# Introduction

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On May 20, 1999, the 7th Annual African American Adult Education Research Pre-Conference was held at Northern Illinois University. Our theme, *Taking our Rightful Place in Adult Education: In History, At Present, and in the Future*, is a partial answer to a bequeathing and plaguing question often asked by minorities in higher education.

Where are the voices of people of color heard in research? We continually ask this question in stern attempts to be heard and to have our research recognized. Validation of research, in some respects, hinges on having one's work published in refereed journals that are recognized within a particular discipline. Studies escaping the boundaries of the mainstream school of thought in some instances are rejected by reviewers, are considered as 'non-scholarly,' and are therefore not given the same degree of respect and creditability by peers. Political hegemonic attempts to devalue and minimize research as 'not real research' has met with strong opposition. Who determines what gets published and who decides what is scholarly in the academy?

Research that focuses on minority issues has often been trivialized, considered intellectually inferior, and discounted. Faced with these tenuous obstacles and the ever-present dilemma of publish-or-perish, few African Americans hold the rank of tenured faculty. Research shows that minorities have the lowest faculty progression, retention and tenure rates in academe.

***'Voice' is not merely an apparatus by which we form speech, but our voice is our moral authority, i.e., an embodiment of us. It is the means whereby we are able to mobilize and engage the world.***

Studies also show that their work is more closely scrutinized or discounted by students, colleagues, and superiors. These undeniable truths beg the question, where then are people of color voices heard in research? 'Voice' is not merely an apparatus by which we form speech, but our voice is our moral authority, i.e., an embodiment of us. It is the means whereby we are able to mobilize and engage the world.

As a graduate of NIU's Adult Continuing Education program, I must admit that the faculty has been instrumental in recognizing peoples' of color struggles in acquiring higher education at predominately White institutions. In past years, the Adult Education faculty has made classes available to students on and off campus, established cohorts, and recruited minority and international students in the program. Some of my fellow classmates are now tenured faculty, and others are on tenure track at colleges and universities around the country. These NIU graduates, in turn, have become mentors to incoming graduate students at their institutions.

The pre-conference was initiated a few years ago in an attempt to provide a forum for African American students to present scholarly research. As a previous student, I vividly remember traveling in a van with peers to present at a pre-conference. How proud I was to represent my institution, to engage in pedagogical dialog, and to debate and defend my research findings. The dialect exchange in formal and informal settings with conference attendees was essential to

my growth and preparation for the academy. Because I stand on the shoulders of my ancestors, my shoulders, in turn, have been strengthened so that others may stand on mine. I, too, then bear the responsibility to make opportunities available and to provide a forum for those coming behind me to share their work

While the purpose of the Conference remains constant, the scope of presenters has expanded to include faculty and staff as well. This issue of *Thresholds in Education* contains papers by conference presenters – Mable Springfield-Scott, Geraldine Clarke, Evelyn Paulette Isaac, Lolita Aiken, Andrew Smallwood, Elice Rogers, Lee Martin, Glenn Palmer, and Karen Watkins. These essays span the gamut of cultural diversity: African Americans in church-based adult education programs; African Americans' educational experiences in a country school; an analysis of Black women's' experiences toward completing an RN program; welfare reform; politics of African American political leaders; an Afrocentric analysis of Malcolm X; and faulty job satisfaction in a university. Other conference papers will appear in a subsequent issue of *Scope*. Through the Conference and this edition of *Thresholds in Education*, many voices are heard and shared. I sincerely hope that these scholars will carry the torch and pass the baton to others.

This conference could not have been a success without certain people. Many thanks to Dean Dr. Alfonzo Thurman who gave the keynote address and is at the helm of instituting change to restructure the College of Education. May God continue to strengthen until the vision comes to fruition. An enormous thank you goes to Dr. Amy Rose, AERC Chair, her staff, Jeanette Heinisch, and Adult Education faculty for their untiring support and coordination. To the organizers of the first African American Adult Education Pre-Conference without whose fortitude, vision and faith this preconference would not have been, thank you. To Juanita Johnson-Bailey, thanks for showing up at all the right places and times, willing to pitch in. To Dr. LaVerne Gyant, my mentor and friend who keeps opening doors and served as conference co-convener, "Have a blessed day." I would be remiss if I did not thank my staff in OIA, colleagues, graduate, and undergraduate students. Oh, yes, Dr. Phyllis Cunningham, keep checking on me.

Finally, I give God the praise, honor, and glory. Our spirituality sustains, strengthens, and carries us when institutions weaken our souls.

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# Leadership, Adult Education and Malcolm X: An Afrocentric Analysis

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## Educational Leadership for African Americans

Adult education has been an integral part of the African-American experience. In their book *The Education of African American Adults* (1990), Harvey G. Neufeldt and Leo McGee discuss the historical evolution of various forms of adult education in the United States. At the center of the examination of African-American adult education is the issue of control. To what extent did Black people have control over educational activities? Traditionally, African Americans viewed education as a tool to combat racial hostility by increasing their access to employment opportunities. Given the importance of the post-Civil War era in shaping forces that led to segregation, racism, and economic discrimination against Blacks, the need for Black leadership to form organizations to combat hostility in society in the late 1800s and early 1900s became crucial in the quest for autonomy from societal oppression (Bennett 1987: pp.255-296; Franklin & Moss, 1994, pp. 264-294). LaVerne Gyant, in examining Alain Locke, discusses reasons why he and other African Americans advocated adult education programs in the 1930s:

Because African Americans had been deprived of social, economic, and cultural opportunities and contact, Locke agreed with his contemporaries Ambrose Caliver and Ira Reid that it was important that adult education programs be made available to the African American community. They also believed that through lifelong learning African Americans would be liberated, undergo major improvement, and exhibit an interest in their intellectual and cultural development (Gyant, 1996, p. 82).

***...the educational contributions of prominent African Americans, such as Malcolm X, have been virtually unexplored.***

Given the well-documented history of defacto and dejure segregation leading to the unequal distribution of resources in U.S. public education, a need developed for African-American community leaders to take action in analyzing problems, defining strategies and implementing solutions for the very survival of Black people (Karenga, 1993, pp. 151-160). This need meant understanding and redefining the role of Africa and African people in society through educational activities.

## Statement of the Problem

Racism, which was manifested in the institution of slavery and perpetuated in the practice of segregation, has led to prejudicial and discriminatory practices in employment, housing and education for African Americans. These social issues have had severe negative consequences affecting the quality of African-American life (Bennett, 1987, pp. 45-46; Franklin & Moss, 1994, pp. 271-272; Karenga, 1993, pp. 271-272). The impact of these events and the failure to resolve them contribute to the ongoing problems of race relations in America, resulting in: (a) the failure to acknowledge the contributions of African Americans in society; (b) the failure to examine African-American life in a cultural context recognizing

traditions and customs; and (c) the gross historical misinterpretation of the African American experience.

An extension of these problems in the field of Adult Education has been a failure to underscore the educational contributions of African Americans. (Neufeldt & McGee, 1990, p.vii; Briscoe & Ross, 1990: 583). Research of the Black experience fails to recognize and evaluate the contributions of Black people advocating social change. Much of the current research does not examine Blacks from the context of their historical and cultural experiences. (Anderson, 1990, pp. 2-3). This has resulted in an incomplete picture of both the field and practice of adult education and the African American practitioners who serve it. Thus, the educational contributions of prominent African Americans, such as Malcolm X, have been virtually unexplored. A. Peter Bailey, a former assistant of Malcolm X's, stated, "Malcolm was a Master Teacher" whose loss to the Black community is significant because few individuals carry this special title and responsibility and have the ability to espouse a rhetoric of Black liberation (Malcolm X, 1994). Bailey's statement queries: What in the African-American experience makes the role of non-traditional education so important? What really was the educational impact of Malcolm X for the African-American community? Has the scope of Malcolm X's contributions to adult education, via his intellectual thought, been explored?

***In the role of Muslim minister and civil rights leader, Malcolm X engaged in an intellectual public discourse that represented a pedagogical approach to adult learning.***

In this study, I conducted an investigation of Malcolm X as an Intellectual Aesthetic who, through his thoughts and ideas, advanced the concept of non-formal adult education through an Afrocentric epistemology. In the role of Muslim minister and civil rights leader, Malcolm X engaged in an intellectual public discourse that represented a pedagogical approach to adult learning.

This study provides an examination of Malcolm X using the Afrocentric paradigm of Kawaida Theory. Within the discipline of Black Studies, this theoretical framework is employed to locate Malcolm X's lasting contributions to adult education. By discovering linkages in the academic areas of adult education and Black Studies, I attempt to provide a balanced interpretation of the axiological basis of culture and education for African Americans.

**Theory**

The Afrocentric approach to scholarly inquiry of Black life can be found in the work of Black scholars one hundred years ago. Karenga cites the writings of Anna Julia Cooper's, *A Voice from the South: by a Black Woman of the* South (1892); W.E.B. DuBois's, *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960* (1975); and Carter G. Woodson's, *Mis-education of the Negro* (1969) as early examples (Karenga, 1993: p. 34). Molefi K. Asante first expressed Afrocentricity as an intellectual concept in a comprehensive form. He states:

> Afrocentricity, as an aspect of centrism, is groundedness, which allows the student of human culture investigating phenomena to view the world from the standpoint of the African. (Asante, 1990: p. vi)

Locating the subject of any study using Africa as the social and cultural reference point is central to the Afrocentric perspective. With the brutality of slavery and the open hostility African American people faced, the preservation of cultural traditions has been both an important and difficult task. This has led to the development of several Afrocentric theories over the last three decades. I have employed the Kawaida theory developed by Maulana Karenga.

In this study, I focus on the variables of *history* and *ethos* to describe and evaluate the contri-

butions of Malcolm X to adult education via his leadership role as a public advocate for the social, political, and economic improvement of African American life. To examine Malcolm X's views on Black culture, I focus on his public statements discussing African Americans' culture as he articulates his own unique voice as a national Black leader in the 1960s. As a Black adult educator, he provides a paradigm for African American thought after his death.

**History**

Kawaida Theory defines history as the record of human struggle in shaping the world. Black history is then concerned with the examination of the African contribution to human history (Karenga, 1980, p. 29). By using an Afrocentric thought to locate the African legacy in the development of the African American history and experience, several scholars found that it examines the valuable contributions of Africa to world and United States' history.

The Nation of Islam's position on emphasizing cultural pride dates back to the organization's founding. The Nation of Islam (NOI) reached out to disenfranchised Black people whom other organizations did not court. To do this, the NOI emphasized that Black people had a rich history and tradition of significant accomplishments (Clegg, 1997, p. 43). This allowed members and supporters of the NOI to develop cultural pride and self-esteem. Given the historically negative views of African and Black people, the importance of this is quite significant.

As a major Black leader of the twentieth century, Malcolm X used history in his speeches to advocate cultural celebration (recovery of historical and cultural memory). Given the foundation of cultural pride that Malcolm had as a child and his rediscovery of this through his religious conversion in prison, his acceptance of NOI doctrine was total and complete. His eventual rise to leadership within the NOI helped him become a leading figure in the resurgence of cultural pride nearly twenty years after the Garvey and the Harlem Renaissance ended.

Malcolm X followed the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, yet his study in prison of African American history, reading the works of W. E. B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson, familiarized him with the chronological and conceptual interpretive history of African Americans. (Malcolm X, 1994). Malcolm's careful study of Black history made him a griot and lay historian. He used his knowledge to preach to NOI members and supporters. Malcolm X's emphasis on historical knowledge continued in the tradition of Black historians who seek to combat the historical ignorance of Black people through the written and spoken word.

There are several key observations that demonstrate the powerful influence of Malcolm X as a lay teacher. First, his role as a religious figure provided Malcolm with a moral authority to communicate with Black people that Black scholars did not have. Second, Malcolm was a charismatic Black leader with national visibility who was able to impact a wide range of people from various racial and economic positions in society. Third, his main audience consisted of Black people in search of liberating leadership from racial and economic oppression. Malcolm's public statements communicated their frustrations and provided insight based on knowledge of the history that defined their life experiences:

> Our history and our culture were completely destroyed when we were forcibly brought to America in chains. And now it is important for us to know that our history did not begin with slavery. We came from Africa, a great continent, whereon lived a proud and varied people, a land which is the New World and was the cradle of civilization. Our culture and our history are as old as man himself and yet we know almost nothing about it. (Malcolm X, 1970, pp. 53-54)

In their analysis of Black adult education occurring in social movements in Chicago, Illinois, Phyllis M. Cunningham and Regina Curry address the importance of African Americans studying their history and culture. In interviews with commu-

nity residents, they discovered that acquiring cultural knowledge led to cultural transformation:

> There were spears all over. The first thing that came in my mind was Tarzan in Africa. But [the instructor] began to make a presentation about the art works and value of it and how it relates to African culture, how it relates to us: The music, the math--and you know, my mind just began to expand. I just wanted more. I just needed to know more about my race and about my people. You know all this stuff was new to me, and it was hitting me too fast. It was hitting all of us too fast. (Cunningham and Curry, 1997: p. 4)

Malcolm X's emphasis on historical knowledge of cultural deprivation helped to teach Black adults about the impact of social problems affecting them. Thus, historical memory of culture is a constant theme found in his public dialog and pedagogical message to Black people. After his departure from the NOI, his emphasis on history shifts somewhat to discussions of political action as he attempts to join in the Civil Rights struggle and finds his unique place outside of the established Black organizations. Two weeks prior to his death, Malcolm X gave several speeches in Alabama to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) members to show solidarity with civil rights organizations. During this time, Malcolm linked the struggle of African Americans for civil rights with the struggle of African countries for independence from European colonial rule. Further, he met privately with civil rights leaders to pledge his support against discrimination in the South.

***Malcolm taught Black adults that the elimination of negative social stimuli could be brought about through collective action and cultural celebration in an organizational context.***

During his one-day visit to Selma, Malcolm X spoke to three hundred young civil rights fighters at Brown Chapel AME Church. With Martin Luther King and many of the central leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in jail, SCLC leaders arranged for King's wife, Coretta Scott King, and Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth to also address the meeting. Prior to the meeting, Malcolm offered his assistance to members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and told them that he planned to start a recruitment drive for the Organization of Afro-American Unity in the South "in about two weeks." (Malcolm X, 1992, p. 26).

**Ethos**

Malcolm's quest for individual self-definition and self-consciousness occurred while in prison. There, he reflected on his life in the larger context of world events and how they affect Black people. As an African American male in prison, he began his personal discovery to seek a place in a society who had rejected him based on his subordinate group status. Malcolm's religious conversion while in prison provided him with further confirmation of the extent of racism and its impact on African Americans; and it helped him to eliminate the negative social conditions in his life (change in diet, lifestyle, work ethic, and religious affiliation). His personal transformation and religious conversion served as a model for relating the depth of the problems Black people face.

Malcolm taught Black adults that the elimination of negative social stimuli could be brought about through collective action and cultural celebration in an organizational context. This is a basic issue of ethos in Kawaida Theory:

> ...liberation and a higher level of human life--to free ourselves, speak our own truth to the world, pose our own paradigm for human society and human relations; join with other third-world, progressive people to start a

new history of humankind (Karenga, 1990, p. 8).

In examining Malcolm X as a cultural advocate, I pose the question, How did he link cultural identification with Black achievement as a public figure?

Elijah Muhammad and the NOI emphasized racial pride and historical knowledge; but after visiting Africa in 1959, Elijah Muhammad witnessed the problems and suffering of poor people and focused his lectures away from Africa and more on African Americans and economic patronage (Clegg, 1997, pp. 240-241). This illustrates the ideological rift between Malcolm X and Muhammad. Malcolm X's message after 1959 still reflects African and African American history which demonstrates the separation of his views and messages from the ideology of Elijah Muhammad's NOI.

The question of the rationale for Malcolm's emphasis on culture may be answered by examining what James L. Conyers, Jr. defines as the Social Ecology of Malcolm X's life. Social Ecology is defined as examining issues of place, space and time to understand the environmental influences affecting a phenomenon to be studied (Conyers, 1999, p. 264). When we consider the place, space and time of Malcolm's birth, we see that he was born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1925. During the early twentieth century in the United States, African Americans lived in segregation and, in numerous occurrences, were lynched. This set the stage for Marcus Garvey's bold leadership emphasizing Black cultural pride. In Malcolm X, we see the strong cultural influence of Marcus Garvey, as both of Malcolm's parents were members of the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Malcolm recalls some of the discussions at the UNIA meetings his father took him to as a child:

> I can remember hearing of "Adam driven out of the garden into the caves of Europe," "Africa for the Africans," Ethiopians, Awake! My father would talk about how it would not be much longer before Africa would be completely run by Negroes – "By Black men" was the phrase he always used. No one knows when the hour of Africa's redemption cometh. It is in the wind. It is coming. One day, like a storm, it will be here. (Malcolm X, 1992, p. 6).

As a young adult, Malcolm was introduced to the NOI, an organization practicing a form of Islamic faith and founded with the influence of Garvey's Black Nationalism. Malcolm's eventual relocation to Harlem was significant in that Garvey's UNIA headquarters was located there and, being in an environment with a legacy of cultural pride, may have provided him with a cultural grounding. Evidence of this can be found in Malcolm's later, public statements emphasizing African culture more than the speeches of Elijah Muhammad or Martin Luther King. Malcolm X stated that:

> Our cultural revolution must be the means of bringing us closer to our African brothers and sisters. It must begin in the community and be based on community participation. Afro-Americans will be free to create only when they can depend on the Afro-American community for support, and Afro-American artists must realize that they depend on the Afro-American community for inspiration. (Malcolm X, 1970, p. 55)

In his final year, Malcolm X's emphasis on culture taught Black people to be proud of their African ancestors and their cultural heritage. Malcolm's advocacy of cultural pride would foreshadow the Black Power movement of the late 1960s. It also provided the model for cultural celebration, greater self-esteem, and ultimately greater achievement for African Americans:

> This cultural revolution will be the journey to our rediscovery of ourselves. History is a people's memory; and without a memory, man is demoted to the level of the lower animals. When you have no knowledge of your history, you're just another animal; in fact, you're a Negro; something that's nothing. The only Black man on earth

> who is called a Negro is one who has no knowledge of his history. The only Black man on earth who is called Negro is one who doesn't know where he came from. That's the one in America. They don't call Africans Negroes (Malcolm X, 1970, pp. 55-56).

Malcolm X used his personal experiences and observations of Black life to teach Black adults about the problems of their struggle for self-definition. His public statements challenged society's belief that Black suffering was due to their biological and intellectual inferiority based on race. Malcolm instead examined the social pressures emanating from historical enslavement of Blacks resulting in racism's creation of barriers to their achievement in society.

Malcolm X initially taught African Americans that as individuals they could eliminate some of the negative social pressures by following Elijah Muhammad and by changing their lifestyle and negative belief system. Malcolm stated that Black achievement collectively could be reached by joining the NOI, which had both a "blueprint" and track record for liberation of Blacks from social oppression.

Malcolm's emphasis on Black solidarity became stronger after his departure from the Nation of Islam. Malcolm X, at the end of his life, broadened his message by emphasizing Black cultural pride and historical knowledge to eliminate ignorance and promote action toward social change.

## Conclusion

Malcolm X's depth of insight as a Black national figure speaking about issues of historical racism and segregation for Blacks in the U.S. has attracted many researchers to offer definitive statements assessing his ideological views. Since his death in 1965, there have been a number of books written about Malcolm X utilizing these themes. The result was an ongoing debate about his legacy for African Americans. Many researchers have discussed various aspects of Malcolm X's ideology, and thus present a variety of views about him (Johnson, 1986, pp. xi-xiii).

Though Malcolm X has been included in many areas of study, his educational impact on the African American community through his intellectual views and actions is one that requires a closer examination. As an intellectual aesthetic, it is important to uncover his educational legacy for Black people. This type of study has utilized available research to explore Malcolm X from a new perspective: as an educator of African-American adults.

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# Giving Voice: An Education of African Americans Piney Woods Country Life School

**by Lee Martin**
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This study is a historical analysis of the Piney Woods Country Life School during the Jim Crow era. The study focuses on the school's underlying mission to aid African Americans in gaining financial and political control over their lives through education for self-reliance, self-determination and economic independence by any means necessary.

African Americans' participation in adult education began with their arrival in America as slaves and expanded to include the development of educational philosophies and institutions acquired through their own efforts. However, historical research of the adult education activities of African Americans and African American education is generally not labeled as "adult education" (Easter, 1995). Generally, the literature relative to the historical development of adult education has ignored this group's intellectual contributions to the knowledge base and its conceptual framework, and it has failed to acknowledge African Americans' participation as both consumers and producers of adult education programs (Colin, 1988).

Africentric and Afrocentric are terms that can be used interchangeably. This study is guided by an Africentric perspective, which posits that the African American experience and history are important and need to be acknowledged (Asante, 1987; Hayes and Colin, 1994). Adult education literature reflects little on the educational activities of African Americans. However, adult education played a vital role in African Americans' struggle for freedom (Easter, 1995; Peterson, 1996). Colin (1996) concluded that, "Adult education researchers have not considered the possibility that in response to the laws and traditions...of Jim Crowism, African Ameripeans...developed and institutionalized a socio-educational philosophy and ideology that reflected a different world view" (p. 42).

The purpose of this study is threefold. First, it is to expand the historical base of African-Americans' involvement in the field of adult education. Second, it is to document the history of African-Americans' struggle for equality in America through the recognition of their most formidable instrument, education. Third and foremost, its intent in telling their story is to give voice to a group whose experiences and contributions have been routinely ignored in America.

This study offers a historical analysis using both primary and secondary sources. The data collection process also included audio- and video-taped interviews with nine former students of individuals who were involved with the school. Statistical and demographic data were taken from class records, census reports, and artifacts such as photographs and personal memoirs. Official records, documents, and relics were used to analyze the ways in which the school reflected the educational experience of African Americans.

## Mississippi and the Rankin County Piney Woods Region

Rankin County was organized in 1828 (Mississippi Planning Commission, 1930). The Rankin County Piney Woods region (where the Piney Woods Country Life School was founded) was settled by Whites

from the Carolinas and Georgia, who could not afford acreage in the Mississippi Delta, and by former slaves because of its low cost (Harrison, 1982). In 1830, two years after the county was organized, 19 percent of the county's 2,083 population were African Americans of which 99.5 percent were slaves. The African American population increased to 40 percent in 1840; to 45 percent and 52 percent in 1850 and 1860 respectively; and with African Americans in slavery, exceeding 99 percent for each period (Mississippi Planning Commission, 1930). In both the 1900 and 1910 census, African Americans comprised more than 58 percent of the county's population; and of the 2,802 African American males of voting age, 51 percent were illiterate (Bureau of Census, 1910). Since the illiteracy rate for African Americans in the county was not recorded, the illiteracy rate for African American adults may have been less than or greater than the 51 percent recorded. However, it was most likely the latter.

McMillen (1989) refers to the state of Mississippi as "Jim Crow Mississippi" because education for African Americans ". . .was separate but never equal" (p. 71). This is quite evident since, according to McMillen, "the state invested most of its meager school dollars from 1890 onward in the education of its White minority, and only provided lip service to the support of a dual education system" (p.71). This belief was illustrated by A. A. Kincannon, the State's Superintendent of Education, who wrote in 1899: "It will be readily admitted by every White man in Mississippi that our public school system is designed primarily for the welfare of White children of the state, and incidentally for the Negro [sic] children" (McMillen, 1989, p. 72).

***...the state invested most of its meager school dollars from 1890 onward in the education of its White minority, and only provided lip service to the support of a dual education system.***

Holtzclaw (1984) stated that, "As late as 1962, Mississippi was considered the worst state in the union for sheer savagery (p. 72) and treatment of African Americans." An alumna of the school who recalled this incident from her childhood echoes this belief:

> I can remember my mother was taking me to the campus for some program ... and those Ku Klux Klansman was riding by and I remember she pushed me in the bushes, I was a little girl, to kind of hide out from those folks. But they were on horses and they had hoods over their heads.

Upon being asked about the effects of Jim Crow on the African American community of Rankin County, Mississippi she went on to say:

> We weren't allowed to vote for a long time. You were not allowed and you, you were afraid to vote. It had a great affect on all of us. For the simple reason [pause] it's just [pause] certain things you just couldn't do. Or didn't do. Because you knew you would be in jeopardy if you did it.

According to Holtzclaw (1984), "between 1890 and 1964, the Black population of Mississippi was stymied" (p. 71). They were repressed socially, politically, and economically. During this period, Mississippi had the lowest percentage of African American voters in the south; lynchings were a way of life in the state for them; and because African Americans were disfranchised due to the separate, but equal doctrine, local officials were free to misappropriate state funds designated for the African American (Holtzclaw, 1984; McMillen, 1989). These misappropriated, state's funds allowed plantation county Whites to benefit from African Americans residing in Mississippi. Moreover, it provided plantation owners with a labor force presumed to be ignorant, docile and dependent upon Whites. Therefore, it is this belief which allowed Whites in Mississippi to gain education and economic benefits

at the expense of African Americans.

**Establishing the Piney Woods Country Life School**

According to the school's archivist, the Rankin County African American community had been talking about organizing a school for twenty-five years before the Piney Woods Country Life School was founded. Jones (undated) asserted, "no one had ever encouraged them and not any of them knew just what to do" (p. 18; see also Cooper, 1989). The first substantial donation that the school received was forty acres of land from Edward Nelson Taylor, a former slave (Harrison, 1982; Jones, undated). McMillen, (1989) cities an early graduate of the school as saying, "The beginning of Piney Woods was by Black people" (p. 97). Despite the social and political climate in Mississippi, the African American community of Rankin County recognized education as their source of empowerment and were willing to support and finance a school in their community.

Laurence C. Jones (1882-1975) founded the Piney Woods Country Life School in 1909 in Rankin County, Mississippi, to serve African Americans. The school was founded during the Jim Crow era of the separate-but-equal doctrine (this was between the late 1890's and the enforcement of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Topeka, Kansas). According to Lusane (1992), the separate-but-equal doctrine became embedded in the American culture after the United States Supreme Court concluded that this, "opened an era of racism and American style "apartheid". . . that permeated every facet of U. S. society for the next sixty-one years" (p. 17) and thereafter. The enforcement of this practice imposed cultural and societal restrictions upon the African American population and caused a significant portion of them to live in poverty, illiteracy and peonage.

***Critics of industrial education questioned whether industrial educational programs equipped African Americans to survive or whether they simply prepared them for continued subservience.***

Jones, an African American who had just recently graduated from the University of Iowa, went to Mississippi to provide education and the chance for a better life to African Americans in the Piney Woods region (Day, 1955). Harrison (1982) stated that Jones was an advocate of industrial education who believed that manual labor education could help society's "bottom rail" (p. 3). Critics of industrial education questioned whether industrial educational programs equipped African Americans to survive or whether they simply prepared them for continued subservience. These critics believed that if African Americans were to succeed, they would need a higher education. Miller (1908) described such critics as lacking "binocular vision" (p. 281). Miller further stated that, "the discussion as to whether industrial or higher education is of greater importance to the Negro . . . should be considered on the basis of their relative, not rival claims" (p. 281; see also Colin, 1989; Harrison, 1982). However, these opposing ideologies fostered a tension in the African American community between those who advocated higher education and those who advocated vocational education. This tension led to many believing that vocational education was inferior to higher education. Despite this debate, the Rankin County African American community was pleased to see their twenty-five-year dream evolve into the Piney Woods Country Life School.

When Piney Woods Country Life School was founded, little if any differences were made between the ways in which children and adults learned. During the early years, the school had many students who were older than the traditional elementary and high school student. According to the school's archivist:

> A lot of times the students' parents would come to Piney Woods to learn to read and to write and things such as that. Because they had very little

> ... educational opportunities before Piney Woods came.

A 1942 alumnus of the school recalled that separate housing accommodations were made available on the first floor of the boys' dormitory exclusively for grown men enrolled in the school. A 1945 alumnus echoed a similar experience when she described her classmates at Piney Woods School as follows:

> We were 17, I would say. Everyone else in our class was 18,19,21,22. It was not unusual at that time for people to be graduating high school at, you know, 20 years old or older. So they didn't seem to be older students . . . they were the culture for that time.

A 1933 alumnus gave an account of how Piney Woods School educated families through his example of "Pa" Collins, who lived on the campus and graduated along with his children. According to McMillen (1989), Collins an illiterate field hand, his wife, their seven children and his mother and father were among the 200 boarders at Piney Woods Country Life School in 1922" (p. 96). Also Harrison (1982) stated that Jones described some of the school's first students as "big, gawky, country boys and girls who came with their earthly possessions in a sack and sometimes with no sack at all" (p.38). In addition to this, a two-year junior college was established at the school in 1931 and operated until the early 1960's (Cooper, 1989).

During Jones' administration, not only did the school serve its students, but it also served the African American communities of Rankin and Simpson Counties, as well as Mendenhall County, and oftentimes beyond the school's surrounding communities. Jones and his wife, Grace Allen Jones, organized conferences and workshops to aid in the improvement of farming, housing, nutrition, and health care. The school's archivist stated:

> Mrs. Jones, when she came to Piney Woods in 1912, immediately became active in the community. First establishing Mothers Clubs . . . she organized local women in the communities, and set up workshops and seminars... on child care, nutrition and housekeeping and all kinds of issues . . . she went on to work with the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, beginning in 1920 as their state president. She served as state president from 1920 'til 1924; and from 1924 until her death in 1928, she was chairperson of the legislative committee... African American offenders, no matter their age, were automatically sent to Parchman, no matter the offense... [T]hey felt that was wrong and that there was a need for a reform school, a training school, as they called it... [T]hey actually presented a resolution to the state legislature. The Legislature approved the resolution, but didn't fund any money to build the school. So, the women by their own efforts... established... the first reform school in Clinton, Mississippi.

The African American community was an integral part of the school with each supporting each other. A 1946 alumnus, after telling how the African American community lived and how his father and others supported the school said, "I was raised in a village and didn't realize it." Jones utilized the village concept, through the Piney Woods School, to empower the school's students and the African American community.

Jones' efforts within the school and throughout the African American community stressed self-reliance. The students provided most of the school's labor. A 1942 alumnus recalled, ". . . these buildings here, we built these buildings. Made the bricks." During Jones's administration the school had its own hospital/infirmary, water tank and fire fighting equipment, and post office; and it operated a farm and several industrial shops. In addition to Jones placing stress on self-reliance, the participants' accounts of their experiences at Piney Woods illuminates the school's unarticulated focus on using education to determine

one's own plight, gaining economic independence, and achieving these things by any means necessary. The next three sections summarize these factors as forces in their lives.

**Education for Self-determination**

The Piney Woods School experience had a significant impact on the surrounding African American communities, as well as its students. While it was not highly profiled as such, its underlying mission was to aid African Americans, both those who attended Piney Woods and those in surrounding communities, in gaining financial and political control over their lives. During the early years, the school's focus was on providing students with the opportunity to become landowners instead of sharecroppers. Later, its focus turned toward inspiring its students to own businesses and to become professionals and educators. While this is not in keeping with the ideology of what the opponents believed were the goals of industrial education, it was Piney Woods Country Life School's unstated mission.

This distinction was necessary if White people in Rankin County were to buy into the idea of a school for African Americans. This is quite evident as the comments from Webster (undated), a local White business person, recount, ". . .this was not to be a book larnin [sic] school... he wants to larn em [sic] to do more and better work. . . ." This was the type of school that was pleasing to the people" (p. 3). Webster concluded that "a book larnin" [sic] school for the Negroes would have gotten no support whatever and Jones would have aroused prejudices that would have been fatal..." (p. 3; see also Harrison 1982; McMillen, 1989).

***During the early years, the school's focus was on providing students with the opportunity to become landowners instead of sharecroppers.***

However, an alumna of the school and participant in this study recalls the school's curriculum as follows:

> ...they were college preparatory courses... they had their own curriculum, you didn't choose... I had Algebra, General Science, Biology, Geometry, Physics, Chemistry and of course English and Grammar. . . . These courses prepared me for the science courses I had in nursing school. . . . I had no problems passing the Boards [Nursing].

In addition to the school's curriculum, racial pride was instilled in the students to assist them in recognizing and developing their own potential and self-determination. The recollections of participants in this study reflect this belief. A 1946 alumna said, "We had people come in, role models. . . . they always had people come in that made you realize; I want to move on, to go further." Another participant in this study said, AI remember that Marian Anderson came here to Jackson and they got a [sic] bus load of us and brought us up that we could hear her. . .and back in the 40s and 50s, that was unheard of."

These former students recognized Jones' imprint on every aspect of their educational experiences at Piney Woods and thereafter. One participant stated that her experiences at Piney Woods taught her not to give up so easily: This attribute in her character development proved to be useful in her career. The school stressed the importance of education and what it would mean to the students over time. A 1945 alumna recalled that, "He [Jones] always just tried to instill in us that nobody could take what was up here [pointing to her head] from us, once we got that."

The educational practices at Piney Woods School were also extended to the community. According to Jones (undated), Farmer's Conferences were conducted at the school for the community:

> At these farmers' conferences. . .we always try to have a good speaker to inspire the farmers to better living as well as better farming. At each meeting we

> have those who have succeeded to stand up and tell how they happened to buy their first acre of land, or how they raised more corn. . .or a farmer's wife tells how she is helping. . . .In this way we get an exchange of ideas and everybody goes home determined to make a new start. (p.49)

According to Harrison (1982), when the 1919 Farmers' Conference occurred, African-American farmers had purchased more that 6,000 acres of land in the area near the Piney Woods Country Life School.

Jones' philosophy emphasized the sharing of experiences, provided opportunities for self-expression amongst the community members and the students, and fostered an environment for self-determination and self-reliance. Through this practice they were given an opportunity to relish the results of attributes in others, to set goals of their own design, and they were allowed the opportunity to foresee the possibilities and potentials of their successes over time.

**Education for Self-reliance**

During the Jim Crow era, when the economic independence for African Americans was limited or non-existent, Piney Woods Country Life School offered students choices and alternatives. These choices and alternatives allowed them to establish and maintain economic independence over time. According to Purcell (1956), when Jones envisioned the founding of the Piney Woods Country Life School, he did so with this purpose:

> [It] must meet the needs of the people where they were and help raise their economic level for improved educational facilities meant better clothes, better homes, better health... a higher economic standard of living for the family and eventually for the whole neighborhood. (p.28)

Jones's goal to improve the economic status of Piney Wood's students was reflected in the school's curriculum requirement. In order to ensure their success of obtaining economic independence, Jones--according to Harrison (1982)--recommended that all graduates of the school acquire no less than three skills for earning a living. Harrison asserted that Jones's objective was that, "The first skill should be mastered... the other two... learned well enough so... one of them could be used if the first one failed" (p. 3). This concept is voiced in the following account by a 1945 alumna:

> Around the middle of my tenure... it boiled down that they needed only one Home Ec teacher... I had (pause) learned so many things at Piney Woods I could do just about anything. I was asked if I would do pre-vocational art. And someone else got the Home Ec job, which I'll tell you, was a White person. And I feel that if I had not taken advantage of all that... was offered at Piney Woods, I might not have been able to have filled this position of pre-vocational (pause) art.

This emphasis on students acquiring more than one skill became the means for many of the students to sustain themselves and continue their education beyond Piney Woods Country Life School. A 1942 alumnus explained that he had done plumbing, brick masonry, and roofing while in college, and all of these skills were learned at Piney Woods School. This participant further stated that he could have made a good living even if he had not gone to college.

According to the school's archivist, Jones believed that, "....if Black people became economically self-sufficient, then that would help a lot of other things fall into line." Jones's belief and efforts in obtaining economic independence for African Americans was effective in improving the living and economic status of the school's graduates and members of the surrounding communities. This was evident in the career choices and opportunities these students and graduates had, as well as in the increased land ownership by African Americans in their respective communities.

**Education "By Any Means Necessary"**

Through Piney Woods Country Life School, Jones

advanced the social, political and economic status of African Americans in Rankin County. However, some of Jones's contemporaries questioned his actions and behavior toward the dominant White culture in Mississippi, thereby suggesting that he was complacent and accommodating to their culture. Harrison (1982) states that because of Jones' relationship with the European American community, "he was not always understood by his Black contemporaries" (p. 116). Holtzclaw (1989) asserted that Jones "had no conception of race relations in the South" (p. 122). However, Webster (undated) declared, "Jones was capitalizing on our [Whites'] human weakness to want to be consulted about things" (p. 3). A 1945 alumna said:

> . . . [H]e made friends with a few White people that I think protected him from getting harmed . . . and that might have been his way of learning to deal with that . . . you know it was dangerous at one time for anybody to try to help Black people to become educated. . . . That could have been his way of, you know, kind of getting what he wanted done. . . . so far it paid out.

Harrison concluded that Jones' relationship with the European American community, "was responsible for much of his [Jones'] success" (p. 116). Ultimately, Jones' success resulted in the social, political, and economic betterment of the school's graduates and students, as well as the surrounding communities of Rankin and Simpson Counties.

However, Jones was not known as one to actively protest the treatment of African Americans or as a political activist for equal or voting rights. In fact, one participant in this study stated, A. . . he was always a socially active person but never really a very political person." While Jones was not known to be political, he did express his beliefs and discontent regarding the inequality and injustice aimed at African Americans in his writings. Jones (1935) described the African American's position in America in this manner:

> In the South . . . a fear of social pressure and criticism has made thinking people slaves to old prejudices . . . conventionality and sometimes ignorance. . . .The colored man is regarded as inferior . . . his will and activities . . . subject to domination. In the North . . . [he] is not ostracized from public places... does not go unrepresented in . . . government . . . is allowed to exist . . . feeling that he has the same opportunity as any other American, only to be rudely awakened by his real position when occasion arises . . . in America we have a problem involving the white American and the dark American. (pp. 83-84)

Also, Jones asserted that, in regards to the injustice in American society and practices toward African Americans,

> . . . there should be a sense of justice and a love of fair play. Unfortunately, it seems that this attribute is difficult to cultivate. Justice is the first step toward inter-racial goodwill, and a long one. Disenfranchisement, restrictions against the buying of a house one is able to afford, and second class train accommodations for which full fare is paid, are daily violations of the fundamental principle; but, worse than these, is the murder of an accused citizen at the hands of a revengeful mob. (p. 90)

In addition, some of his students recall him motivating them to strive for equality and justice, and of him working behind the scenes to help others. A 1942 alumnus of the school, recalled:

> He didn't go all the way out, but at the same time he would help you . . . the school was here and a lot of things he can't do, but he can say . . . when Medgar Evans came down here, Dr. Jones . . . said, "I'll do what I can." He didn't say he wouldn't do anything.

In describing Jones' relationship with the students, this graduate stated, "He'd sit down and lecture you. He'd tell you, "If you let someone run over you, he will always run over you. I don't care who it is.'"

These actions and statements do not present Jones as the accommodationist some believed him to be. While Jones may have been accommodating in some aspects to aid the school and provide opportunities for the students, it is clear that he was not accepting of the second class citizenship enforced on African Americans. However, what Jones did was to provide the means by which his students could achieve self-determination and economic independence so that they would eventually have a voice and become enlightened and active citizens in Mississippi, as well as anywhere else in America.

The former students who participated in this study are each currently actively involved in their communities and the state of Mississippi. Jones may not have been viewed as a political person, but his role as an educator and his involvement in the community illustrates that he was extremely political during this era in America. While it may appear to some that he took the road of least resistance, the curriculum he chose for students at Piney Woods Country Life School focused on providing them with whatever was necessary to ensure their success in whatever job or life's goal they envisioned for themselves.

**Conclusion**

The political climate in America for African Americans has been one of constant struggle in the area of education. Education has meant more to African Americans than the day-to-day activities we engage in when we look at the traditional classroom. Education has been the driving force in the lives of African Americans and their struggle for equality in America.

Laurence C. Jones viewed the educational process as a vehicle to gain self-determination, economic independence, and a voice. Moreover, Jones' educational philosophy proved that industrial education could be used to aid African Americans in becoming self-reliant. In spite of the negative criticism about industrial education, Jones persisted in his belief that education was essential to students' ability to achieve social, political, and economic control over their lives. The participants in this study reflected these ideals in their life choices and beliefs. They view their experiences at Piney Woods as having afforded them with a chance to move up economically from the "bottom rail." Piney Woods Country Life School is an example of how African Americans viewed and used education, at all levels, to achieve in the American society.

*Lee Martin is beginning her second-year doctoral study at Northern Illinois University. A major emphasis during the course of her study is to expand the historical and literature base of African American's involvement in the fields of education and adult education. Lee's interest in this area includes using visual media to document untold stories.*

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# Afritics: Theorizing the Politics of African American Women Political Leaders

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This paper will summarize research which examined the politics of African American political leaders. A critical, ethnographic, case study was used to obtain the data. As part of a larger study, the data revealed that Afritics more accurately explains the politics of African American women as it relates to their political leadership experiences. This paper seeks to theorize the politics of African American women political leaders by providing a discussion of afritics and politics. Second, the paper explores a history of afritics as evidenced by the lives and works of Sojourner Truth, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida Bell Wells-Barnett, Lou Hamer, Fannie Mary Church Terrell, and Shirley Chisolm. Third, the paper will examine the contemporary afritics of former U. S. Senator Carol Moseley Braun and Chicago Alderwoman Dorothy Tillman. The paper concludes with vital implications for scholars of African descent who are developing theories about politics of African American political leaders.

**Politics**

There are many definitions and dimensions to the term politics. Politics is broadly defined as a power relationship which involves the ability to influence the behavior of others. Politics requires a belief in the American ideal that politics works for the betterment of all those who are the margins as well as those who are at the center; however, some politics involve using political power against the marginalized.

***Politics requires a belief in the American ideal the betterment of all those who are the margins as well as those who are at the center; however, some politics involve using political power against the marginalized.***

Kenneth Smorsten (1980) states that politics is a process of deciding who gets what, when, and how, and that this decision-making process is typically made by political elites who exercise the most power and control. These political elites typically are White, male, and upper class. Croteau (1995) argues that a large number of those who claim to represent the people are really about self-interest. They are rich, and are out of touch with common, everyday people. The hegemonic nature of politics is evidenced by the existence of political, wealthy elites who are familiar with the rules of the political game. These politicians use their knowledge, material capital, and cultural capital to make decisions about who gets to keep most of the benefits in this country (Rouder 1997, p.9-24; Harrigan, 1993, pp. 26-31).

**Afritics**

The data reveals that the women in this study have a political style that is not consistent with what has been identified above as politics, but what I term here as afritics. Afritics is an Africentric understanding of politics. Afritics is an African-centered perspective of politics and operates as a defining construct in which people are viewed in an existential context as being

participatory, collective, subjective agents in history who have been and continue to be manipulated by the Western concepts of the political process. Margaret Shaw (1992) states that an African-centered approach moves one through stages of personal, communal, and spiritual transcendence to bring about empowerment and the unifying philosophic concepts in the African American experience characterized by cooperation, connection, and independence. An African-centered perspective requires a world and cultural view which entertains the question, "How do we use corrective politics to integrate history and inquire about the liberation of people?". Phyllis Ham Garth (1996) asserts that an African-centered perspective will allow us to analyze the decisions made regarding scarce resources: Race is, and continues to be, a major factor in these resources. By using an African-centered perspective, we are able to reconstruct Western values by using multiple lenses. Afritics comes about because of the multiple lenses, consciousness, and vision that African American women use in facing their daily life. Afritics is the recognition that there exists two worlds; a White world –which is the home of politics, and a Black world –where the women in this study learned from their experiences acquired in family, church, and community how to use afritics and move from margin to center. bell hooks (1984) described her early awareness of her multiple consciousness and movement between margin and center. hooks states:

> To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body. This mode of seeing reminded us of the experience of a whole universe; a body made up of margin and center. Our survival depends on ongoing public awareness of the separation between margin and center and an ongoing private acknowledgement that we were a necessary, vital part of that whole (p. iv).

***Politics, referred to as "politics as usual," is the voices of White, male elites making decisions that will affect the lives of many, diverse, everyday people whom they probably do not know.***

Deborah King (1990) discussed how circumstances affect the multiple consciousness of African-American women, their politics and their interaction of the world. King commented:

> Black women have long recognized the special circumstances of our lives in the U.S., the commonalites that we share with all women, as well as the bonds that connect us to the men of our race. We have also recognized that the interactive oppressions that circumscribe our lives provide a distinctive content for Black womanhood (p. 265).

In this study, the data suggests that politics is not appropriate for African American women leaders. Afritics is essential for their survival. Politics involves a eurocentric understanding of the political world. Politics stresses finite activity, meaning that an outcome from decision-making is based upon the purpose of winning. Conversely, afritics emphasizes an infinite process of interactions or continuous activity based upon what is good for the collective. Those who represent center in politics are highly concerned with competition and the allocation of resources to the haves and have-nots. Afriticians (those who afritic) pay particular attention to the issues evolving from those on the bottom because they are concerned with lifting as they climb.

Politicians don't always subscribe nor practice the American ideal in their decision-making process. Afriticians, on the other hand, are aware of the American ideal and are highly concerned with the eradication of social inequalities. Politicians are not required to understand the world of Afriticians; however, Afriticians are exposed to the world of politicians very early in their lives and quickly learn to politically flex, or move, between the

White world and their world of origin. The ability to politically flex between environments, culture, and systems represents a high degree of political sharpness and skill as evidenced by the participants studied.

Politics, referred to as "politics as usual," is the voices of White, male elites making decisions that will affect the lives of many, diverse, everyday people whom they probably do not know. The majority of politicians represent "the haves" rather than "the have nots." Afritics is an awareness of "politics as usual" and entails bringing difference to the political table. In the decision-making process, the African American women studied bring themselves and their multiple-lenses to the political table. As Afriticians, the women studied have a strong orientation of community as family and, therefore, have a strong affiliation with their communities. (Unlike many of the typical politicians, struggle is familiar to many Afriticians. As a result, Afriticians emphasize community service (lifting as they climb), and education, both formal and nonformal. Afriticians possess a unique understanding of oppression, and they continuously act as change agents in an effort to end racism, classism, and sexism. Therefore, they constantly battle the "isms." The women studied were not the first to afritic; rather history provides examples of African American women who engaged in afritics. I will now portray six such women.

**A History of Afritics**

One of the earliest African American women to afritic was Sojourner Truth, a former slave (1799-1883). Sojouner Truth achieved fame as a preacher and lecturer, an abolitionist, a supporter of women's rights and an advocate of the poor. Sojourner Truth is most known for her "Ain't I a woman?" speech, delivered before a women's rights convention (Seneca Falls Convention) held in Akron, Ohio, in May, 1851. In her speech, Truth created controversy because, through her afritics, she challenged the audience to re-think the definition of a woman. She pointed out that she was not White nor was she male, and yet she was a woman, a Black woman (Lerner, 1972, pp. 1172-1176; Hine, 1993, pp. 370-375).

Anna Julia Haywood Cooper (1858-1964), a former slave, was an educator, lecturer, researcher, teacher, author, feminist, and an advocate for human rights. Cooper obtained both bachelor's and master's degrees from Oberlin; and, at the age of sixty-two, she received a Ph.D. in Latin from the Sorbonne in Paris, France. Dr. Cooper's afritics is evidenced in her book *Black Woman of the South* (1892) which is considered one of the first African American feminist publications. In her book Julia stated that the African American woman evaluates and sees her world as called for by her race and as a woman. Also, Cooper stated that the Black woman could ill afford to put her sex or her race aside as she seeks to serve the interests of humanity (Hine, 1993, pp. 275-281; Lerner, 1972, p. 574).

***Truth created controversy because, through her afritics, she challenged the audience to re-think the definition of a woman. She pointed out that she was not White nor was she male, and yet she was a woman, a Black woman.***

Ida Wells-Barnett (1862-1931) was born in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and was educated at Rust College (formerly known as Shaw University). She was the oldest child of slave parents. Her fight against racism, sexism, and classism evidences her afritics. Ida was a teacher, writer, reporter, journalist, author, and lecturer. She was the founder of the first, African-American, women's, suffrage club in the state of Illinois; and she used her club influence and charisma to elect Chicago's first African-American Alderman, Oscar DePriest. Among Ida's many political activities, she was an unsuccessful independent candidate for the Illinois State Senate

(Hine, 1993, pp.1242-1246; Lerner, 1972, pp. 196-205).

Mary Church Terrell's (1863-1954) afritics are marked by her sixty-six years of fighting against racism and sexism. Terrell hailed from a prominent African-American family and graduated at the top of her class from Oberlin College. She was a teacher, writer, lecturer, and social activist. Fluent in three languages, Terrell lectured nationally and internationally on the significance of human rights (Hine, 1993, p. 1159; Lerner, 1972, pp. 206-211).

In "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired," Fannie Lou Hamer's afritics are heard. Hamer is especially known for her grassroots activity and public speaking. Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-1977), a former sharecropper, was the youngest of twenty brothers and sisters. In her struggle for human rights, Fannie Lou was jailed, beaten, shot, and her home was bombed. Hamer served as field secretary for SNNC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) and assisted in the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic National Convention where she served as vice-chairperson and delegate to the Democratic National Convention. Fannie Lou Hamer is most noted in afritics for her endless contributions to the Civil Rights Movement. These contributions served to transform the Democratic Party in raising pressing questions surrounding basic human needs and rights (Hine, 1993, pp. 518-520; Lerner, 1972, pp. 609-614).

Shirley Chisolm is a former teacher, nursery school director, and assembly woman who made the first serious bid by a woman for the presidential nomination of a major party. She is the author of two books. In *Unbought and Unbossed*, the former Representative displays her multiple lenses and her afritics as she discusses race, class, and gender in the context of the American political scene (Hine, 1993, pp. 236-238; Lerner, 1972, pp. 352-357).

African American history has several examples of women who engaged in afritics and have served as role models for contemporary African American women who are participating in afritics. Chicago Alderwoman Dorothy Tillman and U.S. Senator Carol Moseley Braun are just two of the women who have followed the path of Truth, Terrell, Hamer, and Chisolm.

**Contemporary Afritics: Dorothy Tillman and Carol Moseley Braun**

Dorothy Tillman's afritics are evidenced by her service as a member of the Chicago City Council and by her participation in the Civil Rights Movement. Dorothy Tillman, an Alabama native, was appointed in 1983 and subsequently won the election in 1985 to maintain her seat as Third Ward Alderwoman. Tillman grew up in the Civil Rights Movement and was a member of Dr. King's staff. She was one of King's trainees and a field organizer for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Tillman was one of the first ten people to march into Selma to fight for the right to vote. She was on the Edmund Petis Bridge renowned for the attention it brought to the voting rights bill.

At the age of sixteen, Tillman found herself working with Dr. King and came to Chicago on what was called a "Northern Tour." Dorothy returned to Chicago at the request of Dr. King in October, 1965. Her return marked her entry into Chicago politics. Dorothy's afritics is seen by her fight for liberation and the eradication of oppression. She stated:

> I came to Chicago very different – to fight and free these people up here. . . they were more frightened than the people in Selma, or Alabama. You know, Daly had to give you your job—done this, don that, and they had straw bosses. It was the same system, but it was worse because these people thought they were free and had something. It was an urban plantation . . . it was far worse than the southern plantation, to me in my opinion (Rodgers, 1987, p. 86).

Tillman's encounter with Chicago politics set the stage for her afritics. She stated:

> I'd never seen such dishonest White people until I got here; and also, I'd never seen Black people stand up against other Black folks like that.

> These folks, ooh, it was a rude awakening! And that was my first venture in Chicago, and we organized for open housing, we fought for open housing, we marched in Grant Park, we marched all over (Rodgers, 1987, p. 93).

Carol Moseley Braun's afritics are displayed through a variety of government initiatives and service. The former U. S. Senator was the first African American woman to serve in the Senate. Braun was also the Assistant U. S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. Braun, an alumnus of University of Chicago Law School discussed her afritics:

> When I got to the State Legislature I knew – and remembered, I had been a U.S. attorney so I knew how and tried a number of cases regarding the big issues of our time regarding health care and housing cases. So, I knew kind of the federal groundwork of the federal law in a number of the areas such as housing, environment and/or health care (Rodgers, 1997, p.117).

Attorney Braun also reflected upon her early years of activisim and revealed that her afritics is an expression of her humanity:

> I was involved, of course, in the march with Dr. King when I was a teenager. I was sixteen when I marched with him; I was 16 or 15. Had been friends with Fred Hampton and involved with a number of my friends who were Black Panthers and activist students at the time, and so I was kind of tangential to those efforts. It's very much a struggle to express my own humanity, in the sense that my folks never gave me a sense of limitations based on my gender or based on race. They gave me the notion that my duty was to be and do the best job I could where I was planted and those kinds of things – and that neither race nor gender would stand in the way. (Rodgers, 1997, pp. 85, 128).

***The research revealed that the women studied have a political style that is consistent with what is termed as "afritics," which is using politics to promote the potential of the powerless.***

**Summary**

This paper has theorized about the politics of African-American political leaders by providing a discussion for afritics and politics. This discussion begins with the claim that politics does not always work for the betterment of all, and that political power is wielded or used against those on the margins. Politics, then, is the prerogative of the powerful. The research revealed that the women studied have a political style that is consistent with what is termed as "afritics," which is using politics to promote the potential of the powerless.

Second, a history of afritics was provided as evidenced by the lives and works of Sojourner Truth, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida Bell Wells-Barnett, Fannie Lou Hamer, Mary Church Terrell, and Shirley Chisolm. This history in the afritics of these women provides a context for future African American political leaders.

Third, the paper examined the contemporary afritics of Chicago Alderwoman Dorothy Tillman and former U.S. Senator Carol Moseley Braun. These contemporary, women, political leaders echo the afritics of those African-American, women, political leaders who preceded them. Chicago Alderwoman Dorothy Tillman's afritics are marked by her grassroots participation and by her service on the Chicago City Council. Tillman challenges racism, classism, and oppression whether it is on the streets or on the City Council floor. Dorothy Tillman's immersion into afritics began with her participation in the Civil Rights Movement where she worked directly with and for Dr. King. Through her participation in this transformative social movement, Dorothy Tillman was baptized into the struggle for civil rights. Tillman's afritics have allowed her to take what she had acquired

and learned "outside of the box" to propose change "inside the box" via her service on the Chicago City Council.

The afritics of former U. S. Senator Carol Moseley Braun were demonstrated when she marched with Dr. King as a student activist in the civil rights era and being tangential to the efforts of the Black Panther Party. Moseley Braun's afritics are further evidenced by her struggle to express her own humanity and to do the best job she could wherever she was promoting the cause of humanity. Carol Moseley Braun, a University of Chicago Law School graduate, is highly knowledgeable about what occurs both "inside and outside the box." Her afritics are highly polished. She is highly knowledgeable of the formal as well as the non-formal ways of knowing. As a result of her formal education, extensive government service, and extensive knowledge and networks both "inside and outside the box," she became the first African-American woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

The findings in this paper hold vital implications for those of the African diaspora because it contributes to the literature relative to race and the reluctance of mainstream adult educators to readily address race, class, and gender and their impact on adult learners and leaders. Findings in this paper also suggest that afritics provides adult educators with a better understanding as to the lived realities and lived experiences of African-American, women, political leaders. Finally, this paper demonstrates that there are other perspectives in understanding the diverse nature of adults as leaders and learners in society.

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# Faculty Job Satisfaction In a University Work Environment

**by Mable Springfield-Scott**
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This research study investigated how sex, age, race/ethnicity, tenure, school/college, and academic rank affected job satisfaction among faculty in a university work environment in Piedmont, North Carolina.

A descriptive survey of the 600, tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty was conducted by the researcher from March 1, 1999, through April 1, 1999. The researcher received 243 completed questionnaires, which represented a third of the 600 faculty members on campus. The subjects represented male and female faculty members. Their ages ranged from less than 25 years old to over 65 years old. They were Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, and other ethnic backgrounds. The respondents were tenured and non-tenured faculty representing all schools and colleges at the subject university. Their academic ranks included professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, and adjunct.

The subjects' responses represented four indices of the dependent variable, job satisfaction, labeled as the Maslow Basic Needs Index, the room/Herzberg Barrier Index, the Vroom/Herzberg Satisfaction Index, and the Maslow Satisfaction Index. Responses also represented the six independent variables, which were sex, age, race/ethnicity, tenure, school/college, and academic rank. Testing the indices with the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that sex, school/college, and academic rank were significant.

***The research question is: Do the factors of sex, age, race/ethnicity, tenure, school/college, and academic rank affect job satisfaction among faculty in a university work environment in Piedmont, North Carolina?***

Post hoc analysis with the Pearson chi-square further validated these findings. Therefore, sex, school/college, and academic rank affected faculty job satisfaction within this Piedmont, North Carolina University. Age, race, and tenure were not significant. Therefore, age, race, and tenure did not affect faculty job satisfaction within this Piedmont, North Carolina University.

**Faculty Job Satisfaction in a University Work Environment**

Colleges and universities across America are moving toward more student-centered environments where the student is of primary focus. True educational visionaries have realized how andragogy is the appropriate way to think and work with adult learners as best described by Malcolm Knowles (Merriam & Brockett, 1997, p. 135).

Total Fall enrollment in institutions of higher education has been sporadic for younger, traditional students but has steadily spiraled for mature, non-traditional students. According to the *Digest of Education Statistics*, enrollment figures have constantly increased for students 25 years of age and older from 1970 to 1994 to projections into the 21st century (*Digest of Education Statistics,* 1996).

Aggressive institutions have utilized these statistics to identify prime prospects and have created

non-traditional programs geared toward the more mature learner. They have recognized that adults return to school to enhance, improve, and change their jobs and careers.

As the academy plans for the new millennium, it must understand how important the faculty is in regard to the adult learner. Faculty members interact one-on-one with adult learners each day in class. The best way to satisfy or delight the student customer must be to first satisfy and delight the faculty member.

Are faculty members happy? Is the faculty part of the university family? Has the university developed a warm, nurturing climate? What produces job satisfaction?

**Research Question and Problem to be Studied**

The research question is: Do the factors of sex, age, race/ethnicity, tenure, school/college, and academic rank affect job satisfaction among faculty in a university work environment in Piedmont, North Carolina?

As a conceptual framework, this study was theoretically grounded in how Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954), Vroom's determinants of job satisfaction (Vroom, 1964), and Herzberg's motivator and hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1976) measured faculty job satisfaction in the university's work setting. Maslow's hierarchy of needs were physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1954). Vroom's determinants of job satisfaction were supervision, work groups, job content, wages, promotional opportunities, and hours of work (Vroom, 1964). Herzberg's intrinsic motivators and extrinsic hygiene factors included achievement, recognition for achievement, work, responsibility, growth or advancement as the motivators; while company policy and administration, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary, status, and security were the hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1976).

**Methodology**

*Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses were postulated:

- H 1: Male faculty are more satisfied with their jobs than are female faculty.
- H 2: Age is positively associated with job satisfaction.
- H 3: Black faculty have a greater job satisfaction than do faculty of other racial or ethnic backgrounds.
- H 4: Tenured faculty have greater job satisfaction than do non-tenured faculty.
- H 5: Faculty who work in the College of Engineering have greater job satisfaction than faculty in other schools and colleges.
- H 6: Academic rank is positively associated to job satisfaction.

*Research Design*

The research methodology employed a descriptive survey design that emphasized logic and observation in order to progress from the basic behavioral theories to analyzing the research question. Using responses that expressed specific attitudes of faculty members on the research questionnaires, the researcher explained influences on faculty job satisfaction. The data shows factors which influenced job satisfaction in the university work environment and thereby answered the research question.

*Instrumentation*

The investigator searched numerous publications and the Internet for an existing questionnaire designed to measure job satisfaction. The questionnaire used for this survey was developed by the investigator using a NASA questionnaire as a model (NASA, 1996). The questionnaire was simple, easy-to-read, and completed in 20-minutes.

The respondents' answers could be expressed using a Likert scale ranging from agree completely which equaled one point; agree somewhat which equaled two points; neither agree nor disagree which equaled three points; disagree somewhat which equaled four points; and disagree completely which equaled five points. The degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction for each statement was determined according to the points assigned.

A low number indicated satisfaction while a high number indicated dissatisfaction.

*Population and Sample*

A convenience sample was solicited for this study in a Piedmont university setting. It is often difficult to obtain a representative random sample; therefore the researcher used a convenience sample with 600 faculty members. The faculty were categorized as full-time and part-time, tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty. A 234-sample size was needed for a population of 600 at the 95 percent confidence level (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). As of April 1, 1999, the research received 243 completed questionnaires, which represented a third of the 600 faculty members on campus. This level of faculty input enabled the investigator to make some definitive conclusions from the survey results.

*Data Collection Procedure*

All faculty members received a cover letter; a questionnaire; and a self-addressed envelope through the university's mail system. In addition, the researcher encouraged faculty members to complete and return the survey by sending a colorful, thank-you/reminder card two days after the initial questionnaire had been distributed.

**Processing and Analysis of Data**

When the researcher received each questionnaire, it was coded with a number which coincided with a scantron sheet. The researcher transcribed answers from the ten questions listed on the questionnaire to a matching scantron sheet. If respondents failed to answer a question, the researcher shaded the "number 9 bubble" on the scantron sheet to indicate the missing value.

The university's computer services center scanned the sheets using an ASCII format to produce a database file. Using Microsoft Excel, Version 5.0 and Version '98, the researcher also created a spreadsheet identifying respondents and their answers numerically from 1 to 243.

The first four questions on the questionnaire were labeled to analyze the four indices of the dependent variable, job satisfaction, as represented by the Maslow Basic Needs Index, the Vroom/Herzberg Barrier Index, the Vroom/Herzberg Satisfaction Index, and the Maslow Satisfaction Index. The last questions on the questionnaire analyzed the six independent variables of sex, age, race/ethnicity, tenure, school/college, and academic rank.

Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the researcher computed an index number for the indices. The statistical package helped the investigator compute frequency tables according to sex, age, race/ethnicity, tenure, school/college, and academic rank. By using the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), the investigator tested between-subjects effects of the independent variables of sex, age, race/ethnicity, tenure, school/college, and academic rank. If the resulting value was less than .05, the variable was significant; but if the value was more than .05, the variable was not significant. The researcher used the one-way analysis of variance as the primary analysis for the study. The Pearson chi-square was used as a secondary analysis.

**Interpretations and Conclusions**

Since this study was conducted at a single university site, the findings could not be generalized beyond this particular university. The researcher developed the survey instrument by using a NASA questionnaire as a model since it was suitable for the University and the research design. This was the first time that this survey instrument had ever been used for research, therefore, the researcher does not know if the measures were accurate and reliable.

Since the researcher is an administrator, housed in the University's Administration Building, many respondents communicated concerns about whether they could remain anonymous. A total of 32 respondents failed to answer Question 9 regarding school/college affiliation, and 33 respondents failed to answer Question 10 about academic rank. These were the highest missing values tabulated from the

survey and may have indicated that some respondents did not feel comfortable completing all segments of the survey. Participants provided numerous handwritten notations on the questionnaires explaining why they could not answer the identifying questions because they wanted to remain anonymous and might be identified if they answered all the questions regarding sex, age, race/ethnicity, tenure, school/college, and academic rank.

***The race and the tenure variables did not affect job satisfaction according to significance rates produced from the four indices tested.***

Unfortunately, the notations on the questionnaires showed that many of the respondents were anxious, apprehensive and afraid to answer all questions on the last section of the questionnaire due to possible reprisals and past history. This is a serious personnel concern that may warrant the attention of the Human Resources Department of that institution.

In conjunction with this issue, the researcher received numerous comments from faculty members commending the survey because they had not been previously queried regarding faculty job satisfaction, which was a high priority for them. They also wanted to know if the research would be used for possible improvements at the university. The researcher suggests that personnel leaders within the university may want to delve into faculty job satisfaction to determine the satisfaction climate of the university's employees.

Respondents wrote different kinds of complaints on their questionnaires such as feeling negative about their time spent at the subject institution, feeling they had not been recognized, believing promotions only occurred when people compromised themselves, and seeing a lack of support because administrators were biased. Others had concerns about inconsistencies, facilities, and overall administrative decision-making. One person did not want to participate because he has had too many problems receiving his paycheck.

So, who were the 243 faculty members who participated in the study? Demographically speaking, the sample closely mirrored the actual demographic picture of the University's faculty in regard to sex with more males than females; in regard to age with more from 45 to 54 years old; in regard to race/ethnicity with twice as many Blacks than other racial backgrounds; in regard to schools/colleges with more from the College of Arts and Sciences; and in regard to academic rank with more associate professors and assistant professors. The only demographic aspect of the sample that was unlike the demographic picture of the University's population was tenure. While the University had twice as many tenured faculty as non-tenured faculty, more non-tenured faculty participated in the study.

Utilizing the analysis of variance as the primary analysis, the researcher determined that sex, age, school/college, and academic rank affected one or more indices of job satisfaction. Age and school/college were found to affect only one out of the four indices each, and were determined to be inconclusive. Sex affected job satisfaction in two of the four indices while academic rank affected job satisfaction in three of the four indices and so were determined to be conclusive. The race and the tenure variables did not affect job satisfaction according to significance rates produced from the four indices tested.

Utilizing the Pearson chi-square as the secondary analysis, the researcher discovered that academic rank, school/college, and sex were significant but age, race, and tenure were not substantiated. The researcher ascertained from these statistical tests that sex, school/college, and academic rank were verified and accepted within the hypothetical postulations. Age, race, and tenure were not verified and not accepted within the hypothetical postulations.

Therefore, in relations to the hypotheses developed by the researcher regarding faculty job

satisfaction within this Piedmont, North Carolina university, the following were documented by data from primary and secondary analysis:

- H1 was accepted. Male faculty were more satisfied with their jobs than were female faculty.
- H2 was rejected. Age was not positively associated with job satisfaction.
- H3 was rejected. Black faculty did not have greater job satisfaction than faculty of other racial or ethnic backgrounds.
- H4 was rejected. Tenured faculty did not have greater job satisfaction than non-tenured faculty.
- H5 was rejected because the College of Engineering did not have greater job satisfaction than faculty in other schools and colleges. Although the school/college variable was significant, the scores documented that the College of Arts & Sciences faculty had greater job satisfaction than faculty in other schools and colleges including the College of Engineering.
- H6 was accepted. Academic rank was positively associated to job satisfaction.

**Findings Related to Literature Review**

The researcher questioned whether professors and instructors felt satisfied, empowered, fulfilled, secure, confident, respected and challenged intellectually. Hollon and Gemmill (1976) discovered female faculty have always ranked behind male faculty in regard to decision-making power, job involvement and job satisfaction. This study showed female faculty were less satisfied than male faculty in regard to basic job satisfaction needs, job barriers and overall job satisfaction.

***Male faculty were more satisfied with their jobs than female faculty according to the results from this study – perhaps due to overshadowing, traditional, male dominance.***

Tack and Patitu (1992) explained some of the key stressors that affect female and minority faculty such as recognition, achievement, growth, responsibility, salary, tenure, policies, rank, supervision, working conditions and relationships. These same stressors were used on the questionnaire for this study. The results from these questions within the four indices showed that male faculty were more satisfied than female faculty. Although mentoring was not included in the study's questionnaire, the Paula Short study (1989) found that women professors could be strengthened with more research skills, networking, mentors, and positive images of women as leaders. This could significantly impact the university campus that was studied by attracting more women to decision-making positions to ensure more inclusive leadership. The male-dominated power structure had not afforded women an equal chance of effectively participating. More participation and involvement is needed to increase the faculty's role in the university family. This was evident by the fact that too many faculty members refused to answer the last questions on the questionnaire for fear of reprisal if they were identified.

Male faculty were more satisfied with their jobs than female faculty according to the results from this study – perhaps due to overshadowing, traditional, male dominance. Male leadership and decision-making may have affected the overall culture, morale, and day-to-day operation on the campus. Males may have established and implemented major policies, administrative directives and long-range planning. Past perceptions also had equated formal, rigid, authoritative leadership with many historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) which left little room for creative consensus building, team spirit, nurturing, and opportunities for empowerment.

In regard to the work profile of academics, Braskamp (1982) showed that younger assistant professors merely tried to survive; mature associate professors

could assist students rather than publish or research; but more seasoned professors could publish, conduct research and assist students. Scores from the questionnaires were better for associate professors and professors than for assistant professors, instructors and adjuncts.

Satisfaction scores from the Piedmont, North Carolina university pointed toward academic rank being positively associated with job satisfaction because the associate professors and professors were consistently more satisfied than assistant professors, instructors, and adjuncts. Experienced, senior, faculty members may have been on campus in their roles for a longer period of time and may have established successful track records. Presumably, knowledge of the system and how to maneuver through bureaucratic proliferation and passages have helped more seasoned faculty to survive. Their wisdom, patience, hard work, consistency, diligence, leverage, and clout were key attributes for success within administrative red tape. These characteristics have supported experienced faculty members while novices have felt dissatisfaction.

Fjortoft (1993) thought that full professors were more committed due to their influence regarding policy and participation. Along the same vein, Peter Seldin's research (1987) indicated that professors have high stress due to limited involvement with governance and planning, salaries, working conditions, time constraints, recognition, expectations and interactions. The associate professors and professors in the study were more satisfied according to the scores from the four indices.

Rosemary Caffarella (1992) discussed how faculty positions and roles were affected by scheduling, equipment, and recognition. The Piedmont, North Carolina university study did not specifically deal with all of these issues but recognition was a key indicator of satisfaction among all groups.

***More than any other recommendation, the public and private sector must move toward a more systematic, trusting, collaborative, two-way exchange of ideas with internal and external publics.***

In addition, academic rank was strongly associated to job satisfaction because associate professors and professors were probably higher on the ladder within their departments in terms of tenure, salaries, offices, equipment, support staff, travel, prestige, clout, light academic loads, menial jobs, time for research, and time to publish.

Black faculty did not experience greater job satisfaction than faculty of other racial or ethnic backgrounds. The scores tended to implicate that there was no real difference in the way Blacks, Whites, Asians, Hispanics, or other ethnics perceived job satisfaction. Race was not seen as an apparent issue directly affecting job satisfaction. Since the faculty being studied work at a historically Black university, the corporate culture was probably sensitive to the needs of minorities and special populations and in doing so had created an environment where Blacks, Whites, Asians, Hispanics and other ethnic groups felt fairly comfortable within the university setting. Maybe the diversity of the staff, with employees and students from almost every continent in the world created a work environment that valued differences.

Tenured faculty did not have greater job satisfaction than non-tenured faculty in the study. Faculty who work in the College of Engineering did not have greater job satisfaction than faculty in other schools and colleges. The College of Arts and Sciences faculty scored the highest job satisfaction ratings within the school/college affiliation category. The school/college variable was significant according to statistical tests but the College of Arts & Sciences had greater job satisfaction over the other schools and colleges, including the College of Engineering.

**Significance for the African Diaspora, People of Color, and Adult Education**

This study, investigating job satisfaction in one of America's largest predominantly Black universities, is a topic that should be on the research agenda for people of color for the 21st century. It suggests that top administrators within both the public and the private sector must focus first on job satisfaction and then on customer satisfaction in order to affect national growth and productivity. It also indicates that successful work environments should encourage exciting challenges, growth potential and self-actualization.

Conducting the study showed the researcher how important adult education is to the future of the American labor force. Staff development, training and adult education programs could help prevent the many cases of anxiety and apprehension based on possible reprisals and past history.

Employee perceptions, job satisfaction surveys, and climate surveys could assist employers in ascertaining honest feedback from employees and could be an excellent way to receive input for future, strategic planning. Workshops geared toward diversity and inclusiveness could encourage more females to gravitate toward key, decision-making positions and non-traditional roles. Training in consensus building, team spirit, and nurturing could bring older and younger employees together to solve problems intergenerationally. Additional leadership programs and training in how to deal with change could identify a new cadre of non-traditional leaders.

More than any other recommendation, the public and private sector must move toward a more systematic, trusting, collaborative, two-way exchange of ideas with internal and external publics. Listening, sharing and effectively communicating with various publics will be a vital prerequisite for a healthy work environment.

***Throughout the country's history, adult educators have opened doors and jobs for people of color.***

Global competition, space-age technology, limited resources, and a highly trained workforce are important factors that will shape higher education for the 21st century and the new millennium. Colleges and universities will no longer be able to rest on past laurels and assume that a rich history and a strong tradition will keep them competitive. Faculty job satisfaction, which basically means satisfying or delighting employees, must occur first in order for the faculty to satisfy and delight students.

Historically speaking from an Afrocentric perspective, people of color have often been the last hired and the first fired. Traditionally, personnel leaders have not been interested in whether people of color were happy, fulfilled or satisfied with their jobs. Plantation and factory bosses were influenced by feudal, Theory X philosophies that governed employees with a tyrant's control. As the browning of America continues, the future economic stability of the country will rest upon the shoulders of human resource experts who understand how to stimulate a diverse workforce utilizing more humanistic, Theory Y principles of management.

Adult educational theories have been a real necessity as America has struggled through wars, slavery, the Depression and the information/technology age. Throughout the country's history, adult educators have opened doors and jobs for people of color. From Booker T. Washington to Paulo Freire, from churches to fraternal groups, from normal schools to land-grant colleges, adult education has brought literacy, training, apprenticeships and new opportunities for people of color. National leaders are fiercely competing on a global perspective to remain at the top of the economic forefront. Even with retrenchment, economic leaders know the nation must become more productive by retraining and retooling through adult education programs. Industry leaders must therefore understand the role of job satisfaction within the work environment, especially in

the new millennium, with a more diversified workforce.

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# Cultural Diversity and the Learning Organization

**by Glen Palmer and Karen E. Watkins, Ph.D.**
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Organizations everywhere are jolted by massive change including dealing with increasing cultural diversity. The literature is brimming with statistics, forecast assumptions, and predictive scenarios regarding the potential challenges of valuing and managing this emerging cultural mosaic (Carnevale & Stone, 1995). The projected shift in the population of the U.S. workforce, coupled with technological, economic, and social changes are compelling forces challenging many public and private sector organizations to examine the need to create, value, and manage a more culturally diverse workforce. Experts in organizational development have urged organizations to learn about cultural differences and not to surrender to ethnocentrism (Cox, 1993; Cox & Blake, 1991; Cox & Nkomo, 1990; Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991; Thomas, 1992) to respect differences, rather than seek assimilation (Thomas, 1990); and to actively involve and incorporate the ideas and skills of people from diverse cultural backgrounds in the development of the organization (Morrison, 1992). The challenge for these organizations is to create effective strategies and programs that will change internal structures, systems, and cultures to be receptive to this culturally diverse workforce. One organizational intervention appears to hold particular promise for addressing these issues. The learning organization is an approach to organizational development that focuses on a culture of empowerment, continuous learning, and spirit of inquiry.

***This analysis will assist in determining whether or not the learning organization as a change initiative creates conditions conducive to promoting cultural diversity.***

The purpose of this paper is to compare Watkins' and Marsick's (1993) model of the learning organization and Cox's and Blake's model of organizational change for managing and valuing cultural diversity. This analysis will assist in determining whether or not the learning organization as a change initiative creates conditions conducive to promoting cultural diversity.

**Defining the Scope of Workforce Diversity**

The term "workforce diversity" is used to describe this changing demographic mix in the workplace (Bolick & Nestleroth, 1988; Cox, 1993; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1993; Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Johnston & Packer, 1987). Although programs relating to diversity in the workplace existed prior to the 1980s, the term was popularized by the 1987 study, "Workforce 2000", commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor (Johnston & Packer, 1987). In addition to emphasizing the growing proportion of minorities entering the workforce, this study called attention to the impact of increased immigration of ethnic minorities on the American workforce. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 1983 and 1993, nearly ten million immigrants arrived in the United States. Current trends indicate that by the year 2050, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and other non-Caucasian groups will represent 47 percent of the total American population (Bremner & Weber, 1992). These changes are expected to continue well into the new millennium. Consequently, this has prompted organizations and their

leaders to rethink the ways in which they are managing their human resources.

The issue of managing and valuing workforce diversity is also pertinent beyond the U.S. borders. The global workforce is also becoming more diverse and mobile (Marquardt & Reynolds, 1994). Minorities are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian workforce, with the latter attributing to two-thirds of the growth in the Canadian workforce (Crawford, 1993). The frequency and fluidity of border crossing in Europe is also changing the composition of the European workforce. In addition, a legacy of Europe's colonial history has been an influx of immigrants from colonies or former colonies: Jamaica, Trinidad, Latin America, etc. The multicultural composition of the world's labor force, juxtaposed against growing globalization by American and other multinational corporations, should be of particular concern to these organizations.

A more recent report by the Hudson Institute, "Workforce 2000," the sequel to the original 1987 publication, provides a more comprehensive reflection of work and workers in the 21st century. According to the authors, technological changes, increasing globalization, an aging population, and continued ethnic diversification continue to drastically alter the demographics of the American workforce (Judy & D'Amico, 1997). However, despite some gains in being able to negotiate the corporate hierarchy, organizational culture, structural, attitudinal and behavioral barriers continue to be formidable impediments for minorities to achieve their full potential in many American organizations (Cox, 1993; Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Thomas, 1990).

***In a changing American workforce, organizational learning is pivotal in providing workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to multiple changes.***

**Organizational Learning and the Learning Organization**

Organizational learning and workplace training programs have assumed greater prominence as globalization pressures American organizations to be increasingly productive and competitive. In a changing American workforce, organizational learning is pivotal in providing workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to multiple changes. These include the appropriate knowledge and skills to value and manage the emerging culturally diverse workforce.

What then is organizational learning? Huber (1991) believes organizational learning occurs when any unit or entity within the organization acquires knowledge that is recognized as potentially beneficial to the organization as a whole. Although it is the individual that has gained the knowledge or skills, since the organization stands to benefit, the learning is thus considered organizational. However, organizational learning is more than the sum of individuals engaging in the learning process (Argyris & Schon, 1978, 1996; Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Inkpen & Crossan, 1995; Watkins & Marsick, 1993,1996). Thus, organizational learning is an ongoing systemic process geared towards improving organizational performance (Argyris & Shon, 1978, 1996; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Gavin, 1993; Marsick & Watkins, 1997; forthcoming; Nevis, DiBella, & Gould 1995; Watkins & Marsick, 1993, 1996).

According to Mink (1992), "Organizational learning implies that each individual in the organization is encouraged to learn whenever and whatever is necessary to improve a process, product, or a service" (p. 3). Hence, the appropriate learning is central in deconstructing myths – structural, behavioral and attitudinal barriers that are preventing minorities from achieving their full potential. The concept and philosophical underpinning espoused by the learning organization is relevant in providing the knowledge and skills required to shatter these almost impregnable barriers. According to Toms (1997), "The market value of

companies that succeed in the decades to come will be found principally in their intellectual assets: Their people and the knowledge these people have about the organization's core competencies" (p.26). Successful organizations of the future must be adaptive, innovative, and creative to respond to changes in the marketplace, technological changes, and social changes. The organizations of the future must learn that they will be required to effectively enact massive and revolutionary changes. Consequently, organizations that use learning as a strategy for achieving their mission are also likely to achieve increased productivity and economic performance (Koulopoulos, Spinello, & Toms, 1997). Confronted with the prospect of a more diverse workforce, continuous learning is necessary to leverage the behavioral, attitudinal, and systemic changes necessary to value and manage a diverse workforce (Cox, 1993; Cox & Blake 1991; Thomas, 1990, 1992). Mink, Shultz, and Mink (1991) asserted that the influx of minorities into the workplace would have significant ramifications on organizational structure, planning, development, and operations.

What is a learning organization? The learning organization has become a major theoretical development in the literature on organizational change and development. As organizations attempt to cope with the complexity and speed of change in technology, knowledge, and productivity as well as a variety of external threats to stability and growth, the learning organization has emerged as a promising way for organizations to meet challenges to their viability. Watkins and Marsick (1993), define the learning organization as "one that learns continuously and transforms itself...." (p.8).

***The learning organization has become a major theoretical development in the literature on organizational change and development.***

Scholars view organizational learning as a process that unfolds over time and links with continuous knowledge acquisition and improved performance (Argyris & Schon, 1996; Garvin, 1993; Watkins & Marsick, 1993, 1996). Much of the learning organization literature focuses on defining the general characteristics of such an organization and include the following:

- The importance of acquiring, improving and transferring knowledge.
- Facilitating and making use of individual, organizational, and systemic learning.
- Modifying behavior and practices to reflect the learning.

According to Watkins and Marsick (1996), "most learning organizations are seeking some kind of transformational change. . . . only by becoming wholly new will many organizations be able to overcome the problems that plague them" (p. 11). This kind of transformational learning is also necessary for organizations to change attitudes and behaviors to value and manage the diverse workforce (Cox, 1993; Cox & Nkomo, 1990).

**The Watkins and Marsick Model of the Learning Organization-A Catalyst for Social Change?**

The notion of the learning organization has gained significant interest among human resource and organizational development practitioners as instrumental in implementing organizational changes with potential economic benefits. However, it remains to be seen if learning organizations can effect necessary social changes such as the kind necessary to value cultural diversity.

The Watkins and Marsick model (1993) aims to systematically transform an organization through heightened emphasis on learning, thus drastically altering the culture of the workplace. The model has seven dimensions, which are labeled action imperatives for the learning organization (p.11). They are presented below:

- Create continuous learning opportunities
- Promote inquiry and dialogue
- Encourage collaboration to its environment

- Establish systems to capture and share learning
- Empower people toward a collective vision
- Connect the organization to its environment
- Leaders model and support learning

Learning occurs both at the micro and macro levels in the learning organization (Watkins & Marsick, 1993), which means learning takes place at the individual, group, organizational, and societal levels. Continuous learning occurring at every level in the organization is pivotal in adapting the organization to an ever changing and evolving global economy (Senge, 1991; Watkins & Marsick, 1993; Gephart, Marsick, Van Buren & Spiro, 1997). However, can this strategic and tactical learning also result in the kind of social changes necessary for a multicultural workforce to operate productively and effectively? One premise of this paper is that by managing and valuing its people, the organization will implement appropriate strategies and programs to facilitate the career potential of its employees, including minorities. Human potential will be maximized, thereby allowing the organization to be more creative, innovative, and ultimately more competitive.

**The Cox and Blake Model**

In their organizational change and development model for managing and valuing diversity, Cox and Blake (1993, p. 231) emphasize continuous learning for achieving multiculturalism. The Cox and Blake model has five dimensions that are interrelated :

- Leadership commitment
- Research/measurement about diversity related issues
- Continuous training and development
- Structural and management changes
- Evaluation
  - Cox (1993) outlines these characteristics of a multicultural organization:
    - A culture that fosters and values cultural difference
    - Pluralism as an acculturation process
    - Full structural integration
    - An absence of institutionalized cultural bias in human resource management systems and practices.

The common aim between the theories of the learning organization and of the multicultural organization is the maximization of human potential to achieve the organization's goals and objectives (Cox 1993; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). The Watkins' and Marsick's model and the Cox and Blake model require systemic changes in the organizational culture, management, and work processes. Both theories emphasize bottom line issues for optimizing the organization's human potential and ultimately its financial and knowledge capital. Given the pivotal role of learning in leveraging organizational change and development in both Watkins & Marsick (1993), and Cox and Blake (1993) models, is it possible that the Watkins & Marsick model for the learning organization also has the potential for effecting the social changes necessary to manage and value cultural diversity?

**Comparing Learning and Multicultural Organizations**

We have presented a review and analysis of the learning and multicultural organizations. Several similarities have emerged from this review and analysis. The more salient similarities to this discussion are listed below:

1. Both organizations emphasize changing the organizational culture, norms, values, beliefs, policies, and systems to maximize the potential of its members, thereby creating a more productive and competitive organization. Implications: Employees, including racio-ethnic minorities, potentially have greater possibilities to advance within such an organizational structure and cultural environment.
2. Both organizations focus on systemic and strategic learning at every facet of the organization. Learning is encouraged at the individual, team, and system-wide levels and is the vehicle for achieving individual, group, and organizational success. Implications: Formal and informal learning becomes the vehicle to facilitate structural changes within the organization, thereby increasing understanding and awareness

which then may lead to changes in people's behavior and attitude. Moreover, paying attention to what is learned informally and incidentally has the potential to surface cultural biases more readily and to create a means for discussing them. A culture of dialogue and inquiry creates the mandate that they will be discussed.

3. The multicultural and learning organizations emphasize and value mentoring and the development of informal relationships.
   Implications: Lack of mentoring an access to the informal network is seen as one of the factors hindering the progress of minorities into upper level management positions. By valuing this type of informal relationship, minorities may have a better chance of being promoted to all levels of management positions.
4. Multicultural and learning organizations have a greater tolerance for ambiguity and transition.
   Implications: Organizational cultures and systems receptive to change and transition are more likely to value and accept an ever-increasing multicultural workforce and will benefit immensely from an ever-expanding global customer base.
5. Both types of organizations focus on the economics of change.
   Implications: As a result, these changes will occur only if the organization agrees that valuing diversity is in their best interests. Since the goal of the learning organization is to create healthier organizations for the long-term sustainability, the culture is likely to change in ways that benefit all of the organization's members.
6. However, it is also true that without explicit attention to issues of inequity and cultural diversity, it is equally possible that minorities will continue to experience differential, and even sometimes, hostile environments.
   Implications: Critics of the learning organization ask, "Learning for what?" Without an explicit multicultural agenda such as that outlined by Cox above, learning organization initiatives alone may not be able to deliver on the goals of removing the glass ceiling and creating workplaces which value all cultures.

**Conclusion**

As the economies of the world continue to inch towards a single marketplace, reliable studies (Fullerton, 1987; Johnston & Parker, 1987; Judy & D'Amico, 1997; Nussbaum, 1988) have indicated drastic changes in the demographics of the workplace. Therefore, American and international corporations will undergo dramatic metamorphosis in their workforce. It is therefore imperative for organizations to effectively deal with the multiple issues relating to a culturally diverse workforce. Identifying the congruencies between Watkins' and Marsick's model (1993) of the learning organization and Cox's and Blake's model (1991) for instituting cultural diversity, may assist HRD practitioners and other adult educators in creating systems and strategies that increase opportunities for minorities to maximize their potential in the learning organization. Correspondingly, the organization will benefit from the increased knowledge and skill of all of its people resulting in greater productivity, innovation, and economic success.

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# A Structural Analysis of the Experiences of Black Women Who Return to RN Completion Programs

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The purpose of this study is to explain how structural factors affect the participation of Black women in RN completion programs. The research questions guiding this study are:

(a) What factors encourage the participation of Black women in RN completion programs?

(b) What factors discourage the participation of Black women in RN completion programs?

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS, 1996), Blacks comprise 4.2% of the registered nurse population, whereas 12.5% of Blacks are represented in the U.S. population. In spite of the 10% increase in minority representation of RNs, the proportion of RNs from the Black population still fall short of the proportion of minorities in the total population of the U.S. Registered nurses who are Black have become an endangered commodity in the health care arena and society. Furthermore, the ratio of Black to White women completing such programs remain disproportionately low (USDHHS, 1996).

The current nursing literature does not adequately address the disproportionate numbers of Black women completing RN completion programs. In an attempt to address this discrepancy of Black representation in the profession, the literature identifies 'barriers to retention' for minority students attending nursing school. Barriers cited in the nursing literature include institutional, economic, and personal factors. Institutional, economic and personal barriers were analyzed in the absence of structural accounts, thus inadequately addressing the failure of Black women in nursing programs. The problem was that no research was available to explain structural factors that affected the participation of Black women in RN completion programs. Even when 'barriers' were identified and given as an explanation for the noted disparities in the numbers of Black graduates in generic nursing programs, there remained unexplained variances. The available research had been conducted in the absence of structural accounts as a variable.

***Registered nurses who are Black have become an endangered commodity in the health care arena and society.***

The purpose and questions of this study required an approach that would not objectify the Black woman's voice while recording her experiences. A qualitative design and a Black, feminist, theoretical framework guided this study. The constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), qualitative researchers are concerned with the participant's perspectives and state that by learning the perspectives of the participants, qualitative research visualizes the invisible aspects and situations. Black feminist thought is an inclusive framework that attends to issues of racism, sexism, and classism. It gives voice to Black women and validates their experiences. Black

women's perspectives of the experience may differ from other groups, and these experiences may differ within the group of Black women (Hill-Collins, 1995). Women of African descent share a history in the U.S. which denigrates Black women.

Several criteria guided the purposeful sample selection. The first criterion was that the women returning to RN completion programs had to self-identify as Black women. These Black women had been enrolled in or graduated from an RN completion program within the last 3 years. This population was chosen because these are the adult population that are embarking upon an educational experience. These women were registered nurses and had completed education at a two- or three-year institution. The success of an initial degree or diploma was past, and factors that encouraged or discouraged her decisions to participate were different.

The second criterion for the study was that Black women had to be enrolled in the program for at least two semesters, completed at least one clinical course, or had completed the program within the current three years. Sampling was purposeful. The sample consisted of 10 Black women. Eight of the participants were enrolled in a RN completion program, and two of the participants had graduated. The women in the study self-identified as Black women who had attended school in Southeastern United States.

**Data Collection**

Because a qualitative design unfolds as the data emerges in the field, a flexible design utilizing an open-ended, semi-structured interview guide was utilized to provide rich and thick data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 1990). Merriam (1988) defines a semi-structured interview as one that is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored for the purpose of obtaining certain information. In the semistructured interview, neither the exact wording nor order of questions is predetermined, allowing the researcher to respond to the situation. The questions on the semi-structured interview were open-ended and the researcher encouraged the participants to talk about their experiences in RN completion programs (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The interview was used in this study because the researcher was seeking to understand the perceptions, thoughts, feelings, intentions, as well as factors that encouraged and discouraged Black women returning to RN completion programs.

**Data Analysis**

The data was transcribed and themes emerged using an inductive approach for analysis. Inductive approaches are used for analysis when data addresses specific questions, problems or issues. This approach was logical because the researcher attempted to make sense of the situation without imposing preexisting expectations on the phenomenon, problem or issue (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Patton, 1990). The data was analyzed using the constant comparative analysis. Qualitative research uses an inductive approach to data analysis and the constant comparative method is one way to conduct an inductive analysis of qualitative data (Glazer & Strauss, 1967; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 127) further states that "data that is collected relates to a focus of inquiry and what becomes important to analyze emerges from the data itself, out of a process of inductive reasoning."

Since qualitative data analysis lends itself to the constant comparative method with an inductive approach for coding, I selected for analysis new units of meaning and compared it to all other units of meaning (Glazer & Strauss, 1967; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). Then I grouped, categorized and coded similar units of meaning. If similar units of meanings were not available, I formed new categories, continuously refining and generating new categories. While categorizing and coding, I developed a set of criteria for inclusion of categories.

**Findings**

Emergent themes and subthemes included motivation. Internal, external and institutional motivators were emergent subthemes. The second theme that emerged was racism. Subthemes

of racism included denial, injustice, psychological distress, and Black vs. White. Racism and its subthemes were used as factors that discouraged participation of Black women in RN completion programs. The third theme was derived from the educational process in the classroom: respect vs. disrespect. If Black women were treated with respect, participation increased. However, if Black women were treated with disrespect, participation decreased. The last theme that emerged was that of gender subordination.

Motivation was a major theme that emerged from the data. Motivation aided in the participation of Black women in RN completion programs. For the purposes of this study, motivational factors were described as being derived from internal, external, or institutional variables. Internal motivational factors included those factors that the participants viewed as aiding the Black women in the completion of their education. These factors were internally derived. All women were internally motivated. Spirituality was identified as a motivational factor, and God was an internal motivator. Most women in the study spoke of God or a spiritual journey while participating in RN completion programs. Black women shared different experiences with God and the role He played as a motivator in their educational experiences. T.G. stated that, "I think it all goes back to the grace of God. He watches over me day to day." Shelly proclaims, "My biggest support is God."

Melissa posits that, Al just thank God that I haven't had a problem working with nurse managers working with my schedule. . . .I was just blessed." Sara credited God with being able to care for patients. Sara's faith helped her to believe that she will be eternally blessed for her good works as a nurse. Mary identifies God as being her motivator and protector. Mary articulated the importance of God in her educational experience.

***Black women attached social mobility to the educational success of earning a BSN.***

According to Mary, when she is not able to deal with life's ups and down, God steps in. Finally, Marie speaks of the importance of God in her life and career. She posits that, "God was just pulling me through. It's just God and I believe this program came along at the right time, you know." The importance of God as an internal motivator could not be overlooked as these women shared their experiences in RN completion programs.

External motivators were perceived as those factors that encouraged participation outside of the self. These variables were extrinsic in nature while playing an equally important role in the participation of Black women in RN completion programs. Black women attached social mobility to the educational success of earning a BSN. For example, Erica viewed social mobility with education and said that one cannot occur without the other. Erica proclaimed,

> "They will say, well you are not qualified if you don't have a BSN. I am going to need a higher education because this is not high enough. When you have an associate degree you think well. I will be able to go places I want, and then when you get out there and work long enough, you feel like there is going to be a barrier. If you don't have a B.S., or further up, then you won't be able to get the type job you want. That is what they will look at."

Joyce viewed the BSN as a "stepping stone" to where she really wants to be. Sharon shared these sentiments and stated, "my purpose was to get my BSN and move forward." While Mary discerned that "Blacks study to better themselves and need the BSN to move from nursing to other health related professions like pharmaceutical sales."

Tuition reimbursement was perceived as an external motivator in this study. All of the women in the study received tuition reimbursement in some form. Mary waits for the tuition reimbursement check from the job so that she can pay tuition. Marie tells of an experience where she did not have funds

available for tuition and the funds appeared. According to Marie, "I went up to the school and I just, I didn't even worry about the money, I was like, well it better be there because I applied for some financial aid and sure enough the money was there. It was like oh, you have a Hope scholarship... you know, but it's just amazing."

Finally, the concept of adults as learners was noted as an external motivator. The Black women in the study valued being treated as adults. Melissa described the importance of adult learning practices and said, "you're all adults just like I'm an adult. Some of you here are grandparents just like I'm a grandparent. There are no little children in here; we are all here to learn. We are adult learners. The adult learners are here on the weekend." Erica conferred by agreeing that "It [weekend nursing programs] has more adult students and the classes are smaller." According to Mary, at the BSN program students are treated like adults. Mary shared the importance of being treated with respect and proclaimed AI feel like--you know, I am a woman. I want to be respected, and I am an adult. I respect you, and I want you to respect me."

Black women in the study identified institutional factors as motivators. Institutional motivators were identified by these women as things that set the institutions apart from other institutions or as reasons for aiding in their participation in the RN completion program. According to T.G., 'the family atmosphere influenced me..." Shelly said that being accepted made the difference in her educational process and states AI have had very good experiences here. Erica spoke of the teachers' availability and stated,

> "You can call, you can call them at home; they give you a home number, their pager. You can use the information. If you are not clear about something, so [teachers] were there for the students, from my aspect. If you want to call them to clarify something, they never said, 'well, I can't talk to you, you know, I am too busy,' or 'you should know this.' I felt comfortable that if I didn't understand, I could page them. I could call them to clarify this [assignments] and [teachers were willing to] work with me. Teachers really tried to make assignments clear or would [invite students to stay] after class for a detailed explanation.

Mary shared the institutional motivators at the university and proclaimed, "so this school is just, it's a helpful environment." Marie connected the relationship of the comfort level of the teacher to their experience. According to Marie, "if they [teachers] had been there for a couple of years teaching class, they were more relaxed, laid back." However Marie explained her positionality as a Black woman in the classroom and stated, A but it was kind of, it was still on a different level like, it's a distance, you know." Diane and Joyce concluded this section of institutional motivators in completely different ways. According to Diane, teachers would not talk to Black women until they [the teacher] had a sense of what the student was about. On the other hand, Joyce had a different experience with teachers talking to her. Both Black women knew the instructors previously or had some interaction with the instructor.

T.G. had the unique experience of being taught and mentored by two Black professors. According to T.G., AI was mentored by Black faculty. I would have quit if it wasn't for the two Black teachers at this school and that's what influenced me, is the Black teachers."

Other institutional factors that motivated Black women to participate included the flexible clinical scheduling and the RN completion program being perceived by the women as easier than their associate program. The flexibility of the clinical schedule was important to the women in the study because of their busy schedules with work and school.

Factors that encouraged or discouraged Black women were connected with institutions and/or people with power over the Black woman. According to Kelly, Burton and Regan (1994), women's accounts or stories cannot provide the researcher with everything she needs to know,

especially the content of deliberate strategies used to maintain or distribute power.

West (1993, p. xvi) states that "race matters." Barbee (1993, p. 347) concurs by stating that "race matters in nursing." Racism flourishes in nursing because structures are in place to support and legitimize it. A culture of racism prevailed over the experiences shared by the women in this study. Subthemes included denial, injustice, psychological distress and Black vs. White. Denial of racism was used as a strategy that protected Black women from their reactions to racism in the classroom or in the clinical areas, as well as aiding in its legitimization. The women in the study shared their stories and justified racist actions with denial. Some of the women used denial as a motivator, while others stated that racism was prevalent throughout their educational experiences in the RN completion program. Mary summed up the subtheme of denial by stating," the experiences [of racism] will happen just because you are a Black woman, but do you accept the experiences for what they are? I think that all Black women, all Black people, have been subjected to some kind of racism; but whether or not you deem it as racism, or your perception of it, is what matters."

All women in the study shared the theme of injustice. Melissa stated that "standards were higher for Black women on the job and in the school." Melissa further stated that White women were not scrutinized as much as the Black women in her RN completion program. Mary shared a story of injustice when the rules changed for attendance policy in her class. She proclaimed, "see the rules apply to who they [White women in positions of power] want them to, and I mean if they clearly say it, you can't miss. . .whereas, we had White people who missed several [days] and it was okay."

***Denial of racism was used as a strategy that protected Black women from their reactions to racism in the classroom or in the clinical areas, as well as aiding in its legitimization.***

Marie shared the most profound example of injustice. According to Marie, when having a conversation with the instructor AI feel kind of like, that something is missing like, I still had to reassure myself or whatever, because some people, you talk, you speak to them, they give, they add something to you, but some people take away something. So yeah, pinch of my little crumb was missing from my pie." The women spoke in codes and often used insider language. For example they, them, their, and those people were used when the women were referring to White women. While words used that pertained to Black women included we, our, our own, and I. Marie's previous statement exemplifies the use of code words during the interview.

The theme, psychological distress, emerged when Black women shared experiences that separated the Black women from the White women in the class. For example, the women were asked about study groups in their program. According to Melissa, "there were no study groups. Some of the White girls had study groups. We tried having study groups with only two of us – nobody else showed up. I don't know what happened. I mean, with the work schedule and the time. It was just a bad time; and so that just kind of phased out, and everyone just did their own individual study. And you called another classmate and asked them a question. The White women did not let the Black women know of study groups. I found out about them later... It didn't really bother me because I was used to it [being excluded] from uh, past experience. They have their own." Mary stated that the Whites had their study group and the Blacks had their study groups. Sara was not invited to study groups but shared a story of the time she asked if she could attend. According to Sara, "I didn't know if I was right or wrong; and after the group, I felt like, I'm not intelligent."

The theme of Black vs. White was apparent when Marie shared her experiences with her White

instructors. She stated," It is like, it's supposed to be like some kind of distance, like there is a line, and you [Black women in the program] don't cross this line, even if, you [Black woman] can hear my [the White teacher's] information. You can take it, but it is not really meant for you [Black woman]. You know what I mean, and I admire that the information was given out. I was still there. I was still happy to be a part of the experience, but was I really a part of it? There was just like, well, you [Black woman] are just here, hearing the information but..."

Mary articulated the theme of Black vs. White and stated, "This school is just, it's a helpful environment... I mean, I think it's kinda just being Black, you kinda know to stay in your place... just like your mama told you, you can't do what the White people do."

The findings of this study suggest that RNs who returned to RN completion programs are constantly aware of the "other", their positionality in the classroom, as well as in practice. The Black women were aware of the differences faced because of race and stated that race was a barrier. These findings, in the presence of structural accounts, did not subsume race but lead to clear explanations of experiences that encouraged and discouraged their participation in RN completion programs. Nursing education is attempting to aid the nation in meeting its goal of having a healthy nation. Implications derived from this study include the need for professors to be aware of the "other" in the class as well as the need to offer diverse experiences for all women in the program. The balance of power among students in the classroom should be strategically planned. Cultural awareness exercises should not dichotomize or negate the experiences of the Black woman. This type of thinking and acting requires the need for the student and the professor to connect and move beyond awareness of cultural differences. Classroom dynamics and the awareness of power should be immersed in the BSN courses.

***Cultural awareness exercises should not dichotomize or negate the experiences of the Black woman.***

The significance of this study was profound. According to the literature (Barbee, 1993; Cargenie & Dolan, 1986: Hine, 1985; Hine, 1989), historically, Black women functioned in the capacity of nurses before and since the Crimean War; but because of poor record keeping, documentation was not accurate. Even when society heard the voices of nurses, it was the voice of the White nurse that was heard. White women spoke for all women in nursing. However, this study accounted for the voices and experiences of Black women. The myth of the "generic adult learner" was nullified. Only one woman in the study was married. Louie & Pollock (1995) stated that the agenda of nursing education for the 21st century must include recruitment and retention of nursing students who are representative of the diversity of the clients they serve. It was logical to assume that the experiences of Black women could be enhanced by the presence of the Black professors. However, Black faculty at this level mentored only one participant. Mary stated that the presence of the Black professor did not positively impact her experiences. In fact, when speaking of the Black professor, Mary said, "She is not partial to Black students. She is just a regular instructor. . . .She does not open up to anybody, and you don't go to her with problems." More research is needed with recruitment and retention efforts of minority faculty because they may be as marginalized as their students. In fact, one Black faculty said, " I am not in the loop of what's going on. Awareness of information regarding changes or new hires are from my students. I am as marginalized as the Black women in the class."

Black women spoke of a dwindling spirit from beginning to ending the program. These women were excited about going into nursing but, as T.G. stated, "I was excited about being accepted in the program but at the end, well, the excitement was

gone". More research is needed to identify what happens to the spirits of Black women who enroll in RN completion programs. How can professors maintain the spirits of Black women. If spirits can be maintained, then the survival mode may not be as prevalent during their educational process.

As population in the United States changes from predominately White to include other racial and ethnic groups, several realities are being forced. Primarily, there is not a myopic view of health. Strategies must be in place for conducive learning environments as well as re-educating Black and White nurses to deliver diverse health care.

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# Correcting a Defective System: Understanding the Impact of Welfare Reform on Employment Training Programs

**by Geraldine Clarke**
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Welfare reform is not a new phenomenon. Since its establishment in 1935, the welfare system has provided financial assistance and services to needy families. Although the system appears successful, one might question its success in light of the following: (1) most recipients tolerate the government's control over their lives, (2) some recipients are complacent about their economic circumstances and ability to change them, and (3) many are dependent on governmental assistance. The Family Act of 1988 marked a significant change in the welfare system when legislation mandated that parents become the primary supporters of their children. Some supplemental federal assistance is available to move them from welfare to work. One major goal of the Family Act was to increase families' self-sufficiency through the development of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program. The numerous welfare-to-work initiatives under JOBS continue to inconsistently move welfare recipients into a state of self-sufficiency. Welfare reform is a complicated issue embedded in social inequalities perpetuated by stereotypical assumptions that blame poor people for their current economic circumstances.

***The media continues to feature minorities as welfare recipients and incorrectly substantiates these assumptions. How true are these assumptions?***

In order to improve the welfare system, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1997, ratified by President Clinton, abolished the old welfare system—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)—and the level of dependency it created. The law distributed a single capped entitlement to states for programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Emergency Assistance (EA), and JOBS. Under the law, the federal government commitment will reduce resources by 65 billion dollars over the next five years (Houseman & Greenberg, 1995).

Moving people off the welfare rolls and into the work environment is the primary goal of federal and state welfare policy. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 will help to achieve this goal by providing welfare-to-work grants to states in order to help TANF recipients become employed and successful in the workplace. The welfare-to-work transition remains a difficult challenge. Strict quotas and vague rules exacerbate problems that states may encounter when funding depends on complying with federal welfare law.

Congressional law imposes a five-year lifetime limit on welfare assistance, with many states setting lower limits. This author considers the push to move recipients toward self-sufficiency within a five year time period as a "fast track" attempt to save federal dollars. This strategy, whether intended or not, further discriminates against minorities, especially African Americans and women, expands the class of "working poor," and sustains poverty within our nation (Abeda & Tilly, 1998; Sheared, 1998).

**Who are these people?**

Middle and upper class citizens typically envision a welfare recipient as an African American woman, with several children, who chooses poverty to avoid work. The media continues to feature minorities as welfare recipients and incorrectly substantiates these assumptions. How true are these assumptions? Welfare statistics from the state of Georgia offer us interesting data. Lindbloom (1995) helps illuminate such myths during a recent welfare reform orientation:

| Myth | Fact | Source |
|---|---|---|
| Once on welfare, always on welfare | The majority of AFDC cases in Georgia are open for less than two years and most are closed within a year. The average length of time on AFDC is 34 months | Georgia DHR/DFC-PARIS Reports (SFU-July 1991 through June 1992) |
| AFDC benefits are too high | Georgia pays a maximum of $280 a month to a mother with two children. This is only 27% of the federal poverty level. Forty states have higher payment levels than Georgia. Though not all AFDC amount for a family of three only brings the total up to 56% of the federal poverty line. | Congressional Research Service Center on Budget Priorities and The Center on Social Policy and Law, Table 1- "Maximum AFDC Benefits for a Family of Three" (January 1992). Updated with 1994 federal poverty level. |
| AFDC families receive benefits under a multitude of programs which fill any gap left by inadequate AFDC benefits | Not all AFDC families receive benefits under other programs. For families who do, benefits vary and do not significantly increase the income available to meet essential needs. Only 31.2% of Georgia's AFDC families live in public housing or receive any form of rent subsidy. Fair market rent for a family of three in a one bedroom apartment is $430. This amount is 50% more than the maximum AFDC benefits. | Congressional Research Service Center on Budget Priorities and The Center on Social Policy and Law, Table 3-"Selected Characteristics of AFDC Families by State" (FY 1989) and Table 5-"HUD Fair Market Rent as Percent of Maximum AFDC Benefits by State." |
| Most of AFDC families have lots of dependent children | The average size of the AFDC family in Georgia is 2.86 persons including the parent. Seventy percent of Georgia AFDC families have only one or two children, the same as the average American family. The size of the average AFDC family has actually decreased in the past fifteen to twenty years. | Georgia DHR/DFCS PARIS Reports (July 1991 through June 1992), Congressional Research Service, Center on Budget Priorities and the Center on Social Policy and Law, Table 3- "Selected Characteristics of AFDC Recipients by State" (FY 1989) |
| AFDC recipients can collect child support from absent parents to take care of dependent children | Of 101,849 AFDC families in Georgia, only 6,306 families receive up to $50 per month of child support from the absent parent. When a family applies for AFDC, it assigns all rights to collect child support from the absent parent to the State of Georgia Department of Human Resources. This Assignment ensures adequate Child support awards and effective methods of collecting support to help provide children with the financial security they need and deserve. | Characteristics and Financial Circumstances of AFDC Recipients, FY 90, Department of Health and Human Services (ACF-OFA) 1992 |
| The AFDC rolls are full of able-bodied adults who are too lazy to work | Some states have general assistance programs for single individuals, but Georgia provides assistance only where there are children. More than two-thirds (69.33%) of all Georgia AFDC recipients are children. The majority of adults on AFDC are single parents facing multiple obstacles to employment; others are employed at some time during the year. More than 45,000 adult AFDC recipients are on a waiting list for PEACH (Positive Employment and Community Help) JOBS Program, seeking education and/or skills for successful employment. | Georgia DHR/DFCS PARIS SFY 92 (July 1991 through June 1992) |
| Women on AFDC keep having children to get more money | The average size of an AFDC family in Georgia is 2.86 persons, including the parent. A mother with one child receives a maximum of $235 a month. An AFDC mother who has a second child gets a maximum of $280 per Month - $45 more per month or barely $10 per week. This amount is no major incentive for an AFDC mother to have another child. | Georgia DHR/DFCS |

As we can see, statistics for the state of Georgia dispel commonly held myths by middle and upper class citizens. Many people continue to hold fast to stereotypical beliefs and assumptions about poor people, especially minorities and women, in the welfare system. In fact, it has been reported in a recent newspaper article that more White families have benefited from public assistance than minorities during the past sixty years (Associated Press, 1999). Along with the stereotypical beliefs about who is being served, there are differences of opinions about society's role in assisting poor families. A New York Times/CBS News poll, published in 1994, demonstrated that 48% of those polled indicated that government spending on welfare should be cut. Only thirteen percent thought there should be an increase in funding. Interesting, when asked about "spending money for poor children," 47% said funding should be increased and only 9% favored a decrease. The poll results seem to indicate that helping poor children is the right thing to do. They also seem to say that cutting assistance for parents is the right thing to do. How much sense does this make?

**Employment training programs (Welfare-to-work initiatives)**

To achieve the best results with the least investment, federal and state legislators and practitioners support "work" as the best strategy to achieve self-sufficiency. Putting welfare recipients to work as quickly as possible satisfies middle and upper class citizens who dislike the idea of financially supporting people unwilling to work.

***Contrary to public opinion, the vast majority of poor people do work for a living! They hold jobs no one else desires, the ones that pay minimum wages, and try the strength and patience of anyone who has ever tried to hold them.***

Contrary to public opinion, "the vast majority of poor people do work for a living! They hold jobs no one else desires, the ones that pay minimum wages, and try the strength and patience of anyone who has ever tried to hold them" (Newman, 1998, p. 266). From an economic point of view, some have concluded that welfare is a funneling system channeling human capital into a permanent economic underclass (Caputo & Ciani, 1997).

Recent evaluations of early welfare-to-work programs seem to indicate that short-term job training has the potential to help some participants increase earnings and reduce welfare receipts. However, poverty, welfare receipts, and unemployment remain high among participants (U.S. Department of Labor, 1997). The increase in number and intensity of welfare-to-work initiative seek to answer the question, "What is the best approach to move welfare recipients into the work force and toward self-sufficiency?" Answering this question is crucial to the economic stability of state governments who must put 25% of all one-parent families into "work activities" in FY97. Between 1997-2002 an additional 5% per year of welfare recipients must be involved in work activities. This cumulates with 50% of heads of households being required to work by 2002.

A study done by Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (1997) found two strategies for moving welfare recipients toward self-sufficiency. The first strategy is called Labor Force Attachment (LFA) which emphasizes placing people into jobs quickly, even at low wages. This reflects a view that the workplace is where welfare recipients can best build their work habits and skills. The second strategy is called Human Capital Development (HCD) , which emphasizes education and training as a precursor to employment. This view is based on the belief that the required skill level for many jobs are rising. Further, it contends that investment in the "human capital" of welfare recipients will allow them to obtain and secure jobs.

While the first strategy, LFA, emphasizes "fast employment," it should be noted that to be self-sufficient a person must make enough money to take care of themselves and their family.

***Review of the literacy data indicates that low literacy cannot be solved within six months to a year of schooling; it takes years for a non-literate adult to learn to read at an advanced level and function independently in the workplace.***

To compensate for the loss in governmental benefits and medical care, a person would have to make $10.00 or more per hour plus benefits (Gueron, 1985b). Minimum wage jobs ($5.15 per hour) without benefits will not lead to self-sufficiency. Families living in public and assisted housing find it difficult to make ends meet with a minimum wage job. Yet, the new welfare system stresses that work of any kind is sufficient to take recipients off the welfare rolls. The welfare-to-work (LFA) programs minimize the role of basic education in favor of immediate job skills training and the acquisition of work experience. Past strategies have focused solely on education (HCD) as the way to move welfare recipients toward self-sufficiency. Research data indicates that the HCD strategy was a more expensive and long term investment, eventually resulting in enhanced work opportunities. Additional support for HCD strategy comes from literacy research. Review of the literacy data indicates that low literacy cannot be solved within six months to a year of schooling; it takes years for a non-literate adult to learn to read at an advanced level and function independently in the workplace (D'Amico, 1997).

According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, the likelihood of being on welfare goes up as literacy goes down. Additionally, the number of weeks worked during the year, average weekly wage, and annual income all rise with literacy levels (Barton &Jenkins, 1995).

> The conclusion drawn from the statistics supporting these relationships is that welfare dependency may be reduced in two ways: by increasing the literacylevels of the general population, to reduce the risk of falling into dependency, and by raising literacy levels of those already on welfare to help them become more financially self-sufficient (p. 8).

The National Adult Literacy Survey also concludes that job search skills and opportunities will maximize welfare savings and job holdings. By itself it will not get people better paying jobs nor benefit the most disadvantaged. Providing higher cost and more intensive services to this population can result in them obtaining jobs with somewhat higher earnings. Stein's (1997) research on literacy programs indicates:

1. students spend too much time in programs to make progress,
2. literacy programs do not have a constant vision of their goals or curriculum,
3. literacy instruction is severely under-funded,
4. the literacy field has evolved without full-time professional teachers (80% of literacy instructors are part-time),
5. there are no systematic means to evaluate educational outcomes.

With the recent legislative mandates, welfare recipients wanting to further their education must do so only after weekly work pre-requisites have been met or face harsh penalties including denial of benefits (Catalfamo, 1998). One welfare recipient speaks of this dilemma.

> By the time I was contacted for mandatory participation in Workfare, I had accumulated 33 credit hours toward a Liberal Studies degree. Liberal Studies, however, is not an approved program of study to pursue, unless I change to a two-year approved program. I am a single parent with four children to support. By limiting my

education to a two-year vocational program, I am denied the freedom to pursue the kind of career I would like and the amount of money I need to earn to support my family (Rice, 1993, p. 11).

**Implications for Correcting the System**

In all the literature reviewed, very few people have presented an honest in-depth look at the real reasons why welfare-to-work employment training programs fail to move recipients toward sustained self-sufficiency. It does not seem to matter that welfare recipients are securing low paying, dead-end jobs. Apparently, the goal is simply to get people to work and off the government's financial back. Studies in the 1980s indicated that welfare-to-work programs can produce positive results but question whether employment training programs will go beyond the past success of the 90s (Gueron & Pauly, 1991). Continued research is necessary in this area to discover what really matters in effective program planning. Whose interest are really being served in the planning and implementation processes?

We need to evaluate training outcomes based on labor market conditions. Ironically, a number of earlier studies found earnings' impacts were substantially larger for people entering the program during a severe economic downturn than for a group who entered in a period of economic improvement (Goldman, Friendlander, & Long, 1985). Recipients involved in specific training programs are encouraged to seek employment in very competitive fields, such as secretarial science or accounting. What good is it to provide specific training when the competitiveness of the field limits accessibility?

***Who makes the assumption that poor people, especially African American, do not value work?***

Adult educators must be cognizant of program objectives and whose interests are really being served in fulfilling those objectives. For example, one goal of current welfare-to-work programs is to teach work ethics. Who makes the assumption that poor people, especially African American, do not value work? How valid is it to teach "work ethics" to people who lack employment opportunities? Sheared (1998) observes that "programs that emphasize the work ethic, obfuscated rather than elucidated solutions to poverty and welfare dependence" (p. 7).

We must address the inequality of employment opportunities in light of race, gender and class issues. With regards to race, a recent article in a local newspaper admits that White recipients are obtaining jobs at a higher rate than African Americans and people of other cultures. Given the underlying assumptions that discriminate against poor people, minorities and women, this article's revelation is by no means startling. With regards to gender, Sheared (1998) suggests that women on welfare, African American women, in particular, will continue to contend with models and programs that only partly address their needs and issues. Even though programs provide services that address basic employment skills for women, they do so with a "blaming the victim mentality" (Sheared 1998, p. 330). With regard to class, studies conducted by Reimer (1997) produced questions such as: How much better off economically and socially are employees who are constantly reminded that they are second class employees--not as "good" as the salaried staff? and How do people cope with knowing they have no opportunity nor support for academic advancement?

**Conclusion**

Examining the underlying assumptions that guide program planning becomes crucial to the development of effective and efficient employment training programs that provide equal access to educational/training opportunities. Whatever affects the least privileged in our society, affects all of society! We must boldly address issues of power and equality if programs are to address the real needs of the adult

learner. Adult educators, legislators, researchers, practitioners, employers, and recipients must work together to understand the impact of welfare reform and how employment training programs will improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Self-sufficiency is a worthwhile goal to achieve. Perhaps Reimer (1997) says it best, "To accomplish self-sufficiency and decrease poverty among poor, we as a nation must confront issues of race, class and gender where poor citizens are 'framed' not as citizens of economic inequality but as the cause" (p. 87).

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# African Americans' Motivations: A Study of Participation in Church-based Adult Education Programs in the African American Church

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Historically, African Americans have placed a high value on education (Neufeldt and McGee, 1990; Guy, 1996). It has been "respected, revered, and sought as a means to personal freedom and communal hope, from enslavement to the present" (Gadsden, 1993, p. 352). Education was eminent in positions within the family, church, and community (Gadsden). African Americans have participated in adult education for hundreds of years, mainly because education in the African American community has been associated with freedom, advancement, and self-determination (Franklin, 1984). Often, in order to acquire learning, African Americans turned to the church. The church not only served as a place of spiritual worship, it was also a haven from societal injustices and a place where African Americans acquired skills, knowledge, and values through the church's educational programs.

One of the main goals of the African American church has been the betterment of its people. Therefore, even before adult education was popularized, the church served as a religious institution and an educator. African Americans went to church not only to worship but to learn.

***The church is at its best when it stands by individuals as they move through different life events and helps them in the search for meaning and order in life.***

The church has been central to the lives of African Americans. Historically, it has been involved in every aspect of the lives of its members (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). It has served as a place of worship and a self-help agency. The church was an essential social institution for the maintenance and enhancement of civility, self-respect, social order, and communal belonging for African Americans in their social and moral isolation in American society (Frazier, 1963). The African American church has been a family stabilizer, provider, and a caretaker in the African American community. Furthermore, it has concerned itself with upgrading the psychological, social, economic, and physical well being of African Americans (Phillip, 1993).

One of the central goals of the church is the education of its members. Its mission is "inextricably linked with the educative process as it occurs in the lives of individual members" (Beatty & Robbins, 1990, p. 29). The church is at its best when it stands by individuals as they move through different life events and helps them in the search for meaning and order in life. In addition, it best serves when it guides individuals as they shape belief systems in light of a spiritual tradition and aids them in the critical examination of societal values. Furthermore, when it supports members as they affirm themselves as part of a religious tradition and fosters

their human growth and maturation, it provides a great service (Beatty & Robbins, 1990).

Education was used as a means to address the social, economic, cultural, and political issues and concerns facing the African American community. In doing so, different avenues of learning were used. It was not uncommon for African American churches to co-sponsor their social welfare and adult education programs or to have them subsidized by outside sources. For example, some churches have collaborated with other non-profit or community-based organizations, while others have received funding from federal and local state agencies. In an effort to educate the masses, the African American church was instrumental in establishing historical African American colleges and universities. Their programs have been beneficial to the education of African Americans. It is this view of African Americans and the church that provides the foundation for research examining African Americans' motivations for participation in church-based educational programs in the context of the African American church.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe African American adults' motivations for participation in a non-traditional setting. More specifically, the study sought to understand their reasons for participating in religious and secular church-based educational programs within the African American church. For purposes of this study, a religious offering was defined as one whose major focus was the teaching of biblical principles. The study answered the following questions: (1) What are African American adults' most important motivations for participating in church-based educational programs? (2) Can individual motivational items be grouped into conceptually meaningful dimensions of motivation to participate in church-based educational programs in the African American church? (3) Is there a relationship between background variables of African American participants and the derived motivational factors?

**Problem Statement**

Education has been important to African Americans because of its perceived benefits. African Americans have been actively involved in educational activities in the African American church. However, there is a gap in the knowledge and research base relative to their participation in adult education; and until studies begin to address the effect of race on participation (Briscoe and Ross, 1989; Ross-Gordon, 1990; Sheared, 1998), the gap will widen. No literature was found that examined African American adults' motivations for participation in religious and secular offerings within the context of the African American church. When explored from a socio-cultural perspective, what are African Americans' motivations for participation in educational programs? Will their motivations be similar to those identified from traditional studies? To broaden our knowledge of African Americans' motivations and to understand the complexity associated with motivation, they should be examined in a context that has traditionally been central to their lives.

**Review of the Literature**

An historical synopsis of African American adult education provides a different perspective on African Americans' participation and motivations in adult educational activities. The body of literature presented suggests that education has been a high priority for African Americans. They have used informal and formal means of learning, and their motivations for doing so have varied. One of the reasons for participation for slaves was the ability to read the Bible. Among other reasons, in the 1980s, free African Americans participated to gain an appreciation of their cultural heritage and to keep abreast of social issues. After the Civil War, African Americans participated to familiarize themselves with city living, and many would eventually participate to gain skills for employment. Generally speaking, through education, African Americans hoped to improve their economic and social status and eradicate the barriers of discrimination.

Numerous community-based organizations have provided learning opportunities for African Americans. One of the most notable is the African American church. It is focal to the African American community. In addition to its religious teachings, it has sought to provide educational opportunities which would uplift the African American community. From its meager beginnings, up to the present day, the church has offered a variety of informal and formal programs of learning for African American adult learners. The church provided a formal avenue of learning with the founding of numerous colleges and universities which it continues to support today. Thus, with the educative role of the African American church, African American adults have been fortunate to participate in educational activities which they otherwise may not have considered.

African Americans' motivations for participation have differed as a result of their various social contexts. Slaves, for example, participated in educational activities to gain their freedom. With the great Northern migration, many African Americans found themselves in situations and environments, which were completely foreign to them. As a result, they participated in educational activities to learn the ways of city living. Many African Americans participated in educational programs that enabled them to acquire employable skills. With the establishment of historical African American colleges and universities, African Americans were able to participate more formally in education. It was believed that education would open doors that had traditionally been closed. Today, in traditional settings, African Americans cite job advancement or improvement as their major reason for participation in adult education (Kopka & Peng, 1993).

***Since the African American experience in the United States is very different from that of the mainstream population, I was extremely reluctant to measure African American adults' motivations on theoretical dimensions derived from the dominant culture.***

Adults participate in adult education for a number of reasons. While many do so for personal, social or altruistic reasons, most participate for professional purposes (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Valentine, 1997), often seeking job advancement or a new job altogether. Therefore, they are likely to engage in learning activities in order to gain skills and knowledge that will enable them to reach their career/professional goals. One's work life and participation in adult education are strongly linked together (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

African Americans are poorly represented in adult educational activities (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Valentine, 1997). However, one of the problems with this assessment is that it is based on studies conducted in traditional settings. In examining adults' motivations in traditional settings, minorities are disproportionally represented among the low income and less educated and, therefore, have low participation rates in organized adult education (Ross-Gordon, 1990). Hence, organized adult education is essentially the domain of White middle-class men and women who are well educated. The working class tends to avoid the more formal structures in support of informal patterns of association, and the poorest classes have a great disdain for them (Courtney, 1992). Thus, formal education appears to be reserved for those who are economically and educationally advantaged (Ross-Gordon, 1990).

There appears to be a disjunction within the literature subsequent to African Americans' motivations to participation. On the one hand, from an historical, socio-cultural perspective, there is strong evidence that suggests that African Americans have revered education and have engaged in it for several reasons relative to their social context.

On the other hand, adult education literature, while adequately providing a general understanding of adults' motivations, has not examined African Americans' motivations in great length. The current study, therefore, is an attempt to close the gap by broadening our knowledge of African Americans' motivations for participation in adult education.

**Methodology**

Since the African American experience in the United States is very different from that of the mainstream population, I was extremely reluctant to measure African American adults' motivations on theoretical dimensions derived from the dominant culture. For example, to measure adult's educational motivations, many researchers have used some version of the Education Participation Scale (EPS). However, one of the drawbacks of the scale is that it was originally designed for use with middle-class adults enrolled in traditional educational programs (Boshier & Riddell, 1978). Since this study was being conducted in a non-traditional setting, the African American church based on an entirely African American sample, I felt compelled to develop a new survey instrument. The item pool for the survey was based on focus group sessions with Christian educators, pastors, and laity from different educational backgrounds, ages, and socioeconomic levels. The end result was a survey consisting of 65 motivational and 11 background items. Mean calculations and factor analysis were used. In addition, bivariate analyses were run to examine the relationship between factor scores and personal characteristics of the sample.

**Sample**

As a result of its large African American membership, three African American churches from the Baptist denomination were identified for the study. The churches were located in the Atlanta metropolitan area and were selected based on their size, location, and educational offerings.

***The church setting provided a source of emotional support and enabled adult learners to acquire skills which would help them to address their personal problems.***

The survey was administered to over 360 participants in 32 different religious and secular educational offerings. In the final analysis, 330 surveys were used.

**Findings**

One of the goals of the study was to identify African Americans' most important motivations for participation in church-based educational programs. Among the most important reasons for participation were items that dealt with a specific religious or spiritual motivation. Other items dealt specifically with learning.

A seven-factor solution was selected as the most conceptually meaningful because it captured a larger range of items and it explained a larger percentage of the variance. The first factor, *Familiar Cultural Setting,* identified adults who were motivated to participate because they felt a sense of comfort being in the African American church or community. Individuals felt comfortable at the church because they felt that people were more accepting of them at the church. Because of this notion of acceptance, participants felt comfortable asking questions, participating in discussions, and overall preferred the church to other educational settings. Older adults and unmarried persons were more motivated by this factor. However, higher income adults were less motivated by this factor.

*Spiritual and Religious Development* was the second factor and delineated adults who participated because they wanted to learn more about their religious beliefs and/or take action to enhance their Christian walk. Some adults were motivated by this factor because they felt it was a part of their Christian mandate. Females and adults who attended Sunday worship services regularly were more motivated by this factor.

Another factor was *Love of Learning*. It described African American adults who participated because they valued learning and found it exciting. Learning enabled them to become more knowledgeable and provided them an opportunity to learn something new. Older people and highly educated adults were more motivated by this factor.

*Support in Facing Personal Challenges* was the fourth factor and referred to adults who sought assistance in coping or dealing with a problem. Adults participated in educational programs in the church because they saw the church as a comforting place to seek help in overcoming their problems or as a place where they could get encouraging words while being challenged. The church setting provided a source of emotional support and enabled adult learners to acquire skills which would help them to address their personal problems. Younger adults were more motivated by this factor.

The fifth factor, *Family Togetherness*, described adults who participated in church-based education because the family was participating or because it allowed children to participate in different programs simultaneously with parents. It also referred to sharing in activities with a spouse or significant other. In this case, the term family was not limited to its traditional connotation. Family could mean extended family or someone that an individual had a close relationship to or spent a lot of time with. Married persons were more motivated by this factor.

*Service to Others*, the sixth factor, and delineated adults who participated because they wanted to serve their community and the church by enlightening others or improving their community. Persons who attended outside educational programs were more motivated by this factor.

The last factor was *Social Interaction*. It referred to individuals who wanted to network with or get to know other people and enhance their social skills. The higher a person's income and educational level, the less motivated he or she was by this factor.

Four of the seven dimensions of motivation (*Spiritual and Religious Development, Love of Learning, Service to Others,* and *Social Interaction)* were consistent with previous adult and religious education studies. Evidence of different aspects of motivation were found to reside in the *Familiar Cultural Setting, Support in Facing Personal Challenges,* and *Family Togetherness* motivational dimensions.

**Implications**

There are no studies of motivation which provide an in-depth analysis of African Americans' motivations to participate in church-based educational programs despite the role the African American church has played in the African American community. This study has contributed to the adult education literature relative to African American adult education and African Americans' motivations. It offers a different framework of motivation to explain African American adult learners' motivations for participation from a different socio-cultural context, the African American church.

As a disenfranchised population, African Americans have reportedly been underrepresented in adult educational activities (Cross, 1981; Valentine, 1997; Whaples & Booth, 1982) and literature. However, within the past two decades, more attention has been given to African American adult education as evidenced by the proliferation of articles and books relative to the field. This study provided yet another examination into the field, but focused specifically on African Americans' motivations.

***As a disenfranchised population, African Americans have reportedly been underrepresented in adult educational activities.***

Groups that have been socially defined as ethnic or racial minorities are increasingly becoming a majority in certain segments of our society (Rachal, 1989; Ross-Gordon, 1990). Therefore, more attention should be directed towards providing educational offerings to this

group. In order to do so, their motivations to participation must be understood. Although some studies have done an adequate job in explaining adults' motivations in general, some have failed to include an analysis of race (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Valentine, 1997). In contrast to other studies, this study is unique in that it not only provides an in-depth examination of African Americans' motivations, it does so from a socio-cultural context, the African American church. Hence, this study has implications concerning the literature base for adult education as well as the practice.

The social context in which adults engage in adult education can have an impact on their motivations to participation. According to Courtney (1992), what has been lacking in adult education research is "a view of all adult learning activity as something which takes place within a definable social context, an organizational and societal nexus" (p. 119). This study was a step in that direction.

A learning environment that is suitable or comfortable for one group may not be for others. And, as Anderson (1988) points out, African Americans' social, cultural, and environmental milieu differs from other ethnic groups. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn when programs are offered in non-formal settings and encompass nontraditional learning, African Americans have responded favorably to them--especially when their needs are met (Briscoe, 1990). Thus, it would appear that African Americans favor programs held in a community whose cultural beliefs and values are in line with theirs. Hence, this study emphasizes how perceptions by adult learners relative to the educational environment can impact motivations to participation in adult education.

Results from this study introduced the idea of exploring adults' motivations to participate based on individuals' perceptions about formal or informal educational institutions' ability to meet or address their needs. In general, this study shed more evidence for the importance of considering the impact the socio-cultural context has on adults' motivations to participate in adult education. Furthermore, this research illustrates the significance of the relationship of the environment or educational setting and adults' motivations.

This study has implications for practitioners as well. Different motivational dimensions emerged from this study as a result of the context of this study. Thus, traditional adult education institutions should move outside the comfort of their "traditional walls" in an effort to reach African American adults. If formal educational institutions want to increase African American participation in their programs, it would behoove them to establish or strengthen partnerships with non-traditional institutions such as the church. Furthermore, community-based programs, such as those offered by the church, have the advantage of providing easy access to educational activities for African Americans and increasing participation and responsiveness (Briscoe, 1990).

Although adult learners from different racial or ethnic backgrounds may have some commonalties relative to motivations for participation, especially in traditional settings, different motivations exist depending on the context. If adult educators seek to provide quality programming that is responsive to the learning needs of African American adult learners (Ross-Gordon, 1991; Rachal, 1989), they cannot rely solely on motivational concepts grounded in studies dominated by White, middle-class adults (Courtney, 1992; Wlodkowski, 1999). Adult practitioners should keep abreast of current literature as it relates to the specific populations they wish to attract to their programs. This will aid them in providing quality programming which, in turn, will enable them to better serve the needs of African American adult learners.

This study has broadened our understanding of African American adults' motivations. It provides a different lens in which to explore African Americans' motivations. It also emphasizes the significance of examining motivations to participate from different contexts to better understand ethnic minorities' motivations to participate outside of traditional settings.

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