficient to keep these libraries open. Opponents to the closings alleged racism because both of the proposed closings were in Black communities. One of the libraries to be closed was housed in the community center where this study took place.

My students often used the library and were disturbed by the possibility that it might be closing. In protest they decided to think about how they might express their dissatisfaction with the proposed closings by using the protest strategies that they were reading about in class. Upon brainstorming they came up with several things that they might do to object to the closings. Suggestions included a read-in chain, a march, letters to the editor, a book checkout campaign, and a rally. Although they were not able to use all of the strategies that they brainstormed, they were able to participate in a march that was sponsored by the Friends of the Library organization. Students created protest posters with slogans like, "I Love Claytor," "I Want to Read," "You Must Read to Succeed," and "I Have a Right To Read." They marched around the library in silent protest along with several other youth.

My students also decided to write a letter to the Library Director to express their discontent. The letter read,

> Dear Mr. _____,
>
> We're writing to let you know how unhappy we are about your decision to close down our library. Many of us use that library as a place to go after school when we have homework. The library has computers that we can use because most of us do not have computers at home.
>
> The library also has a lot of interesting books and magazines that we can read. Claytor Library has the largest number of African American books

in the entire city. We enjoy those books and do not want to see our library close.

We are taking a Black history class and we use the library to do research. One of the things that we have learned is that it used to be illegal for Blacks to learn how to read and write. They were kept ignorant so that they could not become free. We know that it will take reading for us to be successful. Please do not take away our freedom to read in our community.

Sincerely,

F.W.C.C. Youth (SWS-39)

One of my very articulate students had the opportunity to read their letter at a public hearing to protest the proposed library closing. This was a powerful experience for our class as the students were able to see excerpts of their letter being read on the local television news. Interestingly, the proposal to close the library raised so much controversy that the discussion had to be tabled. To date the library is still open, although it operates under a part-time schedule. Each time that I visit the library I can feel proud that my students played a role in keeping a very important community resource available to the public.

Being able to facilitate my students' involvement in an organized movement had a profound effect on me. Each day when they visit the library after school, they know that it is open in part due to their efforts. I felt a great sense of pride for my small role in creating an opportunity for my students to be change agents. In reflecting on this experience, I wrote in my journal,

> It only took thirty minutes in the hot sun for my students to get a taste of what Civil Rights activists experienced in their campaigns to end segregation. If they could hardly withstand an hour march, then certainly they can see the tremendous sacrifice that the Montgomery bus boycotters endured after having to give up public transportation for over

a year. I hope that one day they will look back on their experience marching around the library and think that they were apart of something great. (TRJD-17)

When we finished *Chapter 30*, I felt assured that my students had achieved the performance objective for this chapter.

Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights took my students into the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. In order to teach this chapter I needed to draw upon primary sources which showed actual footage of the Civil Rights protests. In showing *Eyes on the Prize*, I exercised my Afrocentric philosophy in that I exposed my students to the harsh realities of racism as a means to prepare them to cope with modern-day inequities. My racial identity became most evident in my teaching of this chapter because I became more concerned with shaping my students' dispositions toward learning Black history than with having them learn the minute details of the Civil Rights Era.

In order to make the protest strategies presented in this chapter relevant to my students, I drew upon my knowledge of a controversial community issue which would allow them to replicate the non-violent protest strategies they read about in their text. I assessed my students' comprehension of the chapter themes by analyzing their ability to develop a proactive plan of action and see it through.

Upon reflection I learned my students had little tolerance for the devotion and sacrifices that are need to launch protests. Perhaps they have been given so much that they take their currently held privileges for granted. Nonetheless, I learned that lived experience is an important ingredient when trying to explore issues of race and racism. Consequently, I could not expect my adolescent students to internalize Black history in the same way that I did.

MARTIN AND MALCOLM: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement examines the changes in the

Civil Rights Movement which resulted from increasing incidents of White violence. This

chapter shows how Civil Rights workers organized Freedom Summer in 1964 as an

attempt to register mass numbers of African American voters. This effort was met with

harassment and violence. In the atmosphere of turmoil, dissatisfaction with non-violent

protest tactics led to the increased popularity of Black Nationalism. The chapter also

introduces the Black Panthers and leaders such as Malcolm X, who gained greater

influence over the Black community. It explains how the philosophies of these leaders

appealed to many African Americans, especially when faced with the growing number of

riots in Black communities across the nation. Finally, the chapter shows how the Civil

Rights Movement had diminished Jim Crow, the problem of poverty continued to plague

African American people. Although President Johnson promised a war on poverty, this

war took a back seat to the war in Vietnam. The performance objective for *Chapter 31*

calls for students to compare and contrast the integrationist philosophies of Martin Luther

King with those of Black nationalists such as Malcolm X.

I was also very excited about *Chapter 31* because I sensed that they might have a

greater appreciation for the philosophies of Black Nationalism. It also presented an

opportunity for me to paint a more balanced picture of the Civil Rights era. They needed

to know that there was and still is more than one school of thought regarding the agenda

for the African American community.

In light of the 2000 election year, I decided to divide the class into two teams who

would be responsible for creating a mock campaign for Martin Luther King and

Malcolm X. The students were instructed to imagine that these men were running to be the leader of the African American community. Each team had to come up with a campaign poster, a public service announcement, and a debate platform to be presented in class.

The final posters were using computer images, stenciled letters, and a catchy slogan. The following is a facsimile of the posters:

Figure 4.2: Martin Luther King Campaign Poster

This picture drew upon King's famous *I Have a Dream* speech, which the students felt would be a great slogan since it is familiar to moat people.

The Malcolm X poster used a simple slogan that would focus the public's attention of the focal point of the exaggerated 'X'.
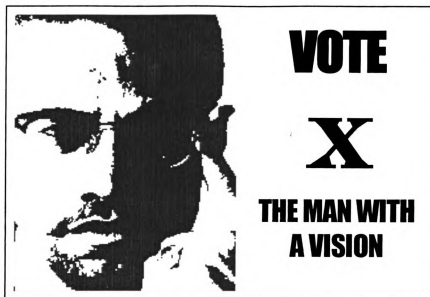
Figure 4.3: Malcolm X Campaign Poster

Public service announcements for each candidate included:

King's PSA

Would you trust a convicted felon? Do you want a leader who admits to using drugs? Don't trust your future with a man who has a shady past. Vote King, a man you can trust! (SWS-51)

Malcolm X's PSA

Are you ready for a change? Are you tired of being beaten up and put down? Power concedes nothing without demand. Vote for Malcolm X, the man who will demand your rights. (SWS-52)

This chapter culminated with the student debates, which allowed the students to share their research findings on both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King while arguing the merits of each of their positions. With my assistance, the students were asked to prepare opening and closing remarks. As a team they had to create spontaneous rebuttal in

response to their opposition. They were given one to two minutes for each section of the debate.

King Opening Statement:	Brothers and sisters, I've come to you today in the spirit of peace. I've seen enough violence in my life to know that violence won't get you anywhere. I believe that with pa-tience we can prove to the world that it's time to finally end slavery. No, we are not slaves on plantations but we are slaves to racism. I am the man who will lead you to a victory over hate.
Malcolm X Opening Statement:	I bring you greetings in the spirit of Allah. It is my pleasure to be the alarm clock for Black America. We cannot afford to sleep while racism grows stronger. There is nothing wrong with non-violence, however, if a man hits you one time, shame on him, if he hits you another time, shame on you. We have been hit in the face enough. It's time for a change!
King Rebuttal:	I understand that we have been waiting for our freedom for a very long time but how do you put out a fire? If you go home and your house is on fire, do you add fuel to the fire in anger, or do you try to put the fire out with water. It will take a calm spirit to put out the fire of racism in America.
Malcolm X Rebuttal:	Did you do know that a man can drown on a teaspoon of water? We cannot afford to drown in our own patience. It's time to stand up and fight for what's right!
King Closing:	I haven't asked you to do anything that I haven't done myself. I've boycotted, marched, preached, and prayed. I've been to jail because I believe in our cause. Love is the only thing that can cure hate.
Malcolm X Closing:	I am not a dreamer, I am the alarm clock. If you choose me to be your leader, I promise you that together we will make America give us what was taken away from our ancestors. (BHCT-23)

The debates served as the finale for our study of *Chapter 30*. The students appeared to enjoy the lively debate, which gave them an occasion to showcase their research findings and their oratory skills. The class agreed that both campaigns were very compelling and it would be difficult to make a choice between the two candidates.

I have often been disturbed by the way history juxtaposes the philosophies of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. I wanted my students to understand that even though these men espoused different philosophies, they nevertheless held a common goal: the liberation of African Americans. I ended our discussion of *Chapter 31* by explaining to my students that Black leadership strategies have been multifaceted and rightfully so because it will take a variety of philosophical approaches to counter racism.

I showed the students a poster that I designed. The poster suggested that Martin Luther King and Malcolm X weren't so different. The following is a facsimile of my posters:
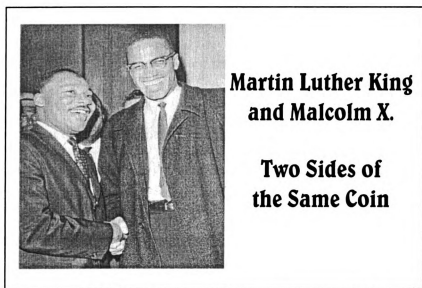

Figure 4.4: Martin Luther King and Malcolm X Unity Poster

When I reflected on my presentation of *Chapter 31*, I felt that the students had expanded

their conceptions of leadership during the Civil Rights era. Both the creativity and the

substance of their projects impressed me. I wrote the following in my journal:

> Today I had one of those magic moments that teachers live for. I got to
> work a little late only to find the lobby filled with four of my students
> who were anxious to find out what time class would start. I couldn't
> believe that my students were actually asking to go class. Perhaps it was
> the excitement of presenting their projects, but nonetheless I was elated
> by their show of interest and eagerness to learn. It was as if these
> students had transformed before my very eyes. (TRJ-24)

Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement presents information that I

thought would be more aligned with my students' values. This chapter looks at the

leadership of both Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. In order to teach this chapter, I

needed to understand that while these leaders may have espoused different protest

strategies, each of them nonetheless had a platform for how to achieve equity for African

Americans.

My Afrocentric philosophy was evident in this lesson because I designed cooperative

learning exercises for my students. I wanted them to rely on one another to argue the

merits of both King and Malcolm X's philosophies. In order to make this chapter content

accessible to my students, I needed to know that many of them had little knowledge of

Malcolm X and had been taught to think of Martin Luther King in a benevolent light. My

Afrocentric philosophy was evidenced in my teaching of this chapter because I took a

communal perspective and tried to impress upon my students that without the support of

the people, no Civil Rights leader could have brought about massive social reform. I

wanted my students to understand that the favorable perception they held of Martin

Luther King is one that was carefully crafted by the media and historians who feared the

preeminence of a militant Black leader. Consequently, Martin Luther King with his moderate stance was appealing to the American public.

I assessed my students' comprehension by evaluating their portrayals of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X in the mock debate. Their presentations seemed to be informed by historical facts on both Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. However, upon reflection I became concerned that I may have reinforced the misconception that King and Malcolm X were at odds with one another because of the way that I designed the student assignment. I learned that in some ways I am guilty of reinforcing historical inaccuracies because I was taught these misconceptions and sometimes fail to recognize my own misinformation. In the end, I think that I did a fairly decent job of addressing the common goals of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. This gave my students important exposure to different leadership philosophies.

A TIME FOR HEALING

Chapter 32: Marching Off to Vietnam describes a nation that was deeply separated. It explains that many people challenged the war, including many members of the Civil Rights Movement. The chapter explains that some African American leaders believed that the war exhausted funds that might better be used to assist the poor, and others argued that the war created a disproportionate number of African American casualties. Interestingly, the Vietnam War was the nation's first attempt to integrate combat units. Black troops in Vietnam continued to be deeply troubled by changes that the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement created back home. Finally, this chapter shows the ambiguities of the war and that the turmoil in the United States meant that returning Vietnam veterans

faced great difficulty in readjusting to civilian life. The performance objective for *Chapter 32* is to identify the primary reasons African Americans supported or opposed the Vietnam War.

After reading and discussing the chapter, students were asked to complete action project proposals which were designed to increase public awareness about some important societal issue. This would be their way to plan systematically something that they could do to heal their communities. Students were divided into four groups with five to six students in each. They worked together to complete their proposals. Students used the Internet to collect information on its select topics. Each group was given ten minutes to present their action project proposals. Projects included a Drug-Free Campaign, a Safer Sex/Abstinence Campaign, a Gang Prevention Campaign, and Teen Pregnancy Campaign. Samples of students' action project proposal advertisement campaign products are compiled in Appendix F.

Excerpts from the group action project proposals included the following,

Topic 1: **Drug-Free Campaign**

Rationale 1: Drugs are destroying the Black community. Too many Black men are going to jail because they sell or use illegal drugs. Kids need to be apart of the campaign to get rid of drugs. (SWS-61)

Strategy 1: Billboard

Topic 2: **Safer Sex/Abstinence Campaign**

Rationale 2: Many teens are getting diseases because they don't have safe sex. Young people need to know how to say not to sex and how to protect themselves if they decide to have sex. (SWS-62)

Strategy 2: Condom Give-away

Topic 3:   Gang Prevention Campaign

Rationale 3:   People are joining gangs because of peer pressure. Gangs
                lead to violence and crime. Kids need to learn how to
                solve problems without violence. We need to get the word
                out that violence is not cool. (SWS-63)

Strategy 3:   Flyer Distribution

Topic 4:   **Racial Profiling Prevention Campaign**

Rationale 4:   The jails are filled with Black men. Police officers often
                pick on African Americans because they believe that all
                Blacks are criminals. The public needs to be made aware of
                racial profiling. (SWS-64)

Strategy 4:   Public Service Announcement

The action project proposals were an ideal culminating experience. Students had an

opportunity to offer visual representations of their ad campaign (see Appendix G:

Replications of Advertisement Campaign).

My purpose in focusing on the Civil Rights Movement was not to have them

memorize content. I wanted them to experience the curriculum and learn how

instrumental they can be in shaping social policies. By having them choose a topic that

they felt strongly about, I hoped to plant a seed that might germinate in their adulthood. I

wrote my last journal with a great feeling of accomplishment. I pondered long and hard on

what I would leave this experience with and wrote,

> Teaching is just as much a learning experience as it is a pedagogical
> undertaking. I've learned so much about my students and myself.
> Most importantly I learned that my students will rise to my level of
> expectations. My students and their commitment to the class inspired
> me. I saw to provide them with an experience that would assist in self-
> actualizing with a healthy cultural consciousness. I am reminded of
> Janice E. Hale, who writes, 'African American culture in the school
> curriculum should provide African American children a sense of who
> they are and what their forefathers and foremothers and accomplished

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under conditions many times more oppressive. For too long, parents, teachers and school administrators have allowed sparks of curiosity in African American children to be smothered by excuses, denials and sidesteps. To reverse the academic failure among urban Black youth... we must unbank the fire.' I hope that I have ignited something within my students, which will continue to serve as a source of energy long into their futures. (TRJD-32)

Words cannot adequately express the tremendous impact of this teaching/learning experience.

In order to teach *Chapter 32*, I needed to know how to empower my students to become proactive change agents. I encouraged my students to think about ways they could address social problems that are endemic of the Black community. I had to have a general sense of topics that they covered, as well as know how to teach them how to develop a feasible course of action. I assessed student comprehension by critiquing the logic of their rationales, the feasibility of their strategies for educating the community, the ingenuity of their marketing plans, the thoroughness of their analysis of the target population, and the overall effectiveness of their class presentations. I discovered my students were very much attuned to the problems that plagued their communities. I learned students can be empowered when inspired to make a personal investment in themselves and their community.

FINDING MY VOICE

My review of the literature yielded only one example of research that I consider to be similar to my own. That research was reported in the *Journal of Negro Education* in an article *It's Not Steps Anymore, But More Like Shuffling: Students Perceptions of the Civil Rights Movement and Ethnic Identity* (Bettis and Bergin, 1994). The University of Toledo

sponsored this study. It introduced thirty-five high achieving African American and Mexican American students, who participated in a special scholarship program, to the study of the Civil Rights Movement and an oral history project. The study took place over the course of a ten-week curriculum and a two-week field study. Researchers set out to determine the extent to which studying the Civil Rights Movement might affect how students perceive their ethnic identity and their relationship to both their own ethnic group and the dominant majority group.

Like my study, this research drew upon racial identity theory to develop its theoretical framework. Bettis and Bergin (1994) sought to find evidence that would support or refute the common notion that exposing marginalized ethnic students in culturally relevant studies of their own cultures would enhance their psychological well-being. They further conveyed that "some researchers see this area of study [Ethnic Studies] as one response to reversing the school failure of ethnic populations" (Bettis & Bergin, 1994, p. 200).

It is my contention that if they sought to test this theory, surely they must recognize the problem posed by limiting participation to academically inclined students. This leads me to believe that they were primarily concerned with the issue of ethnic identity development in adolescents. In stating their purpose they explained, "We believed that our ten-weeks Civil Rights curriculum and two-week field study in the South might provide an event or series of events that would provoke serious reflection in our students on their identity. We hoped that students would grapple with issues of personal identity, group membership, and conflict with the dominant group" (Bettis & Bergin, 1994, p. 208).

This is where Bettis and Bergin's research and my research diverge. Unlike them, my research focused on the teacher rather than the students. I contend that an Afrocentric

curriculum alone is unlikely to initiate ethnic identity development. The catalyst for this type of ethnic identity transformation is likely to be precipitated by teachers' pedagogical practices and teaching philosophy or perhaps some real life experience.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION:

TELLING THE TRUTH, KEEPING IT REAL

> Yeah, I hit him in the face and I would do it again. I can't jus' be lettin'
> nobody talk about me any ole kinda way. And no, I ain't sorry! I'm not
> fixin' to pretend for yall, cause I would do it again. I'm just tellin' the
> truth...and keeping it real! (SID – 20)

Nicole's words spoke an unspoken truth that I cannot continue to avoid if I plan to

stay in the business of teaching Black history to inner-city Black youth. In her anger at a

fellow classmate, she forced me to acknowledge that a culture of poverty often molds the

perceptions that Black youth have of themselves and the world. While I attempted to get

my students to see that they are the regal descendants of ancestors who paid the ultimate

price simply by choosing to survive, at the least offense my little princes and princesses

would often turn on one another with a vengeance. Most of my students were raised in

homes where they were not taught to fight the status quo that often oppresses them.

Instead they lash out at those who are closest to them, one another.

When Nicole expressed that she would not conform to please me, I began to rethink

how my students might perceive me. In her own words, she was simply "telling the

truth...keeping it real" by expressing no remorse for her violent behavior. Nicole forced

me to ask myself, "Am I telling the truth and keeping it real?" Moreover, have I been so

determined to teach Black history as a means to prepare my students for the overt and

covert racism of mainstream society that I have become blind to the socio-economic factors that impact my students' everyday realities? Furthermore, have I misdirected my efforts when I could have placed more emphasis on the social and academic skills that will allow my students to participate in mainstream society more fully?

This research examined the pedagogical and curriculum development decisions I made while teaching an American Civil Rights unit. I sought to reveal my racial identity/self-concept of might have shaped my instructional practices. I hoped to reveal how discussions about the sensitive issues of race and racism were facilitated. Finally, I wanted to analyze how I managed to promote relevancy and bridge the gaps between school culture, home culture, and the culture of power.

MY LEARNING AS A RESULT OF THE STUDY

The introspective nature of this study allowed me to look at my own instructional practices through a new lens. Rather than studying my students, I focused on my learning as a result of teaching the class. According to Michele Foster, "How successful teachers of African American students define their tasks and what they understand to be the goals of successful teaching remains largely unexamined (Foster in Shujaa, 1994, p. 240)." This study examined my attempt to successfully teach Black history to Black students and explored my learning, which occurred on several fronts, including knowledge of the content, knowledge of my pedagogical practices, and knowledge of my students and myself.

Knowledge of the Content

At the onset, I felt confident that I was well prepared to teach the Civil Rights unit. Although the textbook not provided familiar information, I did gain some valuable insights about how my students perceived the Civil Rights curriculum. For example, there were several times in the class when I reviewed the mission of the Civil Rights Movement. Repeatedly, my students would assert that Civil Rights activists were fighting to end slavery. In order to address this misconception, I drilled them by making the entire class repeat in unison, "Slavery is over!" My students seemed to lack a sense of chronology relative to Black American history. They grew to find humor in my drill sergeant tactics. They'd often walk up to me in passing and say, "Ms. Ross, guess what? Slavery is... [and we'd both say] over!"

Perhaps the greatest surprise relative to teaching the Black history content was observing the stark contrast between my reaction to studying the Civil Rights Movement and that of my students. When watching the *Eyes on the Prize* series, I would often feel an emotional rush. Physically, I would feel the blood rush through my veins as I watched Black people being hosed down, attacked by dogs, and wrongfully imprisoned. Conversely, my students would watch the same footage as if it were make believe.

I was perplexed by my students' lack of empathy and desensitization. I asked one of my co-workers why he thought they could be so detached. He responded that they just haven't lived long enough to understand significance of Black history. I processed his conjecture by writing the following in my journal,

> I've always felt a special connection with other African Americans, regardless of whether we were related by blood. When Mae Jamison traveled into outer space, I felt like I could touch the stars too. When Marion Jones won three gold medals, a silver and bronze, I too felt like

I was an Olympic champion. Likewise when Rodney King was beaten mercilessly, I too felt his pain. African Americans are linked inexplicably, just like the enslaved Africans who were shackled together in the bellies of ships that delivered them into the bowels of hell.

If I can feel connected to people who share my skin color, why can't my students feel connected to the many wonderful Civil Rights martyrs. Perhaps, they're too young and just need to live a little longer or maybe they just have historical amnesia and don't know who they are. (TRJD-14)

Although I cannot point to all of the specifics of how my knowledge of Black history grew as a result of this study, I can say that each time I teach, I experience the curriculum in more meaningful ways.

Knowledge of Pedagogical Practices

Teaching is not telling. Teaching is inspiring discovery. I espouse a constructivist philosophy, which encourages students to create knowledge, rather than memorize the conclusions of others. Being a constructivist means sharing the power with my students. This is not always an easy task when trying to make sure that all students receive a high quality education.

I relied heavily on cooperative learning. Students were encouraged to collaborate with their peers to complete assignments and special projects. In addition to the cooperative learning approach, I employed cooperative teaching strategies. I relied heavily on peer-to-peer instructional support. For example, students sometimes were asked to develop journal topics, as well as respond in writing or verbally to one another's journal entries. Likewise, students were eager to take on duties such as passing out books, evaluating assignments, taking attendance, etc. Although lesson plans were written to provide direction and maintain classroom routine, the plans were not followed so rigidly as to hinder

improvisation or spontaneous instructional modification. I constantly revised my plans in order to adapt to my students' learning needs.

Knowledge of Students

Often times, as teachers we expect to have a great impact on our students. We anticipate that students will leave our class more knowledgeable about the course content, as well as eager to learn more. It is much easier to educate a person than to re-educate them once they have been miseducated. Carter G. Woodson writes in *The Miseducation of the Negro* that

> When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand her or go yonder. He will find his "proper place" and will stay in it... The same educational process that inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything and has accomplished everything worth while, depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not measure up to the standards of other people. (Woodson, 1992, p. xiii)

The issue of miseducation is salient when teaching Black history on two fronts. Firstly, my students had not been exposed to an Afrocentric curriculum; therefore, by virtue of the null curriculum in their schools, they were unlikely to either value the curriculum or believe in its legitimacy. Secondly, many of my students were the product of inner city public schools, which have a huge emphasis on maintaining order and keeping students occupied. Unfortunately this often results in little student freedom and an abundance of busy work. Interestingly, I found that behavior problems in my classroom decreased as students were given more as opposed to fewer privileges. Consequently, I was challenged to re-educate my students about their perceptions of schooling as well as their conceptualization of what it means to "know" history.

I have often been struck by the irony of schooling. In one sense, education is often seen as a means of liberation. Being an "educated" person holds the promise of increased choices, and these choices should lead to a greater sense of autonomy and freedom. With this in mind, it seems illogical that schools are also often placed in a position where they constrain rather than promote the freedoms of students.

In my classroom students were not constrained to the class. If needed, they could feel free to go to the restroom. Class assignments were completed in both the in-house library and the classroom. Students selected their own seats. Students often raised their hands to participate in class discussion; however, if we were engaged in a free flowing discussion, they were not penalized for interjecting comments without raising their hands. This class was not graded using the traditional ABCDE grading scale. Instead, students were given written and verbal feedback in order to address both misconceptions and exemplary work.

The open environment and cooperative learning approach which was espoused within my class was not always met with acceptance. Many students resisted my instructional practices, viewing questioning and discussion lessons as a non-academic exercise and group work as a form of cheating. The other major obstacle that I had to hurdle was the belief that "books hold the gospel truth." Early in the course, my students and I participated in a textbook analysis wherein we compared and contrasted historical documents from different perspectives. Students were introduced to the terms primary and secondary sources. This was done so that they might understand how one goes about the process of writing history. This background information was necessary for a subsequent assignment which called for students to identify a primary source for the Civil Rights Movement and present it to the class. Through student-generated research, we discovered that

interpretations of the past evolve with time and are greatly influenced by personal perspectives and beliefs.

My greatest challenge in combating the miseducation of my students was to deconstruct their perception of what it means to "know history." I found that many of my students were literate in the sense that they could eloquently read the words on the pages of their textbooks, but once finished, they often experienced difficulty in comprehending what they read. Likewise, they often believed that knowing history is a matter of remembering names and dates. In the case of Black history, those students who had been exposed to curriculum often viewed it as something that was credible only within the context of Black History Month. These students had some knowledge of what might be viewed as heroic history; however, they had a limited vocabulary of key terms and almost no knowledge of the conceptual and philosophical themes that are part of the study of the Civil Rights Era.

My approach to teaching Black history was one that de-emphasized rote memorization and recitation in favor of encouraging critical analysis and questioning. I've often said to my students, "O.K. now that we've read, let's figure out what it really means," "Explain in your own words," or "What do you think about what the author has said?" One of my favorite activities was "Ask the Author." This exercise allowed students to question the text in such a way as to counter the notion that books are vessels of truth. I initiated the "Ask the Author" activity by sharing racially inflammatory propaganda (see Appendix H), which allowed students to see how the written medium has been used to spread hate and disseminate misinformation.

The process of counteracting miseducation is my effort to re-socialize my students. Many of my students came to me with an adversarial attitude toward school, especially within the context of their summer vacation. These students often used resistance as a means to avoid the indoctrinating aspects of schooling.

There was a time when I operated under the false presumption that all Black students would embrace a Black Studies curriculum and automatically find it relevant. I had inadvertently transposed my experience with Black Studies onto my students. Although this study was not about my students and how they processed the Black studies curriculum, at times it was difficult to unravel the interconnectedness of my teaching and their learning. Good teachers adapt and tailor their instruction to meet the needs of their students. Knowing this, it stands to reason that some mention of my perceptions of how the students received my teaching is merited because of the reciprocal relationship of teaching and learning.

As I gained more experience in teaching the Black Studies curriculum, I noticed several categories of student responses to the curriculum. I attempted to characterize the types of students that I experienced in the table below, which offers a range of responses that cover varying degrees of rage, resistance, and race consciousness. This chart is by no means an attempt to pigeonhole my students. It simply helps me to better process the various responses to the Black studies curriculum that I have observed.

Table 5.1: Typology of Adolescent Responses to Black Studies Curriculum	
Classification	**Description**
Resistant	Student exhibits counter-productive behaviors and disinterest in learning the Black Studies curriculum. He or she rejects the Black Studies content.
Reluctant	Student exhibits an apathetic attitude and is apprehensive about embracing the Black Studies curriculum as being relevant to his/her life. He or she approaches the Black Studies curriculum with reservations.
Unenlightened	Student possesses little or no knowledge of the Black Studies curriculum and may have internalized negative stereotypes about learning Black Studies.
Receptive	Student exhibits a desire to learn the Black Studies Curriculum. He or she willingly participates in learning the Black Studies curriculum.
Militant	Student exhibits knowledge of Black Studies curriculum but chooses to focus on racially sensitive and inflammatory content. He or she has developed an oppositional attitude toward majority group members.
Competent	Student possesses a fundamental knowledge of the Black Studies curriculum. He or she is committed to gaining more information.
Empowered	Student possesses both an advanced knowledge of the Black Studies curriculum, and a desire to learn more information. He or she is inspired to be a proactive member of the African American community and exhibits a positive self-image.

The important question that this chart raises for me is, "How can I meet my students where they are and move them to a more enlightened state of mind?"

SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

At various junctures in this research, I felt as though I needed to re-focus on the "big picture" of my research purposes. As I reflected in my journal I asked myself, "What are the pieces of the puzzle that allow me to teach for cultural relevancy?" Brainstorming this question resulted in the diagram in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Pedagogical Puzzle for Promoting Relevancy

Setting High Expectations

Michelle Foster (1997) has written a text, *Black Teachers on Teaching*, which allows the reader to hear the authentic voices of Black teachers in their own voices, as they talk about their struggles and triumphs in teaching Black youth. I was inspired by the stories of these teachers and was able to discern a common strand that ran throughout the stories of all the teachers who were successful. They all concurred that setting high expectations was essential. This position was best expressed by Madge Scott, who states,

> We have lots of Black kids today who are very capable of excelling in school. But in too many situations teachers say, 'well you know, you can't expect this of children who come from certain areas.' The result is that the curriculum is being watered down. If you have high expectations for children, they will try to meet those goals. My belief is that you would make a child work up to and beyond his ability. (Foster, 1997, p. 42)

I share the perspective of Madge Scott and sought to set high expectations for my students. The greatest expectation that I enforced was that I expected them to come to class everyday. For many of my students, participating in academic study during their summer vacation was quite a challenge. Knowing this I attempted to make the Black Studies class fun and engaging; however, I did not compromise my position on the need for academic rigor.

Building a Healthy Classroom Culture in an Intraracial Setting

The infusion of African American content in school curriculum is certainly one way to make the school experiences of Black youth more meaningful. This, however, is only one aspect of how schools can accommodate the cultural needs of African American students. Schools should mirror the homes and communities of Black youth so that they do not feel

alienated in schools. This means honoring learning styles, linguistic patterns, and family structure. One of the ways that I tried to build a healthy classroom culture and honor home culture was to recognize the speech patterns and cultural norms that my students brought to the classroom. More directly, I sought to identify and draw upon community assets. Once the class was underway, my primary goal was to build a classroom culture that

1. valued student voice;

2. honored home culture;

3. promoted ownership and relevancy; and

4. encouraged positive self-concept.

One of the ways that I attempted to achieve these goals was by taking a cooperative learning approach. I wanted to create a classroom that thrived on free-flowing discussion and mutual respect for different points of view.

Valuing Student Voice

The day of the teacher as "knowledgeable other" while students are "empty tablets" is long gone. Students no longer sit in classes as "empty vessels" waiting to be filled with the teacher's knowledge through osmosis. Constructivists encourage teachers to recognize the wealth of knowledge that students bring to the classroom by building bridges between prior knowledge and new knowledge. I was very committed to valuing my students' voices.

According to Sonya Nieto,

> Research that focuses on student voices is relatively recent and scarce. For example, student perceptions are, for the most part, missing in discussions concerning strategies for confronting educational problems. In addition, the voices of students are rarely heard in the debates about

school failures and success and the perspectives of students from
disempowered and dominated communities are even more invisible.
(Nieto in Mintz and Yun, 1999, p. 380)

Knowing this, along with the fact that my students generally came from disadvantaged

backgrounds, I made an extra effort to encourage student participation.

My teaching philosophy reflected the perspective proposed by Paulo Freire, which

suggests that teachers need to become students just as students need to become teachers, in

order for education to become reciprocal and empowering for both (Freire, 1970).

Although the students were not the primary focus of this research, the manner in which I

interacted with them is central to this study.

Honoring Home Culture/Code-Switching

I attempted to foster an academic environment that embraced my students' home

culture. I sought to attain an acceptable level of cultural congruence in my class. This was

most readily achieved through my acceptance of Black English Vernacular. Cunningham

postulates,

> Teachers need to be adequately trained to understand the dialects of the
> children they teach, and especially to recognize meaning equivalence. In
> addition to this understanding, teachers must learn the acceptance of
> Black dialect as a complex grammatical system. (Cunningham, 1976,
> p. 652)

I learned to appreciate Black dialect in my early adulthood out of my desire to be accepted

by my Black peers. I grew up with the deficit of "sounding White." Through working in

predominately Black settings, I learned to "sound Black." I also gained the ability to code-

switch.

Code-switching is defined as the ability to shift between standard English and Black English Vernacular or some other ethnic dialect based upon social context. In my classroom, code-switching was manifested in my spontaneous shifting between standard English and Black English Vernacular. In doing this, I attempted to model for my students the fact that language is a living tool of self-expression that they must master in order to navigate between many discourse communities.

Code-switching was evidenced in many of my class sessions where I noticed a pattern in my speech patterns. During lecture I generally spoke in standard English, but as in the following example, I occasionally switched to Black English vernacular:

Ms. Ross:	Class, I want each of you to understand the significance of the Civil Rights Movement. Many of the privileges that we have today would not exist had it not been for the effort of the Civil Rights activists. Can anyone tell me how our lives might be different if there had never been a Civil Rights Movement?
Erik:	Well they wouldn't have 'kilt' Martin L. King.
Ms. Ross:	Ok. Perhaps, what else?
Terica:	Black people would still be 'sittin' at the back of da' bus.
Ms. Ross:	Anything else?
Derrick:	Without the Civil Rights Movement, White people would be trippin' cause they be thinking they can just treat Black people any ole kinda way.
Ms. Ross:	Ok. Anyone else?
Nate:	I know one Ms. Ross. Brothers wouldn't be able to get wid no White chics.
Ms. Ross:	Look here Nate, the Civil Rights wasn't fought so that you can get yo' groove on. But you're right. Interracial dating would definitely be a major social taboo.

I discovered that I used Black English when joking, speaking informally or disciplining my students. I tended to use Standard English for formal instruc-tion. By code-switching, I did not force my students to choose between Black Enlgish and Standard English. Orlando Taylor contends that

> An alarming percentage of students who speak non-standard English are failing to acquire standard English, the language of education. Moreover, many students who acquire standard English, do so while being taught to reject the language of their home, community and peers in the process. They are robbed of an effective element of social solidarity, which is an important element of the cultural heritage. (Taylor, 1987, p. 19)

Although I understand the importance of my students learning Standard English for academic purposes, and an increased opportunity to be accepted in mainstream society, I do not favor denigrating Black English Vernacular. I am confident that my students can learn to code-switch effectively.

Fostering Relevancy and Ownership through Sharing Life Experiences

Michael Harris writes,

> Incorporating some of the methodologies and metaphors used in African societies may increase the comfort and identification of African American children with their schools, promote learning, improve discipline, and establish something other than anthropological or ethnographic 'outsider' relationship of the curriculum to the culture and history of these children. (Harris, 1992, p. 312)

Certainly, no one wants to see Black youth feeling like outsiders in their own community schools. I am not sure, however, that the key to eliminating their feelings of alienation will be found in Africa. Most of my students exhibited little allegiance to Africa. One might assume that African-centered methodologies and curricula are relevant to Black youth by

virtue of their race. This was my greatest misconception when I began teaching Black history.

After several years of experience, I learned that in order to promote relevancy and ownership I needed to construct assignments that my students would find meaningful. I also tried to include contemporary issues that they felt strongly about. For example, one issue that students found significant was racial profiling. One of my students, Gerard, explained how he felt discriminated against when he and his cousin went to the mall and the store clerks treated them like they were shoplifters. Gerard added that he'd learned that treatment to be racial profiling. I related with Gerard and shared how my fiancé had been stopped on several occasion when coming to visit me at my parents' home, which is in a predominately white neighborhood. I encouraged Gerard and others to consider the topic of racial profiling for their action project proposal.

Intriguingly, I learned that promoting ownership and relevancy in my class also meant allowing students to share power in setting the class agenda and initiating discussions of interest, rather than simply presenting them with an Afrocentric curriculum.

Practicing Cooperative Learning

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994), author of *The DreamKeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, asserts that "cooperative learning has become a popular response to ability-group tracking. It is premised on the notions that students can and should learn together and from one another" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 60). I relied heavily on cooperative learning because of the broad range of ages and ability levels in my

classroom. I wanted my students to understand that while competition has its place in certain arenas, in my classroom, cooperation was valued.

Some would say that my position on cooperative learning was a part of Afrocentric philosophy. I believe that it was simply a matter of good teaching. One of my indirect objectives for teaching the Civil Rights unit was to create opportunities for my students to learn the value of working together cooperatively to achieve a common goal. It would have seemed contradictory to have them study a mass movement that relied heavily on community mobilization and mutual support, while expecting them to work independently. Through cooperative learning I taught my students that they could rely on one another in order to excel academically.

Cultivating Positive Self-Concept/Countering Internalized Stereotypes

Many Afrocentric scholars contend that an Afrocentric curriculum will instill a positive self-concept in Black youth. They further surmise that improved self-esteem will result in greater academic success. There may be some truths in these assertions; however, I contend that positive self-concepts arise from academic success and perhaps their relationship is more reciprocal than linear. I want my students to experience success in my class, as well as feel good about themselves. I encourage them to participate and I listen intently to their views.

I taught my students about cultural deficit theories, which questioned their intellect while acknowledging their athletic abilities. I talked to them about survival of the fittest, and how they are survivors. I told them that they were destined for greatness:

> Ms. Ross: How many of you have ever seen a Native American, or
> what you might call an Indian? (Three students raised their

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hands). Have you ever wondered why we rarely see Native Americans, if this country once belonged to them? You may not know this, but Whites tried to make them slaves too, but they would run away or die from sickness. Why do you suppose that African Americans made such good slaves.

Toryon: Because we are hard workers.

Ms. Ross: Yes, I suppose that is true, but historians have often perpetuated the myth that Blacks were lazy. They also tried to use poor White people as indentured servants, but they would also run away. They were treated like slaves, but after an agreed upon time period, usually seven years, they got their freedom. I'll ask again - Does anyone have any ideas about why Whites felt that Blacks made good slaves? (Silence).

Ms. Ross: Well, I guess I'll tell you. Our skin color made us good slaves because they could easily distinguish us from themselves. If a Black person ran away, they couldn't just mix in with the general population. In order to justify the decision to make us slaves, Whites created lies about how we were ignorant savages and inferior. The truth of the matter is that we are an extremely strong people. If we were not, our ancestors would never have lived through the Middle Passage. They would have died on the way from Africa, if they were weak. So all of you have superior genetic stock. You can achieve anything you set your minds to.

I would love to say that I'd discovered the silver bullet to repair the self-esteem of my students. Although I encouraged them to see themselves as the regal descendants of Africans who survived, my words may well have fallen on deaf ears.

Speaking the Truth

One of the things that excited me about conducting this study was the fact that I might create the circumstances whereby my students could feel compelled to speak freely

about their questions, concerns, feelings, and experiences relative to the issue of race and racism. So often, African Americans learn to filter their anger and hide their true feelings in the presence of Whites as a matter of self-preservation. It is as if we practiced political correctness long before the term was created. There comes a time, however, when the need arises to express one's self freely or else implode. I wanted to give my students an opportunity to express those muffled thoughts that may have been pushed to the backs of their minds in the absence of a safe place to release their most personal thoughts regarding race and racism.

Talking Candidly About Issues of Race and Racism

Gloria Yamato (1995) contends "Racism is the systematic, institutionalized mistreatment of one group by another based on racial heritage. Like every other oppression, racism can be internalized. People of color come to believe misinformation about their own group and thus believe that their mistreatment is justified" (Yamato in Anderson & Collins, 1995, pp. 73-74). Yamato has raised an invaluable point that was one of my major concerns. She speaks of internalized racism, which I equate to a deathly cancer if left untreated.

This issue of internalized racism became a particularly urgent issue for me when I was faced with the rapidly flowing tears of one of my students, Samia. She came to me crying because one of the other students had called her an "ole ugly Black thang." I sensed that she had some self-esteem issues because of her charcoal colored complexion. I attempted to comfort her, but experienced little success in convincing her that she was a beautiful young lady. I tried to address the situation by having a discussion with my students about

beauty standards and how the media often distorts our perceptions of beauty. I launched a discussion by asking my students, "What do most Black women on television, who are supposed to be beautiful, look like?" JeT'aime responded that they are usually skinny with long hair and light skin. I encouraged them to think about why most of the women who we see on television look the way that JeT'aime described. One on my male students jokingly responded, "Cause they fine!" I challenged my students by asking are only women who are skinny with long hair beautiful? They were silent, which gave me an opportunity to tell them that we often times accept the beauty standards of White society. We fail to realize that all women in various shapes, sizes, and colors are beautiful. We should not make the mistake of thinking that only African American women who have white features are beautiful. Although my students listened respectfully, I do not feel that I was able to successfully get my point across. They have been bombarded by Eurocentric beauty standards for so long that they actually believe that these are their own standards.

Gloria Yamato (1988) puts forth a challenge to people of color by simply stating, "Celebrate yourself!" I believe that this is an important thing to do; however, I feel that it is also important to heal ourselves. The process of healing involves facing the issue of racism and looking ourselves in the face to determine the extent to which we have forwarded our own victimization.

Some of the ways that I broached the topic of racism with my students was to talk about beauty standards, Black on Black crime, drugs, and the crabs in a barrel syndrome (known as haterism by my students). Rather than dwell on White racism, I felt that my students would benefit more from thinking about the ways in which we internalize racism and do ourselves a great disservice.

Discussing the issue of race and racism is a sensitive topic, even when in an intraracial setting. It is reasonable to want to awaken the race consciousness of students in an effort to insulate them from experiences with racism. However, it is unacceptable to expose students to a racially charged curriculum without providing them with a constructive outlet for their emotions. Conscientious teachers never leave their students in a place of fear, anger, or hate.

Although Black and White students are often juxtaposed in national surveys, which compare their scores on standardized tests or graduation rates, I have found that in many ways they are more alike than different. They each require respect, assertive discipline, advanced content knowledge, and culturally responsive pedagogical practices. I try to make a personal connection with each one of my students. I have discovered that I place more value on teaching the student than teaching the curriculum.

Teaching Coping Strategies

Marie F. Peters wrote a chapter in Harriet McAdoo's (1981) *Black Families*, "Parenting in Black Families with Young Children: A Historical Perspective." In this chapter she asserts that:

> An inescapable aspect of the socialization of Black children is that it prepares them for survival in an environment that is hostile, racist, and discriminatory against Blacks… Protective parents expect that their children will discover institutional or individual racism someday and they are prepared to help children cope with this reality as necessary. Black parents provide a buffer for the negative messages that may be transmitted to their children by a society, which perpetuates stereotypic images of Black people. (Peters in McAdoo, 1981, pp. 219-221)

I believe strongly that teachers can often be partners in helping to teach Black youth coping strategies. I never misled my students by teaching them that racism ended with the

Civil Rights Movement. Instead, I helped them to see modern day manifestations of racism, as well as develop proactive strategies for dealing with a problem that is likely to persist well into the future.

Drawing Upon Community Resources and Primary Sources/Seek Parental Involvement

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I presented Figure 2: Interactive Roles in Enculturation Processes. Agyei Akoto created this model and it attempts to illustrate the interconnected relationship of the teacher, family, community, school and curriculum. Furthermore, Carol Lee, who presents this model in her chapter, "African Centered Pedagogy: Complexities and Possibilities," which appears in Mwalimu J. Shujaa's (1994) book, *Too Much Schooling Too Little Education: A Paradox of Black Life in White Societies*, states that,

> Parents should be intimately in their child's intel-lectual development and should be provided with opportunities for intellectual growth themselves. Parents should be expected to maintain an enthusiastic commitment and involvement in cultural activities and to interact in positive ways with other families and parents. It is imperative that parents perceive their role as essential and substantive. (Lee in Shujaa, p. 326)

I concur wholeheartedly with Carol Lee and I have designed many assignments over the course of my Black History class, which called for students to go home and poll their parents or interview significant adults about the course themes. In this way, I felt I was drawing upon the oral tradition, as well as educating parents about what their children were learning in my class.

Mentoring and Motivating Proactivism

We are living in the midst of times when many nationally acclaimed African Americans are shunning the responsibility of being role models. They do not want the media to put undue pressure on them to be shining examples of success for today's youth. Unlike them I believe that someone has to take responsibility for setting an example that others might follow. Although I make no pretense of being perfect, I do attempt to live my life in such a way as to motivate and inspire the young people that I am privileged to instruct as my students.

Gloria Ladson-Billings argues,

> African American children cannot afford the luxury of shielding themselves with a sugarcoated vision of the world. When their parents or neighbors suffer personal humiliations and discrimination because of their race, parents, teachers, and neighbors need to explain why. But, beyond those explanations, parents, teachers, and neighbors need to help arm African American children with the knowledge, skills and attitude needed to successfully struggle against oppression. (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 139)

I believe that I have answered the challenge set forth by Gloria Ladson-Billings by teaching Black history to Black students. As their teacher I can mentor them and serve as a role model. I teach my students that there are no excuses for excuses. I motivate them to own their destinies and take a proactive stance in planning for their future success.

KNOWLEDGE OF MYSELF: THE RACE PERSON REVISITED

As humans, we often spend much of our lives trying to figure out our childhood, attempting to overcome the burdens that a racist, sexist, homophobic, class-oriented society imposes on us. Our lives seem to be forever about trying to free ourselves up. Strangely enough, the horrendous pain that society creates for us pales in significance

when compared to the torture that we put ourselves through in order to live up to standards that were constructed to keep us down. Truly, we are our own worst enemy. But, I also tend to think that we can also our own best friend.

Am I a "race person?" The answer to this question has yet to reveal itself fully to me. This research prompted me to question my ambition to be an Afrocentrist. I was initially drawn to Afrocentric philosophy because I appreciated the fact that it provided an alternative to the Eurocentric paradigm, which de-emphasizes the importance of African Americans and other under-represented groups. I am still drawn to Afrocentric philosophy because I acknowledge the fact that African Americans need to be grounded in a belief system that reflects our cultural values and norms. Likewise, racial/ethnic pride plays an important part of developing a healthy self-concept.

Although I gravitate toward Afrocentric philosophy, at the same time I understand the importance of preparing students to participate in mainstream American society. I understand that I am in many ways a product of a Eurocentric society. At one time, I thought that an Afrocentric curriculum would be the necessary corrective to raise the self-esteem of Black youth. Today, I think that more than anything else, their quality of life needs to be raised. The television bombards Black youth with the images of success that are unattainable if they do not use their education as a means for self-improvement. When you are poor and oppressed because of your race, there is no quick fix in repairing the damage to your self-esteem.

I learned that it is more important for my students to use Black history as a foundation to better understand their own communities than to listen to long lectures or participate in futile historical debates. I was forced to acknowledge that adding pigment to

a curriculum is not the solution for engaging Black youth in meaningful study of history. At the outset, I entered the classroom with the arrogant belief that I had something special to teach my students; I quickly learned that they too had something special to teach me.

I consciously approached this study from a one-dimensional perspective. I wanted to look specifically at how the factor of shared race affected the study of Black history. In the case of this research, I sought to capture the hidden curriculum that emerges when African Americans study Black history within the communal privacy of other African Americans.

I learned that Black people have worn a mask in the presence of outsiders (to the Black race) as a matter of self-preservation. I thought that an intracultural context would yield an openness that often is not present in the company of others. I discovered through this research that when the masks were removed, we were as much different as alike. I cannot assume that race, will necessarily be a predictor of one's disposition toward Black history. I failed to acknowledge that race, while it has been magnified in the United States, is only one aspect of the Black experience in America.

I still maintain that in America race and racism are salient issues in spite of social class. I avoided issues of social class not because I feared embarrassing my students by portraying them in an unfavorable light. Instead, my choice to ignore class issues was more a matter of insulating myself from that pain of a heightened awareness of yet another strand of oppression. I have become somewhat class-blind in that I prefer not to use deficit theories to process my students and their actions. That is not to say that I don't know that my students are overwhelmingly poor. I simply choose to approach them with the same high expectations of youth who are not considered "at-risk."

I cannot say that this research conclusively refutes the early skepticism regarding Black Studies. I did not purposefully avoid engaging my students in grappling with issues that would incite anger and/or criticism of American society. On the other hand, I consciously considered the emotional well being of my students throughout the course of this research.

I can remember when I began to understand how the world perceived my blackness. This awakening of consciousness is what W.E.B. terms "double consciousness and often results in inner turmoil. I have begun to reconcile my inner "strivings and warring ideals," to borrow from DuBois' depiction of this phenomena (DuBois in Franklin, 1965). I have accepted the fact that while I am a member of the Black race, I will never know all there is to know about Black history or ever achieve a level of mastery where I completely understand the many facets of the Black experience. The most I can expect of myself is that I will continue to grow personally and professionally so that I can continue to inspire and enlighten my students, both Black and White. So when asked where I am today, relative to my racial identity, I realize that I am constantly recycling through the stage of racial identity development. I do so in order to navigate through a world that is still very much influenced by race, as well as to serve as a guide for my students.

The ordeal of self-study taught me to be critically introspective. It is not easy to look at yourself looking at yourself. The images of self that once seemed so familiar become blurred and sometimes indiscernible. Perhaps the greatest self-knowledge that I gained from this research is the knowledge that teaching is an imperfect science and human chemistry is too complex to predict. I learned that I should not expect others who share my race to appreciate Black history in the same way that I do. I also learned that history is a living entity that far surpasses the archaic words inscribed in the pages of textbooks.

History is a record of human existence that continues to grow and evolve along with humankind. I just hope that I was able to plant seeds of pride and perseverance in my students so that they might know that they are products of an honorable lineage and may confidentially hold their heads high even when they are not in the presence of "Just Us."

APPENDICES

COURSE SYLLABUS/OVERVIEW

The American Civil Rights Movement
Course Syllabus/Overview
Teacher: Pamela L. Ross

> I want young men and young women who are not alive today but who
> will come into this world, with new privileges and new opportunities, I
> want them to know and see that these privileges and opportunities did
> not come without somebody suffering and sacrificing for them.
>
> Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Course Overview

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s had an enormous impact on American society. Because of media stereotypes and misinformation, most Americans believe the movement's successes were limited to the African American community. Although it was a black organized movement, its consequences reached far beyond the confines of African American citizenry. The movement revolutionized both regional and national politics, economics, social customs, and cultural notions. In addition, the movement also fostered a wide range of social/reform movements including the women's liberation movement, the anti-war movement, and the anti-nuke movement.

Despite the civil rights movement's importance, many Americans still think of the movement as a tightly controlled event with a single leader: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. While King was important, he was only one of many people who provided leadership. In this course, we will not only examine Dr. King's life and career, we will also look closely at the "ordinary" folks in the movement. The movement was truly a grassroots reform crusade. The movement will be evaluated in the context of American reform.

In this course we will explore the origins and development of the African American civil rights movement. We will refute many of the myths surrounding the civil rights movement. We will also examine a variety of organizations, leaders, people, and

philosophies—especially the ideas of Dr. King and Malcolm X. We will carefully consider the role of the media, especially television, in the successes and excesses of the movement. Furthermore, we will also examine the causes and origins of the modern civil rights movement, including the various types and methods of protest activity used by African Americans in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Finally, we will use our historical knowledge of the civil rights movement to explore the current status of race relations in America as well as the exploration of other contemporary human rights movements.

Course Objectives

- Understand the historical development of the contemporary American Civil Rights Movement.
- Recognize movement goals and strategies.
- Discuss myths surrounding the movement.
- Gauge the effectiveness of the African American civil rights movement.
- Critically analyze primary documents, media coverage, and historical interpretations.
- Develop critical thinking skills and formulate individual interpretations of events and the time period.
- Describe the political, legal, ethical, and social issues involved in the movement.
- Examine the broad context of the Civil Rights Movement and explain the broad impact of the movement on America.
- Discover some of the forgotten heroes of the era.
- Encourage students to find an answer to the question, "Where do we go from here?"

Class Participation

Class participation is an integral part of this course. The success of the class depends upon your willingness to discuss, debate, and analyze issues with your classmates. In order to actively participate in class, you must come to class prepared with homework assignments. Please realize that this idea of class participation goes beyond merely being able answer questions that are posed to you; it means taking risks, asking questions, and engaging in creative problem solving.

Writing Assignments

Writing is a crucial part of any college education. Clear communication skills are necessary in today's society. You are expected to complete all written assignments during this course. These will include chapter assignments, and journal, and an action project proposal. Although I do not require that the action project proposal be typed, I prefer it. All typed papers should be double-spaced with a font not exceeding 12 points. ALWAYS KEEP A HARD COPY OF YOUR PAPER AFTER YOU TURN IT IN!!!!!!

Readings

Harley, S., Middleton, S. and Stokes, C. M. (1992). *The African American Experience: A History*, Globe Book Company, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

We will also be working with a variety of other printed sources such as newspaper accounts, editorials, political cartoons, and biographies. These items will either be passed out in class or placed on reserve in Claytor Library.

Course Calendar

Day 1:	Course Overview
Day 2:	Get Acquainted/Cultural Show and Tell
Days 3-8:	Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1940-1945)
Days 9-13:	Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in Post War Years (1945-1960)
Days 14-19:	Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights (1954-1963)
Days 20-25:	Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement (1964-1972)
Days 26-29:	Chapter 32: Marching off to Vietnam (1963-1972)
Days 30-31:	Contemporary Issues
Day 32:	Action Project Proposal Presentations

Rules and Regulations

1. No talking during instructional time
2. You may talk quietly during seatwork time
3. Respect yourself and your classmates
4. No food, gum, candy or other edibles
5. No profanity
6. Be on time
7. Bring all materials to class
8. No fighting or ranking
9. Do your best on all assignments
10. Follow the rules

Consequences

First Offense: Warning

Second Offense: Loss of privileges/call home

Third Offense: Parent Conference

Severe or repeated Offense: May result in removal from the class.

NOTE: If you fail to comply with the rules, your participation in the class may be discontinued. Participation in this class is voluntary

I have read the course overview/syllabus. I will comply with the rules.

Child (print name) _____
                                                    (print name)

Child's signature _____

Date _____

I have read the course/syllabus and understand the rules and regulations.

Parent/Guardian's _____
                                                    (print name)

Parent/Guardian's signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

CIVIL RIGHTS ERA TIMELINE

Time Line	Event
1940	• U.S. Enters World War II • African Americans enter Army Officer Candidate School
1941	• Dory Miller is Hero of Pearl Harbor
1942	• Navy and Marine Corp accept African Americans • Army Air Corp trains African American Pilots at Tuskegee • African American women join WAC and WAVES
1943	• Detroit Race Riot
1944	• Development of Mechanical Cotton Picker
1945	• World War II Ends
1946	• President Truman establishes Civil Rights Commission
1950s	• B-Bop, Cool Jazz, Free-Form Jazz, Rockin' Roll Developed
1950 – 1960	• Two million African Americans move to Northeast and Midwest
1950 – 1953	• Korean War
1952	• Ralph Ellison publishes *Invisible Man*
1953	• Race Riot in Chicago Public Housing
1954	• *Brown v. Board of Education* • Outlaw School Segregation • Three African Americans elected to House of Representatives
1955 – 1956	• Montgomery Bus Boycott
1957	• Federal Troops sent to integrate school in Little Rock, Arkansas • Southern Leaders Leadership Conference (SLLC) Founded

Time Line	Event
1959	• *A Raisin in the Sun* opens on Broadway
1960	• Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee is founded
1960 – 1961	• Sit ins and freedom riot rides are held in the South
1962	• James Meredith forces integration at University of Mississippi
1963	• Martin Luther King leads protest in Birmingham, AL and also the march on Washington, D.C.
1964	• Civil Rights Act of 1964 • Martin Luther King, Jr. receives the Nobel Peace Prize • The Freedom Summer Riots breakout in Harlem
1965	• Selma to Montgomery March • Voting Rights Act of 1965 • First U.S. combat troops enter Vietnam • Malcolm X is assassinated • Riots breakout in Watts, CA
1966	• The Black Panther Party is formed • Meredith March Against Fear
1967	• M. L. King begins Poor People's Campaign • Muhammad Ali resists Draft on Religious grounds • Martin Luther King speaks out against Vietnam War
1968	• Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated • King's assassination is followed by riots in 125 cities • Kerner Commissions Report • Shirley Chilsolm became the first African American woman in Congress
1969	• Vietnam Moratorium
1973	• Last U.S. troops leave Vietnam
1975	• Vietnam falls to communism
1980	• Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr becomes a National holiday
1982	• Vietnam Veterans Memorial Dedicated

APPENDIX C

LESSON PLANS AND NOTES

Content Focus: Introductory Class

Performance Objective: Students will review the course overview/syllabus and be able to explain the course to their parents. 100% of the students will return the perforated section of the course overview/syllabus with a parent or guardian's signature.

Anticipatory Set: Ask student to choose from the following three phrases: 1) One up, One down, 2) Two up, 3) Two down. Tell if student if their guess is correct. Explain the trick of the exercise and explain the importance of classroom rules.

Journal Topic: Give each student a notebook and explain the journal procedures. One paragraph, five sentences minimum will be written at the beginning of every class period.

Directed Teaching: The teacher will give an overview of the class, rules, and regulations.

Guided Practice: Students will be called upon to read sections of the course overview/ syllabus.

Independent Application: All students will bring in an object that represents your culture.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: This day went well. Although some of the students seemed lukewarm to the concept of taking an academic class during their summer vacation, overall they seemed receptive to the idea of being a part of a structured program. The 1) One up, One down, 2) Two up, 3) Two down is always a good attention getter. I'm not sure if they really understood the rationale for why I did the exercise. I wanted them to understand that our society is not haphazard. There are rules and that if they master the rules of the "culture of power," they will be more likely to participate in it successfully.

Content Focus: Cultural Artifact Show and Tell

Performance Objective: All students will bring in an object that represents their culture. They will give an oral presentation explaining why they chose to bring in their particular item.

Anticipatory Set: Show students the picture, "We As One," by Gilbert Young. Explain why this picture is an appropriate cultural item.

Journal Topic: Write one paragraph, which describes the object that you brought to class. Explain why this object represents your culture.

Directed Teaching: Initiate discussion about culture. Facilitate the sharing of the cultural items.

Guided Practice: Students will present the cultural items to the class.

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p. 301-305. Answer questions 1-2.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: I am somewhat disappointed at the lack of participation in the Cultural Artifact Show and Tell. I had imagined that students would be eager to participate. I gave the students who did their homework a treat. I hope that this did not feel punitive to those who did not receive the treat. I suppose it was in some ways but that's real life. If you don't show up for work, you don't get paid. I think I have gotten into the pattern of over-rewarding my students so maybe the conditional treat was not such a bad thing after all.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                   Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1941–1945)

Performance Objective: Having read the chapter overview, students will be able to define the word revolution and determine what a civil rights revolution for African Americans would involve.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students the question – "Is there anything that you can think of that's worth dying for? Explain.

Journal Topic: How might the denial of civil rights to its African American citizens have affected the U.S. as a world power.

Directed Teaching: Explain the irony that Black soldiers faced as they fought for a country that denied them equal rights as citizens.

Guided Practice: Students will read pages 308-309 and answer, "Taking Another Look" questions 1-3.

Independent Application: Students will interview someone at home and find out what their views are on race relations. They will find out if the interviewee feels that things have improved since the 1960's.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: The anticipatory set of this lesson yielded an interesting discussion. I had never imagined that so many youth had thought of dying. Perhaps this is such a relevant theme in their lives because it is not uncommon for them to see their peers' untimely deaths. This year alone I have lost three students. All three deaths were said to be accidental but it just seemed like such an injustice. I'm not sure if my student fully understood that I wanted them to understand the tremendous sacrifice that Civil Rights activists made for the by risking their lives to change life in America. I suppose it wasn't all for them...it was also a matter of self-dignity.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                  Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1941–1945)

Performance Objective: Students will be able to list at least five ways that African Americans helped the war effort.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students, "would you be willing to fight for someone that hated you?"

Journal Topic: Explain what you think the Black soldiers hoped to gain by fighting in World War II.

Directed Teaching: Review the social conditions of the 1930's that lead to the Civil Rights Revolution.

Guided Practice: Read and discuss pages 309-311. Complete "Taking Another Look" questions 1-3.

Independent Application: Students will brainstorm to create a list of protest strategies that they might use to bring about social change.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: Students aren't really relating to this chapter. I mean when would a teenager think about being in a war. They seem to like to read though. I have to make sure that they are reading with comprehension and not just strutting their feathers for their peers to show that they are capable readers. It was interesting to hear their interviews of someone at home and their views on race relations. Many of the students had young parents who really didn't have a strong perspective on the past. Nonetheless the majority of the interviewees felt that race relations had improved but still had a way to go.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                  Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1941–1945)

Performance Objective: Students will watch the video "Glory." They will be able to make a list of the conditions under which the Black soldiers had to fight

Anticipatory Set: Ask students to define Glory. Show video.

Journal Topic: Describe a cause that you'd be willing to fight for. Give three reasons why this is a worthy cause.

Directed Teaching: Give background information on the video, "Glory."

Guided Practice: Students will take notes during the video.

Independent Application: Students will ask at least three people why the Civil War was fought.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, "Glory" video, TV and VCR.

Notes: Students seems to enjoy the "Glory" video. They really related to Denzel Washington's character. I think they also like the extremely graphic nature of the video. I thought that their journals were very interesting. Most of them expressed that they would be willing to fight for their family, friends, and themselves. I think that I will share some of my family history by asking my uncles and father to come in to talk to the class. Both of them fought in American wars.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                   Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1941–1945)

Performance Objective: Students will compare and contrast the conditions that Black soldiers faced during World War II.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students to summarize the major themes of "Glory."

Journal Topic: Write a letter to a soldier in World War II.

Directed Teaching: Explain how World War II created job opportunities for African Americans on the home front.

Guided Practice: Students will read and discuss pages 300-311 and complete, "Taking Another Look" p. 311.

Independent Application: Ask a family member to explain how it is that the family came to live in Saginaw, MI.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, "Glory" video, TV and VCR.

Notes: I'll that my father and uncle's visit made this information more relevant. I don't want to lose their interest at the beginning of the unit or I'll have a hard time getting them back. The students were very respectful and played close attention to their presentations. They asked thoughtful questions and I was impressed by my father and uncles' responses. I will have to ask others to come and visit the class because it allows students to see that the content that they are reading is not so old.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                   Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1941–1945)

Performance Objective: Student will be able to list some of the roles that women played in World War II.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students if they think that women should be able to go into battle.

Journal Topic: Reread the incident about the segregated lunchroom in Saline, Kansas on page 308. If you had been one of the Black soldiers who were refused service, how would you have responded to the lunchroom owner's statement.

Directed Teaching: Introduce primary sources, which illustrate segregation laws. Initiate discussion with students.

Guided Practice: Students will read "Focus on Women in the Military" page 312.

Independent Application: Interview three people. Ask them if they've ever experienced discrimination. Record their answers.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: Surprisingly my male students seemed to be very comfortable with the notion of women going into battle. It was my female students that seemed resistant to the idea. One young lady suggested that she felt that women should be ale to serve in the military if they wanted to but that they should not be required to enlist like the men. The homework assignment yielded interesting information about my students' family histories. Many of them had family roots in the rural South and most families had moved North in the hope of making a better living for their families.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                   Chapter 28: World War II and African Americans (1941–1945)

Performance Objective: Students will complete exercise – "The Who, What, Where of History," "Making the Connection," and "Time Check."

Anticipatory Set: With an 80% or better accuracy, read "Skills: Comparing Points of View" page 313.

Journal Topic: Imagine that you are one of the African American truck drivers who helped supply The Third Army during the Battle of the Buldge. Write a letter home explaining what you think about the work you are doing and how you think it might affect your life after the war.

Directed Teaching: Discuss the issue of point of view with students by exploring primary sources page 313, which presents views on the experiences of Black soldiers.

Guided Practice: Complete chapter assignments page 312.

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p.314-315. Read Chapter 29-Overview.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: It is a good idea to have the students complete their assignment in class. I may want to allow them to work in small groups, as it appears that they are helping one another anyway.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                  Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in the Post–war Years (1945 – 1960)

Performance Objective: Students will be able to list at least three gains and three losses in the post-war years for African Americans.

Anticipatory Set: How do you think that the lives of African Americans changed after Black soldiers fought for America.

Journal Topic: Read "Snapshot of the Times" page 316. Explain how the first two items in the chronology are connected. What two items might have been a result of African American migration to the North?

Directed Teaching: Give a general overview of Chapter 29 making connections to Chapter 28.

Guided Practice: Students will read and discuss pages 315-316 and complete "Taking Another Look."

Independent Application: Go to the library and find an artist from the 1940s – 1960s. Write a biographical sketch.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: I must make more time for journal sharing. Otherwise students may stop writing their entries.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                  Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in the Post–war Years (1945 – 1960)

Performance Objective: Students will become familiar with African American artists from 1990s – 1960s

Anticipatory Set: Play Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit."

Journal Topic: Write one paragraph, which explains your interpretation of the poem "Strange Fruit."

Directed Teaching: Explain the factors, which led to the migration of millions of African Americans from the South to the North between 1940 – 1960.

Guided Practice: Students will read the biographical sketch on their selected artists.

Independent Application: Read and interpret Langston Hughes' – "A Dream Deferred."

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, "Strange Fruit," "A Dream Deferred."

Notes: Hughes' was an excellent discussion piece.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                   Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in the Post–war Years (1945 – 1960)

Performance Objective: Students will be able to compare and contrast the treatment of Blacks in the South versus the North.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students how many of them have ever visited the South. Allow them to share their perceptions of the South.

Journal Topic: Pretend that you've just migrated to a Northern city. Write a letter to your relatives back home in the South.

Directed Teaching: Discuss the difference between covert and overt racism.

Guided Practice: Read and discuss pages 314 – 316.

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p. 316. Complete "Taking Another Look."

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: I hope that I did adequately addressed the stereotype that life in the North was peachy while the South was pure hell.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 – 1973)
                  Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in the Post–war Years (1945 – 1960)

Performance Objective: Students will become more familiar with artists who become popular during the Black Renaissance era. They will be able to discuss the significant contributions of at least three artists.

Anticipatory Set: Read the definition of de facto segregation. Ask students to give an example of de facto segregation.

Journal Topic: What is the difference between legalized segregation and de facto segregation.

Directed Teaching: Take students to the library and assist them in finding either a poem, song, or piece of art from the Black Renaissance era.

Guided Practice: Go to the library to select a piece of art for class presentation.

Independent Application: Write up a one-page interpretation of your song, poem or piece of art.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil and library resources.

Notes: I think that the light bulbs are starting to come on as the students begin to look at the pervasive de facto segregation that exists in our city.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
                  Chapter 29: Gains and Losses in the Post-war Years (1945 - 1960)

Performance Objective: Students will present their song, poem, or piece of art and their interpretation.

Anticipatory Set: Model appropriate presentation style by sharing an excerpt from Ralph Ellison's, "Invisible Man" and explain.

Journal Topic: Make a list of at least five themes that you think Black artists would present in their art.

Directed Teaching: Re-emphasize presentation expectations. Ask pertinent questions during the presentations.

Guided Practice: Students will give their presentation (approximately three minutes).

Independent Application: Read and discuss pages 317-319. Complete "The Who, What, Where of History," "Making the Connection," and "Time Check."

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, library, and Internet access.

Notes: I loved the presentation of the art. It allowed the students to see that even the artists used their work as a form of resistance to injustice.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
                        Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights (1954 - 1963)

Performance Objective: Students will know at least five tactics, which civil rights workers used to win equality for African Americans.

Anticipatory Set: Write the words boycott, sit-ins, marches, rallies, and picket lines. Ask students what all these words have in common.

Journal Topic: Write down everything that you know about the Civil Rights Movement.

Directed Teaching: Introduce Chapter 30 and define the words from the anticipatory set.

Guided Practice: Students will read pages 322-325 and complete "Taking Another Look," page 326.

Independent Application: Complete a time line of events that led up to the Civil Rights Movement (use Chapter 29).

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencils.

Notes: Although I hate time lines and would much prefer rich discussions. I think that my students need to write and visualize the chronology of the Civil Rights era as the seem to lack a sense of time.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights (1954 - 1963)

Performance Objective: Students will know at least ten facts about the Montgomery bus boycott.

Anticipatory Set: Open class with an excerpt of "The Eyes on the Prize" which focuses on the Montgomery bus boycott.

Journal Topic: If you had lived during the Civil Rights era, do you suppose that you would have been able to be a part of a non-violent movement. Explain.

Directed Teaching: Lecture on the philosophy of non-violence, which was espoused by Civil Rights activists under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Guided Practice: Students will read and discuss pages 326-327 and answer "Taking Another Look," questions 1-3.

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p. 332. Students will read "Focus on Separate Is Not Equal." They will write a list of pros and cons of segregation.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, TV, VCR and "Eyes on the Prize" video.

Notes: Many students seemed to have a high regard for Martin Luther King but a low regard for his philosophy of non-violent resistance.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights (1954 - 1963)

Performance Objective: Students will understand the purpose of the freedom rides.

Anticipatory Set: Show a clip from the "Eyes on the Prize," which illustrates the protest strategies used in the Civil Rights Movement. Students will be able to write a detailed description of the strategies.

Journal Topic: Write a note to the Freedom Fighters. What would you say to them?

Directed Teaching: Explain how the media was used to forward the causes of the Civil Rights Movement.

Guided Practice: Read and discuss pages 330-331. Answer "Taking Another Look," questions 1-3.

Independent Application: Go to the library and photocopy a picture from the Civil Rights era.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, library, "Eyes on the Prize" video, TV and VCR.

Notes: "The Eyes on the Prize" is an invaluable resource. It brought the pictures that my students had been seeing in their texts to life.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
                        Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights (1954 - 1963)

Performance Objective: Students will view Dr. Martin Luther King's, "I Have A Dream" speech. They will read the speech in small groups and interpret it by paraphrasing in their own words.

Anticipatory Set: Read an excerpt from Dr. Martin Luther King's, "I Have A Dream" speech.

Journal Topic: Write a letter to the editor of a Little Rock, Arkansas newspaper. Give your reaction to the Governor's use of the National Guard Troops to prevent school desegregation.

Directed Teaching: Lecture on the pros and cons of desegregation.

Guided Practice: Students will read "Building Skills: Sequencing" and complete questions 1-4, page 333.

Independent Application: Notebook. Create a poster, which you might have carried during the march on Washington.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, "Eyes on the Prize" video, TV and VCR.

Notes: My students still do not understand the volatile nature of the Civil Rights era. Many of them want to take year 2000 attitudes back into the 50's and 60's.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights (1954 - 1963)

Performance Objective: Students will complete chapter assignment with an 80% or better level of accuracy.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students "if you had been a student in Greensboro, NC during the time of the sit-ins, would you have participated in them? Explain.

Journal Topic: Write a brief paragraph explaining why you disagree or disagree with King's philosophy of non-violent protests.

Directed Teaching: Give a review of the chapter and assist students with completing the chapter assignments.

Guided Practice: Students will complete "The Who, What, Where of History," "Making the Connection," and "Time Check" page 333.

Independent Application: Students will read and interpret the poem "If We Must Die."

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil and poem.

Notes: Small group assignments seem like a more efficient use of time.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
                        Chapter 30: The Battle for Civil Rights (1954 - 1963)

Performance Objective: Students will be able to list the acronyms and names of at least three civil rights organizations. They will also know the purposes of these organizations.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students to tell how they would respond if someone hit them for no apparent reason.

Journal Topic: Imagine that it is 1963 and you are a student in Birmingham. How would you explain to your parents your decision to join demonstrations.

Directed Teaching: Instruct students about how the legal system was used to dismantle desegregation.

Guided Practice: Students will work in small groups to create a modern day organization, which will address some cause that they all will agree upon. They will come up with a name, mission, and strategies.

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p. 314-333. Create a cause and effect time line with at least ten dates.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencils.

Notes: Perhaps I can set up a trip to Detroit's Museum. The students might have a greater appreciation on the museum having studied this unit.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
                        Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement (1964-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will be able to compare and contrast the Civil Rights Movement before and after 1963 by listing three similarities and three differences.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students - What if anything do you know about Malcolm X?

Journal Topic: Write five sentences that begin - I am Black and proud because ...

Directed Teaching: Give an overview of Chapter 31. Discuss changes in protests strategies.

Guided Practice: Read and discuss pages 334 - 338. Complete "Taking Another Look" questions 1-3.

Independent Application: Poll three people, ask them to tell you what they know about Malcolm X.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencils.

Notes:

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement (1964-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will learn about the philosophies of Malcolm X. They will compare him to Dr. Martin Luther King by creating a diagram, which shows how they are similar and different using at least ten facts.

Anticipatory Set: Read an excerpt from Alex Haley's "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" Discuss his childhood experiences.

Journal Topic: How would you respond to a teacher like Malcolm X's teacher if they told you that you couldn't be whatever you wanted to be.

Directed Teaching: Guide students through the readings and discuss pages 338-339.

Guided Practice: Complete "Taking Another Look," page 339.

Independent Application: Ask three people what they know about the Black Power Movement.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, Alex Haley's "The Autobiography of Malcolm X."

Notes: Although the students favored the philosophies of Malcolm X, the vast majority if them remained loyal to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., at their preferred leader.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement (1964-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will learn at least ten significant facts about Malcolm X from Spike Lee's video.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students - "If you'd been alive during the Civil Rights Era who would have followed Malcolm X or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Journal Topic: How did the goal of the Black Power Movement differ from those of Martin Luther King.

Directed Teaching: Lecture on how the Black Power Movement and Civil Rights Movement work hand-in-hand despite different approaches to bringing about social changes.

Guided Practice: Students will watch the first half of Spike Lee's "Malcolm X" video.

Independent Application: Students will create a Black Pride poster or collage.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, Spike Lee's "Malcolm X" video.

Notes: Spike Lee's video was good and entertaining but perhaps to commercialized. I will have to search for video with real life footage of Malcolm X for future classes.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement (1964-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will be able to compare and contrast Malcolm X's life before and after his prison experience based on Spike Lee's video.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students - "Who can tell me something that you've learned from the Spike Lee "Malcolm X" video?

Journal Topic: What did you like and dislike about the "Malcolm X" video?

Directed Teaching: Summarize the first half of the "Malcolm X" video.

Guided Practice: Students will watch the second half of Spike Lee's "Malcolm X" video.

Independent Application: Students will continue to work on their Black Pride poster or collage.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, and Spike Lee's "Malcolm X" video.

Notes: Students need more time to work on their projects.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
                                Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement (1964-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will be able to accurately define Black Power, as well as, compare and contrast it to the Civil Rights Movement.

Anticipatory Set: Read the piece, "If There Were No Black People."

Journal Topic: How would your life be different if Black people held the majority of the wealth and power in the United States?

Directed Teaching: Lecture on Black Power and read and discuss pages 340-341.

Guided Practice: Students will complete "Taking Another Look" page 341, questions 1-3 and present their posters or collages.

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p. 340.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil, and short essay "If There Were No Black People."

Notes: Students seemed amazed at how much Blacks have contributed to American society but wondered why they had not heard this information before. I think that some students were reluctant to believe the validity of the information.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
                  Chapter 31: New Directions in the Civil Rights Movement (1964-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will be able to describe at least five major accomplishments of the Civil Rights Movement.

Anticipatory Set: Read the excerpt on "Freedom Song." Ask students to share the lyrics of the song that discusses a struggle of any kind.

Journal Topic: What do you consider the greatest achievement of the Civil Rights Movement? Explain.

Directed Teaching: Review the chapter and assist students with chapter assignments.

Guided Practice: Complete chapter assignments - the "Who, What, Where of History," "Making the Connection," and "Time Check."

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p. 340. Use the map to draw a time line of the major encounters of the Civil Rights Revolution, 1954 to 1968.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: Make sure that every person in the group is contributing to the completion of the assignment.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
                  Chapter 32: Marching Off to Vietnam (1963-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will understand the changes that took place in the Civil Rights Movement after 1963. They will be able to list at least five changes.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students to brainstorm a list of everything they know about the Vietnam War.

Journal Topic: Imagine that you are living in Los Angeles in the fall of 1966. A good friend announces that he is joining the Black Panthers. He asks your opinion. How do you respond?

Directed Teaching: Lecture on the causes of the Vietnam War, as well as, the criticisms of U.S. involvement in that war.

Guided Practice: Students will read and discuss page 346-349 and answer "Taking Anther Look," questions 1-3.

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p. 345. Read Building Skills: Analyzing Oral History. Complete questions 1-5.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil

Notes: Another war. I wonder why historians place such a great emphasis on wars?

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
Chapter 32: Marching Off to Vietnam (1963-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will understand the changes that took place in the Civil Rights Movement after 1963. They will be able to create a list of differences of similarities.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students - who can tell me what SNCC and MFDP stand for.

Journal Topic: Write a paragraph explaining which African American leader was the most effective spokesperson for the African American community.

Directed Teaching: Introduce the following organizations: SCLC, SNCC, MFDP and Democratic Convention.

Guided Practice: Students will read and discuss pages 349-350 and complete "Taking Another Look," questions 1-3.

Independent Application: Go to the library and try to find a primary source, which addresses the Vietnam War.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil and library visitation.

Notes: I love having the library available. It is an invaluable resource for my class.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
Chapter 32: Marching Off to Vietnam (1963-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will be able to list at least five of the major gains from the Civil Rights Movement.

Anticipatory Set: Show students Michael Ross' degree from the Air Force Academy. Explain how this was a significant accomplishment that may not have been possible without the Civil Rights Movement.

Journal Topic: Compare the explosion in the cities to riots that arose from the Rodney King incident.

Directed Teaching: Lecture on how military conditions improved for Blacks.

Guided Practice: Students will read and discuss pages 350-353 and complete "Taking Another Look," questions 1-3.

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p. 354. Read "Remember Vietnam." Think of ways you could give a tribute to Vietnam veterans.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencils.

Notes: I hope that the students understood why the improvement in the military were so significant for all Blacks.

Content Focus: The Civil Rights Revolution (1941 - 1973)
Chapter 32: Marching Off to Vietnam (1963-1972)

Performance Objective: Students will complete the Chapter assignments - "The Who, What, Where of History," "Making the Connection," and "Time Check," with an eighty percent or better accuracy.

Anticipatory Set: Say "I float like a butterfly and sting like a bee." Ask students who made these words famous. Discuss Ali's refusal to fight in the Vietnam War.

Journal Topic: If you had been alive during the Vietnam era, would you have supported the U.S. government's actions in Vietnam or would you have joined the protestors against the war. Explain.

Directed Teaching: Assist students with the chapter assignment.

Guided Practice: Students will complete the Chapter assignments - "The Who, What, Where of History," "Making the Connection," and "Time Check."

Independent Application: The African American Experience: A History p. 355. Complete "Building Skills: Interpreting a Newspaper Article." Answer questions 1-5.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencils.

Notes: I am impressed by my students' willingness to complete their assignments.

Content Focus: Contemporary Issues

Performance Objective: Students will become knowledgeable of contemporary issues in the African American community and complete an action project proposal.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students if you could change the world with three wishes, what would you wish?

Journal Topic: What is peer pressure? Give three examples of how you might experience peer pressure.

Directed Teaching: Lecture on the Civil Rights era and how it has had a lasting impact on our society today.

Guided Practice: Read and discuss pages 356-361. Answer "Taking Another Look," questions 1-3.

Independent Application: Image it is the year 1967. Write a newspaper editorial either supporting or criticizing Muhammad Ali's refusal to fight in the Vietnam War.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencils.

Notes: The action project proposal will prove to be very interesting.

Content Focus: Contemporary Issues

Performance Objective: Students will work in small groups to develop an action project proposal.

Anticipatory Set: Ask students - "Do you think we will ever have a Black president?"

Journal Topic: List two policies that are important to African Americans that you think should be part of a presidential candidate platform in the next election. Explain.

Directed Teaching: Explain expectations for the action project proposal.

Guided Practice: Work in groups on action project proposal.

Independent Application: Complete action project proposal.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencils.

Notes: The students seem to be very committed to the completion of their projects.

Content Focus: Contemporary Issues

Performance Objective: Students will present their action project proposals to the class.

Anticipatory Set: Thank the students for the participation in the class. Discuss the final party.

Journal Topic: Write five sentences - "The world would be better place, if ...."

Directed Teaching: Listen to all of the presentations. Ask each group questions for clarification.

Guided Practice: Students will present their action project proposals.

Independent Application: Come up with suggestions for what we might do for our final class project.

Resources: Textbook, paper, pencil and overhead projector.

Notes: The final class was absolutely wonderful. I'm glad that I invited the staff and senior citizens as the students had done a lot of work and deserved to be seen by a greater audience than our class. This has been such a personally enriching experience for me. I'm sure that I didn't do everything just right but I hope that my students had a positive experience. Most say that they did. I'm so happy to have been able to use this class for my dissertation, as I can't imagine another topic being as significant to me.

APPENDIX D

PRE/POST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Pre Interview Questions

Do you understand that you are participating in this class on a voluntary basis?

Have you ever had a Black history class?

Who is an African American that you admire and why?

What would you like to learn about Black history?

What types of activities would you like to do as a class?

Post-Interview Questions

Did you enjoy participating in this class?

What did you learn in Black history class?

Was there anything that you did not understand about Black history?

What was your most favorite and least favorite thing about the class?

APPENDIX E

CONSENT/ASSENT LETTERS AND FORMS

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is Pamela Ross and I am writing because I would like to offer you an opportunity to give your child permission to participate in a special class, which will study Black history over the course of eight weeks. Participation in this class is strictly on a voluntary basis and should you elect not to allow your child to participate, it will in no way jeopardize his or her participation in other programs offered through First Ward Community Center.

The class will be used for research purposes in that I am conducting a study for the purposes of my dissertation for my doctoral program at Michigan State University. The proposed study is entitled *Just Us - A Case Study of an African American Educator's Intraracial Approach to Teaching a Civil Rights Unit to African American Middle School Students*. This dissertation will take the form of a self-study. I will look at my own pedagogical practices and learning outcomes as an African American educator who teaches a Civil Rights unit to middle school African American students. This study will expound upon the challenges that I, an aspiring afrocentric/multiculturalist, must face when seeking to use Black History as a means to empower students of color. While the students are certainly an important part of the study, they are not the primary focus of the research. The focus of the study is myself, the teacher. By looking at myself, as a the teacher, reflective practitioner, and learner, I believe that valuable insights will be revealed about how racial identity shapes the decision making process, culturally relevant teaching strategies, and curriculum development in an intraracial learning environment.

In addition to getting your permission, I will also make sure that your child is willing to participate in the class. Your child will be informed that they can discontinue participation in the class at any time without being penalized. Because your child's participation should be voluntary, both you and your child will be asked whether he or she will elect to participate in the study. Any child who is not a member of the study will still have full access to all programs and activities offered through First Ward Community Center.

For any audio taping that I conduct in class, your child has the right have me stop the recording at any time. If you do not grant your permission for your child to be taped, I

will do everything possible to keep from recording him or her. If I should inadvertently tape your child, I will not use any segments of the tapes in which your child can be identified. Confidentiality will be protected within the limits of the law.

All the data that I collect will be treated with the strictest confidence; your child's name will not be used in any reports about this project, and any identifying characteristics of your child will be disguised. On the attached form, you can restrict the uses that can be made of the information of the materials that I collect that include your child.

Thank you for taking time to consider allowing your child to participate in this study. If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant in the study, you may contact Dr. Davis E. Wright, Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCHRIS) at 246 Administration Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI 48824-1046, Phone: (517) 355-2180. You may also feel free to contact me, Pamela L. Ross at 1410 North 12th Street, Saginaw, MI 48601, Phone: (517) 753-0411 Pager (517) 201-6363.

Sincerely,

Pamela L. Ross, Doctoral Candidate
Michigan State University

PARENT CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION

You have read the informational letter and understand the nature of your child's involvement in the study. The data from the study will be used for a dissertation study. The data will be included in a dissertation and may be used in published articles, presentations at conferences, and/or in teacher education classes at a university. In any such uses, your child's identity will not be revealed. Confidentiality will be protected within the limits of the law.

You have also been assured that you can deny permission for your child's participation in any or all of the activities listed below, and can withdraw permission for your child to participate in any or all of these activities at any time without penalty. Your child will also have the opportunity to agree or decline to be involved in the study's various activities. Choosing not to allow your child to participate will have no impact your child's right to participate in any other programs offered by First Ward Community Center.

I have your permission for your child to participate in the activities that are indicated below.

(Please indicate "yes" or "no" for <u>each category</u>.)

1. I may focus my attention on your child's interaction will me, the teacher, and with other students:
    _____ yes _____no

2. I may audiotape these classroom interactions and use the tapes for research purposes:
    _____ yes _____no

3. I may photograph these classroom interactions and use the pictures for research purposes:
    _____ yes _____no

4. I may talk to or interview your child about his or her perceptions and attitudes about his of her experience in the Black History class:
    _____ yes _____no

5. I may audiotape conversations described in item #4 above:
    _____ yes _____no

6. I may have access to samples of your child's work completed in this class and assessments of your child's progress.

_____ yes _____ no

7. I may use audiotapes and photographs that include your child in class presentations or conferences as long as I do not identify you child by name or through other background information about him/her.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Pamela Ross and I am writing because I would like to offer you an opportunity to participate in a special class with the permission of your parent. The class will teach Black history over the course of eight weeks. Participation in this class is strictly on a voluntary basis and should you elect not to participate, it will in no way jeopardize your participation in other programs offered through First Ward Community Center.

The class will be used for research purposes in that I am conducting a study for the purposes of my dissertation for my doctoral program at Michigan State University. The proposed study is entitled *Just Us - A Case Study of an African American Educator's Intracultural Approach to Teaching a Civil Rights Unit to African American Middle School Students.* This dissertation will take the form of a self-study. I will look at my own pedagogical practices and learning outcomes as an African American educator who teaches a Civil Rights unit to middle school African American students. This study will expound upon the challenges that I, an aspiring afrocentric/multiculturalist, must face when seeking to use Black History as a means to empower students of color. While the students are certainly an important part of the study, they are not the primary focus of the research. The focus of the study is myself, the teacher. By looking at myself, as a the teacher, reflective practitioner, and learner, I believe that valuable insights will be revealed about how racial identity shapes the decision making process, culturally relevant teaching strategies, and curriculum development in an intraracial learning environment.

In addition to getting your permission, I will also make sure that your parent or guardian is willing to allow you to participate in the study. You may discontinue participation in the class at any time without being penalized. Participation in this study is voluntary. Any child who is not a member of the study will still have full access to all programs and activities offered through First Ward Community Center.

For any audio taping that I conduct in class, you will have the right to have me stop the recording at any time. If you do not grant your permission to be taped, I will do everything possible to keep from recording you. If I should inadvertently tape you, I will not use any segments of the tapes in which you can be identified. Confidentiality will be protected within the limits of the law.

All the data that I collect will be treated with the strictest confidence; your name will not be used in any reports about this project, and any of your identifying characteristics will be disguised. On the attached form, you can restrict the uses that can be made of the information of the materials I collect that include you.

Thank you for taking time to consider participation in this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in the study, you may contact Dr. Davis E. Wright, Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCHRIS) at 246 Administration Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI 48824-1046, Phone: (517) 355-2180. You may also feel free to contact me, Pamela L. Ross at 1410 North 12th Street, Saginaw, MI 48601, Phone: (517) 753-0411 Pager (517) 201-6363.

Sincerely,

Pamela L. Ross, Doctoral Candidate
Michigan State University

CHILD'S ASSENT FORM

You have read the informational letter and understand the nature of your involvement in the study. The data from the study will be used for a dissertation study. The data will be included in a dissertation and may be used in published articles, presentations at conferences, and/or in teacher education classes at a university. In any such uses, your identity will not be revealed. Confidentiality will be protected within the limits of the law. You have also been assured that you can decline involvement in any or all of the activities listed below, and can withdraw from any or all of these activities at any time without penalty. Choosing not to participate in this study will have no impact on your right to participate in any other programs offered by First Ward Community Center.

With your parent's permission, you agree participate in the activities that are indicated below.

(Please indicate "yes" or "no" for each category.)

I have your permission for your child to participate in the activities that are indicated below.

(Please indicate "yes" or "no" for each category.)

1. I may focus my attention on your interaction will me, the teacher, and with other students:
    _____ yes _____no

2. I may audiotape these classroom interactions and use the tapes for research purposes:
    _____ yes _____no

3. I may photograph these classroom interactions and use the pictures for research purposes:
    _____ yes _____no

4. I may talk to or interview you about your perceptions and attitudes about your experience in the Black History class:
    _____ yes _____no

5. I may audiotape conversations described in item #4 above:
    _____ yes _____no

6. I may have access to samples of your work completed in this class and assessments of your progress.
_____ yes _____no

7. I may use audiotapes and photographs that include your participation in class presentations or conferences as long as I do not identify you by name or through other background information about you.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Child's Signature: _____Date: _____

ACTION PROJECT PROPOSAL AD ASSIGNMENTS

Guidelines

Students who attend inner-city schools and live in economically disadvantaged urban communities are often perceived as being constantly exposed to social pathologies that negatively impact their lives. The high rates of teenage pregnancies, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, unemployment, and incarceration and institutionalization of Black youth are a few issues that social scientists point to when attempting to gauge the status of Black America.

It is increasingly apparent to me that we must encourage Black youth to develop a self-help initiative that aids them in identifying social problems and implementing strategies to contain their ill effects.

Objective: Use the following outline to gather and report findings based on your research topic.

1. Topic: Select a contemporary moral problem that adversely impacts African-Americans and report your findings based on your research.
2. Statement of the problem: Also, include your rationale for selecting this issue.
3. Devise a strategy for educating the community: (e.g. rally, boycott, sit-in, workshop, etc.) Include your rationale for selecting this strategy.
4. Produce a sample advertisement campaign: (e.g. brochures, flyers, public service announcements, T.V. commercials, etc.)
5. Identify target population: Who is the audience that you need to educate?
6. Marketing plan: How are you going to disseminate the information?

Students are permitted to work in groups of five to six. Demonstrating the value of cooperative learning is the ultimate objective of this assignment.

Prospective Issues:

Racial profiling	Affirmative Action	Domestic Violence
Teenage Pregnancy	Drug Trafficking	Failing Public Schools
Hate Crime Legislation	Standardized Testing	Gang Violence
Drug and Alcohol Abuse	Black on Black Crime	Black Incarceration Rates

REPLICATIONS OF ADVERTISEMENT CAMPAIGN

Group 1 Topic: Drug-Free Campaign
Strategy: Billboard

Don't Be
A Fool

DRUGS

Aren't Cool

DRUGS KILL

Group 2 Topic: Safer Sex/Abstinence Campaign
Strategy: Condom Give-Away

TROJAN®

CONDOM
GIVE-AWAY
TODAY

Choose to
ABSTAIN &
Avoid the
PAIN

Got No Protection,
Then Lose the
Erection

Group 3:   **Gang Prevention Campaign**
Strategy: Flyer Distribution

Guns
Are
Not
Good

Don't Join Gangs

Group 4 Topic: **Racial Profiling Prevention Campaign**
Strategy: PSA

Radio Announcer:

Have you ever been followed around in a store?

Have you been stopped by the police for no reason?

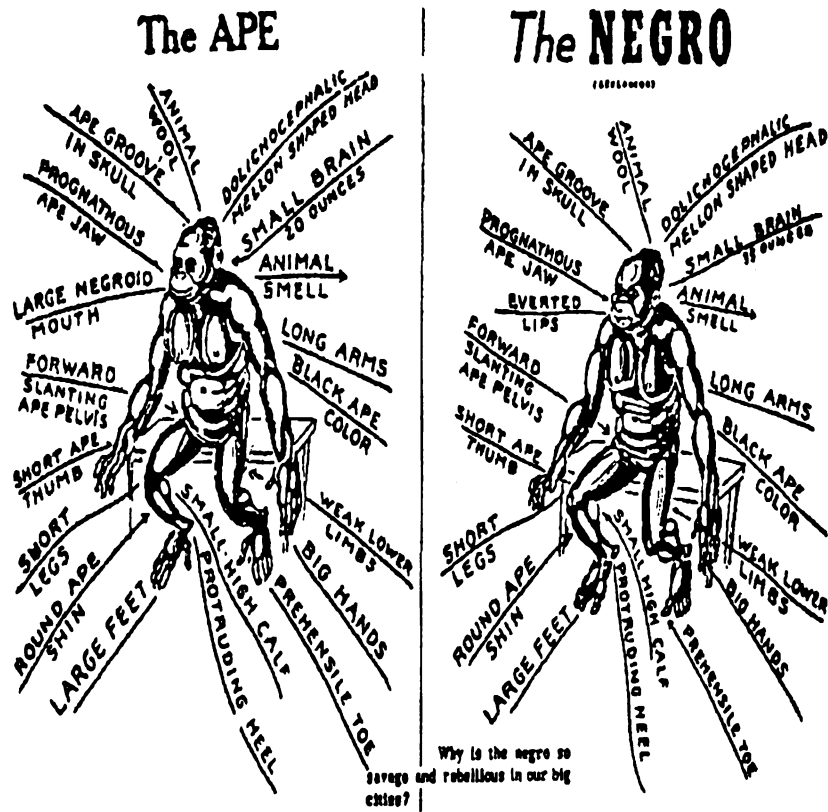Do people clutch their purses when you walk by?

If so, you might be the victim of racial profiling.

Never judge a book by its cover!

We have to learn to accept one another

RACIALLY INFLAMMATORY PROPAGANDA

O BE SOLD on board

Ship Bance-Island, on tuesday the 6

May next, at Ashley-Ferry; a cho

cargo of about 250 fine healthy

NEGROES,

just arrived from the

Windward & Rice Coast.

—The utmost care has

already been taken, an

be continued, to keep them

danger of being infect

no boat havi

commu

pr

CAUTION!!

COLORED PEOPLE
OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,

You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and
advised, to avoid conversing with the
Watchmen and Police Officers
of Boston,

For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR &
ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as

KIDNAPPERS
AND
Slave Catchers,

ad they have already been actually employed in
NAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING
VES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY,
he Welfare of the Fugitives among you, Shun
in every possible manner, as so many HOUNDS
track of the most unfortunate of your race.

Black history class a daily highlight for city youngsters

JEAN SPENNER
■ THE SAGINAW NEWS

Outings to a Lake Huron beach, overnight camping trips and especially a black history class keep Project PUSH & PULL participants interested in coming back yearly.

Pamela Ross, the program's coordinator and a graduate student at Michigan State University, will write her thesis on teaching black history to black adolescents.

"I'm working hard to make it relevant – making it relevant and then tying it into today's lessons of drug and violence prevention," she said.

Teens in the program said they consider the daily hourlong class a highlight.

"(It's) one of the most interesting things we have," said Terica Richardson, 13, who will attend seventh-grade at Bridgeport Middle School. "We have a book but we also talk about it."

The class explores the civil rights movement "and what blacks went through to have freedom" in greater depth than the topics are covered in public school classes, said Cherita Donald, 14, a Bridgeport High School freshman, who lives in Saginaw with her mother, Linda Troutmon. She also is the daughter of Richard Donald of Saginaw.

The teens said they hold Ross in high esteem.

"When I need help, she helps you like a mom," said Toryon Williamson, 14, a Central Middle School eighth-grader who lives in Saginaw with his grandmother, Annie Mae Williamson.

"When people ask me do I want drugs, she gives me advice on what to do and say," he added.

Anthony Lewis said he is finding it easier to stay out of trouble with the law by keeping company with friends from the program.

"I have a few problems with some of the (younger) kids," said Lewis, 15, who lives in Saginaw with his mother, Deborah Lewis. "But I can deal with it. I talk to them. I don't use violence."

But it isn't all fun and games.

Danisha Roach said a tour of the county jail was both educational and "scary."

"I never want to get there," said Roach, 13, an eighth-grade at Saginaw's North Middle School. :

The program offers opportunities that some may not have otherwise, said Richardson, who lives in Bridgeport Township with her mother, Carol Richardson, and stepfather, Willie Madlock.

"I'd never been to the beach before. It was beautiful," she said.

An annual weekend camping trip each August also won kudos.

"It's a work-together camp," Williamson said. "You learn to work as a team."

The program brings some meaning to the summer, said Benjamin Smith, 13, an eighth-grader at Saginaw's North Middle School, who lives with his mother, Yvette Smith, in Saginaw.

"For kids who don't have anything to do, you learn about your heritage and race, and you go interesting places," he said. ■

Call Jean Spenner at 776-9683.

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