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African Centered Curriculum and Teacher Efficacy: Contributors to African American Student Achievement

BY

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Abstract

Recognizing African American students still perform academically at lower levels than their White counterparts, they maintain lower grades in school, and perform lower on standardized tests; educators and policy makers continue attempts at addressing these disparities. One remedy is implementing culturally specific material into curriculum to be reflective of the cultural diversity of students in the classroom. Although research indicates the use of material related to the student's cultural origin can create a learning environment conducive to greater academic achievement particularly with minority children, few studies investigate the inclusion of culturally specific material in the classroom in relation to its effect on teachers. This study investigates the relationship between teacher's view of culture's role in the educational process and teacher efficacy and how this may be related to academic achievement. ANOVA's and Correlation statistics were used to analyze the data. Results show statistically significant academic achievement differences but no significant differences in teacher attitudes towards multiculturalism and the teacher self efficacy variable.

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Achievement gaps that persist between African American students and their White counterparts can slow or completely deter African Americans from accessing the traditional paths to upward social mobility. Taking into consideration that African Americans are currently the second largest minority population (U.S. Census data, 2000) it is imperative that educators effectively support the learning potential of this segment of students. Having recognized this, many educators and policy makers have identified a number of ways to bridge this gap. Along with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the use of affirmative action and various methods of implementing culturally relevant curriculum have all attempted to correct the gaps but have proven somewhat if not largely ineffective thus far.

One of the more recent attempts at closing the achievement gap has been the No Child Left Behind Act. Implemented in 2002, one of the goals of this act was to decrease the achievement gap and improve overall educational achievement standards in the United States. In a recent edition of Equity and Excellence in Education, volume 38, No.3, studies highlighted the NCLB reform as promoting inequality. Gerald Bracey, an educational researcher and writer who specializes in assessment and policy analysis, suggests that this reform may actually contribute towards increasing the achievement gap (Schroeder, 2005).

Other attempts to correct the achievement gap have included affirmative action and the use of multicultural curriculum. In 1996, American Psychological Association offered a formal definition of affirmative action, “voluntary and mandatory efforts

undertaken by federal, state, and local governments; private employers; and schools to combat discrimination and to promote equal opportunity in education and employment for all (as cited in Crosby et al. 2003). From “Digest of Educational Statistics Tables and Figures, 2004,” by U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Blacks have only increased a marginal amount in college enrollment up from 9.6% to 11.3% of the student population of total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions from 1976 to 2002. Beginning in the 1990’s affirmative action policies have been legislatively rejected by several states including California in 1996, Washington in 1998 and Florida in 2000 however the problems that created affirmative action still exists.

Another way of addressing the achievement gap is a scholarly emphasis on the importance of linking the cultural experiences at home with those in the classroom, a notion called cultural synchronization (Irvine, 2002). A lack of cultural synchronization or the gap between the value placed on the child’s own culture and cultural strengths and their formal educational experience may be contributing to the academic challenges African American students face in the classroom. Educators are addressing this by advocating for curriculum changes to be implemented that reflect the diverse populations currently present in our educational system (Jibaja-Rusth, et. al, 1994; Jay, 2003). Educators have placed a strong emphasis on African American students and how the inclusion of culturally specific material may affect their achievement. Research has documented that teaching from the student’s culture produces better academic achievement (Asante, 1991; Lomotey, 1992; Irvine, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nobles, 1990 as cited in Giddings, 2001). However, many teachers are not being trained

to use culturally relevant curricula. Asa Hilliard (1995) critiqued teacher training by claiming it “borders on professional malpractice” because of its lack of utilizing information that does incorporate the culture of the African American student.

The expanding ethnic diversity of the U.S. population has contributed to a continual dialogue about the best way to educate the current school age population and forth coming generations. The recognition of the use of the student’s culture in the learning environment has been a topic of much consideration. In particular, scholars have increased dialogue about how culture may influence academic achievement (Marks & Tonso, 2006; Smith, 2005; Parsons, 2003; Le Roux, 2002) This continues to be the driving force behind the conversation for effectively educating diverse students with multicultural curriculum. The evidence for the influence of multicultural education on achievement is sparse; however it is imperative that multicultural curriculum is implemented appropriately for the targeted populations. Much of the current implementation is only offered at a surface level, not at a level thoroughly infused in the standard curricula thus it is less meaningful and has less impact. There is so much variation that depending on it goal its implementation may be successful in some cases while not in others. Further investigation into the appropriate use of culturally relevant curriculum may yield valuable answers.

Although research continues to highlight numerous reasons why the achievement gap persists including poverty, lack of access to educational resources, lack of quality in schools and teachers, low teacher expectation, lack of parental involvement, cultural and language differences (Arnold 1993, Ford 1996 as cited in Olszewski-Kubilius; DeCivita, et al, 2004 as cited in Lee & Bowen, 2006), little research focuses on various ways of

utilizing culturally specific and relevant material. A narrowed focus on culturally relevant curricula that has received little attention is curricula content geared specifically for individual races. In particular, few studies have been conducted on American public schools that utilize culturally specific and relevant material where the numerical majority of students are of African descent.

Present Research

The present study will look at two public schools, one of which uses an African centered curriculum and another that uses traditional curriculum to compare teacher attitudes about culture. The study will also investigate differences in teacher confidence or efficacy which is the teacher's belief in their ability to teach. In addition, it will be determined if academic achievement differs between the two schools and how this may be affected by both attitudes about multicultural curricula and teacher efficacy. The results of the study will contribute to the knowledge of how the use of culturally specific curricula affects teacher efficacy to teach culturally diverse populations, particularly with the use of African centered curricula in a predominately African American student population. The study may also provide insight to how this may relate to African American students and academic achievement.

Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural theory. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, articulates the importance of the sociocultural environment in shaping learning and the interactions between teacher and child (Kozulin, et al, 2003). Vygotsky's work concentrated on learning and thinking using the individual's social, cultural and historical reality (Mull, 1990). Culturally relevant curricula also seeks to validate the students' reality by recognizing the social, cultural and historical experiences and incorporating them into the curriculum. Given the diversity of the current U.S. populations in the classroom, it is imperative that we investigate the social, cultural and historical experiences of the children to create a learning environment that is conducive to positive academic achievement.

Also relevant to the learning experience is the interaction between student and teacher. Vygotsky captured this importance in acknowledging the zone of proximal development. The student is the zone of proximal development when they have reached the point in the learning experience where assistance is needed to grasp material that is unfamiliar. It is most apparent when the child's potential can be significantly increased with the assistance of a more knowledgeable person who assists the student in moving towards understanding concepts they would not have been able to understand alone. This assistance is known as scaffolding and is an important part of the learning experience (Kanevsky & Geake, 2004). Included in these interactions is the use of cultural artifacts like language and symbolic tools that Vygotsky believed were used to mediate our relationships with others. The relationship of primary concern in this study is the effects of that between the student and teacher. The interaction between these two individuals has the potential to go beyond the zone of proximal development so that greater

achievement occurs (Kanevsky & Geake 2004). Cultural artifacts are derived from cultural experience so in order to facilitate greater academic achievement through the zone of proximal development, the teacher needs to be aware of the cultural information and experiences that impact and influence the lives of their students.

Definition of Terms

African American/Black. African American and Black are used in concert with the original authors use and refer to people of African descent residing in America.

Culture. Culture includes the rules, language, religion, family systems, behaviors, customs and education that a group of people share and pass from one generation to the next.

Attitudes. A learned association in memory between an object and a positive or negative evaluation of that object, and attitude strength is equivalent to the strength of that association.

Attitudes towards Culture. The attitude towards culture and its incorporation in the educational process can be defined as positive or negative evaluations towards the inclusion of culture in a formal educational environment as well as in the curriculum. Attitudes towards culture will also include how the teacher values training required for teachers to become more culturally aware and the acquisition of skills necessary to deal appropriately with culturally diverse student populations.

Teacher Efficacy. The definition of self-efficacy used by Cross (1998) was originally defined by Bandura (1994), to mean the belief that one is capable of carrying out the actions needed to manage situations, even in the face of difficulties. Teachers with high

self-efficacy believe they can affect student learning or outcomes positively despite difficulties and is commonly known as teaching efficacy as defined by Guskey & Passaro (1994).

Culturally relevant education. Culturally relevant education provides an educational experience that involves understanding that students must experience academic success and also develop and/or maintain cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995). "Culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings 189).

African Centered Education. As defined by Wade Nobles in Madhubuti & Madhubuti (1994) African centered education uses both African and African American cultural precepts, processes, laws and experiences to solve, guide and understand human functioning in the educational process.

Literature Review

The Role of Culture in Education

> "Teachers' perceptions of culture related identities and their manifestations in the classroom are especially relevant to school achievement by students" (Neal, et al, 2003).

Historically, the American educational system has not recognized African American culture leading to an argument that education has been used as a tool of domination, and a means to marginalize African Americans and their culture (Hilliard, 1995). This has been done primarily through the dominance of cultural norms that are not grounded in the African American experience and while a critical purpose of education is to transmit cultural knowledge from one generation to the next, African American culture has been historically excluded from the formal school experience (Ozmon & Craver, 1995). The importance of transmitting culture through education was accentuated by Kenneth Conklin when he stated,

> "A society's culture can survive far longer than the lifespan of any of its members, because its educational system passes down the folkways and knowledge of one generation to subsequent generations. A culture changes over time, but has a recognizable continuity of basic values and behavioral patterns that distinguishes it from other cultures. That continuity is provided by the educational system." (Conklin, 2002)

The dominant culture influences the educational content and the approaches used to disseminate the content (Le Roux, 2002) which promotes and transmits the knowledge and cultural norms of European lineage. The current power structure within the educational system is reflective of the power structure of American society which leaves little room for the value of cultural paradigms that are not conceptually and culturally white.

Multicultural Curriculum

The importance of utilizing students' background culture in the curriculum is more critical as classrooms in the United States have become increasingly ethnically diverse. Recognizing cultures role in curriculum has also brought to the forefront how the inclusion of culture in the learning environment relates to academic achievement, particularly for students of color. Emphasizing student culture has been considered a viable way to improve student achievement. However, research shows that pre-service teachers do not have the expertise or knowledge to effectively utilize diverse cultural influences in the learning process (Goodwin, 1997, Swartz, 1996 as cited in Bakari, 2000). Many teachers misinterpret behaviors that are not consistent with cultural norms for the school as a deficit and do not understand the cultural context of the behavior. (Bakari, 2000). This misinterpretation highlights the need for teachers to be culturally competent. Lynch (1999) defines culturally competency as the ability to think, feel and act in ways that acknowledge, respect and build upon ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in multicultural situations. Clearly, obtaining knowledge about various cultures is not enough. The teacher must be able to demonstrate respect for differences, a desire to learn about other cultures, and be flexible and willing to make adjustments in relation to these differences when necessary (Lynch & Hanson, 1999).

Multicultural reform has attempted to address these issues primarily through curricular and pedagogical changes that have oftentimes missed the mark of promoting academic achievement using the student's culture of origin. There are two possible reasons for this. The first may be that the push for multiculturalism functions to divert attention away from the many structural inequities that are the foundation of the

American educational system and the fundamental reasons behind the lack of academic success for African Americans and other minorities as indicated by Michele Jay (2003). The other is multiculturalism reform does not cater to the unique experiences of African Americans in America. In other words, the inclusion of culture in the curriculum is not culturally specific enough for students of African descent, resulting in a superficial overview of holidays and socially acceptable representations congruent with African and African American culture. It is possible that African American students do not perform as well as they could because they are experiencing education that is not meaningful and relevant to their lives.

Another function of multicultural educational reform is to assist in the reduction of prejudice, work towards providing equal opportunity and change the distribution of power to be more equitable between ethnic groups (Jay, 2003). Michelle Jay (2003) asserts that the goal of multicultural education is to challenge the standard curriculum and the power structures that keep it in place. A hidden curriculum exists that prevents the implementation of multicultural curriculum that would benefit the students (Jay, 2003). While most educators and their supporters would agree that some degree of multicultural education is needed, there appears to be little effort to actually change the educational system. Jay believes this is due to the empowerment that multicultural education may provide thus giving rise to action against a system that is inequitable.

> "The multicultural paradigm currently popular in the United States functions in a manner similar to civil rights law in that it is regularly subverted to benefit Whites… allowing the status quo to prevail" (Jay, 2003).

Although policies may state a grand scheme to challenge and effect change in the education system, the contributions approach continues to be the most prevalent

implementation of multicultural reform (Banks 1988 as cited in Giddings, 2001). State level policies have guidelines that permit little beyond the inclusion of racial and cultural groups in the curriculum but don't account for institutional inequities (Johnson, 2003). This is particularly important for marginalized groups like African Americans. This group of students benefit from curricula that empowers and provides tools to challenge the system that has historically sought to denigrate them. Culturally relevant curriculum geared specifically for African American students places the Black experience at the center and functions not just to educate but to facilitate understanding about African and African American culture. In addition, culturally relevant curriculum helps strengthen the student's role in society by instilling a commitment and obligation to be responsible for themselves, each other and Black communities (Lomotey, 1992).

The push for the inclusion of multicultural curricula is being implemented in ways that do not address the need for culturally relevant information to be included in the learning environment as a tool that empowers the students to learn. Oftentimes, the additions to the curricula resemble that of the "Contributions Approach" (Banks, 1988 as cited in Giddings, 2001) which consists of curriculum additions and staff development that focus on a few holidays and heroes consist with various non-White cultures. Lee (1992) explains that the contributions approach among other reform efforts are simply a quick fix and while its use may have some value, it must be combined with more comprehensive reform to have an impact otherwise the core of the curriculum still maintains the status quo by supporting the values and traditions of the dominant group. Marks and Tonso (2006) call these "melting pot values" which are a form of cultural imperialism used in education to perpetuate cultural assimilation and authority.

The Need and Use of African Centered Curriculum

The need to empower students to challenge and institute change in the educational system requires a more narrow cultural approach to education. The goal of African centered education is to effectively and holistically educate African American students to be the best they can be, educationally and otherwise. For African American students, an infusion of African centered curriculum content would not be sufficient. Instead, curriculum that is developed through an African centered perspective and encompasses the values and traditions that embody the best Africa has to offer must be of primary concern. In addition, there needs to be recognition that historically, public education has meant different things to different groups. In 1969, Carter G. Woodson argued that White Americans were educated to fill positions of power in American society whereas Blacks were educated to fill positions subordinate to those in power. The choice to engage in this differential treatment can be found in justifications for enslaving persons of African descent.

"Slavery was one of the most important factors that shaped the social, psychological, economic, educational, and political development of Black people" (Sue, 1981). Enslaved Africans were thought of as inferior to Whites and in need of civilizing which entailed acculturation by stripping them of anything distinctly African. Among these were their names, ethnicities, language, music, religion, food, traditions and cultural practices though this is not an exhaustive list of all aspects affected. Mellon (1988 as cited in Davis, 2005) asserted that the goal of enslavement was to create within the enslaved a complete dependence upon and perpetual unquestioning inferiority to the White race. One way to achieve that goal was to not offer education to those enslaved

persons. The idea is that education is a tool of liberation and to educate the enslaved came with the possibility that they would want to liberate themselves thus disrupting the order instituted by Whites. These were the conditions through which African American culture can find its origin (Morgan, 1933 as cited in Davis, 2005). As stated before, no culture goes unaffected by its historical roots but many have argued that African American culture still retains much of its African characteristics and should be handled with that in mind. Thus, educating the Black population requires more than a superficial inclusion of holidays and individuals that fit the Eurocentric framework of "safe" which don't empower by denying them the appropriate skills to challenge the dominant group's assertion of what is right, valuable and necessary for people other than themselves.

African centered education has taken up this responsibility by grounding thought and practice in the cultural image and interest of people of African ancestry. In relation to the educational process, Nobles states that African centered education uses African and African American cultural percepts, processes, laws and experiences to solve, guide and understand human functioning. African centered curriculum appropriately connects the Black experience to the African cultural world view and value system (Nobles as cited in Madhubuti & Madhubuti, 1994). This connection facilitates a healthy context from which African Americans can learn about and understand themselves and the world. Orienting education in this manner entails goals that are not just to educate but to facilitate understanding about African and African American culture, society and the student's role in society and to instill a commitment and obligation to be responsible for ourselves, each other and our communities (Lomotey, 1992). The African worldview functions under the premise that African people share a collective group identity and as such, its educators

“create bonds among students, bonding with the school, bonding the school to the community and bonding the community to destiny” (Hilliard, 1995). Placing positive value on African and African American culture is essential in educating the student of African descent because in not doing so educators are asking that student to remove themselves from the ways of thinking about and perceiving the world that are integral to their experiences. Educators are asking them to step out of their frame of reference, their community and their culture (Ladson-Billings, 2001 as cited in Neal et al, 2003). In order to contextualize educational content for the student of African descent, it is critical to do so from an African worldview.

The axiological and cosmological attributes of the African worldview incorporate an interdependence and connection between people that is markedly different from that of the Eurocentric orientation (Shiele, 1994). This worldview does not exclude other cultures but places the students learning experience within their cultural frame of reference. **I am because we are**..." is a saying of the Xhosa people in Africa and is a good example of the importance of interpersonal relationships and the emphasis that is put on the effort to be responsible for each others welfare. It is this belief which is essential to African centered curriculum that being responsible for each other will create different expectations for the educator, student, parent and community.

The use of an African centered perspective in education is most commonly found in independently owned and operated schools. These schools are some of the institutions that have been able to implement curricula which support the culture and learning experience of the African American student. Historically, these schools have been Independent Black Institutions (IBI’s) particularly Independent Black Schools. The

history of people of African descent in America providing education for themselves dates back to enslavement when the enslaved Africans were not allowed to be formally educated yet through strength and determination they created ways to do so. Some of these institutions were developed in response to parental desire to control the educational efforts that their children participated in as well as a means for Black resistance to White domination (Beauboef-Lafontant, 1999; Lomotey, 1992). Many of these IBI's, particularly the more recent developments, have structured their educational components and environment based on an African centered curriculum. Another component to the IBI is not just a positive value placed on African and African American culture but an emphasis on the ability for all children of African descent to excel academically. "The belief that all children can learn permeates the IBI and academic excellence for all the children is clearly the goal of these institutions" (Lomotey & Brookins, 1988 as cited in Lomotey, 1992).

African Centered Curriculum in Practice

Lomotey & Brookins (1988) found that "students from IBI's enter more traditional school systems better prepared than the average student because of their high academic competence and exposure to a wider variety of educational content." Examples include the graduates of Shule Mandela Academy, in East Palo Alto, California who were reported to be the only African American students in advanced placement classes in high schools in that area at that time (Lomotey & Brookins, 1988). St. Mel high school, another all Black school in Providence, Rhode Island has a 100% college acceptance rate for its students (Lomotey & Brookins, 1988). Carol Lee (1992) wrote about the New

Concept Development Center (NCDC), a center that initially grew out of a need to address academic disparities in the Chicago area. As the center expanded it became an IBI whose alumni graduated from or were attending some of the most prestigious public schools and gifted programs in the Chicago area.

In a case study (Scherer, 1991) at Victor Berger Elementary School whose curriculum includes African American content created an environment where the students belong to a “school family”. The school family is a merger of the school administration and parents and extended family members. These individuals participate in family meetings twice a month and teachers are expected to engage in continuing education classes that focus on cultural content. The teachers plan in teams during the day while the students are being instructed by full time art, music and physical education teachers and teachers are required to make 36 home visits a year. A sense of community is fostered as links are made between students, family and the school staff. In another study, Ladson-Billings investigated successful educators of African American students and found that these teachers had a fundamental belief that all their students could do well and that parent and community involvement were an important part of the educational process.

Much of the focus on African centered curriculum concentrates on how it will benefit African American students in a variety of ways while keeping in mind the role of the teacher, family and the school’s learning environment. A number of other studies highlight parental and community involvement to be important parts of this process (Lipman, 1995; Lomotey, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Scherer, 1991). When parental and community involvement exists within the school environment as a support to the teachers, academic achievement tends to be better (Lunenburg and Irby, 2002).

Since the role of the teacher is the focus of this study, it is important to take a closer look at the role of the teacher and how the use of the student's culture of origin may influence teaching. Specifically, how the use of culture and attitudes towards the inclusion of culture affects teacher efficacy or the belief that a teacher can effectively instruct African American students.

Teacher Efficacy

According to Tschannen-Moran, et al (1998), teacher efficacy has been defined by researchers as the extent to which a teacher feels they are able to effect student academic performance in spite of level of motivation or other difficulties. Thus, teacher efficacy is the belief that teachers can teach effectively. This concept originated from the term 'self-efficacy' defined by Albert Bandura in 1977 as the beliefs that dictate what a person is able to do (Bandura 1994). Many studies using teacher efficacy as the dependent variable have yielded results that affect teacher and student performance. There is a substantial impact of teacher efficacy on student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986 as cited in Tschannen-Moran, et al 1998). For instance, Armor et al (1976) reported the greater the teacher's sense of efficacy, the greater the student advancement in reading achievement (as cited in Dembo & Gibson, 1985). Similar gains have been found in standardized testing according to Ashton & Webb (1982) who found a significant relationship between teacher efficacy and achievement on the Metropolitan Achievement Test in both mathematics and language (as cited in Dembo & Gibson, 1985).

Researchers indicate "teacher self-beliefs in the form of expectations and predispositions about themselves and their students are important mediators of teachers'

experiences and teaching behavior" (Ashton & Webb, 1986 as cited in Dembo & Gibson, 1985; Clark & Peterson, 1986, and Dusek, 1985 as cited in Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Pajares, 2002). Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs embrace practices associated with high achievement gains (Gibson & Demo, 1984). Overall, teacher efficacy has demonstrated effects on student achievement and is related to teachers' classroom behaviors, openness to new ideas, and their attitudes toward teaching (Tschannen-Moran, et al 1998).

The efficacy of educators has also been directly tied to cultural competency or being culturally conscious. Educators lack of awareness, respect and acceptance of cultural differences have contributed to the deficient levels of student achievement according to Gary Howard, founder and president of the Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage Center, (as cited in Smith, 2005). Le Roux (2002) posits that effective educators are culturally competent with students across a number of cultures which allows them to be effective communicators. Le Roux uses Lynch's (1999) definition of cultural competency which is the ability to think, feel and also to act in ways that acknowledge, respect and also build upon ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in multi-ethnic and/or multicultural situations (2002). Thus being culturally competent allows educators to provide the necessary scaffolding that brings the student to higher levels of academic achievement by using the student's culture of origin. Camille Smith (2005) takes culturally competency one step further by stating that school leaders and the school themselves need to be culturally proficient not just the educators.

As stated previously, predispositions and attitudes towards students play a major role in mediating teaching behavior, thus it becomes important to investigate attitudes towards

multiculturalism as a precursor to analyzing teacher efficacy. If educators are unwilling to recognize cultural competency as an important part of the teaching experience then their sense of efficacy towards teaching a culturally diverse classroom is likely to be less than those that do recognize and embrace its importance.

Attitudes Influence on Behavior.

Research conducted on the relationship of attitudes and its influence on behavior may help shed light on the role of attitudes about culture and how that can influence teacher efficacy. Dr. Ajzen, a professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst contributed to the Handbook of Attitudes on behavior where attitude is defined as a learned association in memory between an object and a positive or negative evaluation of that object (Fazio as cited in Ajzen, 2005). Teacher's positive or negative attitudes regarding culture and its place in the classroom may impact their behavior in the classroom and result in influences that impact student's ability to perform academically. Krosnick and Petty (1995) as cited in Ajzen (2005) state that strong attitudes are more resistant to change, persistent over time, and likely to influence perception and judgments and guide overt behavior. It is likely that strong positive or negative evaluations of culture will influence a teacher's perception on their ability to teach their students. Additionally, the importance of understanding the role of attitudes towards culture on behaviors of the teachers, specifically its impact on their confidence in their ability to teach students is vital. Azbjen's theory on attitudes posits the pervasiveness of attitudes affect on behavior. The effects of attitudes on behavior are often in a predictive fashion which may give us insight to how learning environments are structured in diverse settings

depending on the attitude of the teacher towards culture. Teachers are critical to the success of implementing an African or African American curriculum like those introduced above (Shujaa, 1995). Policy studies have shown that a teacher will not engage in policy led behavior if they don't want to. This is largely because policymakers cannot dictate what matters to people (McLaughlin, 1987).

It is vital to understand teachers' confidence in the ability to teach diverse student populations which may be influenced by attitude towards culture and the cultural initiatives pushed by those concerned with culturally relevant curricula. Within the context of this study, teacher efficacy becomes important because research has shown that positive teacher efficacy is related to positive student achievement outcomes (Tucker, et al 2002). Because attitudes are likely to guide overt behavior (Ajzen, 2005) there may be a link to positive attitudes about the inclusion of culturally relevant curriculum and teaching efficacy.

Purpose of this study

This study was designed to investigate whether the use of an African centered curriculum contributes to the achievement of students attending a public school. The researcher investigated differences related to academic achievement of African American students at two public schools. There are few studies that investigate the academic success of African American students attending public schools with an African centered curriculum public school system (Love, 2003). The researcher will also assess whether attitudes toward the use of culturally relevant information in curricula impact teacher self-efficacy for educating African American children and if they are significantly stronger at the public school that utilizes African centered curricula. The results of the research will inform educators, policy makers and parents regarding the use of culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom.

Research questions

This research will investigate if the teachers at School A and School B maintain significant differences in attitudes toward the inclusion and use of culture specific curriculum? Based on the literature, it is anticipated that school A will have more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of culturally relevant curricula. The research also seeks to understand if the teachers at the African centered school more efficacious than the teachers at the comparable school? In other words, will positive attitudes towards culturally relevant education significantly impact teaching efficacy? Data was also collected to determine if there a difference in the academic performance of the two schools? It is anticipated the School A's use of culturally relevant curriculum will

produce greater academic achievement than the comparable school. Finally, if a difference exists, to what extent is it due to teacher attitudes about culture and the level of teaching self efficacy?

Methods

Setting

Two schools participated in this study. School A, a public school in Kansas City, Missouri has incorporated a curriculum from an African centered perspective that is currently being used by the faculty. School B, another public school in Kansas City, Missouri comparable in racial composition, size and student socioeconomic status but utilizes a standard curriculum was also included in the study.

Participants

The teachers come from two elementary schools that span grades kindergarten through 5th. The participants from School A totaled 17 and the participants from School B totaled 12. School A is part of a project to implement African centered curriculum into the learning experience in two elementary schools, a middle and high school. School A included in this research is one of the two elementary schools involved in this project. The school has implemented a year round schedule and a Saturday school. The assessment standard for the school is performance based and adheres to the district, state and national measures of academic success. The instructional framework of the school utilizes the Kansas City Missouri School District's core curriculum and then builds on this framework using African centered methods and content . All of the teachers in the school are not full time and may be specialty teachers but all the teachers do utilize African centered content regardless of subject or specialty.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria included elementary schools in the 33rd District of Kansas City, Missouri that include grades kindergarten through 5th. The first school included in the study was the school utilizing the African centered curriculum (School A). Then comparable schools were investigated that met certain criteria. That criteria included having a school population of approximately 200-300 students, 95% of whom are African American, at least 80% of whom are on free or reduced lunch and are within an approximate 5 mile radius from School A.

Description of Sample

School A is part of a plan implemented by the Kansas City, Missouri School District to create an African centered educational school reform model that spans kindergarten through 12th grade. School A is the elementary school component to this comprehensive plan developed by the Kansas City, Missouri School District. The school began implementing this particular way of instruction and use of African centered curriculum in the 1991-1992 school year (See Appendix D). The school has students that are bused from outside the local community as well as students from the local neighborhood. School B is comprised of mainly local neighborhood students. The students in both schools are comparable on several criterions such as school population size, percentage of students on free or reduced lunch, percentage of African American student enrollment, student teacher ratio and student attendance.

Research Design

This research study consisted of analyzing the responses of teachers in two public schools in Kansas City, Missouri regarding teacher efficacy and attitudes about the use of culture in the learning experience in their respective schools. The data collected from the surveys were statistically analyzed using ANOVA tests. The achievement results from the Missouri Assessment Program were also analyzed using an ANOVA test.

Procedures

I originally found out about the use of African centered curriculum and School A in a variety of educational courses. After deciding to investigate how this school worked and its impact, I included it in this research project. Then other schools in the Kansas City, Missouri school district 33, where School A is located, were sought. Information on educational achievement data such as the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), an educational reform designed to access the academic progress of the students as well as information on demographics and summary reports for schools of this district were accessed through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

Initial contact with the schools consisted of contacting the principals by phone to explain the nature of the study and to request their schools participation through individual involvement by a number of their teachers. After obtaining permission from the principal of the school, the principal provided email address for all of the teachers currently teaching in the school. These teachers were sent an email that included a consent form detailing the nature of the study, its purpose, procedures, and potential risks

and benefits of their participation. The form also informed participants that their responses would be anonymous and they had the option to withdraw prior to completing the survey. The survey can be found as a link in the email and will be available for several weeks after the sent date of the email. Once the participant reads the consent form, if he/she wishes to be involved in the study, they will proceed with filling out the survey by clicking on the link. All results will be submitted online.

Georgia State University's Institutional Review Board reviewed the research protocol and approved the plans to conduct the research prior to the initiation of the study.

Instruments

Teacher valuation of culture will be assessed through a survey originally entitled "Teacher Multicultural Attitude Inventory" (TMAS) (Ponterotto, 1998), a 20 item survey using a 5 point Likert scale. Construct and criterion validity was established and satisfactory levels of score reliability were indicated. The TMAS survey seeks to establish how the teacher views the incorporation of culture in the curriculum being used and had an internal consistency reliability of .82 (Ponterotto et al. 1998). Another survey entitled "Teacher Efficacy Scale" (Cross, 1998) is a 16 item survey using a 5 point Likert scale that will evaluate the teacher's perception on their ability to teach the students and bring about change regardless of external forces which had an internal consistency reliability of .79 (Dembo & Gibson, 1984). Both instruments were analyzed as one-factor models as indicated by the results of numerous tests performed by Ponterotto, et al (1998) and Gibson & Dembo (1984).

Dependent variable

The dependent variables in this study are attitudes towards the use and importance of multicultural curricula and teacher self efficacy. The “Teacher Multicultural Attitude Inventory” was separated into several groupings.

Analysis

Once the surveys were completed the data were placed in a SPSS program to be analyzed. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was conducted to determine the extent to which the schools vary in their responses. A correlation was conducted to determine the extent to which the variables from the two surveys are related to each other. Student achievement was determined by analyzing the scores of standardized tests using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test. The ANOVA compared the percentage scores for the two schools on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), which is a standardized test directed by the state Board of Education to identify the knowledge, skills and competencies that Missouri students should acquire by the time they complete high school and to evaluate student progress towards those academic standards. Grade 3 students are required to take Communication Arts and Science and grade 4 students are required to take Mathematics and Social Studies. The state of Missouri reports the scores of these tests and they are accessible online. The scores are placed in 5 categories: Step 1, Progressing, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient, and Advanced. Those students performing at Step 1, Progressing and Nearing Proficiency are below proficiency and may need assistance in that area. Those students performing at Proficient level or Advancing level are either at grade level or above.

Validity

Neuman (2006) states validity refers to “how well an empirical indicator and the conceptual definition of the construct that the indicator is supposed to measure “fit” together” (p. 192). Internal validity was achieved in this study through triangulation which is “the idea that looking at something from multiple points of view improves accuracy” (Nueman, 2006: 149) The sources used were two separate surveys and the student achievement scores from the MAP.

Reliability

Nueman (2006) states Reliability refers to “the dependability or consistency of the measure of a variable” (p. 189) and whether it can be replicated. Reliability statistics were used to determine the reliability of each instrument. The Gibson and Dembo Teacher Efficacy scale had an internal consistency reliability of ..79 (Dembo & Gibson, 1984). The Teacher Multicultural Attitude Inventory had an internal consistency reliability of .82 (Ponterotto et al. 1998).

Results

Achievement data

A One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze differences between the achievement scores of the students attending the two elementary schools for 2004 in the content areas of Communication Arts, Math and Science. Univariate statistics indicate the mean for students who are at Step 1 or progressing was substantially higher for School B, (M=30.37, SD=17.16) than School A, (M=4.93, SD=3.16). The mean for students who were performing at grade level were also higher for School B, (M=60.77, SD=12.40) than the mean for School A, (M=41.27, SD=4.82). The mean for students who were proficient or advanced School A (M=53.87, SD=2.62) than the mean for School B, (M=3.87, SD=9.28). A test of Homogeneity of Variances indicates that all the variance for each level of achievement were approximately equal as they all were greater than .05, see Table 1.1. The following information can be found in Table 1.2. There were no significant differences between the two schools in the Step 1 and Progressing category (F=6.37, p=.065). However, the at grade level category did yield statistically significant results between the schools, (F=11.47, p=.028). The proficient and advanced category also had statistically significant results, (F=65.35, p=.001).

Multicultural attitudes

The following results are found in Table 2.1. The mean scores on the Multicultural Attitude Inventory Scale per individual range from 3.10 to 3.80 on a five point Likert scale. The results of the ANOVA test for the Multicultural Attitude Inventory Scale are not significant, F=1.304, p=.264 and can be found in Table 2.2.

Teacher Efficacy

Means scores on the Teacher Efficacy Scale range from 3.06 to 3.94 on a five point Likert scale. These results are found in Table 3.1. The following results are shown in Table 3.2._The result of the ANOVA test for the Teacher Efficacy Scale is not significant, F=.074, p=.788.

A Pearson correlation was calculated for the two surveys and the results indicate that Teacher Efficacy Scale did not correlate with the Multicultural Attitude Inventory Scale, r=.346, p=.066.

Discussion

The findings have a number of implications for theoretical discussion and research on the use of African centered curriculum in public schools and levels of achievement, how achievement is related to attitudes toward the use of culturally relevant information in curricula and if these attitudes toward the use of culturally relevant curricula impacts teacher self-efficacy for educating African American children.

Levels of Academic Achievement

In theoretical terms, the achievement data findings strongly support Vygotsky's hypotheses of sociocultural theory, zones of proximal development and scaffolding. School A creates an environment that incorporates the culture of the students as a core of the curriculum. It is probable that the teachers understanding and incorporation of culturally relevant curricula assisted the students in better understanding the material presented. In addition, the teachers in this school may have also been better able to provide scaffolding resulting students moving out of the zone of proximal development into greater comprehension which may have ultimately led to increased achievement scores. Statistical analyses confirmed School A's use of culturally relevant curricula is producing significant achievement results. Overall, School A's students are performing at much higher achievement levels than School B. The number of students who fell in Step 1 and Progressing category, meaning they are achieving below grade level was substantially higher for School B than School A who in comparison had a substantially higher number of students performing in the Proficient and Advanced category, meaning the students are achieving above grade level. In fact, the findings show that the majority

of the student population for School A is in the proficient or advanced level and performing at grade level categories while the majority of School B's students are in the Step 1 or progressing and at grade level categories. It is clear that School A's students are outperforming School B's student population. This corresponds to the literature highlighting the success in achievement levels experienced by other students in schools with African centered curricula or culturally relevant curricula (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 1992; Lomotey & Brookins, 1988; Lunenbrug, 2002).

Multicultural Attitudes

No support was found for the hypothesis related to attitudes toward the use of culturally relevant information. The teachers in School A do not have significantly more positive attitudes towards the use of multicultural curricula in the learning environment. This may be as a result of the current educational climate that acknowledges and attempts to support diversity policies. The teachers may not want to answer questions about supporting multicultural objectives in a negative way regardless of how they feel. This may also be attributed to differences in the perception of what is meant by multicultural curricula. For instance, the teachers may view multicultural curricula as thoroughly infusing the the curriculum with culturally relevant material while others may have perceived it to be similar to that of the Contributions paproach talked about by Banks (1988 as cited in Giddings, 2001). Because the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Inventory does not differentiate teachers perception of what multicultural curricula is teachers could have been answering the same questions about very different versions of the concept multicultural curriculum.

Teacher Efficacy

The findings indicate no significant differences in how efficacious Schools A's teachers felt in relation to School B's teachers. When the instrument is broken down into more than one factor, significant results emerge indicating that there are differences in how efficacious the teachers feel and this may account for some of the differences in schievement levels as indicated by researchers (Armor et al. 1976, Ashton & Webb, 1982 as cited in Dembo & Gibson, 1985 and Tschannen-Moran, et al 1998). However as a single construct which is how the creator of the survey indicates it should be used, the results are not significant. There may be a number of reasons why the teachers are not exhibiting differences in teacher efficacy. Both sets of teachers may have a number of resources that assist them in being more efficacious in the classroom. For those in School A, the use of culturally relevant curriculum may indeed help the teachers become more efficacious but there attitudes toward its use is just not significantly different from the teachers in School B.

Interaction between the variables

In addition, there was no support that attitudes towards culturally relevant curricula may be affecting teacher efficacy as evidenced in the lack of significant results between the teachers in the two schools for either variable. This coupled with the lack of correlation between the two surveys indicates that there is no support that differences in attitudes toward multicultural objectives will result in differences in teacher efficacy.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the present study. First the sample size is small. This is as a result of only a few schools that use African centered curriculum and are public institutions. The small sample size did not allow for more advanced statistical analyses to be conducted. In addition, the sample size may have also affected the present analysis, resulting in less significant findings. The self-reporting survey method wherein participants may not have wanted to reveal beliefs indicating negative feelings about diversity particularly in light of the current educational climate that pushes agendas in support of multiculturalism may also be a limitation.

Conclusion

While the two variables, attitudes about multicultural practices and teacher efficacy were not significant, the achievement data is. It is obvious that School A is doing something right but it is less clear that teacher attitudes about multiculturalism is affecting efficacy differently for the two sets of teachers. This may be as a result of the self reporting approach coupled with the pressures in education to acknowledge and support diversity and multicultural approaches present in current educational processes. Though these observations of probable reasons we found these results are given, there may be a number of other unforeseen reasons that could also account for these findings. It is also possible that a larger sample size could yield different results using the same measures.

The findings indicate very strong differences in academic achievement between the schools. This implies that the African centered approach is working well for students

of African descent. This is a substantial contribution to the body of growing research about schools that use culturally relevant curricula and their success. Though the study did not elucidate what the teachers' role is in this process, it did shed light on alternative educational experiences that are successful in possibly decreasing the academic disparities between African American students and their White counterparts.

Given the current and growing diverse student population in the United States and the persistent achievement gap between students of African descent and Whites, alternative approaches to education such as School A provide models by which educators, administrators, policy makers and parents can make more informed choices for the educational welfare of African American children. Also, School A could be a model that other schools can duplicate adding the number of students that can be reached to bring about greater academic achievement in a culturally enriching and supporting environment.

Future Research

The use of self-reporting surveys may have not yielded the kind of quality and depth qualitative research may have brought to the research table. It is possible that qualitative research such as observing actual classrooms would be helpful in understanding the role of culture in influencing teacher efficacy and would eliminate self-reporting bias that may be present in the results indicated in this study. It would also be helpful to conduct in depth interviews with teachers and administration about their perceptions of what is working in the schools that utilize African centered curricula. The themes that come out of this approach may give us indications of what kinds of variables

should be analyzed and/or what kinds of instruments would be most helpful in understanding what role teachers may be playing in the educational process of using culturally relevant curricula. The aforementioned research may also indicate several other factors that help us understand what is it about the use of culturally relevant curricula that produces greater academia achievement.

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Table 1.1 Means for Achievement Data for School A and School B

Categories	School A	School B
1. Step 1 and Progressing	4.93	30.37
2. At Grade Level	41.27	60.77
3. Proficient and Advanced	53.87	8.87

Table 1.2 Results of ANOVA for Achievement Data for School A and School B

Categories	F	p
1. Step 1 and Progressing	6.37	.065
2. At Grade Level	11.47	.028
3. Proficient and Advanced	65.35	.001

Table 2.1 Means for Teacher Multicultural Attitude Inventory

School A	School B
3.391	3.475

Table 2.2 Results of ANOVA for Teacher Multicultural Attitude Inventory

F	p
1.304	.264

Table 3.1 Means for Teacher Self Efficacy by School and Total Mean

School A	School B
3.486	3.511

Table 3.2 Results of ANOVA for Teacher Efficacy Scale

F	p
.074	.788

Appendix A

Teacher Efficacy Scale

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. If a student masters a new concept quickly, this might be because I know the necessary steps in teaching that concept…… _____
2. When the grades of my students improve it is usually because I found more effective teaching approaches…… _____
3. When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students…… _____
4. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson……. _____
5. When a student does better than usual, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort……. _____
6. If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him quickly……. _____
7. If one of my students could not do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty…… _____
8. When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I am usually able to adjust it to his/her level……... _____
9. When a student gets a better grade than he usually gets, it is usually because I found better ways of teaching that student……... _____
10. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement……... _____
11. If students are not disciplined at home, they aren't likely to accept any discipline…… _____

12. The hours in my class have little influence on student compared to the influence of their home environment……. _____

13. The amount that a student can learn is primarily related to family background……. _____

14. The influences of a student's home experience can be overcome by good teaching…….. _____

15. If parents would do more with their children, I could do more……. _____

16. Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students… _____

Appendix B

Teacher Multicultural Attitude Inventory

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I find teaching a culturally diverse student group rewarding…… _____
2. Teaching methods need to be adapted to meet the needs of a culturally diverse student group…… _____
3. Sometimes I think there is too much emphasis placed on multicultural awareness and training for teachers…… _____
4. Teachers have the responsibility to be aware of their students' cultural backgrounds…… _____
5. I frequently invite extended family members (e.g., cousins, grandparents, godparents, etc.) to attend parent-teacher conferences…… _____
6. It is not the teacher's responsibility to encourage pride in one's culture… _____
7. As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes more increasingly challenging……. _____
8. I believe the teacher's role needs to be refined to address the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds……. _____
9. When dealing with bilingual students, some teachers may misinterpret different communication styles as behavioral problems……. _____
10. As classrooms become more culturally diverse, the teacher's job becomes increasingly rewarding…… _____
11. I can learn a great deal from students with culturally different backgrounds…… _____
12. Multicultural training for teachers is not necessary…… _____
13. In order to be an effective teacher, one needs to be aware of cultural

differences present in the classroom…… _____

14. Multicultural awareness training can help me work more effectively with a diverse student population…….. _____

15. Students should learn to communicate in English only…….. _____

16. Today's curriculum gives undue importance to multiculturalism and diversity…….. _____

17. I am aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds in my classroom….. _____

18. Regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of my class, it is important for all students to aware of multicultural diversity…… _____

19. Being multiculturally aware is not relevant for the subject I teach…….. _____

20. Teaching students about cultural diversity will only create conflict in the classroom…… _____

Appendix C

Matrix for Comprehensive Analysis of School A and School B.
Adapted from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Factor	**School A**	**School B**
Student enrollment	252	245
% of African Americans of student enrollment	99.6	94.7
Rates of Pupil Attendance	98.9	97.5
Student to teacher ratio	14	16
% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch	75.9%	89.3%

Appendix D

African Centered Education Taskforce

Proposal:

African Centered Education
K-12 Articulation Redesign and Instructional Plan

Submitted by the:
African Centered Education Taskforce

January, 2006

African Centered Education Taskforce

Articulation Redesign and Instructional Plan

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- Appendix One:

Desegregation Document on African Centered Education Expansion, 1998

- Appendix Two:
  KCMSD's Board of Directors, African Centered Education Resolution, 2001

- Appendix Three:
  KCMSD's Board of Directors, African Centered Education Resolution, 2002

- Appendix Four:
  KCMSD Superintendent's Proposal to the Board of Directors, 2005

Executive Summary and Rationale

The Kansas City, Missouri School District's K-12 African Centered Educational articulation process is at a critical junction that has local importance and national implications. The KCMSD currently has two African Centered elementary schools, a middle school and a high school component that has struggled with on-going questions and confusion over its status as a full partner within the alignment of the African Centered articulation. Both of the African Centered elementary schools, J.S. Chick and S.B. Ladd have received recognitions and numerous citations of success based on meeting and exceeding district and state school performance measures and national standards.

The current African Centered Education middle school was reorganized in 2002 to assure that students from both Chick and Ladd would represent the school's student enrollment majority and that a seamless relationship would be established, as students moved on through the middle school levels. The effectiveness of this reorganization has been uneven and dysfunctional based on the politics of the district and the inability to establish an organizational district process to truly support the KCMSD's Board of Directors African Centered Education Middle School Expansion document and resolution (please see attachment: Appendix One and Two). Additionally, the status of the African Centered Education high school component has historical been tainted and mired in questions, confusion and resistance to any

implementation of African Centered Education by various antagonists to the African centered education philosophy and method.

The district must embrace the opportunity to develop and support a true African Centered Educational K-12 articulation process that has the potential of being an urban school reform model for the nation. African Centered Education is an instructional experience that holds high standards of academic success and cultural precepts that imparts character development and social responsibility into the teaching and learning environment. To truly institutionalize the core elements of African Centered Education into the middle and secondary school experience will require the District's Board of Directors to embrace an instructional paradigm shift based on high standards of school success within the African Centered method and model. The central elements and importance of support for this school reform measure is to rethink the schooling process, restructure schools, decentralize the district's bureaucracy and to redesign and interpret educational systems differently (African Centered Education Taskforce, 2001).

African Centered Education Design and Development

The African Centered Education Taskforce supports and accepts the current KCMSD's Superintendent's proposal to the Board of Directors that would establish a district sponsored African Centered Education charter school campus for grades 6th-12th. The establishment of a district sponsored charter would facilitate a site-based management process and be consistent with the necessary decentralization to fully implement and support an African Centered process at the middle and high school levels.

The establishment of a 6th -12th grade African Centered Education campus would be attractive to parents and students currently within the African Centered elementary sequence, as well as attract parents and students back

into the district that left for various reasons. The African Centered charter campus will establish a year round learning program with Saturday school, an extended school year, tutoring and after school learning support, a summer bridge for new students, service learning projects, arts in education and accelerated learning with a college preparatory curriculum. The campus would truly align the African Centered Education performance standards already established K-5, with a seamless organizational design and instructional consistency that is currently in absence because of the bureaucracy within the district current centralized structure.

The African Centered campus would be located on a central campus, with a building that would house a multi-plex of schools/villages within the campus. If a single building with capacity is not viable, a multiple campus could be a desirable option with a multi-plex of buildings located on a unified base. The student enrollment figures for a 6th-12th grade African Centered Education campus would be projected at approximately 700-800 students over a three year span. The campus would instructionally be organized with a reconfigured grade span that would house grade level specific learning villages. The learning villages would be organized as:

Sixth Grade Village:

The "Sixth Grade Village" will operate as a stand alone self contained school within the context of the 6th – 12th grade campus. All sixth grade students will be isolated and separated into a specific wing or floor of the campus building. All core classes and exploratory wheels will be contained and rotated within the sixth grade village. Sixth graders will be given a straight seven hour schedule. All sixth graders will be pre-assessed in math, reading, comprehensions and writing skills. The sixth grade village will operate on a staggered building start time that is different from the higher grades start time.

Seventh – Eighth Grade Village:

The "Seventh-Eighth Grade Village" will instructionally be organized on a 90 min. A/B block schedule. The seventh-eighth grade village will be located on a floor or larger section of the campus. Students will be pre-assessed to determine appropriate grade level readiness and skill level competencies. Accelerated learning courses and a college preparatory curriculum will be used to prepare students for advance placement readiness and accelerated learning opportunities.

Ninth Grade Village:

The "Ninth Grade Village" will prepare students for high level learning, rigorous coursework, advance placement and dual credit coursework at the 10th – 12th grade levels. All students within in this village will be pre-assessed in math, reading comprehension and writing skills. The ninth grade village would be in a self contained wing or area of the campus, allowing ninth grade students to focus on high school readiness and meeting college level entrance criteria.

Tenth – Twelve Grade Village:

The "Tenth-Twelve Grade Village" will be organized as an advance placement college preparatory academy, that will focus on career pathways and college level class work.. Students will be in 90 min. block scheduled classes with dual credit course offering, AP classes and exploratory real world learning in internship, apprentice and job shadowing career opportunities.

African Centered Education

Process and Implementation Framework

School Year 2005 – 2006	School Year 2006-2007	School Year 2007-2008	School Year 2008-2009
Establishment of a district sponsored 6th – 12th charter school ACE campus	Added grade level	Added grade level	Full implementation of 6th – 12th grades
ACE leadership development and identifying future leaders	On-going and continuous	On-going and continuous	On-going and continuous
Parent participation and community building	Surveys, perception data, interviews and questionnaires	On-going training and input	On-going training and input
Charter campus enrollment 6th – 9th grades– 400 students	6th -10th Campus enrollment - 500	6th – 11th Campus enrollment - 600	6th – 12th Campus enrollment - 700
Cultural arts program development	Master classes and arts in education	Master classes and career pathways identified curriculum	Master classes with career pathways established
Teacher portfolio and established ACE training hours and credits	ACE competencies and courses in methods, pedagogy and practice.	On-going	On-going
Parents as stakeholders and decision makers	Annual community Harambees	Annual community Harambees	Annual community Harambees
Establishment of summer bridge and rites of passage training	On-going	On-going	On-going
Psycho-social services and family support	Swope Mental Health and Samuel Rodgers partnerships	Continuous	Continuous
Marketing and media public relations	Video, power point, web sites and promotional packets	Student developed radio and television satellite shows on ACE	Continuous and on-going

African Centered Education
Campus Expectations and Student Standards

The following standards and expectations will be established as the campus criteria for student enrollment.

Campus Academic Expectations

A campus compact will be agreed upon, signed and filed by all of the campus academic stakeholders (principal, teachers, parents and students). An interview will be conducted before students are enrolled to assure that the all the stakeholders are clear of the campus expectations and standards.

Social Standards of Citizenship

Students attending the campus will not have more than two infractions, incidents or school detentions within a semester. All students will be required to complete a campus-based Rites of Passage program for social development.

Behavioral Standards of School Conduct

Students attending the campus will not have more than two school conference cards or violations of the district's code of conduct standards within a semester.

Academic Standards of Learning

Students attending the campus will maintain a minimum of a C grade point average in over-all classes and coursework. If students fail below the campus academic standards, a personalized student-based instructional plan will be implemented and monitored to assure academic improvement and success.

Attendance Standards of Punctionality

Students attending the campus will not have more than two unexcused absences within a semester or more than two classroom tardys within the same period.

Uniform Standards for Admission

Students attending the campus will be required to comply with the campus dress code of shirt, tie and sweater or blazer for boys and a complimentary uniform for girls.

Parental Standards and Expectations for School Success

Parents of students attending the campus must attend a mandatory orientation session and agree to attendance at SAC meetings, parent workshops and on-going African Centered Education training sessions.

African Centered Education Assessment and Accountability

The accountability and assessment standards for the African Centered Campus will be performance based and adhere to the district, state and national measures of academic success.

The African Centered campus will utilize the KCMSD's core curriculum components as the instructional framework.

The African Centered campus will utilize the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) standards and grade level expectations (GLE).

The African Centered campus will utilize the African Centered Education GLO's (Grade Level Outcomes) to establish a learning sequence for knowledge acquisition.

The African Centered campus will utilize a variety of holistic testing strategies to prepare and promote students in content knowledge, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.

The African Centered campus will establish on-going evaluation cycles to assess and assure that students are mastering content knowledge, skill proficiencies and to determine prior knowledge for grade level readiness and accelerated learning opportunities.

The African Centered campus will establish quantitative content knowledge standards of 80% mastery or higher.

The African Centered campus will establish qualitative measurable standards for psycho-social behavior, character development and cultural consciousness.

The African Centered campus will establish and implement a variety of instruments to assure that the integrated learning communities/villages are meeting the over-all campus performance standards and academic benchmarks.

1. Akoto, Kwame Agyei. *Nationbuilding: Theory and Practice in African Centered Education.*

2. Akbar, Naim. *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery*.

3. Billings, Gloria Ladsen. *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children.*

4. Delpit, Lisa. *Other People's Children.*

5. Goggins, Lathardus. *African Centered Rites of Passage and Education.*

6. Hale, Janice. *Learning Styles of African American Children.*

7. Hale, Janice. *Unbank the Fire: Visions for the Education of African American Children.*

8. Hale, Janice. *Learning While Black: Creating Educational Excellence for African American Children.*

9. Hilliard, Asa. *SBA.*

10. Hilliard, Asa.*Testing African American Students.*

11. Hilliard, Asa. *The Maroon Within.*

12. Hilliard, Asa. *African American Content infusion*.

13. Merrell, Peter. *African Centered Pedagogy: Developing Schools of Achievement for African American Children (The Social Context of Education).*

14. Pollard, Diane and Cheryl Ajirotutu. *African Centered Schooling in Theory and Practice.*

15. Porter, Micahel. *Kill Them Before They Grow: The Misdiagnosis of African American Boys in American Classrooms.*

16. Nobles, Wade. *The Black Family.*

17. Wilson, Amos. *The Psychological Development of the African Child.*