NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of UNIVERSITY WOMEN

Evelyn L. Wright
National President

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Founders and Officers of The National Association of University Women  Inside back cover
HISTORY
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

The College Alumnae Club was organized March 11, 1910 by Mrs. Mary Church Terrell, Dr. Sara Brown, Dr. Fairfax Brown, and Miss Mary Cromwell in Washington, D.C. Twenty-four University graduates joined. They elected officers and planned a program. The new club desired to stimulate young women to attain professional excellence, to exert influence in various movements for the civic good, and to promote a close personal and intellectual fellowship among professional women. In 1919, the Club invited the first group of university graduates who lived outside of the District of Columbia to organize. Baltimore accepted the invitation. In the early 1920s, the District of Columbia club organized seven branches. In 1922, representatives of the newly organized branches were called to Washington, D.C. to discuss incorporation, but it was not until April 6-7, 1923, that the Branch structured a national organization. In 1924, the National Association of College Women was incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia. The Association provides a nationwide organizational structure to stimulate and coordinate the concerns and activities of local groups of college women for constructive work in education, public and civic affairs, and human relations. The organization encourages the extension of professional insight and disciplines of college women to a leadership role on local, national, and international levels.

On August 9, 1974, in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Biennial Convention, the Association accepted its updated Charter and became known as the National Association of University Women (NAUW). It has cooperated with national and local, social and economic programs and is affiliated with such national organizations as the National Council of Negro Women, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, The National Urban League, the United Negro College Fund, the Schomburg Center for Black Cultural Studies, and the National Coalition for Literacy. CONNECTION is the national programmatic umbrella which involves establishing an on-going relationship with the chief administrator/CEO of each public school system or social institution where there is a branch of NAUW. Twenty-three women have been elected as National Presidents:

*Dean Lucy D. Slow (1924-1929); *Mrs. Juanita H. Thomas (1929-1933); *Mrs. Vivian J. Cook (1933-1937); *Mrs. Helen I. Grosley (1937-1939); *Dr. Hilda Davis (1939-1943); Mrs. Alice Taylor Chandler (1943-1945); *Dr. Flemmie Kittrell (1945-1949); *Mrs. Inez B. Brewer (1949-1953); *Mrs. Thelma Taylor Williams (1953-1957); Dr. Hilda A. Davis (1957-1961); *Mrs. Lillian W. McDaniel (1961-1965); *Ms. Portia C. Bullock (1965-1969); Mrs. Odessa Wright Farrell (1969-1974); *Mrs. Margaret Una Poche (1974-1978); *Mrs. Nettie Manning (1978-1982);
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Papers
Blueprint for Black Girl Magic:  
The Leadership of First Woman Dean of Howard University Lucy Diggs Slowe

Amy Oppong Yeboah, Ph.D.

Dean Slowe is the answer to a spiritual need in the life of women here, for information and guidance…We, the Women of Howard University, welcome Dean Slowe with eager, open arms, and consecrate ourselves to this sacred task of evolving the NEW HOWARD WOMAN – a woman intellectually alert, physically alter and of extreme culture and refinement. (p. 7)

-- Student Reporter for the Howard University Record (1922)

Introduction

Despite the fact that the National Center for Education Statistics in 2016 reported that Black women are the most educated group in the United States and outnumber Black males in higher education, Black girls and women are still more likely to be pushed out, overpoliced and underprotected (Crenshaw, Oce and Nanda, 2015). 1 Under a presidential administration such as #45’s, where women are physically, emotionally, socially and legally (i.e. Title IX) under threat, the question remains: In what safe spaces are Black women capable of flourishing? If we really understood the genius of Dean Lucy Diggs Slowe, named the 20th century’s most significant force in the higher education of African American women in the United States, we would have an answer.

1 Pushout is described when a student leaves their school before graduation, through the encouragement of the school. Overpoliced is described as the increased exclusionary and punitive discipline practices in US schools that impact student achievement. Black girls receive more severe sentences when they enter the juvenile justice system than do members of any other group of girls. Underprotected describes the little to nonexistent avenues Black girls have in facing issues of pushout and overpoliced.
Slowe was a gift given to a generation of women, a culture of people and the institution of education who transcended simple teaching and learning, but also truly embodied the spirit of “service to all mankind.” Just one year after starting her tenure as the dean of women at Howard University in 1922, Slowe set out to chart a course and develop a model where “Negro women [would] be prepared [and protected] for making their contribution to the problems of the world” (p. 353). Inspired by her own courageous and ambitious life experiences, her goals for women at Howard encompassed collaborating, empowering and developing citizens for a better future. This essay examines the important contribution Lucy Diggs Slowe, known as the most influential women in women’s higher education, made in the field.

**Pioneer**

...orphaned at age six, cosigned to a status of inferiority because of her race, relegated to a substandard educational system, and possessed with a strong streak of obstinacy... as if by an unexplained force – [she] became a leader in nearly everything she touched.

Miller and Pruitt-Logan (2012 p. 345)

Like many, I first came to know about Dean Lucy Diggs Slowe because of her reputation. It is a widespread belief that her work, dedication and ambition spanned and echoed across color and gender lines, making her a force for human good.

Born in Berryville, VA, in 1885 to Henry and Fannie Porter Slowe but later orphaned before she turned six, Lucy grew up with her aunt Martha Price in Lexington, VA. By the time she was a teenager, her family had moved to Baltimore, MD, where at every turn, she demonstrated academic excellence. An outspoken, bright and innovative young woman, by 1904, Slowe graduated as salutatorian from Baltimore Colored High School and was the first in her class to receive a scholarship to attend Howard University. At Howard University,
with a concentration in English, she was an avid reader, holding high-level student leadership and university administrative positions.

Slowe became a pioneer in the field of education, giving birth to quintessential models of learning as an educator in Baltimore in 1908 before returning to Washington, D.C., creating and leading as a principal in the District’s first junior high school in 1915 after attaining an M.A. in English from Columbia University. Yet her next journey back home to Howard University as the first dean of women in 1922 would set the bar for her accomplishments.

While Slowe attended Howard, the rise of the Women’s Suffrage Movement was underway, and Slowe perfected her ability to lead, learn and envision a better quality of education for Black women. Ethel Hedgeman had been searching for a way to “awaken college-bred Negroes to the fact that they are privileged and have a duty to use the torch which they have been given to lighten a people’s darkness,” and Slowe manifested that plan. At Howard University, operating within a male-controlled and centered institution, for 15 years, Slowe sacrificed and set out to “develop the individual.” In her first year alone, she formulated a blueprint for the ideal college woman, the intellectual level of academic achievement and a “spiritual level she called the soul – the indefinable and intangible thing” to reach before graduating (Miller and Pruitt-Logan, 2012, p. 143).

The Women’s Cooperative Council

When Dean Slowe assumed her function at Howard University she was given a skiff to sail an untried sea without chart or compass. (p. 10)
-- Kelly Miller, Howard University Dean of Arts and Sciences (1937)

Dean Slowe’s desire to bring women together upon her arrival at Howard University was at the top of her agenda. As the co-founder of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the National Association of College Women and the Association of Advisors for Women in Colored Schools (for which she served as first president for several years), the first national
president of the National Association of University Women and as the new dean of women, serving on over 13 committees at Howard University she continued with that vision to once again assemble a network of women.

As a strong believer in gathering women to share knowledge, garnering resources and building collaboration, “[s]he called all women members of the faculty, she called wives of all male faculty members, and she called the wives of all university administrators … [asking] them to join her for a conference on the conditions affecting women students at their university” (Miller and Pruitt-Logan, 2012, p. 101). In doing so, she formed the Women’s Cooperative Council with the goal of meeting once each month and addressing all matters affecting women at Howard. The council exemplified unity and a commitment to uplift women on the campus.

This governing body dealt with social activities on campus and created a safe learning and living environment for the students. The purpose of this body was to generate fruitful constructive thinking related to the problems that naturally arose. This network would branch out into service, governing and administrative bodies serving not just the women at Howard but the entire campus community.

The Women’s League

The great question before college administrators today is whether or not the curricula… [and] those who formulate the policies of higher institutions of learning where Negro women study, surveyed our changed modern life and consciously attempted to prepare Negro College Women for intelligent participation and leadership in it? (p. 354)

-- Dean Lucy Diggs Slowe (1933)

Dean Slowe’s vision of the Women’s League at Howard University was that it “was designed to safeguard and promote the interests of women of the University. . . . The League shall be the governing organ in all matters pertaining to the Women of the University” (Miller and Pruitt-Logan, 2012, p. 106). Its work would be to set aside and determine new
demands for racial and sexual equality. As a force for good, “[e]very woman student of Howard University by virtue of her connection with the institution automatically becomes a member of the Women’s League.”

Over the years, the Women’s League presented women with opportunities to shadow female leaders and to exhibit and model leadership skills. As a college senior and president of the Women’s League, Lucimarian Roberts (2012) “was asked to sit on one side of Mrs. Roosevelt . . . [She] remembered being impressed. . . . But only in retrospect [did she] realize just how blessed [she] was to have had that opportunity.” Later on, she would become the first woman to serve as the president of the Mississippi Coast Coliseum Commission, chairwoman of the Mississippi State Board of Education and director of the Mississippi Power Company.

Lucy Diggs Slowe encountered and overcame friction with President Johnson over her support for women. The Women’s League would send student representatives to external meetings such as the National Student Federation of America and the New Windsor Conference on International Relations to be exposed to different ideas. Slowe’s vision of providing Black college women with opportunities to exercise power in a world that deemed them powerless, especially over their own realities, was revolutionary. The league was “a strategic instrument for saturating women students with the principles and qualities she regarded as critical for an educated African-American college woman” (Miller and Pruitt-Logan, 2012, p. 104).

Throughout the 1930s, she continued to spearhead progress for African-Americans on college campuses, lobbying for changes in academic standards for students, better health conditions on campuses and an improved workplace atmosphere for female administrators. Slowe later established the Christmas Vesper Candlelight Service in Rankin Chapel in 1922 as a spiritual revival, the Women’s Loan Fund in 1930 to support needy students and the extension of May Week in 1930 to honor and inspire womanhood.
The annual Women’s Dinner evolved as one of the most memorable of [Dean Slowe’s] traditions. Designed to bring together for a festive occasion as many Howard woman as possible—students, staff members, faculty wives, alumnae, and women members of the Board of Trustees—she hoped that all these groups would be encouraged to cooperate in a concentrated effort to promote the welfare of women students. (Miller and Pruitt-Logan, 2012, p. 102)

For Slowe, the difficulties of working at Howard University were no different than those of Black women studying at Howard or living in America. In an exchange between Dean Slowe and a professor accused of sexual harassment by a student, Clarence Mills, head of the Department of Romance Languages, Mills stated, “I wonder do you realize that many of these same girls, who are so incensed over some vulgarity I am supposed to have uttered, will leave you in order to spend a whole evening in a cat house [brothel] with some of the very members of the Student Council” (Miller and Pruitt-Logan, 2012, p. 135). The brutal attacks on Dean Slowe’s position and the integrity of Howard women mirrored the blanket of stigma, inferiority, immorality and shame that extended from America’s enslavement narrative. To deal with such shame, along with building up the values of unity, Slowe organized for the women at Howard an annual dinner focused on welfare and empowerment. With its culture and atmosphere that centered on women, it was a must-attend event on campus. Every first Friday in November (2012), “The annual Women’s Dinner evolved as one of the most memorable of [Dean Slowe’s] traditions. (Miller and Pruitt-Logan, 2012, p. 102).”

Despite the presence of men, hundreds of college women and graduates gathered to connect, share experience, inspire, empower and ultimately elevate and celebrate each other’s unique and wonderful achievements. At a time such as this, Slowe deeply understood that Black women weren’t encouraged to attend college and were outnumbered, oversexualized and overworked. Page 4 of the Indianapolis Recorder (1936) in bold would report,
Four Hundred Attend Fifteenth Annual Women’s Dinner at Howard University… The Chairman of the Dinner Committee, Miss Pearl Walker presided… Among the features of the evening were the appearance of Anne Wiggins Brown, one of the stars in Porgy and Bess… Since this was the Fifteenth Anniversary of the administration of Dean Slowe, the woman students showed their appreciation for her work by presenting her with a gold wrist watch… the men of the University… presented Dean Slowe with a loving cup containing the following inscription. ‘To Lucy D. Slowe For Service Rendered to the University Community From the Men of Howard.

Over the years, the Women’s Dinner expanded into an inspirational platform to address issues of inequality and success among women and became an opportunity for self-determination and leadership development with such positions as chairman and committee leaders for undergraduate students. The Women’s Dinner became a long-standing institutional landmark that honored women as women. Little did they all know that the Women’s Dinner of October 1937 would be Slowe’s last before she passed away from cancer.

An Everlasting Blueprint

HU Women are bulwarks of church and community salvages; they are founding builders of club and business enterprises. And, thankfully, they are keepers of the flame who pass on the virtues and strengths alive in the continuing generations of Howard University peoplehood.

Eleanor Traylor, Ph.D. (Howard Magazine, 2016)

Dean Slowe’s blueprint for sustaining the success of Black women in higher education in just one year created a pillar in her long-standing legacy. After her first year, for 15 consecutive years, she continued to pave ways and establish trails not just for women but for all mankind. Slowe relentlessly believed that women had a right to earn a college education and become self-governed and self-determined individuals.

When Slowe graduated with an A.B. degree in English from Howard University, where more men were enrolled than women, she was one of eleven women. Yet today, female undergraduate students account for 67% (4,641) of the Howard University
undergraduate student population (College Factual, 2015). From the fall 2016 edition of the Howard Magazine *The Howard Woman*, we see how Slowe paved the way for graduates such as Dr. Marjorie Lee Brown, the first African-American women to receive a Ph.D in mathematics; Noble Prize winning writer Toni Morrison; renowned artist Elizabeth Catlett; classicist Carrie Cowherd, Ph.D; Tony Award winning actress Phylicia Rashad; Senator Kamala Harris; Founder and Chairperson of Radio One Cathy Hughes; sociologist and past interim president of Howard University, Joyce A. Ladner, Ph.D; the first African-American female doctor to receive a medical patent, Dr. Patricia Bath and many other dynamic Howard women. For women at Howard University, unlike majoring in just Teaching and English in the 1900s, “the most popular majors for Fall 2016 incoming class of women, in rank order were: biology, political science, psychology, marketing, international business, nursing, media/journalism & film, journalism” (Howard Magazine, 2016, p.14). When it comes to key leadership positions, while women make up only one-third of deans nationally, at Howard University, 6 of the 13 academic deans are women, and more than half of the administrative cabinet is made up of women (Howard Magazine, 2016, p.36). The legacy of Howard Women’s Dean Slowe continues to shine.

At her funeral, students echoed, “We cannot say of her all that is in our hearts to say. . . . She is a part of Howard and will live forever within these walls” (Miller and Pruitt-Logan, 2012, p. 327). The impact of Slowe’s leadership will forever be credited with creating an intellectual haven.

**References**


Howard University (1936) Four Hundred Attend Fifteenth Annual Women’s Dinner At Howard University. *Indianapolis Recorder*, Marion County.


**ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR**

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Sisters Under the Skin: The Influence of Colorism on African American Women in Literature

Evelyn Shepherd-Wynn

“A whim of faith had set their paths far apart but just the same they were more than ‘sisters under the skin.’ They were really closely connected in blood, in racial condition, in common suffering.” (Jesse Redmon Fauset, Plum Bun: A Novel Without a Moral, pp. 340-341)

African American women authors have had a phenomenal impact on the American cultural, political, historical and literary landscapes, spanning from the Harlem Renaissance to the late twentieth century. Although the literature that African American women authors produced was ignored by the mainstream literary world in early twentieth century, they made tremendous contributions to the betterment and understanding of the African American woman’s experience. By courageously examining cultural and political trials, sharing personal obstacles, and resisting a patriarchal society, African American women authors brought the African American woman’s experiences front and center. In Reading Black, Reading Feminist, Henry Louis Gates Jr. maintains that “[w]hat unites these texts, what makes them cohere into that imaginary metatext we call a tradition, is their shared structures and common themes” (5). African American women authors have examined a number of common themes including race, sex, class, gender, oppression, violence, good vs evil, slavery, community, and spirituality. However, some of the themes examined by African American women authors that seem to get at the heart of many problems within the black community are issues concerning skin color, also referred to as colorism.

African American author Alice Walker is credited for coining the term colorism in her book In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens (1983). In the essay, “If the Present Looks Like the Past, What Does the Future Look Like?” Walker defines colorism as a “prejudicial
or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their color” (291). Walker addresses the divide within the black community by discussing the division among lighter and darker-skinned African American women. Specifically, she focuses on how lighter-skinned women, unintentionally and unknowingly, offend darker-skinned women:

What black women would be interested in, I think, is a consciously heightened awareness on the part of light black women that they are capable, often quite unconsciously, of inflicting pain upon them; and that unless the question of Colorism—in my definition, prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their color—is addressed in our communities and definitely in our black “sisterhoods” we cannot, as a people, progress. For colorism, like colonialism, sexism, and racism, impedes us.

(291)

Walker concludes by discussing how the two groups of women should be more sensitive towards each other. In addition to Walker’s definition, Berry defines colorism as prejudicial treatment of individuals, especially African Americans, based on their skin color and other distinguishing characteristics such as hair texture, lip shape, nose shape, eye shape, and eye color (147). Both definitions guide the examination of colorism in this essay. It is also important to point out that the terms colorism and skin color are used interchangeably.

Considerable scholarship has been devoted to examining how the black community privileges lighter-skinned women. Since slavery, colorism or skin color has been used as a means of stratifying African American women, creating a divide that encourages separation and preferential treatment within the black community. Hall argues that the black community is still functioning as if it is still enslaved when it comes to skin color. He explains that colorism is embedded in the social, cultural and political framework within the black community and that they have been perpetuated by skin color due to slavery. Scholars argue that colorism or skin color stratification among African Americans during the Jim
Crow era was overt and intense because “skin color became a criterion for the attainment of prestige in the African-American community” (Wade, p. 359). Because skin color stratification was so blatant, African American social scientists began examining how colorism impacted the social class of the black community.

Anna Julia Cooper (1892) and W. E. B. DuBois (1903) were among the first African American scholars to make note of colorism and to point out that there was a skin color stratification within black communities. Other scholars such as Drake and Cayton (1945), E. Franklin Frazier (1957), Gunnar Myrdal (1944), Charles Parish (1946), and Frantz Fanon (1952) further examined skin color stratification (Herring et al., 1991; Seltzer & Smith, 1991). As the Black Power and Civil Rights movements encouraged racial consciousness and black pride in the 1960s, they presented a strong resistance against the ideological views of race and color, particularly rejecting anything light or close to European as superior. As a result, the “Black is Beautiful” slogan was born, embracing darker skin and natural hair. Although the Black is Beautiful” slogan emerged and infused throughout the United States, the presence of colorism and its stratification remains in the black community. Consequently, scholars continue to research the color divide within the black community (Coard, Breland, & Raskin, 2001; Falconer & Neville, 2000; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992; Parks & Woodson, 2002; Pearson-Trammell, 2010).

In the literary arena, African American women authors have examined colorism in their literature. Thus, the purpose of this essay is to examine the influence of colorism on African American women’s racial identity in the literature of three prolific African American female authors: Jesse Redmon Fauset’s Plum Bun: A Novel Without a Moral (1929), Gwendolyn Brooks’s Maud Martha (1953), and Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye (1970). While there are other texts that reflect similar depictions of African American women, these texts were selected because they show over a time period how African American women in literature have been impacted by colorism.
Examining the influential work of Jesse Redmon Fauset ‘s *Plum Bun: A Novel Without a Moral* (1929) is most appropriate for a starting point to examine the portrayal of lighter-skinned and darker-skinned women, especially since her work is representative of the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance. Fauset is often referred to as the midwife of the Harlem Renaissance because she spent much of her time as editor of the *Crisis* magazine where she edited and promoted the works of many prominent figures of the Harlem Renaissance such as Claude McKay, Langston Hughes and Jean Toomer (McDowell, pp. ix-x). At the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance, Fauset wrote *Plum Bun: A Novel Without a Moral* where she tells of the conflict between two sisters, Angela Murray and Virginia (Jinny) Murray, because of the color of their skin.

Born to parents, Junius and Mattie, Fauset immediately points out the difference between the parents’ skin color. Angela, who is fair-skinned ‘had received . . . her mother’s creamy complexion and her soft cloudy, chestnut hair, often passed with her mother on Saturday excursions enjoying the nice hotels and restaurants uptown. Meanwhile, Virginia, who is dark-skinned like her father, spends her time with her him on Saturdays. The sisters do not appear to be divided by colorism until their parents die. Afterwards, Angela decides to move to New York to pass as white with no regards for her sister. She declares:

Why should I shut myself off from all the things I want more, —clever people, people who do things, Art, — “ . . . —“travel and a lot of things which are in the world for everybody really but which only white people, as far as I can see, get their hands on. I mean scholarships and special funds, patronage. Oh Jinny, you don’t know, I don’t think you can understand the things I want to see and know. You’re not like me—— “(78).

Jinny responds explaining, “I don’t know why I’m not,” . . . “After all, the same blood flows in my veins and in the same proportion. . . .” (79). It is clear that Fauset sets up Angela as a typical passing character that suffers from her strain of black blood. Without any concern
or compassion for her sister, Angela resolves that whiteness is a blessing that can offer her security, marriage, and economic status; things that her sister Virginia could never dream of because of her darker skin.

As the novel progresses, Jinny travels to New York to visit Angela who now calls herself Angele. However, when Angela arrives at the train station she bumps into Roger, her white boyfriend who hates blacks. Fauset writes: “What was she doing there? Waiting for her sister Jinny who was coloured and who showed it. And Roger hated Negroes” (p. 157). When Jinny arrives she sees Angela, stands beside her and asks a question that was part of a game when they were girls, “I beg your pardon, but isn’t this Mrs. Henrietta Jones?” Angela’s response was as it was when they were young girls, “No, I’m not Mrs. Jones” (p. 195). Jinny knew that Angela had disowned her because of Roger; therefore, she quickly walks away and enters a telephone booth. Although the sisters do connect later in the novel, Jinny remains in New York and becomes successful while Angela is entrapped by a patriarchal relationship and an unhappy sequence of life events. Scholars argue that Angela uses her color to escape to a “better” life, but does not understand that rejecting her race and the people that she love is not worth the sacrifice while Jinny embraces her color and leads a healthy prosperous life; one that Angela had argued, “Oh Jinny, you don’t know, I don’t think you can understand the things I want to see and know” (p. 78).

Two decades after the publication of *Plum Bun*, Gwendolyn Brooks changed the trajectory of Black literature when she placed the character Maud Martha, a dark-skinned female, at the center of her novella, *Maud Martha* (1953). Although the novella is semiautobiographical, Brooks did not experience the same problems and issues as the fictional character, Maud Martha; however, Brooks experienced the effects of colorism especially while in high school. During high school, Brooks explained, that skin color and hair texture are indicative of beauty and admiration. Consequently, a dark-skinned girl like
herself was never considered beautiful or popular. In a 1987 interview, *Conversations with Gwendolyn Brooks*, by Gloria Wade Gales, Brooks explains that *Maud Martha* was:

a lovely little novel about a lovely little person, wrestling with the threads of her milieu. Of course this “lovely little person” was the essence of myself, or aspects of myself, . . . . The novel is very funny, very often! – and not at all disappointing, even though my heroine was never raped, did not become a lady of the evening, did not enter the world of welfare mothers [. . . ], did not murder the woman who stepped on her toe in the bus.

In thirty-four brief chapters, Brooks’s *Maud Martha* tells the story of a black girl who is marred by the preference afforded to her lighter-skinned sister Helen, during the 1930s and 40s. As the darker sibling, Maud Martha Brown knows that her sister is highly favored. The dynamics of their relationship greatly impacts Maud’s identity. Even though Maud loves and cares for her father deeply, she is deeply hurt to hear her parents openly express their favoritism for Helen. Brooks writes:

Their father preferred Helen’s hair to Maud Martha’s (Maud Martha knew), which impressed him, not with its length and body, but simply with its apparent untamableness; for he would never get over that zeal of his for order in all things, in grooming, in human relationships. Always he had worried about Helen’s homework, Helen’s health. (p. 37)

The family’s preference for Helen is a clear example of skin color stratification. This is further illustrated when Maud walks home with Helen, and a black boy named Emmanuel sends out an invitation for a wagon ride. Maud quickly realizes that the invitation is for Helen when Emmanuel replies, “I don’t mean you, you old black gal” (34). Black men’s preference for a white or lighter-skinned black girl instead of a darker skin black girl is one that has been traditionally examined. Emmanuel devalues the black experience by negating encounters with darker-skinned black girls. Emmanuel’s response is one that Maud lives
with throughout her life even with her husband who is lighter-skinned and tends to prefer lighter-skinned women.

Throughout the novella, Maud Martha embraces her black beauty and her “long” nappy hair that is a motif allegorized as a distinctive quality that rejects the stereotypes set in place by Eurocentric ideologies that favor white women’s skin color and straight hair. Confronted with racism and colorism, Maud Martha, a simple ordinary little girl that grows up to be a simple ordinary woman, fights against all odds because all she wants is to be cherished. Brooks asserts:

To be cherished was the dearest wish of the heart of Maud Martha Brown, and sometimes when she was not looking at dandelions . . . it was hard to believe that a thing of only ordinary allurements—if the allurements of any flower could be said to be ordinary—was as easy to love as a thing of heart-catching beauty” (2).

By the close of the novel, although Maud has faced humiliating circumstances and encounters throughout the novella, she embraces a concept of beauty that is embodied within her soul. Maud is a dark-skinned mature woman who is preparing to have a second child. Brooks writes, “But the sun was shining, and some of the people in the world had been left alive, . . . . And was not this something to be thankful for?” (179).

In 1970, approximately ten years after the publication of Maud Martha, Toni Morrison published her first novel The Bluest Eye. Here, Morrison begins her exploration of colorism and identity formation in The Bluest Eye. Morrison’s protagonist is a young eleven-year-old African American girl who struggles with racial identity as she believes that the only way that she can become beautiful is to acquire blue eyes. Set in Lorain, Ohio during the early 1940s, Pecola Breedlove admires European features such as white, blonde hair and blue eyes; all European features comparable to Shirley Temple’s. Temple, a 1930s child star, was portrayed as the epitome of childhood goodness and a beacon of hope for the
future of America with Eurocentric physical qualities: white skin, blues eyes, and goldie-locked hair. Therefore, Pecola believes that possessing blue eyes is the only feature that can make her beautiful. She is clearly a victim of colorism as she idolizes the features of whiteness, blond hair, and especially blue eyes.

Smith argues that Morrison’s novel “. . . illustrates the destructive potential of a culture that recognizes only one standard of physical beauty” (274). In an attempt to be loved by the black community—her parents, her schoolmates, her teachers, and her friends—Pecola believes that the attainment of blue eyes will make her beautiful, thereby earning their love and acceptance.

Allowing a character like Pecola to exist helps contextualize colorism in African American girls. In this novel skin color and eye color prominently drive the plot. In “A Study of Black Feminism and Womanism” in Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye, Alice Walker contends that Pecola’s . . . blackness and her darker skin is doubly pressed and victimized . . . [s]he [is] pressed by a white racist society due to her black race, but . . . . [s]he is victimized within her own black community due to her darker skin. Thus the blackness of her skin gradually disgusts her and leads her to embrace white beauty standards. (qtd. in Kohzadi, Azizmohammadi, & Afrougheh, 1307)

In Violence and Trauma as Constitutive Elements in Racial Identity Formation (2007), Kim points out that Pecola’s struggle with forming her identity is an example of what happens when “one’s racial designation shapes one’s psyche or racialized identity” (78). In the case of Pecola, she is a victim of schizophrenia, her inability to identify with her black features is the cause of her insanity. In a sense, the community assigns Pecola the role of a scapegoat in order to avoid a sense of their own victimization. In “Self, Society, and Myth in Toni Morrison’s Fiction,” Davies argues that Pecola “is the epitome of the victim in a world that reduces people to objects and then makes them feel inferior to objects” (360).
Although colorism was a divisive topic for African American women during the twentieth century, African American women authors chose to address the topic in their literature to assign it a name and a face—a Jinny Murray, a Maud Martha, a Pecola Breedlove. These characters depict many of the feelings and circumstances darker-skinned African American women experience, thereby opening the topic for intellectual discourse. Nevertheless, the problems surrounding colorism continue to be a divisive and painful topic into the twenty-first century. However, colorism is being addressed more openly in the twenty-first century than in the past. Some African Americans have begun to rethink and question their definition of beauty, and many are advocating and demanding a fairer and unbiased treatment towards darker-skinned African Americans in regards to education, employment, etc. The color stratification that values lighter-skinned complexions over darker-skinned African Americans certainly cannot be erased overnight because it is deeply rooted; however, there are signs that colorism is being addressed in a more positive light.

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King’s Six Principles of Non-Violence: an Antidote to Youth Violence Today

Rev. Deborah Finley-Jackson

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed that the only way to fight collective evil in our world was through the practice of nonviolence. This practice was based on his own understanding of the work of Jesus Christ as well as his study of Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian liberator.

In this paper, I propose that due to our children’s exposure to violence daily, their ability to respond to societal ills is compromised. Because of their learned acceptance of violence, they are in danger of being ill-equipped to make positive changes in their world. In fact, their outlook on life will be skewed to the point that they will have great difficulty in forming healthy relationships. I believe that Christian principles speak to living lives of peace, and that by following Dr. King’s 6 Principles of Nonviolence, we can not only offer an antidote to our violent society, but we can encourage our children to take responsibility for themselves and the world around them.

Statistics on Violence and Children

We live in such a violent society, watching the news becomes a stressful, difficult experience. Michael Moore reported in his documentary, “Bowling for Columbine” that America reports crime most often on its news programs, while other countries, particularly Canada tend to report community activities, government policies, thereby taking the focus off criminal activity. The fact is that we have been at war since 9/11. Much like those of us who lived through the Viet Nam era, today’s children are watching bombing, injured and dying people on their televisions each night. Unfortunately for them, they do not have the voice of Dr. King and other war protestors as a backdrop to offset the disgusting scenes of violence that become a part of their psyches.
In addition to the scenes on the news that offer our children violence each night, programming during family TV time includes shows that are violent as well. Police dramas, reality shows are most popular these days. Video games that the children play are filled with blood, gore, and atrocity. The music and music videos offer violent words and scenes that are often degrading to women. As we drive our children to school, they are exposed to billboards that use pictures highlighting violent life styles.

Violence has become a way of life in America. Industry declares that it is supplying a demand. Manufacturers, producers, media moguls all project their decision to use violence for profit as merely giving people what they want.

As we spend our waking lives exposed to high levels of violence, our approach to life is shaped, changed, affected. Our norms include tolerance for violence. Our youth are unable to see the dangers of violent behavior in real life, because in the media world, the “winner” comes out fine in the end. The perception is that violence does not have a real or final consequence.

Children in America spend more time watching television than they spend in school. One set of statistics report an average of 3.5 hours per day (Dietz WH, Strasburger VC). Much of what the children watch is of a violent nature. 70% of children’s programming contains violence in some form, with an average of fourteen violent interchanges in every hour (Wilson 2008). Barbara Wilson reports that watching television violence influences the children.

“…Studies have found that frequent viewers of television, no matter what their age, see the world as a more dangerous place and are more frightened of being a victim of violence than infrequent viewers are. Most of the evidence is correlational, but a few experiments using control groups show that repeated exposure to television violence increases people’s fear of victimization” (Wilson, 2008).

Video games are increasingly violent as well. And because of the intensity with which
children focus on these games their exposure to and aftereffects of violence are increased. “The study revealed that students who played violent video games early in the school year engaged in significantly increased physical aggression and hostile attributions several months later” (Wilson, 2008).

Violence and crime in our communities is on the rise. In 2006, an article in the Urban Review reported the statistics of violence and youth. It was found that 74% of youth in one sample had seen violent acts; that 48% had been hurt violently. 81% knew someone who had been hurt by gun violence, and 75% knew someone hurt by other forms of violence. “These reported levels of exposure to violence led the program researcher to write: The frequency of some of the most serious forms of violence that was reported (for example, hearing gunshots, knowing people shot or stabbed, witnessing threats of violence with guns or knives and being stabbed themselves) is, quite frankly, chilling” (Reichert, September 2006).

**Effects of Violence on our Children**

How does this violence impact on our children? Is there a connection to what the children see and experience and their behavior? What does research show in this area? A study was done to classify high school students’ academic success levels. The researchers looked at different areas, including connections with family, teachers, peers; self-efficacy; motivation; exposure to indirect and direct violence; stress; and health status. The report indicated that the students who had been exposed to violence were the most vulnerable to academic failure and retention (Reichert, September 2006).

From the time the hip hop culture began, along with the advanced violence on television and video games, parents and community members have believed that there was a connection between children’s exposure to violence and their behavior. The educational, medical, and governmental fields have researched this connection.

According to one article, there is no doubt that there is a connection in observed, experienced violence and behavior. “The most recent thorough review of the research on media violence,
by an expert panel convened by the U.S. surgeon general, concluded, ‘Research on violent television and films, video games, and music reveals unequivocal evidence that media violence increases the likelihood of aggressive and violent behavior in both immediate and long-term contexts.’ Hundreds of original empirical studies of the link between media violence and aggression have been conducted, and numerous reviews of those studies—both narrative and statistical—have come to the same conclusion” (Escobar-Chaves, SPRING 2008).

**Scriptural support for a nonviolent ethic**

What does scripture say about these alarming statistics? One example that can be looked to is found in Matthew 5:38-41, where Jesus teaches about retaliation to evil. Rather than taking “an eye for an eye”, he admonishes the people to “turn the other cheek” when struck. In his radical exegesis of this text, Obery Hendricks, finds that this often-quoted scripture was used as a call for equality and self-determination. “Thus, turning the other cheek made a bold statement of the equality of humanity and self-worth. Even if those who were dominated were struck again, it was on their own terms; they had dictated the action. In the sense that the one striking and the one being struck were now both active participants in the act, they had become equals. In a word, turning the other cheek was an act of self-determination.” (Hendricks, 2006)

Hendricks also lifts up the portion of the sermon on the Beatitudes, Blessed are the Peacemakers, as a call for a world where people seek to make the world a place of peace. “Blessed are the peacemakers. He did not say, blessed are the peacekeepers”; he did not bless those whose primary goal was to keep the peace, to maintain the status quo without regard for justice or equity. No. The ones that Jesus explicitly blessed were the peacemakers, those who actively strove to cleanse the world of oppression and exploitation in order to make a reality where true peace can reign for all” (Hendricks, 2006).

These scriptures leave us with a call to fight injustice in a peacemaking way, in ways that
affirm humanity. They affirm a value of peaceful protest and non-violent response to evil. For the purposes of this paper, the working definition of nonviolence that we will use comes from Walter Wink, as quoted in Obery Hendrick’s book, *The Politics of Jesus*:

“…passive resistance which is also called nonviolence…a commitment to respect the sacredness of each person, whatever their class or role, while maintaining a resolute determination no overcome all forms of domination (Hendricks, 2006).

In the scriptures, we have a foundation from which to work as we address the violence in our children’s lives. We are called to be peacemakers and to help them develop into the same. We are challenged to find our own self determination and equality by “turning the other cheek” and passively resisting evil. If our children are left to view the violence in our society without any antidote to it, they will not have the tools they need to fulfill either of these two foundational ideas. And as they become adults, and Dr. King’s work becomes ancient history, in what kind of world will our children live?

**King’s Six Principles of Nonviolence**

During his work in the civil rights movement of the mid fifties to early sixties Dr. King developed “Six Principles of Nonviolence” as a training method for those who were willing to enter the fight for freedom from segregation. These principles can be formed into a curriculum to be used in school to combat the effects of the violence that our children are faced with each day. It’s clear from the statistics quoted in the beginning of this paper, that a problem exists for our children, and therefore in our schools which must be addressed. The omnipresence of violence in our society has an impact on parents in our society that although they mean to protect their children, they are encouraging them to participate in the violence. For example, because we hear so many horror stories of violence in our schools, including physical and cyber bullying, many parents are fearful when they send their children outside of the house. Thinking that they are helping their children survive being bullied
outside, many parents tell their children that if they are hit by anyone to hit them back. This is always in direct opposition to what schools teach the children. They are told to tell, not to hit back. But because students feel victimized, they often take matters into their own hands. Schools and teachers also participate in violence with children to bring order in schools. Institutions harshly punish students who exhibit negative behaviors, especially fighting. Since Columbine, many schools have instituted a “zero tolerance policy” for aggressive behavior. Children who misbehave are threatened, isolated, and suspended as school seeks to control the students. Zero tolerance means that there are no excuses, or explanations and consequences are meted out without discussion. While these policies might serve a temporary fix, they do not empower the students to see life through a different lens. The punishment usually fosters more anger that will be acted out later. This continues the cycle of violence and while children might be controlled, they are not empowered to change their behavior. Practicing Dr. King’s Principles of Nonviolence could be a more effective way to counteract the violent nature of life today.

Principle 1 – Nonviolence is the way of the strong.

Nonviolence is not a cowardly act avoiding conflict. It is a method that demands the courage to resist evil with love and not hate. When parents request that their children hit back, it is because they are afraid their children will be taken advantage of. Teaching this principle will help children understand that if they avoid fighting, they are not “punks” or “chicken”, but are showing a great amount of strength. Teaching this principle would connect our children with their inner spirit and provide them with a strength that is more powerful than their fists. “In the year 2003, the city of Philadelphia lost approximately twenty-eight school age children to violence. Violence that might have been prevented if only children had been taught the basic concept of not retaliating, rather than “hitting back is okay if one is hit first (Davis, 2006).
Principle 2 – The goal of nonviolence is reconciliation not retaliation.

Nonviolence’s goal is redemptive and seeks to win over opponents in love and welcoming. It is inclusive and not exclusive. Much of the violence that children watch on television and in movies is portrayed as justified. Superheroes use violence to make the world a better place. Police use violence to get the criminals. Cartoon characters beat up the bad guys. Our children have learned that sometimes, violence is warranted. In the school context, where punishment is meted out for each infraction without discussion, this idea is reinforced. The teacher knows best, so the “bad” kids get punished. Principle 2 allows children to see it another way. It is the goal of educators to teach in a safe, secure environment. How much better it would be to have battling students come to reconciliation rather than an enforced truce? This Principle can be met as we allow students in conflict to have conversation with each other along with a mediator to help sort things out. When we get children to see each other’s point of view, the conflict is resolved for good, not put on hold for a later eruption.

Principle 3 – Nonviolence is directed against the evil, not against persons.

People are not defined by their behavior. Nonviolence seeks to dispel the force of evil, which overtakes people, therefore, methods of nonviolence are never personal attacks. When children’s conflict can be resolved without blame, participants walk away feeling validated. The behavior is seen as wrong, not the person. For youth who have committed an anti-social behavior, this principle allows them to hold on to their dignity and self-worth.

This Principle was tested in a very personal way for me in a situation I faced as a New York public school teacher. One of my students had a fight in the classroom and was suspended. I had to go to a suspension hearing. There was a mediator who “charged” my student. I had to give testimony as the “witness” against him. I had worked all year to build up trust with this student and I was now in position of testifying against him in a court-like atmosphere. When it was over, the suspension held and was entered on his school record. After feeling
very uncomfortable for a few days, I knew I had to have a conversation with the student and his mother. I let them each know that although I did participate in the hearing, I didn’t agree with it. I gave my word to continue to work with each of them so that my student could end the year on a positive note. While I understand that the school must discipline the students, in this case and most like it, the discipline needs to be followed up with conversation so that the student walks away feeling like a human being and not a “perp”.

In an article by Erik K. Larsen and Jeff Lok, an intervention is described where a high school student who cursed at a teacher has a conversation with another teacher who finds out that the student is angry because he witnessed his girlfriend being slapped by her father. By the end of the conversation, the student understands that he took his anger out on the teacher and is willing to apologize (Larsen, 2008). Instead of being suspended, this nonviolent teaching technique allowed the student to be separated from his wrongdoing.

**Principle 4 – Nonviolence relies on the redemptive power of unmerited suffering.**

This theological principle is based on the model of Jesus Christ. There is a spiritual power that those who voluntarily suffer for others receive. This power boosts the tolerance level in the battle against evil. I think that of the 6 Principles, this is the most difficult to express in today’s world. We now live in a “feel-good, microwave, material” society that values quantity, not quality. We don’t think we should have even a moment of discomfort, as can be seen on the numerous television ads for medications. But if we are successful in our sanctuaries and our classrooms to teach this principle, our children will begin to understand that they can take the high road and refuse to repay evil with evil. Even when we think we’re right, violence leaves us with a bad taste. When we resist the temptation to retaliate and accept the suffering, we are left guilt free. It becomes obvious that we are not in the wrong.

**Principle 5 – The Universe is on the side of Justice**

This gives the practitioner of nonviolence inspiration to know that in the end, there is justice;
it increases faith that the methods will be victorious, and that the work is worth it. – In history, we find that oppressed people after a period, always rise to defeat their oppressors. Dr. King said it this way in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail - “Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro.” If we can impart this idea to our children, that there is a universal good that is worth working towards, they will be able to leave violence behind them; they will be on the side of this universal good, or God, depending on their spiritual context. Nonviolence seeks justice, not victory. To teach this principle, we need to draw on the children’s natural interest in “fairness”, and follow up with lessons on looking at situations objectively to find the just position. Nonviolence calls for justice in the world.

Principle 6 – At the center of nonviolence is agape

“He [King] defined agape as “understanding, redeeming goodwill for all persons.” It is a purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless love…a New Testament love” (Roberts, 2005). We practice nonviolence because we believe in love and not hate. What better antidote to the violent scenes that are in our children’s heads than love? As we discuss this kind of love that transcends all division, separation, hierarchy, comparison, etc., our children will begin to see the value of loving themselves and their neighbors. This principle points the children away from violence to restoration. Love brings peace, forgiveness, self-esteem, and leaves behind hate, anger, and evil.

Conclusion

Today, young people see Dr. King as the hero that brought about an end of segregation. They don’t know about the principles of nonviolence nor how they can be applied to everyday life. As parents, teachers, and community members, it is our responsibility to see that our children grow up to be healthy, happy, productive individuals. We also want them to have respect for themselves and others. We need to give them tools to use as they negotiate life. Dr. King has developed tools that worked in the past and will work today.
While we might not be able to take the violence away from modern society, we can certainly be more intentional as we teach our children how to live abundantly despite the violence. I believe that the Principles of Nonviolence can be taught as an alternative to what’s going on around us. We can help our children develop personal creeds that will empower them and touch their spirits. And as they grow and develop these tools, they will speak not only to each other in love, but will be able to speak truth to power in love as well.

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**Bridging the Gap between Parental Involvement and the School System**

Mary A. Cooley Liddell

**ABSTRACT**

Parental involvement is a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of the parent to the school and to the student (LaBahn, 1995). When parents are actively involved in their children’s education, they do better in school. Bridging the gap between parental involvement and the school system is essential for the development of all students.

It is important for parents to have a positive attitude regarding education, and to demonstrate trust that their children can do well. When parents become involved, both student and school benefit. Grades and test results are higher, students’ attitudes and behavior are more positive, academic programs are more successful, and the schools, as a whole, are more effective.

Parental involvement is defined as having an awareness of and involvement in schoolwork, understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and student success in schooling, and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about student progress. Parents are regarded as important to student success and to school yet they had not been viewed as integral to increased academic achievement.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) definition of parental involvement, based on the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) standards, defines parental involvement as the
participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school; that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child (NCLB, 2002).

Under NCLB the law states that local educational agency may receive funds only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in programs. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children. Each school served under this part of the law shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents, of participating children a written parental involvement policy. In carrying out the parental involvement requirements local educational agencies and schools, to the extent practicable, shall provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children (NCLB, 2002).

The law requires that parents and school personnel write each parent involvement policy statement together. This requirement allows parents to be at the table with school administrations and educators to help write a policy that addresses how every school, through partnership with parents, will promote the social, emotional, and academic growth of children. This policy is the beginning of the formation of home school partnerships and should address the full range of family and student needs that impact learning.

Parental involvement is recognized as essential not only within the world of education, but by lawmakers as well. According to the eighth U.S. educational goal in Goals 2000,
every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children (Hawes, 2005). Parents are their children’s first and most important teachers. When schools welcome families, establish personal relationship among families and staff, help parents understand how the system work, and encourage family-staff collaboration to improve student achievement, students do better in school, and the schools get better. Children learn best when the adults in their lives work together to encourage and support them.

Parents find it difficult to partnership with the school system, because they do not trust the school or the teachers. The lack of trust and respect can be seen in the growing numbers of parents choosing to enroll their children in private schools or educate them at home (Elbot & Fulton, 2005). So many schools do not have an open door policy allowing parents to visit at any time, and parents who insist on playing an active role in their children’s education are often branded as troublemakers.

So many barriers keep parents from been a part of their children school life. Sometimes, cultural differences can create conflict between parents and teachers. When and if the system become more knowledgeable about the differences and recognize the strengths of families, teachers will develop culturally-sensitive strategies to effectively engage parents in their classrooms and improve the academic achievement of students. It is imperative that the school system place more emphasis on understanding the culture of families, especially when language barriers exist (Keane, 2007). Other barriers that parents are faced with are scheduling conflicts, having other children at home that they are responsible for, and dealing with the workforce in general. Families where caregivers work full-time, where there are multiple children, or where English is not spoken or read well face significant barriers to participation in their children’s education. Ultimately, a school’s culture has far more
influence on life and learning in the schoolhouse than the state department of education, the superintendent, the school board, or even the principal can ever have (Barth, 2001).

The key role that parents and the public play is one of accountability, holding not only the public schools accountable for performance but also themselves accountable for the civic roles they must play in ensuring a quality education for children (Fege, 2006). Everything possible should be done by the school system to encourage the parents to become involved. Schools must be acutely aware of the customs and beliefs of the various populations they service if they are to truly work collaboratively for the benefit of the students (Keane, 2007).

Parent groups are important to any school setting, such as Parents in Action (PiA), the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the Collaborative School Committee (CSC), the School Intervention Team, and Bilingual Parent Group for English Language Students. Parents in Action (PiA) organization is a partnership between parents, the administration and the school, came about as a result of two concerned parents who wanted to make significant contributions to the school on behalf of their children. The two parents were initially involved in the Collaborative School Committee (CSC) charged with helping the school with school improvement, school budget and staffing of the school. Parents suggest what they want and need to do to help themselves, their children and the school. The school then, responds to their support that parents need as suggested by parents for parents and their children. Parents formed the Parents in Action volunteer group, but included the principal, assistant principal, teachers, paraprofessionals and other staff help as needed.

Parents in Action (PiA) help with the staffing of the school when employing new teachers. The committee interviews the candidate and parents ask questions and their
recommendations are highly valued. The ability to make effective decisions is vital to the successful performance of a school administrator. The strategic decision-making approach, views decision choices as taking place in an environment made up of multiple interest groups, conflict, negotiation limited resources, positive authority, and informal power (Gorton & Alston, 2002).

Individuals and groups within the human social system are interdependent and constantly engaged in the dynamic processes of defining and redefining the nature and extent of their interdependence. A key goal of any approach to the management of conflict is to eliminate or reduce to manage the hostility arising from the conflict (Owens, 2004).

School leaders are crucial catalysts for helping members of the school community think and act in more integrated ways. Leading from a mindset of independence creates a healthier school, but has problems of its own. Leading from a framework of interdependence, the principal shares power with those on the staff, parents, and students facilitates collaboration when appropriate, and reinforces that each member is part of the whole.

The principal can also frame how teachers, students, parents relate with the school’s physical space. She promotes healthy collaboration and follow-through without squelching individual initiative and voice. The principal is not the only leader in the school, or the only one whose job it is to promote more integrated ways of thinking and acting. This task also falls on the teacher-leaders, parent-leaders, and even student-leaders. Ultimately, it should fall on all members of the school, whose individual actions, taken together, shape the school culture. The school’s culture, in turn, shapes everyone in it. When all stakeholders understand the importance of collaboration, then and only then will the gap come closer. Effective leaders understand and leverage this dynamic.
Skillful leaders can take a school community through the process of identifying values that the community should hold onto, values, which it needs to let go of, and those new values, which it needs to embrace. Most people resist change, yet appropriate leadership can be the catalyst to move through all changes and also to recognize that building partnerships will be beneficial to everyone. The school leader is the driving force of the school, that leadership will guide the teachers in the direction of emphasizing the importance of parental involvement. Effective educational leaders, according to Leithwood and Riehl, encourage public engagement. They focus attention on key aspects of the school’s vision and communicate that vision clearly and convincingly (Smith & Piele, 2006).

School administrators must demonstrate a personal and professional code of ethics and respect the rights and dignity of all stakeholders as they work to bridge the gap between home and school. Whenever an administrator is faced with a choice, the best and most just decision is the one that results in the best or the greatest benefit for the most people (Owens, 2004).

Parent involvement actually declines, as students grow older, as a result there is less participation in secondary schools than in elementary (Stouffer, 1992). There are many things that can be done to improve parental involvement at the secondary level, but the success of any program will be tied directly to the support and encouragement of the principal (Lewis, 1992). “Principals are the key contributions to helping parents and other educators understand each other” (Duncan, 1992). “Ultimate responsibility for creating harmony between the school and home rests with the principal” (Campbell, 1992). One thing that the school can do is to let the parents handle parenting responsibilities and the schools
handle the educational responsibilities. Also, by working with the parents more, the school will have a better idea of what the parents can and cannot do.

According to the National Parent Teacher Association, the overall importance of parent and family involvement, as the foundation for all other education reforms, warrants the same consideration and attention as other areas for which national standards are being developed. The following standards proposed by the National PTA are guidelines for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of programs that serve parents and families.

Standard I: Communicating - Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.

Standard II: Parenting – Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

Standard III: Student Learning - Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.

Standard IV: Volunteering - Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.

Standards VI: Collaborating with Community - Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Strategies where the school benefits, parent involvement increases, student has an advantage and developing community partnership

School/Teachers Benefits

1. More support from families

2. Schools that work well with families have improved teacher morale and higher ratings of teachers by parents.

3. School programs that involve parents out - perform identical programs without parent and family involvement.

4. Schools where children are failing improve dramatically when parents are enabled to become effective partners in their child’s education
Advantages for students (Henderson, A.T. & Berla, N., 1994)

1. Higher grades and test scores
2. Higher achievement in reading
3. Better attendance and more homework done
4. Higher graduation rates
5. Greater enrollment in post-secondary education
6. Students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior
7. Negative student behaviors, such as alcohol use, violence, and antisocial behavior decrease as parent involvement increases

Parental Involvement (benefit)

1. More confidence in the school
2. Greater confidence in themselves as parents and in their ability to help their children at home (Wherry, 2003).
3. Greater likelihood that the parents will enroll in continuing education to advance their own schooling (Wherry, 2003).
4. Ability to make contacts and build social networks that they can use to create opportunities for their children and themselves.
5. Develop closer ties to their communities and neighbors.
6. Learn how to influence decisions made in their schools and communities (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

Community Partnership

1. Communities offer a wide range of resources that are valuable to schools and the families they serve. These resources include people who volunteer their time in the school, organizations that offer enrichment opportunities, businesses that offer career related information and workplace experiences, and agencies that provide various social services for students and families (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2004).

2. Members of the community and local businesses can support family involvement by broadening the learning environment. Volunteers can assist in the schools either for special events or on a regular basis through tutoring or mentoring (Department of Education, 1994).
3. Make community resources available to schools and families. Community organizations may reach out to families by providing services such as childcare and after school programs (Department of Education, 1994).

4. Support flexible scheduling time at work and special programs so parents can participate in their children’s schooling (Department of Education, 1994).

5. Advocate with state education agencies and school districts to promote widespread and effective parent involvement policies and practices.

Bridging the gap and maintaining a relationship between parents and the school will allow schools to provide the kind of education that can be transformative. All this is part of a larger vision: that children can see the school as just one part of the larger adult company that surrounds and protects them, and thus as a place where they dare to challenge themselves to go beyond their customary limits, and even beyond the viewpoint of their families and communities-to explore the wider world (Mrier, 2002). Parental involvement in schools is a national priority for both educators and researchers to promote the successful schooling of contemporary youth (Abdul-Adil & Farrer, 2006).

REFERENCES


ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Mary A. Cooley-Liddell is a retired educator who studied Early Childhood Education at Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield, Massachusetts. She later moved to Pine Bluff, Arkansas and continued her studies at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education with a minor in Agriculture; a Master of Science degree as a Reading Specialist from the University of New Haven, Connecticut; and an Education Specialist (EdS) Degree in Leadership Administration (Doctorate Program) from Capella University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is presently working on a Doctorate Degree in Christian Counseling from G.M.O.R. Theological Institute. Ms. Liddell’s career has allowed her to serve on the Board of Directors of the Arkansas Education Association (AEA). She was a delegate to National Education Association and the AEA, She was President of the Pine Bluff Education Association (PBEA), served two terms as President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). She received service awards from Governor Mike Bebee, Governor Mike Huckabee, House of Representative, Senate, Pine Bluff/Jefferson County UAPB Spirit award, NAUW member of the year, NAACP member of the year, and Omega Fraternity Citizen of the year. She is a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority were she is the Centennial Representative, serves on the courtesy committee, the Little Miss Greek and the Boys and Girls club. She is a member of Bethany Chapel Missionary Baptist Church where she serves as the Church Clerk and sings in the choir. Residing in the South Central Section, Liddell is the treasurer of the Pine Bluff Branch (NAUW), Political Action Chair and is the immediate past president of the branch for the last four years and was vice president from 2011-2013. She has served on numerous branch committees which include Membership, Founders Day, Youth Achievers, Males in Education, Destination Graduation, By-Laws, Handbook, Budget/Finance, Black History/International Day, the “Proud Project”, and Education/Literacy. She chaired the South Central Evaluation Committee in 2013 and presently is the chair of the Single Parent Committee. On the national level, she served on the 2014 Fundraising Committee. Her service continues in 2017-2018. She is the mother of three children – Gregory Cooley (Denver, Co), Tadzia Cooley (Little Rock, AR) and Jimmy Liddell, Jr. (who is now deceased), grandmother of 15 children and great grandmother to a boy and girl.
Minority Participation in Science and Technology Programs

Karen D. Barnes

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs are currently programs where there is significant underrepresentation of minority students. For the purposes of this research, minority students refer to African American, Hispanic, and Native American minorities rather than the complete list of minority classifications. Researchers predict that the United States economy will have an increase in job opportunities for those with training in science and technology. Economic growth and worker retirement will account for 55 million jobs within the next decade (Redd, 2007). Despite the potential for an increase in jobs, African Americans may not be able to take advantage of these job opportunities because there is a low percentage of African Americans represented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Redd (2007) stated, “Increasing the number of racial/ethnic minorities with advanced training at the graduate level, particularly at the doctoral level, is therefore a crucial element for meeting future workforce needs” (p. 4). An increase in the number of African Americans in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs is contingent not only upon participation by African American students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs but also students completing programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
Problem Formulation

Problem Statement

There are multiple opportunities for students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs. Myers and Pavel (2011) indicated that 13 federal agencies spent $2.8 billion during the 2004 fiscal year to increase participation in 207 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs. The need to increase the number of participants in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs relates to the workforce shortage that the technology field in general is facing. Margolis and Fisher (2002) noted that 900,000 public and private sector information technology positions were vacant as of 2002. The specific problem is despite the availability of information technology jobs, there is a scarcity of minority students pursuing education in the fields of information technology and computer science (Maheshwari, Pierce, & Zapatero, 2009; Myers & Pavel, 2011). Minority students, specifically African American students, comprised only 1-2% of the total enrollment of Ph.D. students in computer science/engineering programs (Maheshwari, Pierce, & Zapatero, 2009). Underrepresented minorities (URMs) accounted for only 8.34% of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics doctorates awarded in 2006, even though URMs account for 28% of the United States population (Slovacek, et al, 2011).

The location of the proposed qualitative case study is a university in the Philadelphia area. Qualitative research is a research that does not use numerical data. Christen, Johnson, and Turner (2011) stated, “At its most basic level, qualitative research is defined as the approach to empirical research that relies primarily on the collection of qualitative data (i.e., nonnumeric data such as words, pictures, images)” (p. 361). The proposed research aims to explore factors concerning student participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs. The research population proposes inclusion of 20 African American students from the University.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to discover the factors that motivate and retain 20 minority participants in science and technology programs at the University of Pennsylvania. Retention of minority students may increase the number of qualified African American available to fill available information technology and other math, science, and engineering jobs. According to The Council of Graduate Schools (2007), “The continuing small representation of persons of color with doctoral degrees, particularly in science, engineering, and mathematics fields, is among the growing concerns over workforce issues that relate to the economic health and competitiveness of the United States” (p. 4). This study proposes to use an instrumental case study to interact with current students in graduate and undergraduate level science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs at the University of Pennsylvania to understand and identify specific factors that might influence, increase, and retain minority participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs.

Importance of the Problem

The problem of the scarcity of African American student enrollment in science and technology programs is relevant because the low enrollment in science and technology courses relates to available job opportunities for African Americans. Of the 55 million jobs that will be available over the next 10 years, a third of these jobs will be jobs available in the science and technology fields (Toossi, 2005). African Americans may not be able to take advantage of the amount of open jobs in the science and technology field without proper training and education in science and technology.
Research Questions

Despite the incentives and opportunities for African American students to participate in undergraduate and graduate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs, minority (Hispanics, African Americans, and Native Americans) students earned only 9.2% of all science, technology, engineering, and mathematics doctorates in 2008 (Myers & Pavel, 2011). The research questions for this qualitative case study are: what factors affect African American student participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs? Other sub-questions that the study proposes for consideration are what factors affect retention of African American students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs? What factors deter African American students from selecting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs?

Theoretical Framework

The basis for the theoretical framework in this qualitative research study uses an instrumental case study to understand what factors might motivate and encourage current African American students participating in science and technology programs. An instrumental case study is effective for facilitating understating of issues related to the primary research focus or sub-questions of the research. Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2011) define an instrumental case study as, “An instrumental case study is a case study conducted to provide insight into an issue or to develop, refine, or alter some theoretical explanation” (p. 375). For this research study, the instrumental case study might identify factors that motivated and encouraged African American students to participate initially and remain in science and technology programs. The goal of this study is to describe the case of 20 African American students in science and technology programs to understand which factors, if any, motivate or influence the students. The proposal goal is participant
questionnaires, which aim to reveal the factors that motivate each participant. The motivation factors might be common among the case study participants.

Method and Design Appropriateness

The qualitative method is appropriate for the research problem because the goal of the study is to identify factors currently unknown and factors that other researchers have not documented or quantified in the current literature. The case study design is the appropriate design for the research of identifying factors that influence student participation and retention in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs because the case study allows researchers to use an instrumental case study to gain insight into the issue. Baxter and Jack (2008) noted of an instrumental case study, “It provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory” (p. 549). The qualitative method is also appropriate for this study because the study aims to discover the case study participants’ specific personal experience with science and technology, programs instead of generalizing participant experience across a group of students. The quantitative method is not appropriate for this research study because quantitative research generalizes results. According to Szyjka (2012), quantitative studies generalize knowledge across populations. The most appropriate method for this research study is a qualitative case study.

Population and Sample

The study population proposes inclusion of 20 African American students currently in science or technology programs at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. This study limits the number of study participants because limiting the size of the participants allows insight into the influences and motivations of African American students. Leedy and Ormrod (2009) stated that sampling a large population of participants might lead researchers to generalize rather than gain insight into a specific research problem. The sampling
technique for the case study includes semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2009), semi-structured interviews allow researchers to use a number of specific questions to gather participant responses on a variety of topics.

**Contribution to Knowledge**

**Importance of Study**

The data gathered in this study might provide educators and leaders in undergraduate and graduate science and technology programs with information that might assist in motivating and retaining African Americans in science and technology programs. The study might also contribute to the knowledge and understanding of what factors motivate African American students to choose science and technology programs, which might assist educators and leadership with student recruitment into science and technology programs. Recruitment and retention of African American students in undergraduate and graduate programs might lead to increases in graduation rates, which may help alleviate the workforce shortage in science and technology fields.

**Lack of Knowledge**

The proposed study addresses the lack of current information relevant to factors that may motivate and influence African American students to participate in science and technology programs. The current data acknowledges that the numbers of African American students currently enrolled in science and technology programs is scarce (Myers & Pavel, 2011; Margolis & Fisher, 2002; Mims-Word, 2012). The unknown is whether there are factors or circumstances that could counteract the low enrollment of African American students in science and technology programs. Understanding if these factors exist is important to attempt to address the problem of the shortage of African American graduates in science and technology programs (Lott, Gardner, & Powers, 2009-2010; Maheshwari,
Pierce, & Zapatero, 2009; Myers & Pavel, 2011; Slovacek et al., 2011) as well as the shortage of available African American workers to fill science and technology jobs (Redd, 2007).

**Review of Relevant Scholarship**

**Criteria for Selecting Relevant Literature**

The literature review includes using University of Phoenix library databases online and the physical libraries in Philadelphia for current relevant peer-reviewed literature published within the last five years. The selected literature relates to African American student enrollment in undergraduate and graduate science and technology programs. In addition, the relevant literature may include information relating to minority job-related statistics. The literature also includes labor and job projections found in the United States Department of Labor reports available on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website. The literature review assists in the creation of an annotated bibliography to assist in identification of germinal literature as well as identification of gaps in the literature related to African American student participation in science and technology programs.

**Germinal Literature**

The germinal literature that relates to the proposed study discusses the current condition of African American student participation in science and technology programs (Council of Graduate Schools, 2007; Flowers, 2012; Myers & Pavel, 2011; Slovacek et al., 2011). Scholarly sources that include statistics of the numbers of minority students currently enrolled in science and technology programs are important to the proposed study as well as sources that discuss completion rates of minority students in degree bearing programs (Lott, Gardner, & Powers, 2009-2010; Maheshwari, Pierce, & Zapatero, 2009; Myers & Pavel, 2011; Slovacek et al., 2011). In addition, scholarly sources that discuss job and labor projections are important to relate the completion rates of African American students in
science and technology programs to the number of jobs available currently and the number of positions that experts predict in the future (Redd, 2007; Toossi, 2005).

**Gap in Literature**

Currently, the known literature demonstrates that the enrollment rates for African American students in science and technology programs is low (Myers & Pavel, 2011; Margolis & Fisher, 2002; Mims-Word, 2012), but the known literature does not explain how to increase the numbers or how to retain African American students once the students enroll in science and technology programs. The known literature also recognizes that there is a shortage of African American workers available to fill the vacant positions in science and technology (Redd, 2007; Maheshwari, Pierce, & Zapatero, 2009), but the literature does not discuss if there factors that might influence or change this shortage. The proposed research study has the potential to contribute to the literature in science and technology because the study might address the identification of specific factors that might influence, increase, and retain African American student participation in science and technology programs.

**Summary**

The shortage of African American students in undergraduate and graduate science and technology programs has a significant effect on the availability of the future workforce in the science and technology field. Understanding and identifying the factors that motivate and encourage African American students to participate in science and technology programs might assist educators and leaders in academia in efforts to recruit and retain African American students into science and technology programs. Recruitment and retention efforts might affect the number of African Americans who could take advantage of the number of jobs available in science and technology fields.
References


**ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR**

Karen D. Barnes is currently a Senior Systems Analyst at the University of Pennsylvania. She has worked in Information Technology in various roles in Higher Education for more than 25 years. She has an undergraduate degree in Information Systems from Eastern University, a graduate degree in Information Systems from the University of Phoenix, and is currently months away from completing a doctorate degree in Information Systems and Technology from the University of Phoenix. Karen has been a member of the National Association of University Women for 15 years. She has served as Philadelphia Branch Corresponding Secretary, Financial Secretary, Second Vice-President, and Branch Technology Chair. Karen has also served as National Technology Chair. Currently, Karen is a member of the Philadelphia Branch, Northeast Section where she serves as Philadelphia Branch Treasurer and Northeast Section Technology Chair.
Information Literacy: Scholarship, Practice, and Leadership in Higher Education

Karen D. Barnes

Information Literacy: Scholarship, Practice, and Leadership in Higher Education

Information literacy has a direct influence on scholarship, practice, and leadership within the discipline of higher education. In higher education, information literacy includes not only an understanding of appropriate research but also exposure to and understanding of national and international research methodologies and tools. The discipline of higher education encompasses the students, staff, and faculty. Each of these components uses different information and sometimes uses the same information in different ways.

The tasks of those who are information literate are “1. Know the type of information needed to complete a task or assignment; 2. Retrieve information effectively and efficiently; 3. Evaluate information and sources critically; 4. Integrate select information into their knowledge base; 5. Use information ethically, morally, and legally” (University of Phoenix, 2008, Week One Lecture). Differing opinions exist on how students, faculty, and even staff should acquire information literacy skills.

Attaining Literacy in an Information Rich World

In higher education, various sources bombard students with more information than they can effectively evaluate. To be truly information literate, students need to be able to evaluate this onslaught of information in terms of relevance and accuracy. When students enter into higher education, many do not have the skills needed to evaluate information. Students acquire these skills when they enter into the
academic environment, either through orientation courses or through library training courses. The Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report (1989) notes [in reference to creating information literate people], “Producing such a citizenry will require that schools and colleges appreciate and integrate the concept of information literacy into their learning programs and that they play a leadership role in equipping individuals and institutions to take advantage of the opportunities inherent within the information society” (p. 1). Integration of information literacy into curricula will produce scholars with an affinity for information and learning.

The Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report (1989) reinforces the opinion that true information literacy begins with use of libraries, both public and those on college and university campuses. The model proposed is one in which teachers and librarians (and others) work together to create a curriculum that will result in information literate scholars. The model suggests, “Evaluation would be based upon a broad range of literacy indicators, including some that assess the quality and appropriateness of information sources or the quality or efficiency of the information searches themselves” (p. 7). This model embodies what the scholar/practitioner/leader model should be in higher education.

**Information Literacy as a Function of University Libraries**

One of the ways for those in higher education to acquire information literacy skills is through instruction in university libraries. University librarians are knowledgeable and experienced with information sources, research, and various research tools and methodologies. At issue with libraries in higher education is if students should be required to take an information literacy course delivered by a librarian as a required part of the curriculum. Zabel (2004) agrees that information literate students should acquire their skills in conjunction with university librarians.
However, she does not agree “…that mandated instruction is the solution…” (p. 17). Requiring information literacy courses in universities would mean a change in the curriculum, which Zabel points out, is not an easy feat. It would also require an increase in tuition for students, as well as dedicated staff to teach these courses. Zabel (2004) further notes that this mandated instruction “…is meaningless unless teaching faculty require students (especially undergraduates) to do research as part of their coursework” (p. 19).

Many universities would not be able to accomplish a library course as a mandated instruction. However, some universities that make this instruction a part of the freshman orientation courses. Other universities offer optional courses to acquaint students with information literacy topics. For example, the University of Pennsylvania libraries offer workshops for faculty, staff, and students. These workshops acquaint faculty, staff, and students with various research tools and technologies (University of Pennsylvania, 2008).

Attaining student information literacy in higher education should include student education on library resources and scholarly research methodologies. Mackey and Jacobson suggest two models of information literacy collaboration that include “…teaching alliances and campus partnerships” (p. 140). The teaching alliance model involves “…conversations [librarians and students] about the syllabus, specific assignments, and the use of educational technology” (Mackey and Jacobson, 2005, p. 141). The campus partnership model complements the teaching alliance model in that this model consists of collaboration between librarians and faculty members. Mackey and Jacobson (2005) describe this model as librarians and faculty in collaboration to “…plan ways to revise existing courses that strengthen students’ information literacy skills” (p. 143). Higher education
necessitates that courses incorporate the ongoing use of library resources for students to become information literate.

**Acquiring Information Literacy through Diverse Studies**

In addition to viewing information literacy in higher education from the perspective of libraries and obtaining information through research, technology, and printed matter, coursework that exposes students to national and internal information can also allow students to obtain information literacy. Lauer and Yodanis (2004) quoted Stein’s contention that, “With some exceptions, American students tend to be globally illiterate” (p. 304). Institutions of higher education should incorporate international information into curricula to create students who are more knowledgeable of international information, research, and methodologies. Lauer and Yodanis (2004) further note “Globally literate students have the confidence, knowledge, and skills needed to apply sociological concepts, theories, and questions to societies different from their own and to develop their sociological understanding based on cross-national differences or similarities that are found” (p. 304).

In higher education, the incorporation of international and diverse studies into coursework results in scholars who are not only well versed in international information, but also scholars who have advanced evaluation skills. Students learn that when researching, they need to consider all available information and not only information that they find locally.

**Final Points**

Attaining information literacy in higher education will need to involve collaboration between faculty and librarians. Faculty should consistently work with librarians to incorporate research as well as cultural and international knowledge into coursework so that students will consistently turn to university library
resources for quality information. This method will assist students in acquiring the level of information literacy that will allow them to develop into effective scholars, practitioners, and leaders in the future.

References


ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Karen D. Barnes is currently a Senior Systems Analyst at the University of Pennsylvania. She has worked in Information Technology in various roles in Higher Education for more than 25 years. She has an undergraduate degree in Information Systems from Eastern University, a graduate degree in Information Systems from the University of Phoenix, and is currently months away from completing a doctorate degree in Information Systems and Technology from the University of Phoenix. Karen has been a member of the National Association of University Women for 15 years. She has served as Philadelphia Branch Corresponding Secretary, Financial Secretary, Second Vice-President, and Branch Technology Chair. Karen has also served as National Technology Chair. Currently, Karen is a member of the Philadelphia Branch, Northeast Section where she serves as Philadelphia Branch Treasurer and Northeast Section Technology Chair.
Abstracts
First-Time College Students’ Experiences of Transitioning from High School to College

Arlene Rice Woody, Ph.D.

Abstract

Although many students in low socioeconomic backgrounds lived in adverse situations during childhood, they were deeply motivated to pursue higher education. The current generic qualitative study was conducted to fill a gap in the literature pertaining to African American students’ experiences of transitioning from high school to college. The primary theoretical framework for this study is critical race theory. Specifically, this study focused on low socioeconomic status African American first-time college students enrolled in a historically Black college or university (HBCU), located within the United States. Through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, the 12 students described the challenges faced from parental support, peer support, teacher support, and school administrative support. The researcher utilized thematic analysis and revealed commonalities in the students’ accounts of their experiences and reasons for making their transitions as (a) preparation for better livelihoods, (b) realization of more responsibilities, (c) growing up and realizing that the future depends on commitment, (d) control of educational journey, (e) lack of high school support, (f) the timing importance of transitioning from high school to college, and (g) campus climate at a historically Black college or university (HBCU). The semi-structured interviews allowed the students to describe and gain a better understanding or meaning of their experiences. In other words, the students were able to convey how their childhood experiences contributed to their transitions from high school to college. They identified key components that impact a student of color decision-making process, as it pertains to the pursuit of higher education. Hopefully, educational institutions focus on implementing essential programs for smoother transitions.
ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Dr. Arlene Rice Woody is a retired Telecommunications professional. She holds a BA in Accounting from University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, a M.B.A in Business Administration, Management and Operations from the University of Phoenix, Little Rock, and a Doctorate degree in Psychology from Capella University. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated PB/Jefferson County UAPB/AM&N Alumni Chapter and is a member of the National Association of University Women, Pine Bluff Branch, South Central Section.

The Knowledge, Skills, Motivation and Organizational Factors That Teachers Need to Support African American Boys in Public Preschool:
An Evaluation Study
School readiness involves socio-emotional competencies and behaviors, including relationships with peers and teachers, which are generally predictors of later academic performance and the ability to adapt to school for preschool children. This study found that teachers who have the ability to create positive preschool classroom environments and instructional strategies to develop socio-emotional competency in African American boys in public preschool, specifically, those in low socioeconomic backgrounds are more motivated to meet job performance goals. To support African American boys in low-income areas conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge is required for teachers to understand the concept of socio-emotional development and how to respond to children’s behavior. The study reveals that teachers need considerable support to design classroom management and instructional strategies to promote growth. This study, using Clark and Estes’ gap analysis method, evaluated the state of which early education center teachers achieve job performance goals to provide structured and unstructured opportunities for African American boys to cultivate socialization and emotional competence to improve their resilience, confidence and persistence with tasks. Triangulation of the data collected shows that teachers in the Pyramid Unified School District are lacking the knowledge and skills needed to support African American boys in public preschool.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Dr. Ayanna E. Davis, a Los Angeles Unified School District Principal, is a dynamic and innovative leader whose early childhood education expertise has provided services for over 3,500 children and families throughout her 20 years as an administrator and 25 years in the field of education. She is a mother of one son, Joshua, a recent graduate from Xavier University of Louisiana and currently a graduate student at the University of Southern California.

Ayanna began her career with the Los Angeles Unified School District as an elementary school
teacher and became inspired to focus on early childhood development and education. During her earlier years as a early childhood educator, she developed a passion for observing socialization and emotional development skills as it relates to school readiness for preschool students, specifically, those children who are living in low socio-economic environments. While advancing in her career, she collaboratively designed curriculum-training modules for a cluster of LAUSD early education center’s teachers and early education aides. In addition, she has been chosen for a Fellowship at UCLA as a Cognitive Guided Instruction Elementary and Early childhood Math Leader, president of the Organization of Early Education Center Administrators (OEEA), and a Board Member for Living Advantage, Incorporated, a non-profit organization servicing foster youth in Los Angeles.

Dr. Davis holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, University of Southern California, Masters of Arts in Education Administration from California State University at Dominguez Hills; and Masters of Arts in Educational Administration Leadership and Policy Studies from California State University at Northridge. In May 2017, Ayanna earned a Doctorate of Education focusing on organizational change and leadership at University of Southern California Rossier School of Education. Ayanna’s research topic was an evaluation study on the knowledge, motivation, and organizational factors that teachers need to support African American boys’ socio-emotional development in public preschool. She is a member of the National Association of University Women, Tri Cities Branch, South West Section.
Survey Says: An Analysis of The Degree of Impact of The Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program on Classroom Practices

Shresia Deon Fontenot Kenney

ABSTRACT

Every year, thousands of teachers participate in California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program in order to complete the requirements needed to obtain a clear teaching credential. Within this program lie various facets of support that serve the needs of beginning teachers and aid them in transitioning from university theory to classroom practice. Despite the long-standing existence of the BTSA program and the changes that have taken place since its development in 1992, the need exists for closer analysis of the program's effect on teaching practices and student achievement.

This quantitative study analyzes (a) the degree of impact on classroom practice experienced by participating teachers, (b) the components of the program reported to have high levels of strong/moderate impact on classroom practice, (c) the components of the program reported to have high levels of some/no impact on classroom practice and (d) the areas where additional support is desired in order to positively impact student achievement.

As a means to test the quality and impact of the BTSA program on teachers' classroom performances, results from the BTSA Program survey were used. The raw survey data was arranged into a usable format by creating a unified list of questions that aligned across the three survey years. After that, descriptive statistical techniques and data visualization methods were utilized to analyze the data. The study found that there is a year by year decline in average ratings with respect to classroom impact, teacher response for desired support topics, and responses for reasons to not continue teaching.
This study focuses on the impact of the BTSA Program on classroom practice and student achievement. The study provides credence in revealing the need for changes within the BTSA Program in order to positively affect classroom practices and student achievement. Although this study is one perspective, it recognizes the need for the perpetual quality support of beginning teachers.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Dr. Shresia Deon Fontenot Kenney is an administrator and educator, leadership developer and mentor possessing experience in educational consulting and leadership. She is an energetic, professional therapist and Christian counselor seeking to empower and inspire others to improve their quality of life and their overall daily performance.

She holds a BS in Microbiology from Louisiana State University; a M. Ed. in Secondary Education and Teaching from the University of Phoenix – Southern California; a MS in Biology from California State University – Dominguez Hills; a MA in Clinical Psychology from Azusa Pacific University, and a Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership from Pepperdine University.

Dr. Kenney is a charter member of the National Association of University Women, Tri Cities Branch, South West Section.
Life is a Mirror of Reflections
Dr. Essie French Preston

Our life is a mirror of reflections that gives us a picture of our inner self. Just as we look into the mirror, we see a constant change of reflections that are real, imaginary and assumed. During our infancy, our mirror show us joy, pain, love, sadness and distress. We are able to convey these feelings with others as we grow into early childhood. What we see during this time leaves a lasting imprint on what we see in the mirror as we grow into our golden years. Our early childhood years mirror to us eagerness, iniquitousness, and inhabitation. We are able to approach life with an openness.
to what comes our way.

We discover our desires, the world around us
and the simplicity of living life as it appears to us.
There are not many worries.

Our teenage years reflect challenges as we
become aware of the world around us
and how we fit into the world.

We see the need to belong and to be accepted.

Our vision of self, shows change in our body,
our thoughts, and desires.

We either accepts what we see and work
on what want to see.

Our early adulthood reflection introduces us
to characteristic of what makes us lovable,
attractive, desirable, mature, and stable.

Our behavior is directed by our desire
to live out the feeling of what we see in the mirror.

We make Decisions based on our interpretation
of what we saw reflected in the mirror.

Our middle age reflection convey to us
what should have, could have, and would have,
had we followed the mirrors image of what
we interpret as we looked at ourselves.

Our golden reflections are true and accurate,
it shows a change in our physical appearance.

It shows the years of growth, illnesses, happiness,
sadness, rejections, accomplishments and failures.

All these things are seen, but your commitment to living
becomes the dominant vision.

The inner self, tells you that this is the last ride
so determine how you want to take the ride.
Up, Up, and away!

About the Contributor:

Dr. Essie French Preston, Southwest Sectional Director, received her Doctor of Education and the Educational Specialist Degrees from The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; her Masters in Education from the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama and her Bachelors of Arts from Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama.

Dr. Essie French Preston is a professor and Counselor at Compton College where she has served as Interim President, Vice President of Students Affairs, and Registrar for more than 30 years.

Worth The Read!

Chanté Smith

I know it's been a minute since my last writing. I've never really been good with keeping up with such things. But I'm back today because I have something to say. And yeah, it's a little long but it will be so worth the read!

I was very excited to take part in this opportunity and wasn't quite sure of what to expect but I know that what I got out of it was more meaningful than what I could have hoped for! It was set up to where we help serve others in the not-so-nice areas around us.

As a HUGE introvert, I need a lot of time to myself (like a couple hours per day) which I didn't get while away and thus, it stunted my normally amazing level of awesomeness.

But after having time to myself, I've had some time to reflect and get my energy back and I'm actually still trying to understand exactly how I feel.

So I figured I'd flush out my thoughts by writing, which I happen to be good at. I have a way with written words, not verbal. I probably should've become a writer.

When one thinks of service, though I shouldn't generalize to all, they think that it's an awesome opportunity to give some type of needed resources to those who lack them. In theory, this is what it should be. There's a problem that is identified. We then provide a solution by implementing a system that is supposed to help progress the current state of the people to something better than when we first came. Pretty straight forward and easy to comprehend; it makes logical sense that when you present a much needed solution to a problem, it fixes the problem. However, I don’t necessarily always feel like I am fixing a problem; for many reasons…..
For one, I'm still young, trying to figure out what it means to be. I'm still trying to figure out how to apply what I've been learning for so long. I've worked with so many people in the past but even with that, it still doesn't feel like enough. I struggle with flourishing in areas that have yet to be fully developed. I'm someone who needs every little detail first before I can make sense of the bigger picture and feel competent in doing so. I'm not saying that I won't make a move unless I have every single detail because that's not feasible in this type of environment.

But what I am saying is that the "fake it til you make it" philosophy is pretty difficult to do for someone who can't make sense of the missing details. This issue that is clearly perceived by the bystanders around me can sometimes make it seem like I don't belong but regardless of what it seems like, that's just not how my brain works.

Instead, I have to find other ways to compensate for that. After all, "faking it" in itself IS a compensation for lacking knowledge or direction. So maybe my compensation can encourage me to include something a little more authentic since faking it doesn't seem to be my thing.

Secondly, even though we encounter people home and away with exercises and other modifications to hopefully improve function with a little patience and education to go along with it, I wonder what, if any, real difference did we make for them in the grand scheme of things? Are we interested in what we are doing as ‘research’ on whether or not this service that we do IS actually beneficial for the people we claim to be helping or whether or not it's simply to stroke our own egos and to fulfill our own need for that feeling of satisfaction that we get when helping the "less-fortunate".

I hadn't really thought about this concept until someone dear recently mentioned it and I was in the midst of serving these communities, seeing for myself how it all relates. In a way, it shifted my perspective to think twice about what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. I struggled with seeing how I could possibly be helping someone that I am only seeing for mere minutes, who is still leaving with all the same problems that they came in with, and that I will never see again nor can follow up with.

I know that helping a little is still helping, even if it doesn't fix the entire problem, but I'd like to challenge that by asking, ‘Does helping a little actually make the problem worse when no real progress is made?’ Like a sense of false hope if you will.

Lastly, I think there is some value in what the system can offer and what it can mean for the future of all we try to help at home and abroad. But the fact remains that delivery is everything and this is something that I believe should be considered and addressed.

I think that we as Americans have to be careful about not creating systems that encourage the "Savior complex"; where we think others can't and won't survive without us and start equipping them properly so that they CAN and WILL.

And THAT is where I believe the true solution begins.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying this was a horrible experience; these are just some of the not so feel good emotions that I struggled with while I think on some things done, but on the flip side of that, I also had some really feel good emotions that I think made it all worth it!

I was able to see life in a different way, outside and inside. And I'm not talking about being in the nice fancy parts and places that people like to live, work and visit when they need a break from their own life, but I mean I was actually in other communities.

Where it doesn't look so pretty. Where it's not the most desirable. Where there's absolutely nothing to do at night but to enjoy the loved ones around you, which we tend to take for granted in our comfortable homes, with all the technology and "freedom" we're afforded.
Being able to experience the day to day as if I were part of the community was priceless and I really, really enjoyed it.

Yes, my community has many great and needed things that many other communities don't, but I feel like some of what we have can also take away from our quality as human beings and we kind of forget to consider the things that actually matter in life. We're so consumed in self and current trends that we forget about community and how to be content.

That may sound weird to say but it makes sense in my head.

Being away helped me to think about the important things in life and see that even though I'm not always home, it's still possible for me to be happy and live life and not wish that I was somewhere else.

Knowing that what they feed us at home about other communities, countries and civilizations is a bunch of ego stroking nonsense.

We are blessed here at home but being blessed is all about perspective and believe it or not, there are people in other communities and countries who feel just as blessed and satisfied with way less. In fact, I'd like to argue that these people may even possess more than what we think we have gained in all of our advancements and man-made accolades.

I feel really connected to the people I serve; spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally. Even with the differences in cultures and languages, I feel like I belong. I don't feel like I am visiting or a foreigner or a tourist in a different land; waiting to get back home, but I felt like these were my people. Like I was them, and they were me.

How I felt definitely found a special place in my heart.

It just helped to solidify in my spirit the fact that we are all the creation of a single creator and are truly all connected in every way because of it. We all enjoy music, enjoy dancing, enjoy food, want to be loved, want to be heard, want to be seen, want to experience, want to connect with our Creator, want to connect with other people.

There is no hierarchy in humanity. We are all the same, even with our differences. And I'm so thankful that I was able to have this tangible experience to compliment the intangible moral beliefs that have always been a part of me. I still cannot accurately describe the bond that I felt and still feel. I just know that I had this overwhelming feeling of emotions that left me unable to verbalize what was happening on the inside of me; instead, all I could do was shed some tears of mixed emotions.

I even mentioned to a friend how the amount of emotions that I had in that moment, in my mind, felt similar to how I'd imagine Jesus felt when the verse, John 11:35, said, "Jesus wept." even though the circumstances were different.

Those two words, "Jesus wept" are so powerful that they have their own verse.

So much power in one sentence; that's how I felt.

I am inspired to learn more.

You've gotten to experience the long process of me flushing out my thoughts and figuring out how I actually feel. Now all that energy I said that I got back in my first paragraph is gone again.

This is why I don't do this often because when I get deep, it takes so much out of me and one paragraph can take me hours to make sense of in words, what already makes sense in my heart.

The end result is always worth it but the process is so dreadful. But now, it is done and I am pleased.
Hopefully you all have taken something away from this writing by vicariously living through my experiences and I also hope that you will visit others, serve others, and love on others, if you haven't already.

I know that I definitely want to give and experience it all over again. Now, I will go rest my brain.
I hope this was Worth the Read!

Dios Bendiga (God bless).

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Chanté Smith is a native of Philadelphia. Growing up, Chanté had several interests in sports, film, web design, and graphic design. This led her to attend Murrell Dobbins CTE High School where she studied web design and graphic design and where she played on several varsity sports’ teams. Upon graduation, Chanté attended Howard University where she received her BS in Human Performance with a concentration in Sports Medicine and minored in Chemistry. In recent years, Chante has pursued studies in the Doctorate of Physical Therapy program at Drexel University. Chanté has a huge heart for helping others and it shows in the work that she does. She considers herself to be an advocate for mental health and is currently serving as a Crisis Counselor helping to save lives, one conversation at a time. Chanté has been a member of the National Association of University Women, Philadelphia Branch, Northeast Section since October 2016.
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION UNIVERSITY WOMEN FOUNDERS

K. Rose Samuel-Evans


Today we honor the spirit of our founders and ask the Question:

Who Is The NAUW Woman?

We are progressive women remaining relevant in a global society. We are women, “that thou art mindful of us and created us to be a little lower than the angels.”

In 1910, where it would all begin with four college educated women leading the way to show other college educated women, their life lot was not to be common place. They were to use their education to uplift our people and the entire human race. Mary Church Terrell, Dr. Sara Brown, Mary Cromwell and Dr. Fairfax Brown. May their spirits continue to be the light as we pledge ahead as ‘Progressive Women Remaining Relevant In A Global Society.’

Who is the NAUW Woman?

We are progressive women remaining relevant in a global society. Women, “that thou art mindful of us and created us to be a little lower than the angels.”

From the beginning of time when God created womankind, the wonders of His creation that would forever bind, women of exemplary character and brilliant minds. With the spirit of excellence running through our veins, leaving our valley, climbing our mountains, lifting our wings, forsaking our pains, to achieve our greatness, while performing acts of goodness, with hearts of grace.

Who is the NAUW woman?

We are progressive women remaining relevant in a global society. Women, “that thou art mindful of us and created us to be a little lower than the angels.”

We are: educators, CEO’s, accountants, judges, social workers, community activists, children advocates, thespians, pastors, politicians, preachers, gifted teachers and fearless leaders. Among us are two past national presidents, branch presidents and leaders from the north, south east and west.

Our mission to remain relevant sent us on a Liberia sisterhood journey. We gave and give our best in Africa and here in the west. We know the FOUNDERS’ spirits smile as we achieve our quest.

On this Founders’ Day, and EVERY day, let us remember, we are progressive women remaining relevant in a global society. Women, “that thou art mindful of us and created us to be a little lower than the angels.”

Written and presented by:
Philadelphia Branch Member
K. Rose Samuel-Evans

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Reverend K. Rose Samuel-Evans is a member of the National Association of University Women, Philadelphia Branch, Northeast Section.
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