Using a Leadership and Civic Engagement Course to Address the Retention of African American Males

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Since the 1970’s retention has been one of the most contested issues in higher education; scholars disagree about whether it is a structural, policy, or student life problem. African American males continue to be at the bottom of matriculation, achievement, and graduation rates. Universities have tried a variety of retention methods, mostly concentrating on non-classroom issues. A review of the history of curriculum demonstrates that there is no precedent for incorporating non-cognitive (student life) and cognitive (academic) spheres of the university. A review of the literature on retention in general suggests the need for a more specific approach that takes into account the intersectionality of race, masculinity, and popular culture to better understand the conditions that underlie retention problems for African American men. The centerpiece of the dissertation is the design of a course that integrates academic and student life issues and that is designed specifically for African American male students at Predominantly White Institutions. Materials produced by the students as well as the course itself were evaluated using discourse analysis to assess whether and how this curriculum equipped students with the skills and persistence needed to negotiate university culture. In addition, quantitative reports on retention are included.

The research demonstrated that a flexible classroom design can address the complicated issues faced by marginalized students on college campuses. In particular,
the course provided evidence of the importance of developing community for marginalized students. Classroom supported student communities mitigate against the isolation students face when they believe they are the only ones experiencing difficulties, whether in the classroom or as part of campus life. The findings incorporate the need for sustainability beyond the classroom as well.

Finally, the dissertation argues for using leadership as a framework for such classrooms because it cuts across academic disciplines and provides skills that will be useful for the students in their careers. A detailed description of the class, the syllabus, the assignments, interactions, and discussions is included so that the materials can be replicated for other universities interested in new retention models.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the matriarchs in my family. To all the hours that they cleaned floors, watched other people’s kids, went hungry and made a difference in the lives of others. I honor you.
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I would like to thank so many people. I first want to think my second grade teach Mrs. Hattie Lawson. She never taught to a test and she constantly pushed me and so many others to think outside the box. I would also like to thank my Grandmother Odessa Clayborne for playing Scrabble with me and never allowing my age to be a determining factor of pursuing my goals or being taken seriously. A double portion of thanks to Mr. Mike Manoloff who never squashed any of my ideas in AP Government, and still sends his support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Introduction to the Project: A Narrative

In the chapters that follow, there is an evaluation of the effectiveness of a course designed and taught to promote retention among African American men at a Primarily White Institution (comprehensive university). The beginning contains a brief personal discussion of what motivates my work and how the decision was made to focus on the intersectionality of African American males, leadership, and retention and then consider two of the central premises of this work: building on the knowledge that students bring to the university and creating community. The end concludes this introduction with an outline of the chapters.

I am always wondering how I can find innovative methods that speak to men. Especially black men with respect to retention at institutions of higher learning like Ohio State. In April 2010 I heard about a new book that was coming out on the 27th written by Wes Moore about two Wes Moores. The book was about two Wes Moores, men who had the same name but different outcomes in life. One Wes Moore had the type of disruption happen that allowed for him to make better decisions about his life. The decisions were made based on the social and cultural influences of the communities that they grew up in. The other Wes Moore kept making poor decisions that have landed him in prison for life. They both came from single parent households and from a similar
neighborhood. The first Wes Moore discovered his namesake and corresponded with him. They eventually met, and the book resulted.

This was so intriguing. Then it was reported that he was going to be on Oprah so the show got recorded and millions of viewers were impressed with the story within a story. The book was acquired and there was a buzz about not putting it down and many circles of readers and thinkers around black men could not stop talking about it. The simplicity of the story telling made it very assessable. The realness of their lives reminded me of a “choose your own adventure book”. You can look back and see where you made the poor decisions but unfortunately there are no do-overs. This book could teach a series of lessons around the non-cognitive factors that affect a student’s life, spur conversation, and/or give the men a language to discuss what was happening in their lives.

That is in part why I created and advise the book club of men, Enigma; Rich Nathan said in a community talk, who used to teach business law at Ohio State, said that the average man in the United States only reads one book a year. When we started we were 12 men reading to over 40 going into its fourth year and being fully sponsored by the Office of the Vice President of Student Life. The Other Wes Moore had to be one of the summer books for the men. I also happen to be a Bell Fellow for the National Center on the African American Male. It is this space that gives me the administrative contact to all the first and second year black males who come through the space. Because of the nature of this relationship, the methods people try to use to engage and retain students are more visible. The Bell Center had not used a book program and what would make this
program unique would be the book would speak to the diversity of their experiences. Early Arrival Programs were not incorporating a component of a book that would speak the lived experiences of its constituencies. The leadership of the Center was convinced by my argument to take into consideration implementing a book program with the early arrival program and then they told me to pick a book.

Because the young men of Enigma had already selected the Wes Moore book as one of our summer books, there was confidence that the Director, Dr. James Moore III would agree with my choice. And not only did he agree with my choice but he also agreed to buy the book for the 63 men who would participate in the program as incoming freshmen. As the men of Enigma would embark on reading the books for summer, so would these men who would arrive to Ohio State three days before the rest of the students as incoming freshmen. As the men of Enigma would embark on reading the books for summer, so would these men who would arrive to Ohio State three days before the rest of the students move in. The new student facilitator of Enigma (like a president of a club) and several of the other men were asked to help me facilitate the conversation about the book when the men would participate in the discussion about the book.

There was hesitation that 63 young men would want to talk about a book at nine AM on a Saturday morning. But if the book became the tool that could add to their experience and give them a language to talk about their shared experiences, then surely with the opportunity the men would rise to the occasion? Most of the men admitted to reading the book. At first we did a large group discussion of the book to hear the men’s overarching thoughts of the book while several members of Enigma participated as a
panel with me to garner the conversation. Then the conversation was moved into four small groups so that students who were silent during the large group discussion could be animated.

In the small groups the men were able to articulate their perspective on the book. The men were given the opportunity to discuss the complexities of their own pasts and at the same time draw for the double narrative of the book to tap into the meta-narrative of manhood and blackness and the pursuit of self determination.

The Enigma reading group is similar to the men in the *Dead Poets Society* film. Popular culture by way of films draw parallels to their lived experiences and allows for students to look critically at their own lives through the examination of the other. In this case, the bringing together of men to think critically about the world around them by using literature and narrative as the means to do that is instrumental to investigating themselves and navigating the social world around them. This group is one example of the fact that retention is not just about the institution that is the university but is also about creating opportunities for students to self-navigate with assured motivation and resiliency. To develop these characteristics in students they have to procure a sense of self and find their voice. Finding one’s voice gives a person authority and authorship of their life in a way that empowers them to find the power in knowledge and to cultivate a thirst for it but at the same time never becontent in the pursuit of it. This group leans towards that aim, and this is what inspires me to develop and implement new models for retention.

**Statement of the Problem**
Revisiting Retention

Although retention of students of color at Predominantly White Institutions has been a long process, over forty years in the making, (Tinto, 1977) the retention and matriculation rates suggest that the progress that has been attained has been marginal. Conversations have shifted from the goal of retention through graduation to greater interest in limiting access and increasing the incoming freshmen’s test scores. This shift is astonishing considering that test scores are not accurate predictors of success. This shift has left a population in the grey. This population is African American males.

The gap in the literature and in the retention rates should pause any researcher interested in this subject to look for a different shift, one that offers “a difference that makes a difference” (Gregory Bateson). The inspirational work of Erin Gruwell, a teacher in California, who with the help of her 150 students, used writing as a method to create an ontological shifts in the classroom. Over 15 years ago, Gruwell created a model that was able to change the manner in which students navigated their lived experience. This shift that made the classroom a laboratory space which captivates the reader to think the classroom could be more flexible and inclusive could translate from the k-12 arena to the higher education arena. The idea is that somehow the classroom does not have to just be the transmission of knowledge but that there could be this dialectical conversation.

By using narrative as a method, Gruwell was equipping her students with sociological imagination. Charles Mills in 1959 framed sociological imagination as the ability to see outside one’s situation. I will argue both that seeing outside one’s situation
is a key component for successful retention and that creating the classroom as a laboratory facilitates this process.

A goal of this study is to investigate retention at Ohio State of African American Males and identify if a course can address the cognitive and non-cognitive issues that influence of retention. In this dissertation, I describe the curriculum of the class and evaluate its effectiveness. This is an investigation of one model for retention of African American Males at the Ohio State University. The central focus is to examine what might make a difference in the lives of these men to help them matriculate at this predominately white institution. How do you get to a difference that makes a difference in the lives of students when there are so many factors and variances? What will make a difference might not be the same for all students; however the premise of the course is that it attempted to identify the factors that, as a group, could make a difference. The course designed is called African American Leadership and Civic Engagement to introduce students to leadership and community engagement, equip them with skills to be successful in their tenure at Ohio State, while also combining academic understanding of race with gaining networking leadership community building skills.

Community is a kind of intersection of people with intangibles like the development of trust and relationships. An incoming freshman class at The Ohio State University is around 7,000 people. In any give year the black males in those incoming classes could be around 150 men. This minority within a minority (black women have a much larger population) can lead to isolation and affect attrition and matriculation.
One purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate the use of the class to provide a new model of retention and to address the non-cognitive issues that African American males face that lead to attrition. The term “non-cognitive” applies to student life issues. The larger category “non-cognitive” is preferable because it includes not only things that occur outside the classroom, but also, importantly, the attitudes, beliefs, experiences, etc. that occur within academic spaces (including labs, lecture halls, seminars, etc.). The class was designed as a vehicle to create a space to build community and develop leadership in this particular community on a college campus. Community building was designed to sustain students in their university tenure as well as in their future careers.

**Students Finding/Using Their Own Voice**

Students were encouraged to use their own knowledge and interests as a component of the course to help them be more analytical in their understanding of their experiences at a Predominantly White Institution. The central focus is to equip black males to negotiate the space and place they are in and at the same time observe how they might do that using their own methods, the things they already know and use to negotiate their worlds (which I refer to as swagger).

Through collecting their assignments, narratives, and the review of course content, this dissertation demonstrates that retention can be done differently and a leadership class is a new method that can be used. Retention is a consistent issue that always surface as an institutional problem, but as the review of the literature will demonstrate, no one has suggested a method of managing it through the curriculum and inside the classroom.
The course has been designed to include a comprehensive approach to engage the issues that black males have to negotiate in their lifespan. Swagger, borrowed from popular culture theoretical framework, is a means for students to find their own voice. The men in this class and even swagger are influenced by two types of cultural forces. William Wilson in his book, *More Than Just Race*, expands the concepts stating that the two cultural forces are:

1. National views and beliefs on race
2. Cultural traits—shared outlooks, modes of behavior, traditions, belief systems, world views, values, skills, preferences, styles of presentation, etiquette, and linguistic patterns that emerge from patterns of intra group interaction in settings created by discrimination and segregation and that reflect collective experiences within those settings (2009).

The focus on cultural traits is exactly what the class aims to equip the students to unpack and synthesize through the literature provided in the course, the conversations in class, and the knowledge that they bring through their lived experiences that encompass Wilson’s framework of cultural traits and how that is shaped by cultural forces. These same forces impact cognitive and non-cognitive factors that affect retention.

In *Freedom Writers*, Gruwell describes equipping students to find their own voice and parlay a space for them to engage college as a liberatory process that is for them is giving them a seat at the table. It is telling them that their thoughts and ideas and experiences are valuable and deserve to be validated.
The space it takes to create a community is very peculiar. bell hooks in her book, *Teaching for Community* discusses that the classroom needs to be a place that is an environment conducive to the particular needs of the students. In this case, the ultimate is that knowing the “mutual pursuit of knowledge creates the condition for optimal learning.” There should be a practice of freedom. Progressive education, in which people are encouraged to connect and engage with each other, builds community.

For this class, community started with several elements in mind. Teaching requires curiosity, according to Paulo Freire. “The exercise of curiosity convokes the imagination, the emotions and the capacity to conjecture and compare in tracing Caring is a method of being curious. In this space, creating community included some crucial elements. One is borrowed from Abraham Maslow’s *hierarchy of needs*. If anybody was hungry or was going through emotional duress, how could they focus on learning? This is why the part of building community comes from eating food together. Eating together addresses a basic need, and even if the students aren’t literally hungry, it recalls a time of family, of bringing people together, and opens up the possibility of community. Building relationships organically is complicated in a post internet society. Facilitating “kitchen table conversations” that is deliberate talks that are authentic and in a safe space, and this traditionally has not always been the classroom. This course is also designed to serve a platform for sharing the authentic self and being invested in each other.

Ken Robinson writes exceptionally about the importance of imagination in education. The lack of it, according to him, is why so many students are turned off by the classroom. Creativity creates the space for students to use their own knowledge to merge
with what they learn to form new ways of thinking. For a long time the government has functioned with the knowledge that students do not learn well if they are hungry, the free lunch program was birthed from the fact that millions of children were arriving and leaving school hungry. (The Black Panther Party developed the framework and pilots of a free lunch program.) Eventually there began a national free and reduced lunch program. This innovative way to help marginalized students helps with them to pay attention in class and their total wellness. This is also why basic needs are addressed in this course. Eating together helps to create community but also meets a basic need. When the needs are met, community can be cultivated and as a class we could focus on issues and the methodology of the course.

Parker Palmer is noted for his methods of critical teaching and his understanding of classroom dynamics. He posits that dialogue is crucial to facilitating a whole learning process. His input for class design was part of this course. He says in book, *The Courage to Teach*, that there are some tenants that lead to an enlightened classroom dynamic that he has framed based on feedback from teachers attending his workshops. Those tenants are:

- A capacity to combine structure or intentionality with flexibility in both planning and leading the class: clarity about my objectives but openness to various ways of achieving them.

- Thorough knowledge of the material I assigned to my students and a commitment to helping them master that material too
- A desire to help my students build a bridge between the academic text and their own lives and a strategic plan for doing so

- A respect for my students’ stories that is no more or less than my respect for the scholarly texts I assigned them

- An ability to see my students’ lives more clearly than they themselves see them, a capacity to look beyond their initial presentation, and a desire to help them see themselves more deeply

- An aptitude for asking good questions and listening carefully to my students responses- not only to what they say but also what they leave unsaid.

- A willingness to take risks, especially the risk of inviting open dialogue, though I can never know where it was going to take us (Palmer, 2007).

Palmer informs those who teach that their role in the classroom is also important. The lecturer/facilitator/professor is still as much as part of the class as the students are. This dissertation will include narratives of the men who took the class and excerpts from the journal kept during this time that positions thoughts and ideas as the class progressed. This is exactly what Parker Palmer was framing in his book and how to make the learning experience about the dialectic and not about hierarchy.

Examining curriculum is also important when designing a course. Many courses are designed around the subject matter and not taking into account the social and cultural forces that the student has to manage or does not manage. Most courses are not student or experience centered. The countercultural course proposed and implemented here is to place the student in the design and not as the object of the design. By investigating the
history and dynamics of curriculum, the design of this course has an informed foundation.

Establishing Community

One of the challenges faced was how to create community. The decision was to incorporate food: historically and culturally familiar part of community gatherings. It is not a leap to have food be a part of the class ethos and have everyone (including the instructor) contribute to each class by signing up for weeks to bring food and snacks for everyone else. This encouraged the men to be responsible for class in more than attendance by making them directly accountable to the other men in the class.

One of the activities the men had to do and then share was developing their life mantra or motto and write about it. One of my favorite songs I shared with the men comes from Hip Hop is from an artist named Mos Def. Many of the men from the courses remembered the artist and not the song I was referring to because it was not mainstream. The song contained a lyric about wanting people to be free. I shared that line with them as a meditative exercise. Education at Ohio State sixty years ago really was not for women or people of color. Jesse Owens has buildings named after him today, but the man could not live on campus because of the racist practices of the institution at the time. The late Dr. Frank Hale who has a cultural center named after him is recorded saying that even in the 1950’s he was not allowed to live on campus. That is the truth that is hidden but felt by black men on campus today.

Storytelling is a method (within discourse). It is a method that gives legitimacy to marginalized groups especially when they are the outsider. At Predominantly White
Institutions, black men continue to be an outsider or marginalized in one way or other. Popular culture allows for students to tell their stories they way they see fit and as the instructor it is our mission to help them navigate the collegiate experience and negotiate learning in the way that helps them go further than concepts to push to application and greater understanding.

**Gendered Space**

Ohio State is one of the best places to pilot this kind of research and reproduce the best of what single-sex education brings to the table because it is a microcosm of the larger society. Some places like Morehouse and Spellman have been so successful because they practice what many high school private catholic schools practice, offering co-institutional or blended schooling. This means that although the main school may stay single-sex space, there are courses that students can elect to take on other campuses or socials that bring the two sexes together.

**Differences across Programs in Retention**

Depending on the institutions, there are different needs for that population. Localizing the black male community at Ohio State as a frame of reference can produce transferable methods and findings to other colleges and universities. Ohio State provides more differentiated services for their minority populations then compared to other institutions. Most institutions do not have the diversity of minority students attending, and being the largest institution in the United States and set in an urban center it is a unique circumstance. Ohio State has around 3700 black students and a third of them are males. This concentration of black males would allow for the most differentiated study
and the most useful to create methods that could transfer to other institutions as best practices.

**Chapter Outline**

Chapter two focuses on a literature review of the history of curriculum and the history and current trends in retention. The discussion of curriculum traces how the history of curriculum does not take into account the non-cognitive factors that play a role inside the classroom. Including a historical overview is a driving force in designing a class. The second part of Chapter two unpacks the history of retention in higher education and reviews what has been done in the past forty years. Chapter three discusses the theoretical framework and further establishes the need for conversation and thinking around the intangibles like resiliency among students. Maintaining a student centered curriculum allows for the addressing the lived experience of black males of which their worlds are filled with ontological matters like popular culture, *cool pose* and *swagger*. The second part of this chapter is about civic engagement, leadership, followership, and community organizing. Chapter Four is the methods used to analyze the data collected for the dissertation. Chapter Five is a detailed account of the class including a review and assessment of the syllabus, assignments, and activities. Chapter Six is an analysis of the data and materials collected from the students during the class. There is an analysis of the students’ reflection papers, turned in weekly and their final projects (a brief life story and a life motto or mantra and explanation of how they would live up to it). Chapter seven, the conclusion, returns to my larger question about the
usefulness of a class to address both cognitive and non-cognitive issues related to retention. I also lastly give a brief discussion of what should I would do differently with the course. The appendices contain: a best practices document I made of what sixty universities are doing across the country to retain African American males; retention and graduation rates for Ohio State separated by gender and race; post-class thoughts from the students who took the classes; and a report on African American males in higher education.
Chapter 2: Review of the Relevant Literature

This Chapter of the dissertation has two sections of focused literature reviews. One is to examine the history of curriculum comprehensively and the other is to examine the aspects of leadership and apply that to the context of the black male experience. Starting with the history of curriculum in the k-12 is important because until modern United States history, Black people were not attending institutions of higher education because of systemic racism. The development of curriculum was developed without considering the lived experience of African Americans. The literature reveals that there is a gap even with the contribution of recent scholars.

The second section of the literature review focuses on retention. This is a comprehensive approach to understand retention in general and moreover specifically African American males. Retention as a practice to matriculate and graduate students has been on the rise since 1970s but for black males there has been no statistical increase even though enrollment over time has increased. This dissertation proposes that it is the intersection of curriculum (and leadership) with retention of black males.

The Historical Development of Curriculum
In 1819, Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia in order to “develop leaders who are well prepared to help shape the future of the nation.”

(www.vareview.com/mag/article.asp?is=mj04&ar=a4)

The development of curriculum has been pedagogically centered on learning outcomes that address cognitive skills. Very seldom has scholarly training been centered on addressing non-cognitive factors that affect the way students learn or the way they navigate life in the classroom. The skill or knowledge acquisition has been limited. This chapter investigates the history of curriculum and how evident it is that there is an empty space in the literature regarding the focus of non-cognitive factors being addressed in the classroom. The series of unanswered questions are what is being left out when it comes to the groups that were historically marginalized and yet methods of teaching teachers and classroom dynamics has not changed to incorporate the diversity of cultural experiences that impact learning and classroom performance.

The history of the curriculum field from 1900 to present is complex and has many sections that influenced and shaped the field. This section of the chapter is structured to cover the cultural and social practices, key theories, scholars, policies and historical precedents that make up the complexities of the curriculum field. Curriculum can be defined in two ways: “It is the entire range of the individual; or it is the series of consciously directed experiences that the schools use for completing and perfecting the unfoldment” (Willis et al, 1993). In the United States, the field of curriculum focuses on the latter. Curriculum has been a driving force for the present political and social climate because schools are how the values, traditions and history of a nation transmit to future
generations. Current leaders and policy makers are products of the curriculum that has been shaped and reshaped over the past ten decades.

The framers of modern curriculum in the United States can be described as social scientists. Social scientists like John Dewey and fundraisers/activists like Booker T. Washington were participating in an unconscious collaboration that has lead to the depth and complexity of the curriculum field. As diverse as the field was during development and continues to be there is also that much more complexity because of how curriculum is designed. The field of curriculum is not developed in isolation; it is affected by social, cultural and economic forces. It is informed and driven by policy and the law. This paper seeks to frame the scope of the curriculum field in the United States from 1900 to the present. To better understand how curriculum developed it is important to look at each time period of growth as a series of eras. The past informs the present. The progenitors of curriculum are not tied to one group of people but its groups of people over time that have collectively contributed and developed curriculum directly or indirectly.

1890-1930 Era

This time period frames the beginning of the modern time of how the curriculum field now exists. Many of the core scholarship formed around curriculum was developed at this time. The Era that began at the turn of the century is marked by scholars whose work is still used today. The policies that were determined would help shape what decisions law makers would make and how associations would design their charters and memberships.
**Scholars**

The scholars are men (and women) who have contributed to the field and have constructed the theories and policies that shape curriculum as a field over the past ten or so decades. There are a host of scholars that can be considered cornerstones to the field one is John Franklin Bobbitt. Most of the people making a contribution that is in the curriculum canon were men who would write and produce works that would contribute to the field of curriculum into the next century.

John Franklin Bobbitt who wrote *The Curriculum* in 1918 is credited with being a pioneer of the curriculum that focused on preparing children for prescribed roles for adults in society and for the types of occupations that they would be employed to do. Bobbitt would say:

“In any organization, the directive and supervisory members must clearly define the ends toward which the organization strives. They must coordinate the labors of all so as to attain those ends. They must find the best methods of work, and they must enforce the use of these methods on the part of the workers. The central theory is simple. Human life, however varied, consists of the performance of specific activities. Education that prepares for life is one that prepares definitely and adequately for these specific activities. However numerous and diverse they may be for any social class, they can be discovered. A fourth principle of general scientific management is: work up the raw material into that finished product for which it is best adapted” (Bobbitt, 1918, p. 260).
This statement summarizes his belief of what curriculum should be and how it should be implemented. Scientific management and engineering as key curricular strategies would reflect the presence of the industrial revolution and the need for efficiency in work that would funnel to education. Bobbitt continues to be recognized as the advocate of social efficiency education movement and many American school leaders would adopt his early findings even though at the end of his career he changed his mind on many of those issues. These concepts birthed out of the social efficiency movement would be opposed by many scholars one of those were the still prominent John Dewey.

“Instead of a national curriculum for education, what is really needed is an individual curriculum for every child.” -Charles Handy

Social Forces/Policy

The Industrial Revolution had a resonating impact on the education field and would drive much of the policy formation. Though mostly a part of the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution would inform the policies and social and cultural forces that would take place in the early 1900’s. Child Labor laws would come in effect in the early 20th century. Several national committees and organizations would generate the kind of reform necessary to impact the curriculum field directly. The National Child Labor Committee’s work to end child labor was combined with efforts to provide free, compulsory education for all children, and culminated in the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938, which set federal standards for child labor. In 1936 to reinforce the new laws, Walsh-Healey Act states U.S. government will not purchase goods made by underage children (Wasserman, 1972).
And then in 1938 the Fair Labor Standards Act passed and legislated for the first time, minimum ages of employment and hours of work for children were regulated by federal law. Children having laws that turned into governing policies meant that more children would be attending public schools for longer periods of time. Curriculum would need to adapt and become more inclusive, comprehensive, complex and even efficient. Children were not the only group of people being advocated for; women were doing their own advocacy work in order to secure their suffrage rights (Flexner, 1975).

Although the national movement began in 1848 in Seneca Falls women did not officially obtain suffrage nationally until the women’s vote became part of the U.S. Constitution on August 26, 1920, as the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. More women at this time started to access higher education and institutions that were closed off to women began to open their doors due to change in state and national law. However, even though women are fifty percent of the population they do not make up fifty percent of the political offices and policy making bodies. However, more young girls attending school meant that curriculum would have gender boundaries based on the history of disenfranchisement and that women had little input on that design of curriculum during this time period being that all of the early curriculum work is attributed and cited by white men. Policy is driven and designed by the scholarship produced by the men who creating it at the time. That scholarship produced by men like Bobbitt and a sundry of others would inform the establishment of associations that would bring standardization to national and state rubrics for compulsory education. The National
Education Association became a body that advocated and assessed education at a local to national perspective (nea.org website, 2010).

The National Education Association (NEA) was established in 1857 and accepted Black (male) members and later female members before either group had the right to vote. In 1910, NEA would have a female president (Ella Flagg Young). It was during this time period that the NEA would advocate for standardization in pay for teachers, that there should be a national Department of Education that would help fund programs to reduce illiteracy, train teachers, and equalizes educational opportunities for all children (2010).

Framing the history of modern education, the scholar has to investigate when education became a national project to establish universal education. In a post-emancipation era the process was messy. Just like any current occasion being completed in education, it all started with the commission of a committee.

Contemporary education started in February 1893 at the convening of the Committee of Ten or sometimes referred to as Fifteen. There were three main sections to this report, headed by subcommittees and ad-hoc appointments. The training of teachers; the correlation of studies in elementary and high school education; and the organization of city school systems (NEA, 1895). With respect to the training of teachers would be the framing of the requirements for scholarship (academic standards), professional training, training schools (the places to train teachers) in the science of teaching and the art of teaching, referred to as pedagogy.
The science of teaching at that time had five areas and this has not changed much over the past hundred years. Psychology would include the physiological development to adolescent development. The metaphysical aspects of the student to how a student encounters their environment were the depth of what would be taught. Methodology would encompass the principles of education and the “methods” of teaching the curriculum of schools. School economy should survey and take into account school systems in the western societies such as Germany, France and England as a way to benchmark. The element of dealing with history of education includes the doctrine of the philosophy of education at the time (NEA, 1895).

The art of teaching or pedagogy would include observation and practice. The primary education versus college take on the class would be differentiated. The college version would change depending on the subject area. Correlation studies in the elementary education system would be child centered. By four points the Committee came to frame this sentiment: logical order of topics and branches (this means that the curriculum takes into consideration where the child is developmentally); symmetrical whole studies of the world of human learning. This takes into account the maturity of the student; psychologically symmetry of the whole mind focusing on mental cultivation; and juxtaposing the students’ course of study with the world in which they live with respect to their localized understanding (NEA, 1895).

At the end of the 1800's the question of the purpose of the American high school was divided between two main philosophies. Traditional educators saw high school as a college preparatory institution. This divided students into academic versus terminal
students, often based on economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds. Others believed the high school should serve more as a people's school, offering a range of practical courses to create laborers. The National Education Association addressed this issue by appointing a Committee of Ten in 1892 to establish a standard curriculum. The standardization of a universal curriculum would be crucial to the growth and development of this committee was composed mostly of educators and was chaired by Charles Eliot, the president of Harvard University. Eliot led the committee to two major recommendations. The first was earlier entry of some subjects. The second was the teaching of subjects for both college-bound and terminal students.

The Committee of Ten recommended eight years of elementary education and four years of secondary education. It defined four different curricula as appropriate for high school. The first two followed a classical trend: classical and Latin-scientific. The second two were more contemporary: modern language and English. Courses that are now considered basic like foreign languages, mathematics, science, English and history were included in each curriculum. Giving choices allowed for the most flexibility and changing over time the needs of the communities (NEA, 1895).

The significance of the Committee of Ten was its contribution towards liberalizing the high school by offering alternatives to the Latin and Greek classic curricula and the belief that the same subjects would be equally beneficial to both academic and terminal students. This could equip all students to critically think. The goal of high school was to prepare all students to do well in life, contributing to their own well-being and society's good, and to prepare some students for college.
1920s to 1940s Policies

The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 passed by the United States stated that those who have entered or will enter work on a farm would have a specialized curriculum. This agriculture related program that was at the federal, state and local levels led to the segregation of these students in relation to urban students and the curriculum that governed those classes. The emphasis would be exclusively on job specific skills and exclusion of any theoretical or liberal arts framework and concepts. Over the years the emphasis on vocational courses were eventually labeled “junior colleges” and later would become “Community colleges.” Motivation for agricultural education coincided with World War I and the need to provide the mass production of food, fuel, and supplies for communities and abroad. After World War II the tension between rural and urban would increase due to the fact that by 1920, fifty percent of the United States population would live in cities and at the end of the 1920’s would bring the Great Depression.

The Great Depression is the last driving social force that would influence curriculum before the 1940’s. Its existence led to more reform in education and another level of advocacy for vocational or specialized education. The National Youth Administration that was birthed from the strife of the great depression was an arm of curriculum that emphasized the training and and preparation of men and women to do specialized jobs. This time period strengthened the argument for social efficiency in education. Liberal arts education is expensive and the acquisition of the literary greats would not produce the necessary agriculture or goods from a factory.

1940’s to 1950’s Era
This particular era brought even more reform and innovation to the curriculum field. World War II brought a host of innovation and growth to the United States. Math and science became more of a focus because of the technology needed for nuclear weaponry and communication. There are more specialized skilled jobs because of the war and more women had entered the labor force because of the war as well. The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 or commonly known as the G. I. Bill also added to the number of people pursuing higher education after World War II. This would begin access for poor white people and people of color to enter higher education at increasing numbers (Humes, 2006).

Nevertheless, in the 1950s, during a time of anxiety because of the global climate of cold war and cultural conservatism, progressive education was widely repudiated, and it disintegrated as an identifiable movement. However, in the years since, highly differentiated groups of educators have rediscovered the ideas of Dewey and his likeminded associates, and revised them to address the changing needs of schools, children, and society in the late twentieth century. Open classrooms, schools without walls, cooperative learning, multiage approaches, whole language, the social curriculum, experiential education, and numerous forms of alternative schools all have important philosophical roots in progressive education.

In the 1960s, critics of education took Dewey's ideas in a more radical direction, helping give rise to the free school movement (and could be understood to fuel the black power movement’s platform for free education and other such notables). In recent years, activist educators in urban school districts have advocated greater equity, justice,
diversity and other democratic values through the publication Rethinking Schools and the National Coalition of Education Activists (Nasaw, 1981). Social change and progressive education are interrelated. Schools that have these core values can be considered as progressive:

- Treating the whole child: Progressive educators are concerned with helping children become not only good learners but also good people. Schooling is not limited to academics, nor is intellectual growth limited to verbal and mathematical proficiencies and testing.

- Community: Learning is not something that happens to individual children — separate selves at separate desks. Children learn with and from one another in a caring community, and that is true of moral as well as academic learning.

- Collaboration: Progressive schools are characterized by “working with” rather than a “doing to” model. In place of rewards for complying with the adults’ expectations, or punitive consequences for failing to do so, there is more of an emphasis on collaborative problem-solving — and, for that matter, less focus on behaviors than on underlying motives, values, and reasons.

- Social justice: A sense of community and responsibility for others is not confined to the classroom; indeed, students are helped to locate themselves in widening circles of care that extend beyond self, beyond friends, beyond their own ethnic group, and beyond their own country. Opportunities are offered not only to learn about, but also to put into action, a commitment to diversity and to improving the lives of others. In college this is framed sometimes as service learning.
• Intrinsic motivation: When considering (or reconsidering) educational policies and practices, the first question that progressive educators are likely to ask is, “What’s the effect on students’ interest in learning, their desire to continue reading, thinking, and questioning?” Students are not motivated for lifelong learning because metathinking and questioning is not valued.

• Deep understanding/metathinking: Facts and skills do matter, but only in a context and for a purpose. That is why progressive education tends to be organized around problems, projects, and questions — rather than around lists of facts, skills, and separate disciplines. The teaching is typically interdisciplinary, the assessment rarely focuses on rote memorization, and excellence is not confused with “rigor.” The point is not merely to challenge students but to encourage them to think deeply about issues that matter and help them understand ideas from the inside out.

• Active/engaging learning: curricular innovation can come as a collaborative effort if students play a vital role in helping to design the curriculum, formulate the questions, seek out (and create) answers, think through possibilities, and evaluate how successful they — and their teachers — have been. Their active participation in every stage of the process is consistent with the overwhelming consensus of experts that learning is a matter of constructing ideas rather than passively absorbing information or practicing skills (Perrone, 1998).

• Taking students seriously: In traditional schooling, as John Dewey once remarked, “the center of gravity is outside the child”: he or she is expected to adjust to the school’s rules and curriculum. Instructors will have broadly conceived themes and
objectives in mind, but they do not design a course of study for their students; they design it with them, and they welcome challenge and innovation in the classroom (Perrone, 1998).

Scholars

Influential curriculum thinkers of the Progressive Era continued to contribute to scholarship on how to shape the field. Harold Alberty, Boyd Bode, and Harold Rugg worked in intellectual collaboration to address the needs of young people, especially young people in the state of Ohio. Their collective goal was to translate the democratic ideas into the everyday lives of students in secondary school institutions.

Harold Alberty was the curriculum consultant Eight Year Study, director of one of the schools participating in the study, and was the editor of several Progressive Education Association commission reports. One of his greatest contributions was developing the idea of the “core curriculum.” In Reorganizing the High-School Curriculum (1947), Alberty framed five core types and developed a typology for curriculum. All of this work was to contribute to the democratic ideal.

Unlike Dewey and other pragmatists of that time, Boyd Bode pulled away from the Progressive Era as an idealist. At the time Bode found the pragmatist position inadequate to account for the nature of the mind or of knowing, and a weak foundation for morality. Conflicting Psychologies of Learning (1929) would become one of his crowning and contributing pieces to the field during his tenure of being leader of a department at The Ohio State University a position he held after leaving University of
Illinois. While at Ohio State he would become the center of what came to be known as the "Ohio School of Democracy" in education.

Bode would publish *Democracy as a Way of Life* (1937) where he would present his educational and social vision. He would challenge extremists in the progressive movement by stating that there needs to be balance between the interests and needs of students and at the same time a clear and concise social philosophy. In * Progressive Education at the Crossroads* (1938) Bode would argue much like theorists before him that there needed to be a middle ground and either extreme does a disservice to education and the development of curriculum.

Another contributor to the field during this time was Harold Rugg. Harold Rugg, a professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University for most of his career, was one of the best-known educators during the era of Progressive Education in the United States. He produced the first-ever series of school textbooks from 1929 until the early 1940’s. Rugg was a cofounder of the National Council for the Social Studies (Nelson, 1978).

*Policy, Social and Cultural Forces*

This time period is pivotal for the future of public education and curriculum because of 1954 court case *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*. The separate but equal legislation that was the law that formed multiple policies and state law at the time was overturned. The Jim Crow era was on its way to an end. The case decided that all the segregated schools and public places would no longer be allowed to exist. This change did not happen instantly. This change had to be taken.
The problem with integration was more than logistical; it would call into question biological racism and the bias in curriculum. The revelation that the many states were spending two to four times as much money on a white child than on a black child had exposed the truth of racism being in every facet of the citizen’s experience in the United States. This court case opened literally doors of opportunity for black people, especially in the south, to attend universities and high schools that had the means to better prepare students for college. Curriculums are almost organic in that they need all kinds of support in order to exist, grow, and contribute to society. It is not enough to examine curriculum field without looking at the social and political climate and occurrences that shaped its every evolving scope.

*African American Experience*

African American curriculum field and education has a divergent path especially before integration because of the history and degradation of black people. The schools may have been separate and unequal but black folk thrived and contributed excellence despite adversity. This excellence is best captured in James Anderson’s The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935. In chapter four of his text, he outlines the normal schools and county training schools that would lead to who were equipped to teach the students. Common schools, or the equivalent to elementary schools, could not be further established for black children if a form of curriculum that was standardized. This is why training schools were essential (Anderson, 1988).

The fact that the curriculum was not standardized by 1900 worked in favor of those interested in the development and social uplift of black children. The model that
seemed most nationally prevalent and contested was the Tuskegee-Hampton model of industrial training and basic reading and writing skills. The General Education Board (GEB) had a fiscal investment in the way black students would learn. This would also included industrial philanthropists who would donate money to black education but wanted a vote in what kind of education that would be conducted and transmitted.

Agricultural and industrial training based on the Tuskegee-Hampton model would prevail as the most fiscally supported method and curriculum. It would seem that those educators who wanted to teach liberal arts initiatives had to be deceptive in order to teach a core curriculum that mirrored the curriculum that was being developed for the majority of the population at the time. This Hampton-Tuskegee model originated with Booker T. Washington and his ideas to become economically attractive to the majority population. The major opponent at the time to this idea was WEB DuBois who argued that liberal arts training were essential to the continued decolonization of black people’s minds and having access to full citizenship rights that come with complex thinking and understanding. DuBois ideas would not be initially funded like Washington’s (Anderson, 1988).

In 1917, a guide was published, called *Suggested Course for County Training Schools* that would explicitly give the curriculum to teach industrial education at County Training Schools. This would also begin a discussion for higher education for black folks. In order to get funding to teach and be taught, black communities would seemingly acquiesce to some of these standards. The theory and practice of gardening, knitting, cooking, canning, woodworking and laundering were part of the curriculum at
the time. This vastly differs from the liberal arts education and classics that were part of the discussion other men developing curriculum at the time were having. These county training schools took the place of what is understood as public high schools. This would be the sole source of secondary education for black communities in many of the counties that were populated by black people in the South. Anderson says, “Their purpose was to adjust black southerners to a life of subordination, and they were oppressive in form and content, except when their intended purposes were subverted by local school officials” (1988).

Common schools or public elementary schools and Anderson notes that the same social and economic forces that were strongholds against black children being educated in the same manner that white children would be afforded to do. Even with the child labor laws enacted, it would seem that black children were not be a recipient of that legislation. However, the Rosenwald School construction campaigns would allow for there to be collaboration between black communities and philanthropic efforts. Black high schools were another matter altogether.

Black high schools or secondary education was limited to urban areas until the 1930’s. Anderson notes that the national shift to secondary education and the rise of white children attending high school revealed a class and race dynamic. “The disparity was greatest in Mississippi, where there were proportionately more than nine times as much white as black children enrolled in public high schools in 1934” (Anderson, 1988). Anderson points to a policy decision as why this is the case. A court case decided in 1899 would further “other” the black experience in the South with regard to education by
affirming the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* case (Thomas, 1997) and establishing that blacks would have to make the sacrifice and choice on whether they wanted primary or secondary education and that there could not be both when money was not existent. This was not the case for white schools.

**African American Education/Curriculum before Desegregation**

At the time that scholars were producing works regarding the curriculum field, it must be acknowledge that black people were designing, writing, and implementing a separate curriculum due to segregation. According to James Anderson, it was a mix of philanthropic dollars that came with an attached plan and with the black community giving dollars it was attached to hope to help their children and their children’s children to be successful. Some of the tension that existed around the development of curriculum of for African Americans can be attributed to the divergent ideas between Booker T. Washington and Dr. W.E.B. DuBois. These two men have historically and theoretically been placed against each other.

In "The Awakening of the Negro" (1896) Booker T. Washington argued that black education's first priority should be to counteract the debilitating effects of slavery and the way to do that is to become crucial to the economic system. Black people could get specialized training and gain capital power by becoming a (now paid) labor force.

He advocated a series of programs like the one used at The Tuskegee Institute (which he himself help to found) that would include manual labor and life management-skills into its curriculum design. By gaining confidence with training/schooling and being
able to engage the economic arena black people could raise their social and political position. "Friction between the races will pass away in proportion as the black man...can produce something that the white man wants or respects in the commercial world.”

The protagonist view seems to come from a man who was the first black person to graduate from Harvard, in "The Training of Black Men" (1902) W.E.B. Du Bois argued that training blacks for economic usefulness is not enough and does not produce the outcomes claimed by Booker T. Washington. There was always a dialectical relationship between Du Bois and Washington. Du Bois further counters that it is a disservice for black people to prepare them for manual labor without the benefit of education, culture, and ideas belittled them and suggested to them and to the rest of the world that they were less than fully human. An egalitarian society with respect to race relations, he positioned, could only occur between two self-respecting, cultured, educated races--not between a hegemonic group that subjugates a minority group. Generations would become increasingly disgruntled with a system that they cannot understand nor navigate because they would not have the educational tools to engage that system. Du Bois was married to the concepts of a multiple curricular school system for black people so that a percentage (usually attributed to a tenth of the population) could have access to a competitive liberal arts training and he believed that all black people should share a basic core knowledge that could be equivalent to what Dewey himself assessed for (white) students (in the North). Much of his ideas were compromised by racist sentiments, lack of resources and support of the government for policy and law. The social and political climate at the beginning of the 20th century and for the first couple of decades was a difficult time for
the development of curriculum but even more so for black communities to fund, retain, and establish schools to serve the communities that they were in. As curriculum became something debated on in the North, it was the mechanics of building a school and getting materials that was the primary concern of majority black communities. Then the debate of industrial education vs. liberal arts or a mixture of both could then be contested. Regardless, the black experience with education in the early 1900’s had its successes but it definitely had its host of challenges.

An article in the Journal of Negro studies says:

“While the text of the Brown decision was about segregation at the elementary and secondary school level, the subtext was about justice and equality throughout the educational arena and the entire social system. So, as the Court decision began to be applied at the postsecondary level, the doors of colleges and universities that had been closed to African Americans were also flung open. As we examine the result of the Court's ruling 50 years later, aggregate enrollment patterns in the nation's colleges and universities appear to show quite a different outcome than in the K-12 schools. At the time of the Brown decision, segregation was as pervasive in the nation's colleges and universities as it was in the K-12 systems, and nearly all African American students received their undergraduate education in the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). However, by the end of the 20th century, the great majority of these students were enrolled in postsecondary institutions that are predominantly White. On that basis, one could argue that the student enrollment figures suggest that racial integration has been
more extensive, and, thus, ostensibly more effective at the collegiate level than at the K-12 level” (Williams, 2004).

The article describes precisely many of the issues that were prevalent at the time of the court case and outlines some of the outcomes and how they impact black students but at the same time this means that white students are also affected. The article also describes that integration was more effective at the collegiate level as opposed to the new legislation integrating primary and secondary institutions. This lends itself as suggestive that curriculum for public schools that are mostly African American would still be different and separate from schools that were mostly white students. This would also set the tone for how the next era would react and interpret all the change that Brown vs. the Board of Education would provide.

1960’s-1980’s Era

This era would be marked with tragedy and triumph. The 1960’s began with much political protest and strife. The 1970’s would bring gender and education into law and policy with Title IX legislation helping in education and that policy was able to come about due to the Equal Pay Act of 1963. The Equal Pay Act of 1963, which is an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, is a federal law that requires employers to pay all employees equally for equal work, regardless of their gender. In other words, the act prohibits unequal pay for equal or substantially equal work performed by men and women in the same establishment who are performing under similar working conditions. Enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Equal Pay Act also bars employers from reducing the wages of either
sex in order to comply with the law. The act makes no provisions as to wage discrimination based on race or national origin, addressing only the issue of sex-based wage discrimination and covering only situations involving issues of equal work. The Equal Pay Act was closely followed by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in employment based on race and ethnicity (Zinn, 2003).

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, renamed in 2002 the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act in honor of its principal author, but more commonly known simply as Title IX, is a United States law enacted on June 23, 1972. The law states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance..." (Valentin, 1997).

It is the culmination of these laws and policies that changed how funding would occur in schooling and would again reshape thoughts and ideas on curriculum. There is one scholar in particular who contributed ideas to the field that were building on prior work and that was innovative. Jerome Bruner’s collective work would add a dynamic not ventured by former scholars. He says this of spiral curriculum: “If one respects the ways of thought of the growing child, if one is courteous enough to translate material into his logical forms and challenging enough to tempt him to advance, the it is possible to introduce him at an early age to the ideas and styles that in later life make an educated man” (Bruner, 1960). He speaks to teaching the whole person in such a way that it honors the student and what the student will learn. This is revolutionary.
The sixties with respect to curriculum started with Jerome Bruner’s landmark contribution to the field, *The Process of Education* in 1960. It had a direct impact on policy formation in the United States and influenced the thinking and orientation of a diverse group of teachers, pedagogists, social scientists and scholars, it positioned that children could be engaged in the learning and teaching dynamic with a more proactive stance. Children can be active problem-solvers who are ready to engage complex ideas and concepts. This was contrary with the dominant view in education at that time, yet it spoke to many people on multiple levels. There were four key themes of the text that would be cutting edge for the time:

Four key themes emerge out of the work around *The Process of Education* (1960):

*The role of structure in learning and how it may be made central in teaching*. The approach taken should be a pragmatic one. “The teaching and learning of structure, rather than simply the mastery of facts and techniques, is at the center of the classic problem of transfer... If earlier learning is to render later learning easier, it must do so by providing a general picture in terms of which the relations between things encountered earlier and later are made as clear as possible.”

*Readiness for learning*. Here the argument is that schools have wasted a great deal of people's time by postponing the teaching of important areas because that are arbitrarily too complex. The hypothesis is that any subject can be taught
effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development with the proper method.

This notion underpins the idea of the spiral curriculum - A curriculum as it develops should revisit these basic ideas repeatedly, building upon them until the student has grasped the full formal apparatus that goes with them.” This directly relates to human memory and cognition.

*Intuitive and analytical thinking.* Intuition (“the intellectual technique of arriving and plausible but tentative formulations without going through the analytical steps by which such formulations would be found to be valid or invalid conclusions” is a generally neglected but critical element of productive thinking. This is at the point where Bruner notes how experts in different fields appear “to leap intuitively into a decision or to a solution to a problem” and looked to how teachers and schools might create and cultivate the conditions for intuition to flourish.

*Motives for learning.* Jerome Bruner expresses in his text that “interest in the material to be learned is the best stimulus to learning, rather than such external goals as grades or later competitive advantage.” In an age of increasing spectatorship, “motives for learning must be kept from going passive... they must be based as much as possible upon the arousal of interest in what there is be learned, and they must be kept broad and diverse in expression” (1960).

**Freedom Schools and Their Influence on African American Education**
In 1964, in Mississippi there birthed and flourished the notion of Freedom Schools. The CRM lead to the space where black people would collaborate with Northerners and/or work within their own community to supply an education that would address curriculum and pedagogy from their perspective. The Curriculum was two divisions, academic and citizenship. The academic components included reading, writing, mathematics, and science. However, the records that have the richest content were the focus on citizenship curriculum. There were seven units. Unit one covered the black experience in the state of Mississippi from the socioeconomic reality of that time to the statistics on education. The second unit discussed in part, the black experience in the North. Unit three was the focus on black history in general and some of the Diaspora. This unit also focused the notion of black political power from a non-Eurocentric perspective.

The fourth unit discussed the multiple power structures that existed at the time that oppressed people of color. Unit five would illuminate the interconnectedness of poor whites, poor black people and why there was tension between those groups. Unit six gave this historical perspective of nonviolent movements and also stated the disciplines of participating in such movements. Lastly, the seventh unit would be two parts and give the case law and political narrative of black people in the law. This content and perspective is not apart of public education as is (Braselmann, Emery, and Gold, 2004).

The content of what was learned in these Freedom Schools are not in the framework of public education today, which leaves gaps in whose history gets recorded and told and the lack of establishment of ownership of education by its diverse engagers.
Social and Cultural Forces/Policies

The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) would be an instrumental in shaping policy during the 1960’s and 1970’s. Besides the push for integration in all levels of education, the CRM would bring with it some legislation, the Voting Rights Act for example, that would allow black people, especially all people of color to participate in the political process. The political process at the state and local level would prove most important because of how school would get funding would come from those two entities.

The Civil Rights Movement, especially localized in the South, was significant to bring about integration, secure suffrage for black people in the South, and education reform to black people and poor white people. Through acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience, black people and allies were able to obtain political, economic, and social access to basic constitutional rights and human rights (Williams, 1988).

1990’s -2010 Era

“It is surely the case that schooling is only one small part of how a culture inducts the young into its canonical ways. Indeed, schooling may even be at odds with a culture's other ways of inducting the young into the requirements of communal living.... What has become increasingly clear... is that education is not just about conventional school matters like curriculum or standards or testing. What we resolve to do in school only makes sense when considered in the broader context of what the society intends to accomplish through its educational investment in the young. How one conceives of education, we have finally come to recognize, is
a function of how one conceives of culture and its aims, professed and otherwise” (Bruner, 1996, x).

Most teachers have little control over school policy or curriculum or choice of texts or special placement of students, but most have a great deal of autonomy inside the classroom. To a degree shared by only a few other occupations, such as police work, public education rests precariously on the skill and virtue of the people at the bottom of the institutional pyramid.” -Tracy Kidder

The current state of the curriculum field is overwhelmed with standardized testing, the overabundance of students being diagnosed with attention deficit disorder and federal legislation like “No Child Left Behind” that would have been underfunded. The National Education Association (NEA) has come a long way now boasting over 3.2 million members (Nea.org, 2010). Outcome-based education or performance based curriculum is usually used as justification for increased funding requirements, increased graduation and testing requirements, and additional preparation, and greater amounts of homework (that students are not completing). The standards-based National Education Goals were set by the U.S. Congress in the 1990’s.

Many of these goals were based on the principles of outcomes-based education. There are regular press releases that go out nationally reporting the ideas and views of the organization on policy and advocacy of the profession, curriculum, and of course students. At the end of 2009, the president of the NEA had this to say about the legislation:
“No Child Left Behind is firmly cemented as President Bush’s failed education experiment. Such overemphasis on standardized testing, combined with a lack of funding, has forced schools to narrow the curriculum and divert resources from art, music, social studies and physical education to teach to the test. The good news is that with President-elect Obama and Arne Duncan—his choice to head the Department of Education—at the helm, the beginning of a promising new direction for public education in this country is around the corner.”

Dennis Van Roekel, NEA president quipped his position and the position of the longstanding organization. These men and women are the ones who have shaped and will continue to shape the curriculum field but have been shackled by legislation designed by people who do not work with children or have experience in education.

**Reframing Thoughts**

Jonathan Kozol once said, “But for the children of the poorest people we're stripping the curriculum, removing the arts and music, and drilling the children into useful labor. We're not valuing a child for the time in which she actually is a child.” There is something to be said about the liberal arts curriculum married with pragmatic applicatory skill acquisition. The liberal arts training will encourage a child to think for themselves. The skills based learning will prepare them for a labor force. It is the intention behind the curriculum design that brings it all into contention.

Carl Jung says, “One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the
soul of the child.” Curriculum and standards are necessary to provide equity, teach citizenship, prepare a person to engage in community, become civically minded, and be able to be a productive member of society, whether that means to be in the labor force or not. The conflict continues to be over content and what is the rubric that tests how and what a student knows. The curriculum field has and will continue to change, the hope of any educator is that policy makers will listen to the practitioners, learn from the past, and put students best interest at the core of every decision made.

Retention

The Retention and Matriculation of African American Males

Retention and matriculation is one of the most salient issues in Higher Education. With that being the case, the group of students whose retention rate that still is the lowest nationally is African American Males. Although there has been marginal gain in the past thirty years with current models of retention (that will be discussed here), there are gaps in the scholarship and practice that I will explain in this section. The focus on Black males versus any other group is because of their low retention rate. If there could be a method of retention created that addresses the issues that keep their retention rate low, then that kind of method or set of methods can translate to other groups that have issues with retention. (For example Appalachian, Latino, and low income students.)

Defining Retention

Three theoretical models account for the majority of published research on student retention: the Student Attrition Model (SAM) (Bean, 1982), the Student Integration Model (SIM) (Tinto, 1975), and Astin’s Theory of Involvement (1975).The
key theoretical premise in Tinto’s (1975) model is that as students are integrated into and become more interdependent with both the academic and social elements of a college or university, the probability that a student will leave the university declines. Attribution is a direct function of the congruency between the student and the institution. For most students this congruency is positively related to the time spent at the institution and is especially critical during the freshman year (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

This congruency between the student and institution involves developing compatibility between a student’s motivation, drive, and academic ability and the academic and social characteristics of the college or university. In addition, a student’s commitment to an educational goal plus a commitment to stay at the school are effective factors in the student’s decision to persist. The most serious threat to the validity of Tinto’s model resulted from a potential specification error owing to failure to include a series of external factors (Bean, 1985). Working from a different theoretical base, Bean (1982) proposed an alternative comprehensive model that included external factors. Bean’s (1982) model was based on both process models of organizational turnover and the Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) model of attitude—behavior relationships. Attitudes formed from beliefs result in behavioral intentions that lead to the overt behavioral act of persisting or dropping out.

*History of Retention as a Theoretical Model*

Tinto’s Student Integration Model (1975), is based on a Durkheim theory on suicide in which the theory states that social integration of students increases their institutional commitment and thusly reducing the possibility of student attrition. Tinto
would note that it is the connections between the individual’s commitment to that of graduation and their commitment to the institution of higher learning.

This couplet would be a determining factor on whether or not a person would decide to drop out, according to Tinto. The questions not addressed in this model are how to manage the historical chasm between people who have historically had access to higher education and those who have been barred based on the social and political climate. Also, if the climate historically was not open to people of color, there must be a construction of a space that can serve marginalized students when the community was originally constructed to keep them out (Allen, 1984).

However, Tinto’s model can be problematic because the human condition is more complex than a social rubric for making an educated guess about how students leave college and why they leave. There are a number of factors related to retention. And there is a fiscal cost to the university for student attrition. Most discussed is Tinto’s attrition model (1975) that attempt to describe and categorize the attrition process. Like all educational theories, however, this kind of model is open for interpretation and, depending on a number of variables and systemic constructs, cannot be used to describe all groups of peoples, organizations, and situations. This is particularly important because the population of who attends colleges has changed over time. The social landscape of the university has significantly changed over time.

*Factors Related to Retention*

*Academic Preparedness* is a factor that plays an important role if students are successful navigating the collegiate space. First generation college students have a host
of issues that students whose parents or other family members who have attended college do not have. This social, economic and cultural capital adds to the resilience of students who possess those conditions. A student who goes to a private school that can afford certain kind of high school experience versus a student who comes from an impoverished or urban district without proper funding will more than likely not have such amenities that would provide a background for excellence (Thayer, 2000).

The models available fall short because it states that students come unprepared and colleges and universities provide remedial coursework. Yet, the nature of the problem is not addressed by the larger educational system. Students should be prepared. There is an issue of disconnect with respect to gap in secondary schooling and college education. Remedial classes are consistently being taken out of the available curriculum for students entering institutions of higher learning and there also goes the opportunity for many students to attend college.

*Campus Climate* is very important in the discussion on retention in higher education. These understandings of non-academic challenges are important here because low-income and minorities students can/will experience culture shock. The lack of diversity, with respect to socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and regional differences within the ethos of the campus such as faculty, staff, and students, and curriculum can threaten the academic performance and social experiences of these students.

Campus climate also includes the day to day lives of students. There are many incidents that are not accounted for. If a student were to lose a parent or get in an accident, that affects how they navigate collegiate space. If a student has a baby, there
are multiple issues with the complexity of trying to have a child when a person just left their childhood. Healthcare for the child, babysitters, and childcare are some of those issues that make going to school fulltime that much harder. For a student who has tragedy happened to them or has to deal with consequences of their choices, the university as an organic space falls short in being supportive in these cases because the majority of students who have the possibility of these experiences have resources to help them. That is a space that allows for relationships to form without being forced.

Commitment to Educational Goals and the Institution is another framing offered by Tinto (1993), where he hypothesized commitment to occupational and educational goals and the commitment to the institution which one enrolls significantly influences their college performance and persistence.

The problem with getting a student to be invested in the classroom is that there is not an open conversation of why general education curriculum is important nor a discussion of the value of education past the equipping to learn a skill set and enters the work force. Bell hooks discusses in her work, Teaching for Community, that higher education is a kind of mental liberation. It should be making you a better person. However, Astin asserts that higher education is about finding and cultivating a person’s talents (Astin, 2000). These are both assumptions that need to be fleshed out together. The traditional liberal arts agenda that is part of the history of the universities was first kept to elite males. The university has taken the same institution and has added programs and people but really has never unpacked the crux of the system.
Social and Academic Integration is a process of a student becoming socially acclimated into the college campus community. The social fabric of the university is a permutation in which the experiences compounds and accumulates as the student matriculates. It is as much the residence life experience, the advice from the resident advisor, conversations with an international scholar, attending a lecture, going to a campus concert and getting involved in student and community organizations. Astin says in his theory of involvement that students learn when they get involved. It is the accessing of peer relationships, gaining role models, and mentors are important dynamic of student integration and that is not just for the social aspects but also to be salient academically (1984).

Financial Aid is crucial for a student’s retention (Cabrera, 1992). Without funding a student cannot stay at an institution of higher learning. Knowledge acquisition that comes with a degree is costly. For minority students and low income students, persistence and enrollment is dependent on the availability of financial aid packaging. Only four percent of college students are from below the poverty line. Thusly, persisting to a degree is confounded by the ability to pay, yet, if a student is not successful their first year at an institution, they may lose their funding due to grade point average. The cycle is systemic because then a student is at real loss. Their academic preparedness fails them, and at the same time they cannot persist because they cannot afford the institution that will not continue to fund them based on arbitrary rubrics that keeps up an image of prestige for the university. This is why it was important for this course to have a financial planning session so that students can begin the conversation of financial wellness.
Framing Student Retention - Factors

Student persistence models allows for educators to assess the dynamics between cognitive, social, and institutional factors that frame the student experience. This triad acts as a set of forces that affect student persistence and achievement. Cognitive factors shape the academic ability (strengths and weaknesses). From the level of proficiencies in reading, writing and mathematics to critical thinking having an understanding of the mechanics of higher education includes ability and then the ability to follow through.

Social factors relate directly to a student’s ability to persist and perform in various social settings. Social factors include parental and peer support, the development and existence of career goals, educational legacy (also understood as students who come to school with family members who have attended college and primarily), and having coping mechanisms that help a student manage their emotions and sustain themselves when life situations that are out of their immediate control occur.

Not being connected to campus life may lead to ostracization of that student. Being in between adolescence and adulthood (for men this age range has been coined Guyland by Michael Kimmel) is still undefined and yet at the same time framed by the college experience for those who choose or their families choose for them to attend college. Some students who come to college do not learn to socially engage and with their lack of interaction. Students who play video games all day and order all their food delivery tend to be those persons who do not reflect upon their collegiate career as something meaningful but because of their lack of interaction, they experience college as a means to an end (Pascarella, 2005).
Instead of taking this privileged space to work on self-discovery and understanding these talents (Astin, 1985) that a student can add to the world, a student learns to be a better consumer instead of a lover of learning. The university seen as businesses exchange that takes their monies and time and they receive, rather than claim, an education. Higher education is not framed as something that can help their interpersonal skills and students come to college with the wrong attitude and idea about what college is and can do for them. The university is more than just a place where students learn a skill set for a job. The American college is organic. It grows and changes and births new knowledge with each passing year. And depending on what the student brings with them to college with respect to their background, this could change student to student (Fleming, 1984).

Institutional Factors include the responsibility of the university to respond to the developmental needs of the constituencies they serve that being the students and communities the institution exist in. Supporting a student holistically will allow for the student to become the person that is balanced and can contribute to the community they choose to be a part of. Academically the ability for a student to be resilient and persistent has to do with what a university provides in services such as tutoring, mentoring, career counseling and course availability. These flexible set of conditions must be an anchor part of the student experience but also must meet the institution’s goals and priorities (Tinto, 1993).

Components of Student Retention
However the organic and mechanic nature of the university acts as an enigma to the contemporary student because the business behind the curtain is further complicated by the fact that the ivory tower that is the collegiate hierarchy is a system that benefits by being not understood. Just as the day to day operation of Wall Street is public yet people do not understand its activities without having a business degree or necessary experience, college is similar in the fact that its activities are public but its practices are gilded by an intellectual curtain that is coded with lexicons and equations.

For students who have more and can spend more, engagement with the university and their collegiate experience is more of a rite of passage and they gauge it as a sense of entitlement. Every incident and experience is negotiable because that is what they experience in their own lives. On the contrary students who come to school with less than enough or from marginalized experiences, their narratives are few and far between because they are grouped and assessed as problems to solve and not the talents to cultivate as suggested by Astin and researches of his ilk (1985). Their narratives are not recorded at the rate of the meta-narrative of mainstream collegiate culture and their experiences are so isolated and fewer in numbers in comparison with white males attending college. Retention is still responsive and not curative from the foundation of the problem.

A progressive stance on retention would require placing mechanisms institutionally that would bring about the changes necessary to obtain and retain qualified African American males at institutions especially Predominantly White Institutions. Shaun Harper and other people in Higher Education critical studies have identified some
operationalized methods of Tinto et. al. works. He and others collaborated pedagogically and petitioned that communities and universities have to do some radical measures in order to bring about any type of real change that could be empirical. Problems addressed and rationales given for what steps that in his framework and position on black male retention need to take place.

More than two-thirds of African American males who enroll in college do not graduate. This national phenomenal is abysmal. There seems to be no accountability for institutional reality. Black males are nationally 7.9 percent of the nation’s population but not one campus that is predominately white totes a population close to the national census data on black males. There should be accountability. Tinto (1975) discusses the importance of that delicate balance in retention and matriculation. The rubrics used for universities and colleges are skewed because certain minority groups are so small on campuses a retention rate can appear really high even though certain groups fall between the cracks.

Retention and graduation rates must be tied to standards by which institutional performance is assessed and used in. There also must be aggregate data about minority students and a commitment to retention as model that is more than just programs but becomes part of the fabric of the institution. Accountability does not seem to be strong enough. Those institutions that fail to graduate a certain percentage of black males should be sanctioned and held accountable for creating, implementing, and documenting improvement plans. This would take a national buy-in by different key stakeholders in the university and community.
Public flagship institutions must take definite and aggressive steps to hire additional black male faculty members, as black male students seek out same-race male faculty mentors who are currently missing (Fleming, 1984). Funds should be created/found specifically for African American male faculty recruitment, and institutions should target black male scholars who are completing doctoral programs (Astone, 1991). An institutional commitment must be made to cultivating, hiring, and retaining cohorts of black male faculty who can provide culturally desirable mentoring for students. More resources (fiscal) should be devoted to supporting programs and student organizations that strive to engage and retain black male students. The effectiveness and sustainability of such efforts are largely dependent upon the provision of financial resources and advisory support. If the support and institutional commitment is not present, then the initiative will not be successful (Flowers, 2004).

Tinto is the cornerstone of the development of retention in higher education in the United States. From community colleges to four year institutions and professional colleges, understand how to retain students rests on his work. Models that mirror the framework set up by Tinto have been suggested and tested by other theorists since his breaking work in 1975. Retention is a complex issue involving many variables.

There are three general levels of retention efforts that both the institution and students can operationalize: the student level, the institutional level, and the community level. At the student level, students must be challenged to seamlessly address both the academic and non-academic skills. At the institutional level instructors and administrators participate in strategies that facilitate persistence and program completion.
Institutions must also make a financial commitment being that this is also a retention factor. The community level must include businesses that fiscally support and provide personal involvement to universities. Tinto further suggests that colleges should adopt a community model of academic organization. This would mean that shared and connected learning experiences are promoted.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) conducted a study of educators’ effects on students, and they frame seven areas of student-environment interaction that have been correlated with educational attainment: academic achievement; peer relationships and extracurricular involvement; interactions with faculty; orientation and advising; academic major, residence, and financial aid and work. This supports Tinto’s three areas of which educators have more influence than other possible variables (1975). Student interaction with college environment, individual characteristics, and individual characteristics are these three areas.

A conceptual framework for student retention (Swail, 1995) suggests some further work needs to be done with respect to students of color. Swail has completed work at historically black colleges and universities and using that research and combining that with the current models and research has produced five components of student retention with a scope that includes regard for marginalized groups. Looking at Recruitment and Assessment, Academic Services, Curricular Instruction, Student Services, and Financial Aid, these components have a relationship between each other and provide a way to girdle students and at the same time garner institutions with a mapping of how to engage and support students. Recruitment is crucial to the admissions process. But there is also
a question about access. Three categories can be placed under recruitment: student identification, admissions, and orientation. (Tinto, 1993). Identifying students whose career and educational goals are closely matched to the institutional mission and, second, to admit only those students to college. Methods to achieve this varies but under this category includes the recruitment of students who have been involved in precollege preparatory programs, promotional visits to local secondary schools, the development of outreach programs in the institution’s target area, and the use and promotion of alumni clubs to recruit students.

*Pre-Collegiate Strategies for Retention*

Having strategies that are the best interest for potential students that have been historically marginalized in higher education are necessary and has had some success. Three programs that can be considered as pre-collegiate models for retention are the blueprint program, the TRIO national program Upward Bound and the Ohio State local program Young Scholars. These programs serve as examples for what colleges are doing and should do to look at retention as a process that precedes official college entry (OMA website, 2010).

*Attrition*

To understand issues with retention is best understood coupled with understanding attrition. Tinto has posited that there are four variables for collegiate success. These four variables are students’ family background, high school experiences, campus social interactions, and personal attitudes (of which racial ethos along with the possibility for achievement) (Tinto, 1975). However, those who study higher education intellectually
wrestle with what should be considered or framed as the ‘campus social interactions’ that black males have to manage and how that is very different from their gendered and racialized counterparts. Campus climate is consistently not addressed; this is why the commitment with money is not the only factor that needs to be addressed.

**Why Focus on African American Males?**

There are other marginalized groups that have issues with retention and matriculation, namely American Indian and Hispanic/Latino groups. However, African Americans are more populous in higher education (especially in the Midwest). Focusing on this particular group can uncover new methods and pathways that can be transferable to other groups and/or helpful in creating new methods of retention for American Indians and Latino groups. Focusing on males is also important because in these three groups, it is the males who are falling behind the most for their ethnic/racial group in higher education.

With this being said, the State of Ohio also makes that same recognition as chronicled in the Diverse Issues in Higher Education tracking the resources, National Center on African American Males and the commission from the Governor. Most of these efforts are being localized to The Ohio State University.

In recent history in Ohio, the Ohio Board of Regents’ Former Chancellor Eric Fingerhut was said to have been “leading discussions to develop a leadership center that focuses on Black achievement at the collegiate level. Fingerhut says concern over the college graduation rates in Ohio of African-American males, based on data collected from the Higher Education Database of Ohio, led to the discussions. Statistics from a
study by the Ohio Board of Regents revealed that the six-year graduation rates for the
cohort of Black male freshmen who started college in the fall of 2002 ranged from 5
percent at the University of Akron to 47 percent at The Ohio State University” (Feintuch,
2010).

Fingerhut is further quoted saying “In studying the data available to us, it
occurred to us that we needed a centralized center that studied the best practices in
helping African-American males graduate and advocated for the best practices across the
university system.” The collaborative nature of the Board of Regents, Ohio universities,
and specifically Ohio State has been focusing on the relevance and important work that
needs to be done with the graduation and retention rates of black males.

According to Feintuch, Fingerhut brought together a group of scholars, business
executives and governmental leaders from across Ohio to discuss the concerns of
retention, attrition and success of black males in higher education. This conversation led
to an outcome that procured two strategies to improve Black graduation rates. The first is
to do early preparation for college or a pre-collegiate program. Fingerhut noted that the
nature of the pre college program would be not only for academic preparation but also for
mentoring and the mechanics of applying to college. Secondly, would be a mentorship
program that was aggressive and monitored students throughout their tenure. Again, this
does not bring anything new as a model of retention, it is however, more involved than
some of the mentoring that has been provided or that is in existence. When centralized to
a program or center, the goal is replication and implementation.
The formal concern for college retention and graduation rates among Black males in Ohio dates from 1989, when Gov. Richard Celeste signed Executive Order 89-9 to form the Commission on Socially Disadvantaged Black Males, now known as the Ohio Commission on African American Males. The commission targets Black males before they reach college age through community outreach programs that focus on middle and high school students.

One of the programs is the Leadership Program. The goal of the program is to “show young people the traits, characteristics and behaviors of leaders, how they do their work and what their values are,” Sam Gresham quips for this particular article as the director of the program. “As a precursor to this, says Gresham, two educational programs have been developed. The Discussion of Manhood, which began last month, profiles Black leaders. The other program is called *Three Keys to Exploring Martin Luther King: Passions, Views, Approaches*. It incorporates video, expert testimony and PowerPoint presentations to offer in-depth discussions of topics pertaining to Dr. King. The programs are in five Ohio communities and there are plans to expand. They offer youth insight into their self images and positive role models to improve their ability to make decisions for themselves” (Feintuch, 2010). All of these ambitious ideas and programs are still limited to outside the classroom experience.

“What we are trying to do in each one of these communities is build functioning, operating coalitions that identify problems of African-American males and begin to address these problems and find ways to resolve them,” Gresham is quoted saying.
“The Ohio Governor’s *Closing the Achievement Gap* is another initiative that targets African-American males before college age. In 2007, Governor Ted Strickland approved $20 million for a two-year period to address the issue of improving high school graduation rates among Black males. According to Dr. Venita Kelley, the director of the program, in 2009 the initiative became legislated into law as part of an education reform approach” (Feintuch, 2010). There is fiscal support and programmatic support for focusing on African American Males but there is still not a focus on using the classroom to address any of these issues. Feintuch poses these questions that mirror the ones for this project: *But why does Ohio have so many wide-ranging initiatives for African-American males? Why would OSU invest in a center that focuses on African-American males? Why would the governor spend $20 million on an initiative that focuses on African-American males? Why is Ohio the first state to have a commission specifically focused on African-American males?* He then goes on to quote Dr. James T. Moore III who is the director of the Bell Center, who says “When the young people are not doing well in education, they cost this state billions of dollars to support other subsidies and the criminal justice system.” This would be the reason that the state government is in favor of the focus on African American males in higher education, but their methods and findings do not bring anything new to discussion that is thirty years or so in the making. The discussion has yet to conclude creating a class that teaches *something* that helps the black male be successful in higher education. That *something* is the focus of this dissertation. A class can address the non-cognitive factors while equipping students with leadership and mentoring skills.
Why A Gendered Space?

Having a gendered space is a highly contested idea. However, there is something to be said about the success of places like Morehouse and Spellman and why they produce successful and resilient black students who become leaders in black communities and heterogeneous communities. Sophia Russell makes an argument that is pretty clear why there are many positives to single sex education:

“Socially, same-sex schools are emotionally easier on students. Stereotypes based on gender are not a huge issue in these settings. Girls are more outspoken and competitive when boys are not around to tease them. They also feel more comfortable participating in sports and traditionally male dominated fields when boys are not watching.

Conversely, boys become less competitive and collaborate more because they don’t have to worry about girls’ opinions of them. They can also feel free to participate in the arts with a class full of other boys.

Proponents of same-sex schooling say this freedom builds confidence in young students and allows them to concentrate on their studies more because it removes the distractions of coeducational social pressures. Although very little research exists, some studies have suggested that the benefits are more evident in girls, lower income families and minorities. Author Rosemary Salomone, argues that there is a place for same-sex schools. In her book, *Same, Different, Equal: Rethinking Single-Sex Education* (2005), she examines the benefits of single-sex education in the public realm.
These are really good points that are consistent in the relevant scholarship. The negatives that she points out are also salient:

“Opponents of same-sex schooling such as the ACLU and National Organization for Women have historically maintained that same-sex schooling would diminish the affects of Title IX. Title IX, a 1972 Higher Education Act, calls for federally funded educational institutions to treat males and females equally in schools and in sports. Some opponents also suspect that same-sex schooling will either push students into exploring homosexual relationships, or on the reverse viewpoint, it could increase gender stereotypes and homophobia.

As teachers, educational administrators, and parents explore the educational benefits of same-sex schooling, debates will continue to grow. If you are a parent observe how, when and where your child learns best. Since each child learns differently, your decision should be made on your child’s individual needs. The best educational setting for your child may very well be a same-sex school or class” (Russell, 2007).

What is proposed is the inverse. At Ohio State and every other comprehensive institution of higher learning, the classes are not single-sexed. This is not the issue. However, to make this a space where black males can be challenged and supported and create a unique sense of community that is lacking from their everyday life on predominately white institutions, this single-sexed and ethnic cultural space must be carved out and the most innovative yet accessible place to do this is in the classroom.

Socioeconomic class is a part of the issues of retention; however in this case, even
African American males who come from an affluent background deal and manage with many of the same issues that black males who come from lower economic statuses. The racism and discrimination is not a respecter of persons. Nor is the isolation of the lack of being a critical mass to connect with and/or to not be viewed as a marginalized minority. 

_Absences from the Scholarship and Praxis_

As one can conclude from the strategy by the state of Ohio, the emphasis is on research and implementing out of the classroom support. The notion of assessing non-cognitive factors as a place to formulate retention practices is not new. Discovering and recovering more cognitive factors and non-cognitive factors that add to attrition is not something new. However, the classroom is not new either. What is new is using the classroom as the retention model. The focus on Ohio State makes the most sense because it is leading the state in research on retention and matriculation and houses the only National Resource Center on the African American Male.

_The Need for Something More_

At many colleges and universities you can take leadership courses to become a resident advisor and before you leave for a study abroad experience. The evolution of the leadership classroom space can be designed to equip young men (and women) with skill sets and new knowledge that will help them inside and outside the traditional classroom for a seamless experience. The class was set up to address the major points in the strategic plan, entertain notions of manhood and young adult development, and through the assessment of the self became a vehicle on how to engage aspects of community.
This design is the attempt to meet them where they are and help them have a greater sense of awareness of who they are and who they desire to become.

The curriculum is designed to negotiate the aspects that make up their identity as men in American society, coping mechanisms, and dealing with group dynamics, especially dealing with the concept of manhood. Mapping out what this means as individuals and how that merges with their core values as a member of several communities is many times mutually inclusive.

**Retaining African American Males**

Retention and rates of retention have not changed drastically in implementation in the past forty years at Predominately White Institutions, (my chapter that discusses retention paints a startling picture of that stagnation). The only change has been the kind of effort and how different offices and personnel are held responsible for retention. More effort was definitely needed but the problem is the lack of innovation. Institutions of higher learning have demonstrated more commitment but the retention rates have only had marginal statistical success. The concept of the class is to use the classroom, the same way as a laboratory is used. The purpose is to gain experience to be used in other situations and transforming knowledge acquisition to experiential learning.

Retaining African Americans males in institutions of higher learning has been a contested task. The consistent theme has been addressing the non-cognitive factors or the out of the classroom experiences. Methods that have been offered from scholars are limited to the scholarship that is in Student Affairs and Higher Education as a field.
Lee Jones as a scholar has presented critical work in the conversation of retaining African American students in Higher Education. Jones gives more guidance to how to retain students of color by creating an affirming culture (Jones, 2001). The shortcoming to author’s strategy is that it does not account for the diversity of universities and that every campus has a similar set of strategies that pull from the same tools that have been available.

There are four contemporary scholars whose research is around the plight of the African American male in college experience. Shaun Harper, Terrell Strayhorn, Michael Cuyjet, and James Moore III are men who research and discuss the black male experience through the lifespan. Their collective work covers the non-cognitive factors as well as social, intellectual and cultural capital.

Harper has released several policy reports and numerous publications in 75 journals and nine books. He focuses on black male achievement. His recommendations were limited to structural changes in the university and campus climate. Strayhorn generally focuses on black students in the STEM fields and people of color who identify with the gay, lesbian, and transgendered communities.

Cuyjet wrote the pivotal book about the experiences of African American students at universities. He has also researched and reported on the success of mentoring and why it is an effective strategy. Although these are important advancements to the field of higher education and the plight of the black male the issue still remains on developing competencies and strategies within the classroom context.
The next chapter is the theoretical frameworks for this dissertation and especially the aspects of popular culture, swagger, leadership, followership, citizenship, and community organizing. These frameworks provide the undergirding for the data output for the class and the reasons to focus on sustainability beyond the course as well.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks

Introduction

Having conversations with students about civic engagement is more like teaching a foreign language instead of it being an extension of former learning. Leadership is not in a title. Then what is it? Relationships build trust (Ahlrichs, 2003). To develop the talent in others takes time and it takes having a relationship. A huge part of this class is the relationship with the students and the instructor, and the relationships the students have with each other. Developing talent in students starts with a “braintrust”. The students have to be engaged and feel that the course they are taking is a space they feel comfortable in and cultivates community.

There is also taking into consideration how people learn. Cognitive science informs pedagogists about several things to consider with regard to learning:

“The knowledge base that formed the background for the forum draws heavily on recent research from cognitive science on how people learn. Among the most critical findings from this work are that successful learning depends on: (1) engaging students’ prior understandings in the learning environment; (2) supplying students with both factual knowledge and a conceptual framework on which to hang that knowledge; and (3) successfully instructing students on how to
monitor their own learning (NRC, 1999). Further, it is increasingly agreed upon that successful learning is domain specific” (NRC, 2005a, 2005b, 2007).

Cultivating community goes hand in hand with building civic engagement. Thinking about civics is a past time that does not happen enough currently. Civic engagement can be defined as:

“Working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.”


A class can provide the intellectual and practical space for this to occur. Because civics is not taught in secondary education as it historically once was, this tradition is new to students and the classroom can serve as a training space to re-pilot these issues and practices. This section of the chapter unpacks the intricacies of leadership, followership, civic engagement and community organizing and positions why this deliberate unpacking is necessary to govern this body of work especially shaping the course.

What is Leadership?

American civil society has a historical and current praxis of leadership, followership, and citizenship. Beyond the investigation of these conceptualizations I will offer that an alternative is to broaden the discussion to include community organizing as
the intersectionality of the three and at the same time is set apart from the historical and current operations of the terms. This section will give a historical overview and end in discussing the importance of my research focus on African American males.

**Concepts of Followership, and Citizenship, Leadership and Community Organizing in a Historical Context**

**Followership**

Followership tends to have a negative connotation because of the focus on trying to make every person a type of leader. But a leader must have followers, and being a good follower is an important skill set as well. This is because there is a dialectic relationship between leaders and followers. Without a reciprocal relationship there would be no “buy-in” with respect to communities and their immediate democratic leaders. Followership has to be examined because it is essential to the survival of the leader or the person in charge. Characteristics of a good follower are similar to that of a good leader; humility, trust, determination, courage, aspiration, and practicality (Fritz 1980).

The aware follower rests in the balance between conformity and lack of free thinking and juxtaposing that against leadership oppression. Leadership oppression is when a follower covertly or overtly undermines the person who is the leader of a group or organization because he/she feels that they can facilitate the process better or that the person in charge is incompetent. This aware follower honors the group dynamic and the importance of being a cohesive group and at the same time can be critical of the group.
and leadership in a manner that is respectful and honors those who are members (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003).

**Citizenship**

Learning to become a democratic member of a community working with people who are different in a productive way is a broad definition of what it means to be a citizen. Being a citizen and citizenship is a broad concept. A *functional citizen* and what that means has evolved over time in the Western context.

The concept of what it means to be a citizen in the American civil society is translated through public education. "Modern" civic education as a recognized and discreet curriculum began a around a hundred years ago in the effort to indoctrinate and acculturate the many thousands of immigrants who arrived during this time period to ensure that they were assimilated into the then dominant Northern European culture with its Judeo-Christian, Graeco-Roman, and (in law and government) Anglo-American roots. Inventing a process like civic education means that the acculturation process will have a formal mechanism. These early initiatives tended to be courses and information that did not hold the attention of early attendees and was not valued by its learners (Schudson 1998).

By the 1960s, civic education was put on the back burner of education because the Vietnam War and other social movements brought along disenchantment and distrust of the government. Any civic education was left to high schools and it was taught in such a manner that students became disinterested as the decades passed by. The problem was/is that people do not have a basic understanding of rights and civic responsibility.
(This would be why there have been no recent social movements). Any reforms or changes in education always come from outside social forces. This accounts for the banning of books from the conservative side or the constant debate over sex education serving as examples. Civic education has had its own dialectic. Students' disinterest in politics is paralleled by their increasing disinterest in activism. Civic education continues to hold distinct meanings in different political and social contexts. Civic education today is a hybrid of what is known as social studies and history. However, social movements and political agency is rarely discussed and definitely not tested on formally.

The Issues with Attempting to Define American Citizenship

The Declaration of Independence proclaims that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” One of the most significant pursuits of the American people was frame more specifically what rights American citizens should enjoy and exactly who gets to enjoy them. The dialectic to define American citizenship includes the following important social phenomena:

The expansion of the voting class from 1776 through the 1820s. The rise in the number of white men who voted in elections during this time period is often referred to as Jacksonian Democracy, even though this increase in citizen participation began prior to Andrew Jackson’s terms as president.

The changing position of African Americans in American society opened voting and citizenship with respect to race when suffrage occurred. The struggle
to define the social and legal status of African Americans began well before Independence. The Constitution originally institutionalized slavery, but Americans became increasingly conflicted about the legitimacy of this institution. This question was finally decided by the Civil War’s outcome (not to be confused with the reason the Civil War occurred). Legislation resulting from the war ended slavery, and the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution guaranteed African Americans important rights of citizenship, such as the right to vote.

The changing position of women in American society opened voting and citizenship with respect to gender. The Fourteenth Amendment, which established the rights of freedmen, did not apply to women, and women did not gain the right to vote until fifty-two years after its passage. However, American women struggled throughout this period to gain suffrage, and even longer to gain economic and social equality (Schudson 1998). For example the equal rights amendment (ERA) was not enacted until the 1970s that would put some legislation to the equal pay of women.

*Civic Learning*

In February of 1999, the Third Report of the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities, entitled *Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution*, said,

“[I]t is time to go beyond outreach and service to...engagement. By engagement we refer to institutions that have redesigned their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become even more sympathetically and productively involved with
their communities, however communities may be defined.” This meant that there was going to be a reinvestment among many institutions to reinvest in the notion of civic learning and ethics. Across the country there are centers and institutes being created to foster and cultivate these aspects of learning.

Arthur Chickering has done much for the contribution to student development theory and higher education. He has also contributed to the body of literature on civic learning. He suggests that there are several points that universities and colleges should agree upon with respect to civic learning. Some of those are closely linked to notions of leadership as well. Some of the aspects he refers to are intellectual competence, interpersonal competence, emotional intelligence and integrity. He refers to the development of these areas as vectors (2001).

Intellectual Competence

The ability to analyze and synthesize stacks of data, diverse theoretical perspectives, and wide-ranging opinions is critical. So is the ability to evaluate the soundness of varied inferences, to recognize underlying assumptions, to distinguish between elegant, emotionally loaded rhetoric and analytical logic. Developed critical thinking skills and various levels of cognitive complexity are required to convert information into sound working knowledge.

Interpersonal Competence

All the significant civic work in our society is done by groups. These groups increasingly include participants diverse in gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, and socio-economic status. The ability to listen empathetically, to repeat accurately others
points of view, to be aware of one’s own mental models and biases, to understand productive group processes and to call attention to unproductive behaviors, to exercise leadership, and to be a courageous follower all are required for effective contribution.

*Emotional Intelligence*

Most social issues generate strong feelings in people and among communities who hold varied points of view. Being attuned to one’s own reactions and those of others and expressing those feelings in ways which do not demean or antagonize others who differ is critical for reaching the compromises inevitably required for solid, broadly owned, decisions and actions. Emotional intelligence is also a dynamic of competent leadership. This work has especially been expounded upon by Daniel Goleman.

*Integrity*

Every social issue has value attached to it in some manner. Economically, every dollar spent is a value statement and associated with a form of capital. Understanding the implied as well as the obvious values which underlie varied positions and decisions is critical for dealing with means-ends issues and for anticipating the long range implications of particular actions. Being clear and open about collective values so there is internal consistency in discourse bridges gaps in communication and helps for negotiating hostile social space. Furthermore, because significant social change takes substantial investments of time, energy, and emotion, unless there are core values shared, there will be no growth or excelling towards the shared goal.
Understanding civic learning in its historical context and where it is immersing in literature presently lends itself to extrapolating the connectedness of the triad of leadership, followership and citizenship.

**Citizenship**

Citizenship is being a member of a community. However, membership to becoming a citizen of the United States is fluid and has changed over time. Citizenship as a concept changed when African Americans became citizens post emancipation and African American men gained the right to vote. Women did not have access to vote, a basic concept of citizenship, until 1920. Nancy Bacon says this about redefining citizenship:

“"The definition of citizenship most appropriate for our times, then, is one that reflects both the political and economic communities in which our neighbors live. We might define citizenship as the totality of rights and responsibilities that are associated with multicultural political and economic communities. An expansion of the definition of citizenship raises exponentially the number of challenges that come in educating citizens. Where we had political rights and responsibilities of people basically committed to their country of inhabitance, we now have economic rights and responsibilities of people with competing interests and varying levels of commitment to the country in which they live. A graphic analysis of just one family's political and economic ties could yield a mass of circles across multiple continents, leaving little room for agreement on what is
required of any family member in order to benefit from the rights afforded him” (48, 2002).

Citizenship has a historical legacy and a present age of redefinition in the historical context. Scholars debate on citizenship in a democracy being more than a legal status, it is a character or spirit, an ethos that guides relationships among persons and animates individual commitment to fundamental civic responsibility.

History of Leadership

There are five eras of leadership that inform the current era of leadership in the American context. Tribal, pre-classical, classical, progressive and post-progressive are the five eras. *Tribal leadership* attributes includes directive and task-oriented, leaders were chosen based on size, strength and agility, leadership was based on fear, family played a role, and the main leader was a skilled expert in something that the group identified as a commodity. The implications for tribal leaders are that brute force and fear-based initiatives were acceptable forms of engaging the followers. Survival skills were acknowledged as most desirable and social skills were a plus. If the follower failed that choice would lead to death, yet the follower role was instrumental to the long time success of the tribe. Tribe is a dated term when it is used to separate modern from what are presumed to be other, non-modern, societies, but it remains useful as one way of organizing groups of people.

*Pre-classical leadership* was concerned with spirituality, claimed divinity, death was feared and kings and queens were part of the ruling class. the implications for pre-classical leaders was that the leader was spiritually or magically endowed, androcentric,
the kings and the church as institutions were incongruent and fought for power, and brutality and oppression was justified. For followers, the role was subservient, they were vessels to be filled with spiritual teachings, subhuman classification and treatment was acceptable, and they followed because of fear. This dynamic was highly hierarchal.

Classical leadership incorporated production at minimal costs, stability, noted workers were inefficient without proper training, and division of labor was employed, and was result driven. The implications for classical leaders is having the mentality of production at all costs, labor is infinite (so people are expendable), and leaders lead and divide the labor. The implications for classical followers is that hard work is expected and “builds character,” chaos is the downfall of the policy driven organization, no one is indispensable, and that workers are considered lazy and inefficient (Wren, 1995). This was driven by industrialization.

Progressive leadership poses to improve quality and management, to increase total quality; there is a focus on empowerment and change that produces positive results. There is a holistic approach and the implications include being visionary and transformative. Change is embraced instead of repulsed. For progressive followers, collaboration brings more power to their position. Everyone has worth and value. There is intimate involvement with organization change and direction (Wren, 1995). This kind of leadership redistributes power but still functions within a hierarchy.

Post-progressive leadership addresses the post industrial world, globalization plays a factor, and there is sensitivity to the demands of the information age, and post-Cold War, and social change models. The implications for post-progressive leaders are
adjusting to the post-industrial society, new democratic agenda, and leadership models involve innovational change, risk, and collaboration. The implications for the post-progressive follower is that the follower’s needs are met (turnabout from the other eras), collaboration gives access to a different power dynamic, and equal partnership in the leadership relationship changes the hierarchal nature of this dyad (Wren 1995).

The past forty years has limited leadership to the business world, the political arena, (for profit and non-profit) organizations, and some community grassroots efforts but leadership is not addressed in everyday life of average citizens. It has only been in the past ten years that leadership as a focus of scholarship has been reinvigorated into the academy. Leadership centers and courses are becoming a national trend. The era that is after the post-progressive era is still being defined. Higher education is just shifting the literature from borrowing from business models and bibliographies to creating new bodies of literature and references for there to be virtual clearing houses of information on leadership. The business school no longer has the market on preparing future leaders and leaders in businesses, schools and corporations based on a few select models (Wren, 1995).

The disadvantage for the average American citizen is that four out of ten will drop out of high school and only twenty percent of Americans have any higher education degree. So the formal settings of purposed leadership development are not afforded to most the population and this by default places them in an unaware follower status. In the public education school system, there is not a national standard, for example the content of courses will vary state to state. However, all states have some form of local, state, and
national curriculum that looks at citizenship and thusly the leadership from a government perspective is discussed in that context. Students are given opportunities to get involved in extracurricular activities but there is no formalized training or attention to that until a student goes to college. But most citizens do not attend college, thusly most leaders in government and corporations are going to have parents who had a university education and/or they have a college education themselves.

The problems with the coining of these eras are that they are Eurocentric and ethnocentric. They do not allow for other groups of people to define their space and time and it belittles the experiences and kingdoms of other nations of who developed differently over time. There is a social capital given to nations that politically evolved like European nations.

Alternate Conceptualizations of Leadership

Counter narratives about leadership have come about from social and political movements over time. An example that is rich in a polylithic paradigm is the Civil Rights Movement (CRM). This movement created space for there to be a plurality to how leadership is defined. Leadership was often seen as a masculine quality and that if women were leaders; it had to be done the way men have done it. Charles Payne discusses that women leaders organized and their structures were anti-hierarchal, which in the American context was unheard of as a practice that actually worked. He goes on to say that women canvassed more, attended more meetings and mass church meetings, attempted to vote more and kept civil rights workers in their homes (1993).
With each American social movement during the time of the Civil Rights Movement and after, there emerged new opportunities and practical forms of leadership arose that later would be theorized. The women’s movement, the gay rights movement, and the labor union movement allowed for leadership to have a face that was not just the ivory tower figure head, but that meant that any community could hold its own leader(s) and that people could access them. Leadership could be replicated not just scholarly but also from life experiences. Social institutions like churches, camps, scouts, and service groups became legit means of cultivating leaders that transcended their local communities and diverse experiences began to gain authenticity.

The CRM also produced archetypes of leadership for African American males. Medgar Evers fought for black students to be able to go to the same colleges as white students. Asa Philip Randolph was a prominent twentieth-century African-American civil rights leader and the founder of both the March on Washington Movement and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, a landmark for labor and particularly for African-American labor organizing. Stokely Carmichael participated as a student with the Freedom Riders and would later become a leader in the Black Power movement of the 1960s to 1970s and of the anti-war movement. Mentioning these men outline the other kinds of leaders and models they presented that was in between Dr. Martin L. King Jr. and Malcolm X and for those leaders who were not anything like the leaders who are remembered for that time period. This is because the stories of the movement have been limited and attributed to scholarly silos like history and not as leadership models.
Paula Giddings in her book, *When and Where I Enter*, takes that Anna Julia Cooper quote and frames the ways African American women were leaders in social movements and without them being “Bridge leaders” the Civil Rights Movement would not have been successful (1996). At the time these women were trying to gain justice and equal rights and were not thinking about the kind of leaders they were at the time. This is important to the larger conversation about leadership, that it is mostly practiced then conceptualized. Movements occur when people mobilize together as a network.

Looking at the different ways in which tasks were accomplished and delegated trumps traditional notions of leadership as described in the different leadership eras. Taking into account different cultural and gender narratives allows for leadership to be seen and operationalized not at a monolithic expression but as multilayered and complex, just as humankind is complex.

Two other examples of alternative conceptualizations of leadership are Native American societies that are matrilineal and Morehouse College’s leadership curriculum. According to the historical teachings of some native groups Aboriginal women historically engaged in clear and fundamental roles ensuring good governance, and wellness, roles and responsibilities that were grounded in their core value and belief systems. The effects of the impacts of domination and control, which is a trait of colonization, and how these encounters have harmed Aboriginal (first nations groups) laws, beliefs and traditions, have been well documented. Racist and genocidal patriarchal legislation and policies were used to intentionally deconstruct, dehumanize, and displace Aboriginal women at every decision-making level within their own societies. This
compromised their traditional roles and responsibilities, as well as their relationship to the land, to their family and to their systems of governance (Jaimes 2002).

Aboriginal (Native American) women became the targets of violence and discrimination of every type. Aboriginal women are central and integral forces in the success of revitalizing Matrilineal/Matriarchal/Egalitarian systems. Now many groups of American Indian women, with the support of American Indian men, are taking sustainable action toward revitalizing Matrilineal/Matriarchal/Egalitarian systems.

For decades Aboriginal (Native American) women have been holding anyone who knows about “our way of being’ accountable to come together to take concrete action toward revitalizing our traditional Matrilineal/Matriarchal/Egalitarian systems. Aboriginal women are reclaiming and renewing women’s traditional social and political roles characteristic of Matrilineal/Matriarchal/Egalitarian societies and resuming their rightful position in all discussions and at all levels of government. This is important because it exerts agency despite the years of exploitation. At the community level there can be a lot of decision making that is executed within the framing of local, state, and federal government. Agency is best examined at the micro level entering the macro level with community organizing.

Community Organizing

Community organizing is the connection between Leadership, Followership, and Citizenship. Community organizing is a long-term approach where the people affected by an issue are supported in identifying problems and taking action to achieve solutions. The organizer challenges those he or she works with to change the way things are—it is a
means of achieving social change through collective action by changing the balance of power. The tactics and strategies employed by the organizer are similar to the processes of leadership including timing the issue, deliberate planning, getting the attention of the populace, framing the issue in terms of the desired solution, and shaping the terms of the decision-making process (Pyles, 2009).

Community organizing changes the balance of power and creates new power bases. Groups that organize do not have to be statewide or national in scope, nor do the decision-makers have to be elected officials. Some examples from history are but are not limited to: civil rights movement: The boycotts of businesses and busses in the South brought about desegregation and the Voting Rights Act; labor unions: Strikes against conditions in factories throughout the early part of this century led to the 40-hour work week and better working conditions for all workers; the anti-war movement: protests against the war pressured the government to end U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Community organizing is people working together to get an agenda accomplished. Community organizing is different from other voluntary organizations because of the political agenda and the people who choose to be a part of that space. A participative culture would be the label that best defines that space created by community organizing. Many voluntary organizations seek an active membership, either for practical reasons (in order to achieve a means to an end) or as a matter of equity (everyone should be participating at the same level). But community organizations are unusual in viewing participation as an end in itself. Under the rubric of leadership development, they devote considerable time and resources to enlarging the skills.
knowledge, and responsibilities of their members. It is not an accident that the injunction, "never do for others what they can do for themselves," is known as the iron rule of organizing, rather than, for example, the iron rule of bowling leagues. The very purpose of direct action organizing is contravened when membership is comprised of passive supporters or donors rather than people actively engaged in the work of the organization (Pyles, 2009).

Inclusiveness is another important aspect and dimension to community organizing. Community organizations are generally committed, as a matter of principle, to developing membership and leadership from a broad spectrum of the community. Community is including the young and the old. The educated and the not as educated are valued at every aspect of the process. Those who have and those who have not are seen and treated at the same level. Community organizing is inclusive as a function and is committed to fostering civic participation among groups that have been "absent from the table," including communities of color, low-income constituencies, immigrants, sexual minorities, and youth; unlike other kinds of voluntary associations that, in most instances, tend to draw their membership from a narrow social base and their leadership from business and professional elites. Being genuinely inclusive and developing leadership capacity among historically marginalized groups require more than good intentions; they demand a high level of skill, a frank acknowledgment of power disparities, and a major investment of time and effort. The ability to be inclusive also takes a level of awareness and cultural competency (Pyles, 2009).
Breadth of mission and vision must be established for the group to have solidarity around it. The Harlem’s Children’s Zone contends as one of those new examples of an old concept. Geoffrey Canada has networked to establish a common mission and vision to see through the goal of changing the ethos in Harlem New York and forming a counterspace where children will learn to navigate their social world in an environment conducive to excellence in education and in life. Success has found Canada’s mission and vision by having social and cultural capital ready for them and accessible unlike with some of their peers who are not participating in said program. The parents and community people are treated as co-laborers and not as a commodity or the problem with what has contributed to the low success rate of children from these backgrounds (Tough, 2008).

There are several forms of community organizing and one of those is the political activist approach. One cannot talk about the political activist approach to community organizing without reference to the person who had helped to define modern community organizing, Saul Alinsky. His organizing skills were focused on improving the living conditions of poor communities across the United States in places like Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. Alinsky emerged as a community organizer in the second half of the thirties and his approach is very much a product of that time. His thinking about organizing was influenced by the newly militant labor movement: he took his emphasis on democratic organizations and confrontation from the new labor organization among industrial workers, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (Horwitt, 1989).
Alinsky's approach emphasized several things. First and foremost, the organizations should emphasize democratic decision making and encourage indigenous leadership. Second, the organizations should be open to all members of the community, emphasizing inclusion over exclusion. Alinsky conceptualized that more representative the organization, the stronger the organization. This social prescription meant that many different interests should be represented in the same organization (depending on the configuration of the neighborhood) and many times that maintaining diversity meant avoiding issues where there was disagreement (Horwitt, 1989).

A third aspect of the Alinsky approach involves the organizer's relationship with the neighborhood. In order to gain insider’s identity into the neighborhood (and thus gain access and a wide audience) the organizer should work collaboratively to gather the support of the traditional community leaders and organizations in the neighborhood (Alinsky, 1972). The starting point of the community organization is an organization of already existing organizations. A fourth feature of the approach has to do with goals: the organization should be geared to meeting people's self interest however they define that interest. The goal of Alinsky was "letting the people decide no matter what they decide."

The fifth feature has to do with strategic planning. Very simply, Alinsky believed, just like Frederick Douglass, *that power concedes nothing without a fight* and that using conflict methods yields the greatest gains for the organization. The final feature of his strategy was to enter into these conflicts and implement direct action that would create victories because winning builds organization. The last two methods of Alinsky’s action
planning maintained a two-fold emphasis of his style organizing: to gain the ability to self-determine and to build stable, durable organizations (Horwitt, 1989).

Alinsky first applied his principles to his organizing in the Back of the Yards neighborhood in Chicago in the thirties and forties. Back of the Yards was a stable, white ethnic working class community next to the slaughterhouses. It was in these kinds of neighborhoods - racially homogeneous with strong ethnic, political, social organizations - that his approach was most successful (Horwitt, 1989). The Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council developed by building a broad coalition of union leaders, priests, small business men and neighborhood residents. This kind of coalition building was about to provide access and the BYNC rallied for jobs and services from the corporations, the Chicago political machine and the federal government.

There are some reservations and pitfalls in this approach, however. One has to do with its emphasis on established institutions. This emphasis on neighborhood elites proved dangerous in BYNC and in other Alinsky-style organizations as these elites came to define the goals and programs of the organization. Also, the emphasis on letting the people decide and avoiding issues that could cause disagreement proved problematic as the BYNC organization decided that it was in their self-interest to keep blacks out. The attempts to avoid issues of racism in the organization came back to haunt BYNC as blacks sought entrance into the neighborhood in the early forties (Horwitt, 1989). This seems counterintuitive because Alinsky would speak out about equality. After the fifties, a decade hostile to the political activist approach to community organizing, Alinsky experienced a fever of activity in the late 60s and 70s, as liberals and liberal leaning
foundations embraced his method of community organizing as a more reasonable alternative to the militancy and rebellion in cities (Horwitt, 1989).

Many other political activist organizations emerged in the 1960s, out of the civil rights movement and the student movement. While similar to the Alinsky model in that they emphasized democratic practices and confronting power with power as a method, they were fundamentally different from Alinsky in their goals. Whether it was within or between the community organizing of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Economic Research and Action Projects of the Students for a Democratic Society, or the Black Panther Party, these organizing attempts emphasized fundamental social change and were profoundly ambivalent about building stable organizations. In this regard, they did not last long: sometimes they dissolved on their own (the ERAP projects of SDS); other times they were infiltrated by the FBI and their leaders harassed, jailed or murder (the Black Panther Party) (Austin, 2006).

As a partial reaction to the radical community organizing, many Alinsky type organizations were replicated throughout the country with organizers trained by and funding from the Industrial Areas Foundation - a foundation financed by liberal organizations, churches and labor unions during this time (Horwitt, 1989). And at the same time other groups were using community organizing because it organically made sense for their population. Alinsky is important because of the scholarship created around his work and because he wrote his methodology down. Because traditional Alinskyism builds its power base through alliances with traditional community institutions like churches or ethnic organizations, it has been most successful in
communities where those organizations are still viable. For example, Alinskyism has flourished in many Mexican American communities in the south west where the church functions as the center of religious and ethnic life. The Montgomery Bus Boycott worked, (though not attributed to Alinsky as much as the shared method was being used at the time), again using churches and established organizations to bring about change.

As recession hit and urban problems grew in the 1970s, more and more community activists recognized the limitations of organizing in one place against issues that were less local and more national in origin. Out of this realization emerged a variety of organizations that were neighborhood focused but got their agendas and their money from their state or national affiliate. The central task of these organizations was to build power across neighborhoods and communities. ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) is perhaps the best example of this. Citizen Action is another (Delgado, 1986).

Organizations like ACORN differ from Alinskyism in that they engage in electoral politics as a way of gaining power; ACORN does not rely on support from foundations and churches but on door to door solicitation and dues paying members. ACORN has and does focus on voter registration, education, living wages, predatory lending and affordable housing, and gun control (Delgado, 1986). This is because it also is about maintenance and community development that takes time. As a third approach to community organizing ACORN is an example that merges into multiple categorizations.
The third approach to community organizing is perhaps the loosest of the three categories. Included in this category are the neighborhood associations and civic clubs that emerged in the 1950s in the new suburbs throughout the United States. These associations and clubs were designed to enhance and protect property values and to lobby local officials and business to improve services to the neighborhood. Other approaches have been emerging in the 1980s and 1990s in community organizations that have already developed a power base in a city and that use that power base to deliver housing or employment services in a nonprofit corporate form.

The neighborhood organizations that emerged out of the suburban sprawl of the 1950s were essentially associations of homeowners. They developed them as a way to collectively enforce deed restrictions in their neighborhoods. They functioned as traditional improvement associations, supplying services, lobbying city hall for street repairs, park development, schools, traffic signs etc. In some cases they were used to prevent racial integration and to prevent panic selling. These are typically not included in history of community organizing but these efforts illustrate one of the features of all the approaches to community organizing: Community organizing cuts across the political spectrum. And community organizing does not mean utopia. Especially with examples like the deed restrictions, community organizing was not just inclusive, for some groups they used it to exclude other groups.

*Interdisciplinary Studies inform Leadership, Followership, and Citizenship*

Leadership, followership, and citizenship relate to my research in how these paradigms provide the framework to design courses that cultivate “topical areas” that
make the environment (ethos) outside the classroom. The issues and conditions are juxtaposed with innovative curricular practices that blend history, men’s studies, resiliency, sociology, political activism and identity to create an academic space for college males. These disciplines influence and reframe the paradigms of leadership, followership, and citizenship. The ideas of leadership and who is a leader is embedded to be intrinsically read as male but leadership is not an innate ability.

In order to be a competent leader, a functional citizen, and an aware follower there has to be a systematic and purposeful orientation for those roles. A competent leader has to understand the history and its present impact, be resilient, and understand identity development with respect to emotional intelligence. History informs the competent leader because he learns the complexity of human encounters over time and how he can execute wisdom and not repeat the same mistakes of his predecessors. History for the competent leader, especially African American males, has to deal with the narratives of the plight of black people during the middle passage, slavery in the Western context, Jim Crow South, the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement.

Knowing the people who were participants and understanding movements and how those people navigated oppressive social spaces over hundreds of years is a key component to the triad of leadership, followership, and leadership as it relates to the human condition. What it means to note benevolent leaders and active followers of that time allows for the current black male to understand resiliency and its importance to the social survival and uplift of the African American community.
Being resilient means that a person has the capability to withstand certain amounts of stress and still be purposeful and resourceful. The type of adversity that a person of color endures at an institution of higher learning is varied. A black male at the Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) has to navigate a hostile social environment. African American males may encounter covert and overt kinds of racism and discrimination that causes stress and depression. The competent leader seeks out coping mechanisms and helps to develop strategies to garner other people of color with the ability to navigate and cope, so black students are retained and matriculate through their institution of higher education. This is why HBCU’s like the aforementioned Morehouse College are key stakeholders in this process because their leadership curricula do incorporate this important factor.

The *competent leader* also has to manage and understand theirs and others’ identity development. Daniel Goleman (1995) and his work on emotional intelligence lends itself to the parlaying of the competent leader and equipping them. At the same time actively assessing where students are developmentally, emotional intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing the emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.

The *competent leader* has emotional intelligent leadership skills. Shankman and Allen (2008) note that for the college student, consciousness of context, consciousness of self, and consciousness of others are crucial concepts to operating as a leader. This is also very important to the black male because of the crux of issues he faces navigating a PWI. Leadership is all about relationships.
Followers. Participants. Collaborators. Constituents. Facilitators. Change Agents. Leaders. All of these are dimensions and characteristics of the emotionally intelligent leader. A relational and ethical process of people coming together and attempting to accomplish positive change. Learning and understanding why effectively engaging others while being conscious of self is key to the development of competent leadership (2008).

College becomes this place and provides the ethos as a laboratory for learning the empirical aspects of leadership. Avery, Rotundo, Johnson, & McGue’s (2006) study deduced that seventy percent of leadership is learned. Consciousness of context (or ethos), self, and others are interdependent. Context includes environmental awareness and having the ability to be savvy in groups. Consciousness of self is being aware of ones’ abilities and emotions including self-perception, self-understanding, self-esteem, self-control, authenticity, flexibility, achievement, optimism, and initiative. Consciousness of others is being aware of ones own relationship with others and the role they play with respect to leadership like empathy, citizenship, inspiration, influence, coaching, change agent, conflict management, developing relationships, teamwork, and capitalizing on difference (Allen & Shankman 2008).

Consciousness of context is important to the triad relationship of leadership, followership, and citizenship because people operate within the social space of environments. The dyad relationship between leader and follower is that the followers can often determine success or failure of leadership. Leaders have to be equipped to think intentionally and critically about their environment. From understanding the core
values and mission of the group or community they represent to assessing the needs of the members.

Consciousness of self includes components like self-perception. This reflective skill means that the student is gaining confidence on how to react in professional settings and that those reactions are appropriate. Working with challenging people and finding out what recharges and energizes oneself serve as evidence and a rubric to assessing self-perception. Being aware of one’s own strengths and limitations and managing constructive feedback is also hallmarks of this kind of awareness. This includes a healthy self-esteem, managing emotions to have self-control and poise, being transparent and trustworthy, and being flexible. This is not exhaustive but at the same time this list and discussion demonstrates the complex nature of being conscious of the self.

Being conscious of others obviously includes self and environment awareness. This is the awareness that bridges the follower and leader together. Here is the garnering of citizenship. Many scholars agree that the qualities of a good citizen are socially constructed and this can be gathered from the historical development of citizenship as well. According to the Higher Education Research Institute in 1996, “To be a good citizen is to work for positive change on behalf of others and the community.” So an example of this is honoring the community you are in by participating. If your neighborhood is having a crime watch meeting, you attend. On a college campus, if one is a member of a social fraternity or the black student association, they attend meetings, pay dues, and serve on committees to help move the organization further along on its goal and mission.
Besides inspiring and influencing the localized community, coaching is a fundamental part of the fusion between leader and follower in this pursuit to be conscious of others. Coaching in this context trains and prepares while embodying the willingness to learn from others. The relationship becomes reciprocal in the most ideal situation. Mentee and mentor, master and disciple, master and protégé, etc, these dynamics of the historical human community have existed for time immemorial. However the aspect of a competent leader that is most overlooked is being a change agent that seeks out and works with others toward a new direction (Allen & Shankman, 2008).

The emotionally intelligent leader recognizes that change is inevitable and at the same time looks for opportunities for improvement and/or innovation. Changes that may benefit one person, an organization, or multiple communities is great in theory but there is a problem with challenging the process when there is more dynamics in place such as systems of inequality.

A problem with the current trend in literature is that it has been used for a long time like Leadership Challenge (Kouzes & Posner 1996). The problem with ideas like challenging the process is that it presents a linear equation for a majority population but when dealing with the complexities of that of students of color it is more like a summation or integral. When a student of color challenges a process, they are seen as a rebel rouser or a person stirring up trouble. Their claims are only taken seriously en masse.

With equations, linear or summation, either one is still mathematics. The parallelism is that hegemonic leadership and leadership operationalized by marginalized groups is still leadership but the systems and problem solving strategies are different.
However, because of the lack of scholarship to articulate these differences is merely inference and supposition and not because the literature reveals or unpacks the complexity. The complexities are that leadership arose in the West (for these marginalized groups) mostly out of adversity and conflict versus ownership and influence (like the dominant forms). For example, the tactics used in slave revolts are not the same in the American Revolution.

Conflict management/resolution is a lasting component keep to emotional leadership and completes the toolbox of the competent leader. Conflict is part of the leadership experience. Conflict can be overt and/or materialize as subversive in nature like leadership oppression. Leadership oppression is when a follower or outsider seeks to undermine the present leadership, right or wrong, in a manner that does not reflect well on the organization. Usually this is systemic of something else that going on in the ethos of the organization. Once the student can recognize the power struggles and the source of those kinds of conflicts the management of the issues can take place. By listening and being willing to do the work, the organization can move forward.

The functional citizen is the engaged and informed citizen. They are the ones who are politically engaged and understand the importance of community. They are those who do neighborhood watches to throwing block parties to raise money for a cause that the community agrees upon that is worthy. The functional citizen also has global awareness. Civic understanding is not limited to a mile by mile radius. And citizenship is heavily embedded in leadership because it is a function and extension of it. And at the same time followership as well.
An aware follower does not engage in leadership oppression. Leadership oppression is destructive and undermines the role of even having a leader. An aware follower finds means to support and invest in the person(s) at the helm because most of the time they had something to do with getting that person elected or appointed to said position. And even if this is not the case, there are usually procedures in which the role of the follower and leader are defined. Observing roles instead as viewing order as a simple hierarchal setting allows for there to be growth and development for all vested persons.

**Countering the Hegemonic Narrative**

Leadership has to be different in presentation scholarly for black males because their experiences are multilayered and complex. And at the same time, the development of African American leadership has been shaped and contoured differently than mainstream literature suggests. Roberts & Smith (1999) investigated the black leadership narrative. From social theory and research on black leadership to the literature and transformation of black leadership through a historical analysis, Roberts & Smith sought to fill the gaps in the literature around leadership and representation of black leadership. The authors absolved that there is scholarly neglect on the assessing of black leadership.

An example of developing a different leadership structure from a dominant paradigm is what Willa B. Player did in her tenure at Bennett College. Player outlined her philosophy of leadership for the Women’s HBCU and enacted it (Brown 1998). In measuring the quality of leadership, she had six core values that consisted of (1) sacrifice and service; (2) true purpose; (3) excellence; (4) courage; (5) imagination and innovation;
and (6) exo-centered rather than ego-centered motivation and methods (1998). Brown then goes on to demonstrate how Player measured the effectiveness. The point is that the values and ethics are not that different from the majorative population, but how they are used and framed are.

The effectiveness of the leadership is composed of the subsequent values: (1) the commitment to a functional, reality based education; (meaning preparing students for the job market and career planning); (2) commitment to empowering students (this is by addressing the needs of the whole person, academically, socially, spiritually and metaphysically); (3) a commitment to collective action (community service and experience) (Brown, 1998). The chasm difference is that the community does look to a person to embody the ideas of the community to help move everyone forward. The hegemonic form of leadership is more isolationist in nature.

Walter & Smith suggest that there is a seamlessness between leadership, followership, and citizenship and the black experience in the context of leadership has to be unpacked because of its complexity. Mainstream literature exhausts itself in trying to bring the three paradigms together. This reveals a large gap in experiences on the same notion. The majoritarian or hegemonic perspective on leadership does not speak to the complexities of leadership in marginalized groups. This is something that each HBCU most go through and try to balance what they will choose of the dominant literature and how to marry that to another set of values.

Walters & Smith (1999) further say that scholars of the black experience have not done the work to fill that void either. This means that present leadership classes are
designed and taught within that dominant framework. The intersectionality of sex, race, age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, education and occupation are all elemental factors to take into consideration. Yet, the current framework is lacking those considerations from a higher education approach even though it is noted that these considerations are imperative. Another important difference to note is that with respect to leadership in the black community is that lower class (economically) black people engage in aspects of leadership more keenly and purposely than their white counterparts. This is important to note and is exemplified in the community organizer and the aspect and place of elders in the black community. Where is this place of elders in the white community and how are they honored?

*The Challenges of the Lack of Innovation in the Classroom and How to Resolve Them*

The lack of diversity and variation in the leadership courses lends itself to why there are not many students of color who take those courses. They do not think that it is a place for them because their ontologies and cultural epistemologies are not honored in that space that is supposed to be liberating. How can the excellence procured at HBCU’s and Urban Leagues etc. make its way to the collegiate majority academic space? It has to be created. It is the amalgamations of the current literature and bringing in the historical narratives and examples of the legacy of leadership in multiple marginalized groups and making those examples applicable and meaningful.

Studying slave narratives like that of Fredrick Douglass or Harriet Jacobs establishes a notion of agency. Having a student understand the steps it took mentally to be free physically is a process that one is hard pressed to understand without the power of
using narratives. Emotional intelligence is crucial to conceptualizing and implementing quality leadership but the idea of agency is left out because it is an unspoken expectation of the snapshot collegiate attendee. White privilege plays a part in the challenges of understanding how agency is stifled in black communities. This is because privilege is a kind of (human) capital that is virtually intangible unless defined.

Black students, especially black males have to be poised and disciplined in a different manner than their white counterparts because of the social debris. They encounter racism on a daily basis, seen or unseen and navigating that alone means that their ability to be tapped for opportunities and experiences will vary based on their means to access whiteness and understand that. Students of color who are not in mainstream collegiate groups like student government are mostly overlooked for positions like students members on the board of trustees for universities and will rarely be invited for fireside chats and events to schmooze with their university president. This is reserved for the student leader. But what does the student leader look like?

Regardless of who is put in a pamphlet, the phenotype of the majority organizations at PWIs are usually white students. This sets up a social cycle such that students of color do not trust or believe that these kinds of organization are for them. There is a great social division among student leadership and it seems that few colleges have the audacity or interest in addressing the issues that have set up for this social reproduction to take place. Developing a leadership class that fosters purposeful navigation of such social constructs would support self agency and garner students with
the tools to be resilient and make the intellectual tools of leadership available more assessable and pragmatic to that of African American male students.

In *The Long Walk* the life of a university president to the HBCU women’s college, Bennett College, the pragmatic yet socially embraced leadership set up the framework in two sets; quality of leadership and the effectiveness. These notions offer a transformative framework as discussed.

*Examples in Community Organizing*

One example of community organizing within the African American community set in the historical context is the Black Panther Party. The Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCDO) was established by Stokely Carmichael in Alabama in 1964. This organization later changed its name to the Black Panther Party. This is after Stokely’s involvement with Freedom Riders and the Freedom Summer of 1963. This was the beginning of the black power movement (Joseph, 2006).

In October 1966 Bobby Seale and Huey Newton formed the Black Panther Party (BPP) in Oakland, California. They named the new organization after the emblem adopted by the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in Alabama. The Black Panthers were initially formed to protect local communities from police brutality and racism. The group also ran medical clinics and provided free food to school children. Within a couple of years the Black Panthers in Oakland were feeding over 10,000 children every day before they went to school (Joseph, 2006).

Prominent members of the Black Panthers included Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, Fred Hampton, Fredrika Newton, Eldridge Cleaver, Kathleen Cleaver, David Hilliard,
Angela Davis, Bobby Hutton and Elaine Brown. And of course there are many leaders who were in cities all over the country.

The BPP was marked with a great amount of tragedy due to many of its leaders and outreach persons being murdered. In November 1968 Fred Hampton founded the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party. He immediately established a community service program. This included the provision of free breakfasts for schoolchildren and a medical clinic that did not charge patients for treatment. Hampton also taught political education classes and instigated a community control of police project. One of Hampton's greatest achievements was to persuade Chicago's most powerful street gangs to stop fighting against each other. In May 1969 Hampton held a press conference where he announced a nonaggression pact between the gangs and the formation of what he called a "rainbow coalition" (a multiracial alliance of black, Puerto Rican, and poor youths) (Joseph, 2006).

The leaders of the Black Panthers were influenced by the ideas expressed by Malcolm X in the most militant times of his life and at the end when he was most collaborative. The Panthers therefore argued for international working class unity and supported joint action with white revolutionary groups. The Black Panthers eventually developed into a Marxist revolutionary group (Peniel, 2006). The activities of the Black Panthers came to the attention of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI. Hoover described the Panthers as "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country" and in November 1968 ordered the FBI to employ strategies to cripple the BPP and especially target specific leaders. In 1968 Bobby Seale was charged with inciting riots during the
Democratic Party National Convention. When Seale repeatedly interrupted court proceedings the judge ordered him to be bound and gagged. Seale was found guilty and sentenced to four years in prison for 16 counts of contempt of court. This is just one of the examples of how the tactics of the BPP created opportunities for the FBI and other branches of the government to counter their efforts (Austin, 2006).

In the early hours of the 4th December, 1969, the Panther headquarters in Chicago was raided by the police. The police later claimed that the Panthers opened fire and a shoot-out took place. During the next ten minutes Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were killed. Witnesses claimed that Hampton was wounded in the shoulder and then executed by a shot to the head. The panthers left alive were arrested and charged with attempting to murder the police. Afterwards, ballistic evidence revealed that only one bullet had been fired by the Panthers whereas nearly a hundred came from police guns.

After being released from prison, both Bobby Seale and Huey Newton renounced political violence. Over a six year period, twenty-four Black Panthers had been killed in gun fights with the police. Another member, George Jackson, was assassinated while in San Quentin prison in August, 1971 (Joseph, 2007). The Black Panthers now concentrated on socialist community programs including free breakfasts for children, free medical clinics and helping the homeless. Many of these programs would later be replicated by the federal government, especially the free lunch program.

In 1973 Bobby Seale ran for mayor of Oakland and came in second out of nine candidates with 43,710 votes (40 per cent of votes cast). The following year Elaine Brown was elected party chief and helped to turn the party into a supporter of women's
rights (Brown, 1992). Under her leadership the party successfully supported Lionel Wilson in his campaign to become the first black mayor of Oakland (Joseph, 2007). This demonstrated that the BPP was not a monolithically focused group and that it was as complex as its participants and members. The fact that many if its leaders who survived that era would go on to contribute at mean levels of political and social leadership and also contribute to scholarship by writing books transcends the notion of leadership and followership as a simple dyad and reveals the dynamic of community organizing as being the better method of producing this kind of multi-layered leader or contributor to the larger society.

However even with all its positive contributions, there were some negative aspects of the BPP and it is through these failures that there are other lessons learned. History also teaches society what roads to not venture down again.

*The Negative Aspects of the BPP Contributions, Leadership Corruption:*

COINTELPRO eventually intimidated and corrupted all three of the BPP’s top leaders: Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver. (COINTELPRO is an acronym for a series of FBI counterintelligence programs designed to neutralize political dissidents.) Although covert operations have been employed throughout FBI history, the formal COINTELPRO's of 1956-1971 were broadly targeted against radical political organizations (Donner, 1990). In the early 1950s, the Communist Party was illegal in the United States. The Senate and House of Representatives each set up investigating committees to prosecute “communists” and publicly expose them. (The House
Committee on Un-American Activities and the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, led by Senator Joseph McCarthy).

When a series of Supreme Court rulings in 1956 and 1957 challenged these committees and questioned the constitutionality of Smith Act prosecutions and Subversive Activities Control Board hearings, the FBI's response was COINTELPRO, a program designed to "neutralize" those who could no longer be prosecuted. Over the years, similar programs were created to neutralize civil rights, anti-war, and many other groups, many of which were said to be "communist front organizations"(Stone, 2004). Each, in their own way, caved in to the pressures and began acting in a manner that was deliberately designed to destroy the BPP, and to disillusion not only Party members but black people in America for subsequent years to come. COINTELPRO's methods to neutralize groups like the BPP so that black people in America would be so disillusioned and disenchanted that they would stop believing in this one black leader who they would trust or follow. Any black leader or organization which advocated pragmatic solutions to Black oppression would not be taken as serious as before (O'Reilly, 1989).

Early successes made some Panthers feel that they were the only possessors of absolute truths. Some became arrogant and dogmatic in their dealings with Party members, other organizations, and even the community. This turned people off. The Black Liberation, Native American, Puerto Rican, Asian, Chicano, Anti-War, White Revolutionary, and Woman's Liberation, Movements were all occurring more or less simultaneously during this era. This meant that people could be committed to more than
one cause especially if the group they were invested in began to not be in their best interest.

_Lumpen Tendencies and Poor Use of Rhetoric:_

Although the BPP was adept at the art of propaganda and made very good use of its own and the establishment's media, still many Panthers fell into the habit of making boisterous claims in the public media that would be misconstrued or could not be followed through on.

It can be safely said that the largest segment of the New York City BPP membership (and probably nationwide) were workers who held everyday jobs. Other segments of the membership were semi-proletariat, students, youths, and lumpen-proletariat (from the sociological perspective in Marxist analysis, this would be people who are marginalized by society, particularly criminals, homeless people, and the long-term unemployed).

The _lumpen tendencies_ within some members were what the mass media’s depiction (and some party members) kept showing the public. Lumpen tendencies with this particular population were associated with lack of discipline, liberal use of alcohol, marijuana, and curse words loose sexual morals, a criminal mentality, and rash actions. These tendencies in some Party members provided the media and the government with better opportunities than they would otherwise have had to play up this aspect, and to slander the Party, which diverted public attention from much of the positive work done by the BPP (Joseph, 2007).

*Failure to Organize Economic Foundations in Community:*
The BPP posited socialist politics. They were anti-capitalist and this skewed their concept of building economic foundations in the community when it came to practicality. They often gave the impression that to engage in any business enterprise was to engage in capitalism and they too frequently looked with judgment upon the small business people in the community.

As a result the BPP built few businesses that generated income other than the Black Panther newspaper, or that could provide self-employment to its membership and to people in the community it was claiming to serve. The BPP failed to encourage the black community to set up its own businesses as a means of building an independent economic foundation which could help break "outsiders" control of the black community's economics, and move it toward economic self-reliance. This directly went against their tenants but at the same time resulted in the contribution of economic depression within urban and black communities (Joseph, 2006). For African American males, community organizing is the kind of model that as a method works the best. 

Followership, Leadership, Citizenship, and/or Community Organizing all have the component of changing or reinforcing something. Citizenship, though may defined as having the duties, rights, and privileges of being a citizen of a country, reinforces the status quo of the state. Leadership imparts skills and is useful but the implementation of these highly differentiated skill sets varies. Followership is in the spirit of collaboration and working towards the same goal(s) but has to have framing to be meaningful. In the work that I intend to do, it is community organizing that makes the most sense. Its intersectionality brings together the components of these three paradigms and creates a
space that is meaningful and useful to the training and preparing of African American males to be leaders in any kind of community. And at the same time being models of excellence for black males who are marginalized and not afforded the opportunity to access higher education and positions of political and/or economic leadership.

*Men’s Studies as a Tool to Assess Challenges*

Another challenge that is faced is the lack of doing a proper gender analysis that incorporates race so that there is an understanding of the black male and where he is developmentally for sake of the persons designing the courses to indoctrinate leadership. Men’s studies inform the critical analysis lacking in design of leadership courses.

Educators cannot examine the current trends in higher education associated with performing gender until unpacking the complication of gender performance. Masculinity as a gender performance has posed its problems for men as femininity has for women. Adopting the hegemonic or dominant model of masculinity that is suppose to capsule all men limits the choice and means of male performance in society. Limiting the ability to perform creates a myth that most boys/men cannot live up to or live down. There are host of myths of boyhood that perpetuate lies into the adulthood of men. Some of these are how boys relate, their friendships, their need for love and how they love, and what is needed from their parents and others.

As boys grow into men, American culture shapes male behavior so that they wear a cultural posing “mask”. This mask is the metaphoric projection of masculinity. This is not to say that some men do not express hegemonic masculinity as part of inherently who they are at the core of their personhood. However, men at the core of their humanity are
stifled when they cannot express love to one another because of being labeled or othered from their manhood. Dr. Pollack goes to say in *Real Boys* that:

“Our culture underestimates boys’ friendships primarily because we tend to underestimate all the emotional needs and abilities of our boys. As we’ve already discussed, even very young boys are shamed for the showing of any signs of neediness, dependence, sadness, or vulnerability. According to the old “Boy Code”, we expect our boys to be little men: tough, independent, autonomous creatures. We restrict how much affection they show one another. Society teaches us that boys-and men—are less in need of friends, close personal bonds, or connections. Furthermore, society often views open displays of empathy and affection from boys as somehow inappropriate.”

Dr. Pollack refers to this perpetual hesitation of boys and men as *gender straitjacketing*. The fact that early on in social development boys are taught to limit the ways they seek out and express friendship hinders the way that they can express their maleness. They are discouraged from talking about anything too serious because this would translate into them being weak, needy and vulnerable (Pollack, 1998). If men were to be seen as this they would be labeled less than a man, thusly being emasculated. In the same vein with respect to women, *gender straitjacketing* boxes them in as being no more than weak and vulnerable and if to perform other than that they would be viewed as trying to take on male roles. Talking about gender as performance is one of the methods of taking into account the whole person. It is a challenge that must be met with
consistent consideration of what African American males consistently contend with in their everyday life.

“Indeed it is this very fear-the fear of being labeled a fairy, a wuss, or a fag, of being perceived as feminine or homosexual- that often prevents boys from feeling comfortable engaging in serious emotion talks with each other. It too often inhibits boys from ever saying they care for each other. It often prevents them from expressing physical affection for other boys. It allows adults to put a low premium on the kind of tender, loving friendships among boys that, with few exceptions, we encourage among girls” (Pollack, 185, 1998).

This prevents young men, especially black males, from developing their emotional intelligence because there is a stigma against men having, expressing, or assessing emotions and although scholars agree that the most capable leader takes these things into account. Gender performance and doing gender has had an unbalanced approach in feminist studies. Critiquing men and exposing the injustices perpetuated and developed by men is not unfounded. However, this does not mean that men are not hurt by this. Adhering to the definitions of gender performance in what it means to be a man is limiting and damaging. The unwritten codes of performing gender are unrealistic for most men. American society has sewn the myths of masculinities into its own social fabric that it cannot see where it has gone wrong. This is a challenge when teaching leadership modeling.

Women in higher education face many real hardships that are linked to gender inequity. However women are just as guilty to holding men to these myths and limiting
the ways that boys and men can do gender. Real social change and a shift in the way that people think about gender have to deal with individual ownership and a shift in what society values. Colleges and universities champion themselves as a marketplace for ideas yet are just as responsible for the reproduction of social norms that damage the growth and development of black males.

Black male identity formation and the study there of is pertinent to creating a leadership experience that is meaningful and assessable to the student.

Managing Apathy

One of the most ignored issues with empowering college students to be active and productive members of society is apathy. The purpose for investing in the triad of leadership, followership and citizenship is to create civic engagement and to counter apathy. Studies examining the political culture in the United States divulge that most people are not engaged politically. Political knowledge seems to not be valued nor the norm on a college campus. In the piece by sociologist Nina Eliasoph, Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life, she has some insiders’ knowledge from her research that helps to give understanding to the climate of apathy.

She notes that no matter the function and focus of a group to be civically engaged, the organization did not foster a culture of a space where debate and discussion on political issues would be fostered (1998). And because of work like hers and a national shift in colleges seeing the necessity to create civically minded individuals and communities, such that they hold themselves accountable by participating in American Democracy Project (co-sponsored by The New York Times and the American
Association of State Colleges and Universities) and 950 college and universities have signed the Campus Compact pledge to “educate citizens.”

Promoting civic engagement serves two important purposes. First, active participation by citizens enhances the quality of democratic governance and promotes better policymaking by elected officials. Second, a democratic government derives its legitimacy from the participation of the people as whole in their own governance. There are thoughts that service learning can help impact students to become more civically minded. Service learning asks students to translate theory into practice by applying academic skills to address a need identified by the community. Counter to volunteerism, service learning requires participants to engage in critical reflection about the ways in which academic learning intersects with real world issues and social injustices. It also requires intentional reciprocity between those serving and those being served—in other words, the students are doing work with, not for, the community (Eliasoph, 1998).

But then there is a problem with service learning and how it has been framed as active civic engagement. At PWI’s it reinforces racism and also sets up a resistance of black students who do not want to participate. Green (2003) wrote a piece on service learning that revealed just this notion. She says:

“If service-learning takes place, as it often does, when mostly white students at predominantly white institutions serve mostly poor people of color in urban settings, then teachers of service-learning need to reflect on how whiteness and class privilege function in the service-learning paradigm. By telling more explicit stories about race and class, it is possible to open a door for more complex
theorizing about the relationship between those who serve and those who are served.”

Because most of the time contextualizing and orienting students engaged in service learning is not done in this manner, most of the white students who participate walk away with this belief that the community they just served are all the same. But if done correctly as a partnership and creating a space for black students to actively participate and not feel demonized or tokenized, there is a transformation that can take place.

This kind of partnership establishes ownership and helps a student and the communities widen their own definition and sense of community. Another problem with actually motivating students is not equipping them with the correct balanced knowledge or the knowledge of how to obtain it. Civic responsibility requires action, but only well-informed action. The uninformed citizen turns into a person who puts energy into the wrong social vehicles that do not bring about change. Without mastery over the substance of policy, people tend either to remain inactive, or to take policy positions to express their self images and emotional orientations. For the classroom, in order for responsible citizenship to be effectively transmitted, intellectual curiosity must be invested in as well as pragmatic skills given as a means of reproduction and empowerment (Colby, Et. al., 2003).

**Conclusion**

In cultivating excellence in African American males, a leadership class is an excellent medium because leadership can be learned. bell hooks her in her book, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* reminds educators of the reason for higher
education. She notes that education is supposed to be a liberatory practice (2003). The lexicon of leadership must be broad and far reaching so that it enhances every group, not just the majority group. Language and the institution that holds its boundaries is a powerful mechanism. If used to truly provide access and to equip marginalized students like black males with a skill set that guides them in being functional citizens, competent leaders, and aware followers; then this pursuit would be radical justice and the essence of higher education. Examining leadership and using these methods to create a retention model would make higher education a space where black males thrive and surmount the history of disengagement based on the climates on university and college campuses across the country.

**Creativity and Belonging: Moving Towards and Innovation**

Being at a Predominately White Institution (PWI) is difficult when you are non-white and you are trying to develop a sense of belonging. From navigating microaggressive racism to becoming equipped with coping mechanisms, a black male on a college campus is in a constant struggle of what it means to belong whether he is cognizant of it or not. And just like many students who are beginning their journey through college as a rite of passage, it is all about transition. Schlossberg (1997) explains the transition process as “moving in, moving through, and moving out.

In her book, *Belonging: a Culture of Place*, bell hooks discusses the methods of surviving racism and disrupting its assertions that came about via the Harlem Renaissance. One of the aspects of what hooks was getting at is that crux of what the Renaissance did was cultural production. Cultural production can be a practice of
liberation (hooks, 2009). Cultural production can link students of color to the rich past that they come from historically in order to better understand who they are. This history can be at odds with a university’s institutional history. History informs the present and thusly how universities have formed over time has a connected framework to the ethos and ecosystems that sustain campuses as well as cultivate students’ excellence or even their detriment.

Creating a web of praxis that uses theory to promote excellence in students who start with different deficits based on historical inequality could be a way to help them to achieve at a different level that has not happened before. When there is still a chasm with the graduation rates of black males and all other monitored groups, there is something that has to be a strategy that is rooted in the classroom but takes into account from a pedagogical perspective the non-cognitive factors. A class with this structure goes beyond the classroom and transcends the traditional syllabus.

There are a few people thinking about creativity in the classroom, and one of those people is British born Ken Robinson. He posits that schooling and education should foster students to become their most creative and innovative selves. Ken Robinson maps for the world that in a CNN article he wrote in November 2009 that “school stifles creativity.”

“The tragedy is that meeting the many social, economic, spiritual and environmental challenges we now face depends absolutely on the very capacities of insight, creativity and innovation that these systems are systematically suppressing in yet another generation of young people.
Education is about developing human beings, and human development is not mechanical or linear. It is organic and dynamic. Like all living forms, we flourish in certain conditions and shrivel in others. Great teachers, great parents and great leaders understand those conditions intuitively; poor ones don’t. The answer is not to standardize education, but to personalize and customize it to the needs of each child and community. There is no alternative. There never was (Robinson, 2009,2).

To welcome critical thinking and learning in a way that is informed in the past but comes up with something new, that is innovation, and so is a class that looks at tradition and theory in a new way that is helpful and useful in practice. Students do not have to disregard all that they know and have experienced. In fact those experiences and ideas are helpful in driving class discussion and moving and building popular culture as a field as well. Learning becomes organic and dynamic in a setting like this particular course. Even when taught twice there are few similarities besides some of the readings and themes from their papers because of their lived experiences.

**Narrative**

Angela Davis said in a lecture at Ohio State, “there needs to be a decommodification of education.” She was talking about access and resources and how they were only limited and transmitted to a few. Popular culture is a theoretical framework that aids in understanding race and gender in education because as a framework it is the most current and fluid. It allows for there to be flexibility and the
most interdisciplinary juxtapositions that creates theory and praxis space that invokes conversations to be had on issues that are silenced in the academy and they everyday social world of people.

In the following there will be discussed how popular culture can provide alternative pedagogical frameworks that can engage learners by using their already refined forms of critical thinking in everyday life. This is not advocating for the greater use of mass-media (though this is not not criticizing those efforts); rather, this is an argument for incorporating the particular, highly developed, deeply familiar modes of interaction in popular culture into pedagogical practice. In particular, there will be an examination of the usefulness of the “cool pose” or “swagger” for engaging African American male students in critical self-reflection of their citizenship and subjectivity in the university.

This work will focus on defining popular culture; identify and engage scholars who use popular culture as theory; define and address the popular culture concept of coolness; and further that concept by using literature as a means to understand coolness historically and as a concept that has been part of the academe but positioned as something else known as masking.

**Defining Popular Culture as a Theoretical Framework**

Popular culture as a scholarly discipline is an immerging field even though there are multiple perspectives and its history can be traced back hundreds of years, it is just the past thirty years being used as a theoretical framework. Popular culture is good to think with and against as a knowledge tool. In order to define popular culture, first
culture has to be defined. John Storey quotes Raymond Williams’s very broad definition, “a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development.” And he begins to narrow the scope by saying it is “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or group.” And his third position suggests that culture could be “the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity” (Story, 1998). The dictionary defines culture as, “the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations b: the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group” (Webster, 2006). Culture continues to have contested meanings depending on the scholar and epistemology.

John Story posits that popular culture has six perspectives of definitions. The first perspective of understanding popular culture, according to Story, is widely understood as what is well liked by many people. A way to examine this particular definition would be to look at the sale of books, records (iTunes downloads), concert goers, television show viewers, sporting events and (cultural) festivals (Story, 1998). This, commodified view of popular culture is limiting, as Angela Davis points out. It fails to account for who has access to the marketplace, and it doesn’t account for less visible markets. A second definition of popular culture is to look at the left over social fabric that does not meet the rubric of “high culture.” In other words, this definition measures popular culture by quality. Of course, throughout history, the same artistic productions have been assessed as high or low. Pierre Bourdieu posits that cultural distinctions are used to support class differences. High culture is argued to be the result of an individual act of innovation and
creation whereas popular culture is argued to be mass-produced commercial culture. However these definitions are not fixed. They are engaged in a dialectic because of the fluidity of For example, William Shakespeare and his body of work is considered high culture, however, in the nineteenth century Shakespeare and his work was considered common and part of the popular theater (Story, 1998).

Story’s fourth framing of popular culture is the manner in which it is defined as “mass culture.” There is tension between the notions that popular culture is consumed as a passive and automatic social process. A fourth definition of culture is to say that culture immerses from the people. Another way to say this is to refer to popular culture as folk culture. This definition usually is viewed with a level of authenticity. In other words, things regarded as folk culture are expected to be produced and consumed by local audiences with a local aesthetic. Story notes that this definition is problematic because how does any agent define or include what is really of the people versus dominance and power of how other social forces shape and define culture. Folk cultures are rarely if ever isolated and instead are part of larger cultural networks.

A fifth definition of culture with the influence of Antonio Gramsci’s work, states that popular culture is a politicized space where there is tension between the subordinate groups in society and the dominant groups in society. It is the exchange between the two that produces popular culture in a created space. This exchange can produce new, intermingled forms or cultural hybridites. There is a creation of a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. In The Location of CultureHomiBhabha points out the reproduction of binaries and that approaching culture as high and low etc.
diminishes the lives of people and creates a system of power (Bhabha, 1994). By complicating culture to not be a binary there is displacement of the historical precedent and a marriage to the new space. *American Idol* is an example of karaoke singers who get a national stage and then a record deal. No one refers to *American Idol* winners who are monetarily successful (Fantasia, Jennifer Hudson, and Carrie Underwood) as glorified karaoke singers because of their mass appeal and ability to generate revenue. *American Idol* is for now very much part of popular culture.

Finally, the sixth proposed definition involves the paradigm of postmodernism. Here there is no recognition of high or low (popular) culture but instead, culture becomes the social site where the construction of everyday life is practices and can be examined (Story, 1998). Story points out that as we attempt to define culture, there is the creation of “othering” or by framing a definition there is an immergence of “the other.” There is no correct way to approaching the definition as much as there are different intellectual pathways that frame group ontologisms. How people make meaning of the world is seen through multiple social lenses. Popular culture is one of the social lenses that allow the familiar to get complicated. Complicating the everyday life brings to the surface the critical issues that people often ignore; for example, gender as performance that often get ignored and thus not unpacked.

Socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought is a consistent base of the definitions of popular culture; as part of this process, images are mediated through cultural signs. Consumerism has changed over time because technology has allowed for mass consumption to be
entertaining on phones from iPods to televisions and Amazon.com. Consumption is one method of transference of popular culture because it is that process that allows for the complexity of a person’s identity due to how many social forces are at work and access to how a person is shaped and how they shape popular culture. However, consumption alone is insufficient to account for cultural practices, which also always involve production.

For example, *Hip Hop* as a musical genre is an example of popular culture. A consistent theme in mass consumed hip hop is that success is wrapped up in materialism. This mirrors capitalism but the method is skewed. The consumers of hip hop are eighty-five percent white males 18-35. The persons controlling the music industry for the most part are white male CEO’s. The transmitters or performers are mostly African American males. Hip hop is a popular culture vehicle that only reveals a narrow representation and demonstration of the black experience and with respect to men, who perform hip hop, limits the manner in which their gender is viewed by society. This is why it is important to engage with the scholars whose work speaks to these specific situations.

**Contributors to Popular Culture Theory**

bell hooks’ *Teaching to Transgress: A Practice of Freedom*, introduces the notion of radical pedagogy (1994) as a way to approach the classroom. The paradigms that she presents are revolutionary in that it is countercultural to the present state of curriculum and classroom dynamic. She says, “There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources”(1994). This is countercultural because in higher education, professors are
viewed as the gatekeepers of knowledge and not the facilitators. The knowledge that students already maintain, especially the managers and practitioners of popular culture are not relevant in the contemporary classroom. The classroom must be a space where everyone is acknowledged and the street culture or popular culture that students bring to the classroom is valuable because their knowledge can be used to illustrate complex concepts.

Students have to commit and be invested in the classroom, not just the professor. In the current culture of classrooms it is common to see students on Facebook on their phones and on their laptops; they are disconnected from the process. “To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning is a process that comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (1994). It is here that hooks outlines a teaching ethic and demonstrates that pedagogy can be engaging. One of the methods to be successful at this is to transcend the classroom dynamic by engaging the students where they are, and that includes using the culture of their everyday life to make curriculum and coursework interesting to them. In other words, to pull the curtain back on the Wizard of Oz and demonstrate that the mystery is whatever the academe wants it to be; but at the same time the students can access the
understanding that is necessary to acquire the information being transmitted in the classroom. She does not suggest that this is an easy endeavor.

hooks notes that this progressive and holistic approach to the educational experience is more demanding than not only the traditional classroom, but also the critical and feminist pedagogy. Engaged pedagogy is more demanding but students leave that experience equipped with the kind of learning that transcends the institution or the classroom. There is mistrust at the onset of the classroom experience because students have a level of expectation that is not even considered. hooks suggests that this expectation is to be viewed as a whole person (1994). She further posits that only classes like Women’s Studies were more conscious of creating a space where the teacher and student recognized a connection between ideas learned during a course and the connection. This is not to say that progressives have the process of learning right, this is why she urges the learner and the teacher to embrace change.

It is well known that some professors use the same notes on the same class for their entire tenure as professors. Teachers/professors may also practice the teaching model that they have been exposed to and not explore any other methods. Hooks also notes the hesitation of approaching change and acting on it is a difficult space to negotiate. However, the “safe place” classroom usually errs on the professor being comfortable in lecturing and students staying in their “place” (1994). The space that needs to be created in the classroom that cultivates excellence and at the same time acknowledges multiculturalism and inclusivity is to acknowledge community. Community building is a method that is not commonly used in a classroom. The idea of
using groups and teams to work on projects does not necessarily create relationships. This is a dynamic that must first be modeled by the professor/instructor with the entire class. Hooks urges her readers that this can be accomplished, especially in the book that would follow *Transgress, Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. “That union of theory and praxis was a dynamic example for teachers seeking practical wisdom” (2003). In this text, hooks examines how to teach to transgress and cultivate communities that would lead to the classroom leaving the traditional setting.

“Progressive education, education as the practice of freedom, enables us to confront feelings of loss and restore our sense of connection. It teaches us how to create community” (2003). hooks takes her reader to the task. Here hooks agrees with Parker Palmer that enlightened teaching stimulates teaching and creates a space for community to be cultivated. The classroom that cultivates community is a place where thinkers are born. The knowledge that is powerful liberates minds instead of indoctrinating the minds of students. The notions of refereed canons of knowledge must also be challenged in order for there to be a kind of liberation. hooks entertains Gayatri Spivak who writes, “There can be no general theory of canons. Canons are the condition of institutions and the effect of institutions. Canons secure institutions as institutions secure canons…” (2003). This notion pushes the reader to be critically aware of the construction and transmission of knowledge and how ranking knowledge thusly means that there is knowledge that is given little value.

One of the problems with higher education that hooks and others have noted is the commodification of education. How the education system has turned into a “banking
system.” The classroom is managed as the best vehicle to learn knowledge and skills, but as she argues, it should be a place that teaches the skill sets to perform and think outside the metaphysical confines of the physical classroom. The classroom is just the starting point. Other theorists like Parker Palmer agree. Parker Palmer is in the same academic camp as hooks and others by seeing education as a liberation experience and that it is important for the advancement of those committed to progressive education. He has produced scholarship that gives process to hooks’ position of teaching. He also posits the importance of student learning and that creating a series of methods that cater to this end would produce a better system of education. Teaching is not this practice of transmitting knowledge, it is about creating space to share and create knowledge.

Parker Palmer states in his book *Courage to Teach*:

“My focus on the teacher may seem passé to people who believe that education will never be reformed until we stop worrying about teaching and focus on learning instead. … I have no question that students who learn, not professors who perform, is what teaching is all about: students who learn are the finest fruit of teachers who teach. . . . I am also clear that in lecture halls, seminar rooms, field settings, labs, and even electronic classrooms—the places where most people receive most of their formal education—teachers possess the power to create conditions that can help students learn a great deal—or keep them from learning much at all. Teaching is the intentional act of creating those conditions, and good teaching requires that we understand the inner sources of both the intent and the act” (7,1999).
Teaching as a practice must be assessed and reassessed and students have to be the center of that or the things that help build a classroom become meaningless according to Parker Palmer.

“To teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced. //

The hallmark of the community of truth is not psychological intimacy or political civility or pragmatic accountability, though it does not exclude these virtues. This model of community reaches deeper, into ontology and epistemology—into assumptions about the nature of reality and how we know it—on which all education is built. The hallmark of the community of truth is in its claim that reality is a web of communal relationships, and we can know reality only by being in community with it” (95, 1999).

Teaching and learning, furthermore, is about establishing community. In a community there can be the honest transmission of investigating knowledge and questioning it as well. Students are more invested if their role is more clearly defined and if they are treated not as hostages of compulsory education but as participants in learning to be contributing citizens. This kind of citizenship that can lead to higher education becomes something offered to everyone and not only offered to a minority of people who have the means to pay for it and/or the knowledge of how to gain access to higher education.

Parker Palmer also offers that building community is an act of resistance. This act of resistance is part of progressive education. This creates an environment that is conducive for all kinds of learners and students to be included in the process of learning.
“At its best, the community of truth advances our knowledge through conflict, not competition. Competition is a secretive, zero-sum game played by individuals for private gain; conflict is open and sometimes raucous but always communal, a public encounter in which it is possible for everyone to win by learning and growing (103, 1999). The social Darwinism of compulsory education and higher education affects those who come with the least than those who already know how to compete. Survival means that a student and a teacher must perform and this performance is conformity.

Parker Palmer reminds educators that teaching is more than just methods and grading. This counter cultural notion encourages the development of leadership and service skills, rather than methods and techniques. It is more than preparing students for testing. In fact when not considering the whole student, teaching as a profession is reduced. Parker says this about just that point;

“Our tendency to reduce teaching to questions of technique is one reason we lack a collegial conversation of much duration or depth. Though technique-talk promises the "practical" solutions that we think we want and need, the conversation is stunted when technique is the only topic: the human issues in teaching get ignored, so the human beings who teach feel ignored as well. When teaching is reduced to technique, we shrink teachers as well as their craft--and people do not willingly return to a conversation that diminishes them” (145, 1999).

Palmer demonstrates the interconnectedness of teaching and learning. If the teacher is not invested in the student as a whole, the process of learning and the transmission of
teaching are not authentic and it is likely that the student is aware of this, even though they may not be equipped to speak on it. Instead the student may not pay attention in class or their behavior is not the kind that is neither receptive to learning nor respectful. This creates a space to challenge domination and resist conformity in education.

Educators must pursue a method that the students can identify with and the knowledge that students come in with is informed by popular culture.

Another scholar whose work contributes to the foundational discussion of teaching and praxis and creating a space to understand race and gender as a contested space in regarding access is Henry Giroux. Henry Giroux, one of today's leading critical pedagogy scholars. Critical pedagogy is a teaching approach that attempts to help students question, conceptualize and challenge domination, and the ontologies and paradigms that dominate. Cultural studies is intellectually connected to popular culture studies. Giroux’s work informs many of the theorists and practitioners who engage the notion that popular culture is a critical lens that allows for there to be analysis of how schools are agents of socialization. The social reality is that students who attend schools bring with them a knowledge already, and this knowledge outside of their family unit, is influenced by popular culture transmitted by media but also heavily transmitted among each other.

"My work has always been informed by the notion that it is imperative to make hope practical and despair unconvincing. My focus is primarily on schools and the roles they play in promoting both success and failure among different classes and groups of students. I am particularly interested in the way in which schools
mediate--through both the overt and hidden curricula--those messages and values that serve to privilege some groups at the expense of others. By viewing schools as political and cultural sites as well as instructional institutions, I have tried in my writings to provide educators with the categories and forms of analyses that will help them to become more critical in their pedagogies and more visionary in their purposes. Schools are immensely important sites for constituting subjectivities, and I have and will continue to argue that we need to make them into models of critical learning, civic courage, and active citizenship” (Giroux, narrative).

Compulsory school as a hierarchy is another social reality that students are not equipped with the language to speak. This silence is what allows for codes and behaviors to become coping mechanisms to manage this contested space of power.

Media is a medium for popular culture transmission. The media is responsible for and engages in its own invisible pedagogy, constructing representations of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, occupation, age, etc. on television, magazines, and websites to name a few. A critical media pedagogy, as Giroux suggests, “seeks to make visible how and why these representations are constructed, to ask whose interests they serve, and to locate sites of resistance to disabling representations and oppressive cultural narratives” (Giroux, 2002). This is why popular culture is useful. The theoretical framework for this can be Giroux says:

“The intersection of cultural studies and critical pedagogy offers the possibilities for educators to confront history as more than simulacrum and ethics as
something other than the casualty of incommensurable language games.

…Pedagogy does not succumb to the whims of the market place in this logic nor to the latest form of educational chic; instead, critical pedagogy engages cultural studies as part of an ongoing movement towards a shared conception of justice and a radicalization of the social order. This is a task that not only recognizes the multiple relationships between cultural and power, but also makes critical pedagogy one of its defining principles” (Giroux, 2002).

This is why education has to cease at being commodified because it reinforces systems of power and control that pointedly leaves out minority groups. Giroux furthers says:

“Missing from much of the corporate discourse on schooling is any analysis of how power works in shaping knowledge, how the teaching of broader social values provide safeguards against turning citizen skills into simply training skills for the work place, or how schooling can help students reconcile the seemingly opposing needs of freedom and solidarity in order to forge a new conception of civic courage and democratic public life. Knowledge as capital in the corporate model is privileged as a form of investment in the economy, but appears to have little value when linked to the power of self-definition, social responsibility, or the capacities of individuals to expand the scope of freedom, justice, and the operations of democracy” (Giroux, 2002).

Here Giroux is speaking to the social and cultural forces that inform the everyday and corporate sociological experience; especially that of a student. He draws from the interdisciplinary writers like Paulo Freire and Toni Morrison who contribute to the
discourse about these kinds of issues that are in higher education. Giroux is aware and speaks to the issues of conformity and resistance in education. Education as a liberatory practice is a consistent theme among educators committed to taking into account the whole student and recognizing that the scope of education has the responsibility to provide tools to investigate the social world. All of these scholars are invested in the whole student and the practice of teaching. They are also scholars who link historical context to the present. Teachers as well as students have to participate in the act of resistance of the status quo. This is most difficult for groups that have been historically othered.

Recognizing the present means using popular culture as a means to examine how to assess the student in the 21st century and also how to change teaching practices because of that change that has happened with time. They also agree on the injustices of the current system of education and that provides a space to discuss the aggregate issues of black males in education and how they are perceived and acted upon as well as misunderstood and their own performance of this social reality. Part of this social mapping is to understand cool pose and the performance of the black male experience.

**Cool Pose**

Popular culture is still emerging scholarship that has been relatively left packed. Some of the useful concepts address issues of masculinity that is gender as a performance, and concepts about race in the schema of education. The concept of coolness provides an opportunity to build on research on both gender and race in education. Coolness as a concept has been a manner to describe and qualify the
experience of African American males in the United States. Being cool or performing the “cool pose” is a strategy or method for black males to draw their ontologisms, to make meaning in their everyday life (Majors and Billson, 1992). Majors and Billson in their book *Cool Pose* say this about coolness:

“We believe that coolness as a strength may be linked to pride, self respect, and masculinity. At the same time, coolness as a mask may contribute to dropping out of school, getting trouble, sliding into drug and alcohol abuse, and being sucked into delinquent or criminal street gangs. Cool pose may be a factor in frustrating love relationships and violence in the home and on the streets. As a response to a history of oppression and social isolation in this country, coolness may be a survival strategy that has cost the black male-and society-an enormous price” (xi.)

Coolness has cultural, social, and emotional significance for the black male experience in general, and though it may not describe the lives every black male, it is one of the coping strategies that is used to navigate the social world. Majors and Billson position that as a method of survival and expression. With respect to survival, posing helps with the coping of oppression and marginality. According to the authors being cool “helps him cope with conflict and anxiety, and paves an avenue of expression in sports, entertainment, rap-talking, breakdancing, and street cool. It is a part of everyday life.”

For a certain population of young black men, this kind of posing allows for the management of the negative images and portrayal of black men and black culture. Being cool or the cool pose allows for a sense of control, confidence, swagger, and faux security (1992).
The authors go on to say, “We suggest that black males have become so conditioned to keeping up their guard against oppression from the dominant society that being cool represents the best safeguard against further mental and physical abuse” (Majors & Billson, 1992, xi.). As a coping strategy, posing helps with the management of the feelings of rage, depression and hurt when struggling against injustice, prejudice, racism, and discrimination.

Majors and Billson in Cool Pose argued many salient points that coincide with the work of Marlene Connors in her book, What is Cool? Understanding Black Manhood in America, by framing coolness as a framework that consists of behaviors and attitudes that are part of the social fabric and conceptualization of manhood of young black males (2003). “Cool, at its most basic, is a way of living and surviving in an inhospitable environment, a rational reaction to an irrational situation, a way of fitting in while standing out of gaining respect while instilling fear” (2003). This is true even if this is not the intent of that black male. The society in the United States as well as abroad has “boxed-in” the black male to a certain type and when he performs his race/gender outside that box there is backlash, whether it is positive or negative. The social and cultural forces are at play within a historical context.

Connors offers the reader several social manifestations of coolness. Street cool, revolutionary cool, middle-class cool, southern cool, electronic (commercial) cool, and woman and cool gives a wide definition and some depth to how coolness can be understood. Street cool refers to the urban black male experience. Coolness comes from the necessity to have a method to control one’s emotions regardless of what was
occurring in the social world around them. This code of behavior could be present in other communities but the history of slavery and segregation makes coolness in the black community unique. It becomes a culture that empowers and protects the black male from the world around him. This social reality of drug trafficking, poverty, sexual recklessness, and systems form cycles that go unexamined (2003).

“To be a man in America you had to adhere to the rules of the white man. But those rules did not apply to the Black man’s life, and even when they did, adhering to those rules seemed to require a compromise few Black men were willing to make. America, a nation devoted to capitalism, defines manhood through achievement, money, possessions. Black men had very little money, and very few means of earning it. The Black man had to develop a reality for himself, a new culture that protected and empowered him within his own environment, his own neighborhood; a code of honor that conveyed his growing manhood, and eventually anointed him with the coveted title of “man.” Eventually cool responded to that need and became an unspoken code that taught a black boy how to become a man, among his peers and in his environment” (Connors, 2003).

Revolutionary coolness speaks to the ongoing liberation struggle for African Americans and at the same time the guise that. “Cool was there to guide Black males as they broke out of their physical and mental space” (Connors, 2003). Meaning that this social guidebook provides another choice than the mayhem and disorder of street culture that provides no relief. From Malcolm X to Stokely Carmichael, the black man who reclaims a sense of his identity in order to shift the paradigms of racism from victim to
empower person is at the epicenter of understanding this typology of coolness. Middle class coolness brings to mind the fictional Huxtable family of *The Cosby Show*. The middle to upper class of black folk are present in American society and maintain their own unique method of navigating the social space that they dwell (Connors, 2003). Class differentiation is a social and political reality for every minority group in the United States.

Electronic or *commercial* cool is the commodification of black culture and reduces it to merchandise. The 1990s are evidence that fashion and style in black communities become a style for adoption in the larger American and global communities. Coolness evolved into a way of dress. Looking “sharp” and dressing to impress has currently become a conversation about who has the “freshest gear” and that type of dress is about shoes, accessories, and high culture clothes (Connors, 2003).

Lacking from Connors assessment is leaving space for the black male to be an intellectual. There is a scholarly coolness that has gone unexamined and defined in this kind of cultural framework. The black man who identifies as an intellectual also has a performance factor to his lifestyle that is a reflection to the space that he must navigate. Although the *middle class coolness* may suggest that some of these black males are college bound, it is the college student and professional that has to have a guise of some sort that is a coping mechanism that arguably is different from the other cools that are defined by Connors.

Coolness in the current popular context could be called “swagger.” Talking about the complexity of a black males’ swagger is at the same intensity of coolness. If one
were to ask a student on campus to discuss how they “perform their identity” there would be little to no feedback, but if asked to talk about swagger, the answers would have all the content a social scientist is seeking to frame performance or race/class/gender. In the same way that Connor offers several kinds of coolness, which extends the work of other men and women who discuss coolness, swagger has different layers and connotations depending on the context.

While the term “swagger” is not technically new to hip hop, it has only recently become a popular culture, turning the game on its head and defining what it means to be cool in 2009. “SwaggaLike Us,” a hit collaboration between the four most successful rappers in the industry; Kanye West, TI, Jay-Z, and Lil Wayne. It is the closest thing to “super group” rap music has seen managed to accomplish to date. Because of this, everything in the song becomes significant automatically to its consumers especially. There have been many words used for swagger throughout the past thirty years, such as dope, fire, fly, etc. Those terms are synonymous for “cool.” But swagger calls to mind a very specific brand of cool. Swagger is classy. Sophisticated. Posed. Those who possess swagger stay in control no matter the situation. This performance, just like the hip hop artists performing the song, is a guise for something more complex, how black male gender performance is something commodified and defined within and outside the community for reasons to obtain control for lack of control in the patriarchal paradigm.

Swagger can also be framed as coolness with some sophistication, but it is so consciously used in so many communities that it has become the catchall phrase to describe all the types of coolness. According to the urbandictionary.com which is a web
space that every day people contribute to its content, swagger/swagga has forty-four definitions. The scholar has to keep abreast of the play on words and evolution of how groups will self-describe and define themselves; this is why the intersectionality of popular culture is important to note here. Popular culture and cultural studies provide critical consciousness for investigating the concepts of coolness and its impact on how African American males engage the social world. I propose that scholars widen the scope of swagger to include intellectual swagger. In fact the rapper, T.I. in his song Live Your Life, says, “I'm the opposite of moderate, immaculately polished with the spirit of a hustler and the swagger of a college kid. Allergic to the counterfeit, impartial to the politics.” Those lyrics that he raps are part of the basis of why intellectual swagger needs to be discussed scholarly, it is because popular culture has already introduced the necessity in the past several years distinguishing that there is something different about an educated black male. Yet, the academy has not really helped to define that well or used the students to shape that narrative.

Another method to understand cool pose and coolness is to unpack masking and the construction of black masculinity in literature. Literature when examined for the time period it covers is the popular culture of that period and can relate historically what was seen as “cool pose” at the time. Men like James Baldwin, Richard Wright and Paul Laurence Dunbar were men from the Harlem Renaissance through the 1960s whose work contributed to a literature canon that would give language to the performance of black males. Using literature as an example of how coolness operates in the everyday life of black males also reveals its embeddedness. It is a part of the social fabric of society.
Critical race theory, as defined and redefined by scholars like Patricia Hills Collins is about intersectionality of the social sciences and humanities. Juxtaposing cool pose and masking, a social science analysis with a literary analysis; creates a contemporary understanding of gender as a performance. Critical theory as a method is in itself mixed methods.

Critical race theory tends to be organized around core questions that reach into several disciplines and that require multiple strategies. Critical race theory requires using a broader definition of social science and humanities as well as the intersections between them.

Critical race theory draws upon paradigms of intersectionality. Recognizing that race and racism work with and through gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality and/or nation as systems of power, contemporary critical race theory often relies upon and/or investigates these intersections by multiple disciplines and fields. Literature and popular culture used together is an example of mixed methods that can unpack concepts like coolness and illuminate the history and progression of the concept. Recognizing that coolness as a concept has developed over time because of social and cultural forces. Literature takes the scholar to those places in time when literary scholars were producing their works and contributing to what they were seeing and experiencing at the time. This fits in well with many of the definitions of popular culture.

**The Intersectionality of the Cool Pose and the Mask**

*Got one mind for white folks to see,*  
*’Nother for what I know is me;*  
*He don’t know,*
He don’t know my mind, when he sees me laughing
Just laughing to keep me crying.
-R. Ames

One of the major themes in African American/Black literature is masking. Masking is complex because it can be interpreted in several different ways and still be accurate in describing sociological and literary circumstances. For the use of this project, these masks or faces can be organized into three social silos. When these masks are used they are usually towards the black community as a whole, one face of the mask is for white culture, and another face specifically is a gendered space that represents black males. This poem by R. Ames demonstrates the duality of the black experience that WEB Du Bois would make famous and critical in his scholarship. African American/Black writers have used the performance of the mask to critically examine and explain the multiplicity of narratives that black people have in the United States respectively.

With respect to black men, the mask or the cool pose hides the inner turmoil and anxiety of existing in a white racist society. The social fabric of the United States is built on chattel labor and the social construction of race. These social constructs produce an environment that fosters the development of masking. Masking is the projection of a certain manner in behavior in order to invoke a response. In the poem above is also an example that posing was necessary. The poem is evidence that performance was part of the everyday life. The added layer to the complexity of being black is the gender dynamic.
Black masculinity as a performance of gender can be defined in the Western context as having a *cool pose*. This does not mean that all African American behave in this manner, but since the inception of American society black males have had to do quite a bit of masking to navigate the racialized space. The sociological paradigm of the *cool pose* in conversation with the literature framework of masking illuminates the social reality of black males in American society in the broader historical context. Adopting the cool pose/performing masking can further be understood as a strategy for black males’ ontology or how they make meaning of their everyday life. This discussion does not define black males but is on the many social strategies used to navigate the complexity of Western society. This social strategy is one clearly articulated in the texts produced by several African American male authors. (Majors, 1994)

This idea of coping or posing is best demonstrated by the literature written at the cusp of the Harlem Renaissance and after. This section will hold in conversation with this idea of the cool pose as a sociological device with that of some of the selected literary works of James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, WEB DuBois, Richard Wright and Paul Lawrence Dunbar that expresses the cool pose in a manner that can be further understood. These writers were able to talk about the experiences of the community of black people and at the same time demonstrate that there was an individual experience as well. Much of the treatment black males have received over time has been isolated to the person but happens so often that it affects the community just by the multitude of occurrences like lynching at the turn of the 20th century. For example, Ida B. Wells found that in 1894 "197 persons were put to death by mobs who gave the victims no
opportunity to make a lawful defense” (Duster, xxii). Most of these people were men. It is in this history; racism is embedded and became the muse and the truth from whence these men would tell their own stories and stories for their communities. Literature in partnership with swagger (coolness) historically produces phenomenon like masking.

*The Beginning of Black Masking*

Masking as a means of social and cultural survival and navigation birthed from the fusion of African heritage and the chattel slave system. African culture emphasizes interconnectedness and communalism, where as euro-American culture values separateness and independence. “In African culture, expressive individualism and communalism are compatible ideals. While possessing belongs to the community at large, uniqueness is valued. Euro-American culture on the other hand, forces possessiveness and individualism to live in the same boat.” (Majors & Billson, 1992, xii)

The cultural differences noted here is to begin an exploratory conversation of how masking became part of the indoctrination of black people, especially black men in particular. The social tools or “lessons” had to equip young black men for survival and at the same time has lead to some gender straitjacketing. Majors and Billson go on to say that “ideal of cool bears a spiritual meaning; sense of control, symmetry, correct presentation of self, and sophistication. Coolness is a part of character. Because of slavery, a peculiar system created an environment that procured this new gendered pose. With slavery, the use of the “mask” became a coping style and was widely used by black males. So even though black women mask and pose as well, the styles of black males are more rigid because of the social norms for men. This may be because of the perceived
threats to white female sexuality and supposed violence that black males have come to represent (Majors & Billson, 1992). Black masking begins because the black body is politicized due to the impact of slavery.

This history of the politicized body of black men began with the dehumanization of African Americans with the inception of the institution of slavery. Chattel slavery resulted in the kind of labor that not only built United States as a nation, but also was the construction of these many masks. Furthermore, regardless of the kind of performance by black men (people) there was a deferment of access to the American Dream. Hughes points out in his epic poem:

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin
in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?

The American Dream is not just a dream deferred for all of black Americans, but also because of the gender norms of who are the providers versus who are the caretakers (men and women respectively). The access and ability to attain anything that could be associated with the American Dream, such as property, voting, shopping, going to the movies etc., were all occasions that until thirty years ago were not something that black America could ascertain for themselves. And in 1951 when Hughes was writing these kind of poems, as the racial climate would begin to explode from the West into the
International arena, the truth of the empty promised of the dream would take its toll on black males.

*The Call for Those to Listen*

Richard Wright recognizes in his piece “White Man, Listen!” that the masking behavior of American blacks allowed for the whites to see what they want to see as a caution to protect themselves (Wright, 1957). This is a perfected system of cultural concealment. American black poetry is evidence of the lived daily life where masking takes place. Poetry documents the themes of disguise, black acting; the example of this is Paul Laurence Dunbar’s epic poem, “We Wear The Mask.” In this poem, Dunbar demonstrates that the “we,” the black community, all do the same form of masking in response to race. It is the conversation with Du Bois and Baldwin and Wright that the further gendered implications for black males are discussed.

*Baldwin on Masculinity as a Mask*

Masculinity is the embedded set of characteristics ascribed usually to the male gender. These characteristics are how men perform their sexuality. Black men have been historically marginalized when it comes to gender performance. Much of this is due to the social residue from slavery, such as the hyper masculine black male who pines after the white female. Masculinity is not an actual thing but it is a set of lived behaviors or embedded characteristics. The dialectic between black manhood and performing of their gender (masculinity) is well framed by this argument by James Baldwin, “This ideal has created cowboys and Indians, good guys and bad guys, punks and studs, tough guys and softies, butch and faggot, black and white. It is an ideal so paralytically infantile that is
virtually forbidden-as in an unpatriotic act- that the American boy evolves into the complexity of manhood” (Baldwin, 1998). In this speech that Baldwin makes he notes that gender is this constructed space. Thusly, just a race is a socially constructed space; gender is just as constructed and puts forth unrealistic expectations for black men. Going uncontested reinforces these beliefs.

Baldwin continues to argue that being a man is the reconciliation of the whole human, that masculine and feminine characteristics dwell in every human, but this fabricated notion of what it means to be a man in America is a muddy space to navigate. This space is further complicated because of race and class. There is a double bind to black males trying to achieve/prove manhood. Black men live in America and the American Dream is narrated to them in every social space yet, he is denied legitimate tools to access and participate as a full and productive citizen. This double bind is what continues to marginalize black males in America.

This marginalization of black males is what Du Bois would allude to as the framework of double consciousness. Double consciousness according to his book The Souls of Black Folks offers three components to understanding the explanation of the black experience in America. He acknowledges the power of white stereotypes on black life and thought (i.e. the American Dream), how racism excludes black Americans from participating as full citizens (Jim Crow), and the paradox of being African decent and American at the same time (Du Bois).

All of these systems are working at the same time to construct the veil that he assesses that black people are born with. How a black male responds to these realities is
usually by some form of masking. Most forms of masking in response to racial issues are usually learned at a young age. According to Richard Wright, there are a series of lessons. Literature provides a place for students to make that familiar a stranger in order to discuss it and create a language for it.

*How to be Black is to Mask*

*The Ethics of Being Jim Crow/Double Consciousness*

The difference between being American and being African American is a part of what Wright offers the reader in his autobiographical sketch. These collections of experiences illuminate how blacks encounter their racialized being in a western context from their encounters with white people. He assures the reader that his first lesson on how to exist as a racialized person was when he was very young. This is when he began to learn to mask as survival. In his stories, he discusses times that he could have been the person lynched for acting out of the role that is defined for him. The quicker he acclimated to being that “Negro” the more likely he would survive. His survival also meant that he would need to teach others these tactics. This is how Jim Crow becomes about social parameters and does not need law and politics to reinforce its powerful presence (Wright, 1937).

The first lesson he learned was as a child, which is when a child may find their first racial encounter. He was subsequently handled by his mother in a manner that suggests that the historical precedent of being black in America required a lesson on how to encounter with white people. He got into an altercation with some (white) boys and subsequently got physically hurt. His mother suggested that he should have hidden (his
face) (Wright, 1937). He should have avoided the altercation. But as a child, he reasoned that there was not a physical place to hide. This brings up the fact that this story illuminates that black people do not have cultural capital or white privilege to rely on in social situations. The mask becomes a metaphysical face in order to have something to hide behind. This guise is a defense mechanism. Having to mask and having that awareness is how double consciousness works.

Du Bois’ schema of double consciousness is the purposeful navigation of the black self to the separate ideas and life lessons learned and look at differently, “making the familiar strange”. Developing strategies to navigate social spaces controlled by the Jim Crow paradigm i.e. where Wright worked as a young man involves the use of coping mechanisms. When he failed at doing the “correct shuffle” at the hotel, he was reproached and another lesson was learned, while another layer to the mask was forced upon him. There are several points at which to engage with Du Bois’ work. He examined the institutional and social power of white stereotypes on black life and thought. He reasoned that racism ostracized black Americans from participating as an American, for example the Jim Crow statutes acted as not allowing black people to access citizenship rights such as voting. And he focused on the complexity of reality of being African and African American at the same time (Du Bois, 1998).

He explains that the black man is in search for the space that the divided self could be whole. “The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to
Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa” (1994). Subsequently, masking continues to occur because this place has not been constructed or realized as attainable by most black men.

This notion is supported by James Baldwin in his remarks made at a debate in 1965 “The American Dream, and the American Negro, he says:

“In the case of the American Negro, from the moment you are born every stick and stone, every face, is white. Since you have not yet seen a mirror, you suppose you are, too. It comes as a great shock around the age of 5, 6, or 7 to discover that the flag that you pledge allegiance, along with everybody else, has not pledged allegiance to you. …It come as a great shock to you to discover that the country which is your birthplace and to which you owe your life and identity has not, in its whole system of reality, evolved any place for you. This disaffection and the gap between people, only on the basis of their skins, begin there and accelerate throughout your whole lifetime. You realize that you are 30 and you are having a terrible time. You have been through a certain kind of mill and the most serious effect is again not the catalogue of disaster-the policeman, the taxi driver, the waiters, the landlady, the banks, the insurance companies, the millions of details 24 hours of every day which spells out to you that you are a worthless human being.”

It is in this speech that Baldwin, Wright and Du Bois are in conversation with each other. Here they agree that double consciousness happens with learning to perform blackness coupled with the awareness that the person is doing just that. Knowing that
you are perceived is only in part, the aware person understands what is causing them to perform and then posing becomes a choice and more strategic.

*The Politicized Black Male Body*

Ralph Ellison’s multilayered and just as complex novel has many themes running through the book. The white gaze on the black male body in the boxing gear that occurs at the beginning of the book was done in a dehumanizing manner. African American male disempowerment is framed well by this text by the man encounters the protagonist/narrator engages. Ellison’s series of points of the invisibility of black people, especially the black man points directly to the affect of history. Majors and Billson support this notion by saying, “Ironically, although blacks are a highly visible minority in terms of skin color and other physical features, they have been rendered invisible in many ways. Early in American history they, like women, were chattel, property, soul-less, or animals. Subsequently, they were let out the larger American picture of freedom and self-determination by being defined as mentally and morally inferior” (1992). The authors would go on to say that this kind of marginalization led to the systematic exclusion of the fundamental ideas of the *American Dream*. There is less access historically to education, homeownership and career options and opportunities. This is well discussed in Ellison’s novel. The Narrator attends college at the beginning and by the middle of the novel he has to deal with how institutional racism has nothing to do with choice, especially in the work environment. This tension in the book is the very reality that black males encounter in their everyday lives. This posturing or canon of symbolic gestures is about self perseverance, community, bitterness, and distrust in
response to white culture. The characters that Ellison constructed also demonstrates that black culture is dynamic and is always changing, but the reasons for masking have not changed (Ellison, 1952).

These texts work together in creating a different conversation about masking because the contribution of literature can be the black male voice taken out of context, or rather, put in the realistic context of dual pressures/expectations/performances. The metaphor of the mask is extended to a serious sociological problem that can affect the psycho-social development into a whole person as Du Bois suggests as the success of reconciliation of the multiple faces.

When black men are portrayed in literature, unspoken or spoken, there is always double consciousness at work. When an author presents a male character as more than simple, this is not seen as traditionally masculine and at the same time is not the performance that white culture demand of all men.

The peculiar reality of black people in America and especially black males is that contemporary black culture emerged in an environment that is not typical to any other group especially in the West. Nielson, who does clinical work on black children and how they adapt socially, says that their experiences developmentally create a curtain of invisibleness. This curtain is constructed by the black mask of shields, fronts, gaming, and posing that ensures survival (Nieslon, 1986). He finds that many black children learn early on to suppress their natural feelings of fear, rejection, hatred, and/or confusion. As they grow into adulthood, this process of putting on the mask on top of masks is their rite
of passage. For the black male, the mask indoctrinates them into this gendered and racialized place.

Until there is a “new song”, or a new way in which black males can find liberation from behind the mask/face/veil there can only be the dream and not reality, again noted here by Langston Hughes:

"A New Song":

I speak in the name of the black millions
Awakening to action.
Let all others keep silent a moment
I have this word to bring,
This thing to say,
This song to sing:
Bitter was the day
When I bowed my back
Beneath the slaver's whip.
That day is past.
Bitter was the day
When I saw my children unschooled,
My young men without a voice in the world,
My women taken as the body-toys
Of a thieving people.
That day is past.
Bitter was the day, I say,
When the lynchers rope
Hung about my neck,
And the fire scorched my feet,
And the oppressors had no pity,
And only in the sorrow songs
Relief was found.
That day is past.
I know full well now
Only my own hands,
Dark as the earth,
Can make my earth-dark body free.
O thieves, exploiters, killers,
No longer shall you say
With arrogant eyes and scornful lips:
"You are my servant,
Black man-
I, the free!"
That day is past-
For now,
In many mouths-
Dark mouths where red tongues burn
And white teeth gleam-
New words are formed,
Bitter
With the past
But sweet
With the dream.
Tense,
Unyielding,
Strong and sure,
They sweep the earth-
Revolt! Arise!
The Black
And White World
Shall be one!
The Worker's World!
The past is done!
A new dream flames
Against the
Sun! (Rampesad&Roessel 170)

This poem is progressive and aggressive, due to its pro-communism slant. The point being that outside of the polemics, identifying all of the complex issues and causations of the cool pose can help educators and therapists with the host of issues that are due to code switching and gender performance. This kind of necessary work for men is crucial and as evidence of its pervasiveness in American culture, African American literature captures it through multiple texts and voices. This is due to the cultural and political structures that immerge due to the historical precedent of the West that has produced a certain kind of masking and African American literature illuminates the whole gambit of the Black male experience.
Closing Thoughts on Masculinity and Literature

“Thus, academic performance, differentiation, and stratification based on relatively unexamined presuppositions of what is to be considered as valuable knowledge are the guiding interests behind the research. The focus tends to be on the research. The focus tends to be on the determining the variables that have a major impact on an individual’s or group’s success or failure in school, such as “adolescent subculture,” the unequal distribution of educational resources, or say, the social background of students. The goal is maximizing academic productivity” (Apple, 29, 2004).

Here Apple suggests that conformity is transmitted through the business like nature of education. If the focus is on productivity, then there is not the engagement of critical thinking and consciousness-raising. Students are in a constant state of rebellion. Especially African American males whose cool pose and maintaining a set of codes and behaviors are used to respond to this system of inequality. This tension is tiring and does not allow for African American males to fully be admitted into the public education system and thwarts their efforts in higher education. Black males still maintain the lowest retention and matriculation numbers nationally when it comes to graduating from college. At the graduation rate of around 38-54 percent nationally, earning a bachelor’s degree becomes an act of resistance.

Most educators do not take into account the whole person. This means that most educators do not know or think about the performance of gender in this manner. It is not in their learning or practice to think that the behavior of their African American males is
rooted in a historical context and their behavior is in resistance to conform and to be viewed as a whole person. Education is not designed to manage the resistant of black males by their cool posing and swagger. This is viewed as a threat and responding to performance with hostility does not build community nor does it foster learning. Popular culture allows for the educator to learn about these ideas and concepts and the social reality of their students. Popular culture also gives language to students whose behavior and posing is mostly nonverbal. Popular culture gives black males the space and language to articulate their story, just like the literary works that Baldwin and Wright have contributed. Popular culture creates the space for understanding the familiar and complicating it so that it can be examined. This examination will allow for the change that the scholars like hooks, Palmer, and Giroux necessitate.

The next chapter is methodology. This chapter outlines the course and what the data would be and look like as well as how it would be examined. This course produced hundreds of papers from the students who participated and the data will also demonstrate how the students persisted to graduation.
Chapter 4: Methods

**Framing Methods for a Course**

This chapter will discuss how the data was collected and what themes were selected to analyze for this dissertation. A class has a captive audience for weeks and can create a cohort. The cohort could discuss a host of issues and together would explore swagger. Swagger as a popular culture concept could equip the men to find their voice by starting with something familiar. The class could take into account the issues that are relevant to black males and the composition of which they are in particular their challenges and their strengths.

As discussed in this dissertation, one way to enhance curiosity, imagination, and the hierarchy of needs is through popular culture. Popular culture as a conceptual framework levels the playing field in the classroom because the students get to be experts. This is empowering. This is why the concept of *swagger* is so important because it takes something that is very familiar to their lived experience and through examination can become a source of empowerment and not just a popular culture nuance.

As a research method, Discourse Analysis can be characterized as a way of approaching and thinking about a problem. Critical or Discourse Analysis is nothing more than a deconstructive reading and interpretation of a problem or text, and in this case the larger problem is retention and the creation of the class is a method to address
retention of African American Males. To design the course, there needed to be further support of the literature and an understanding of the link between discourse analysis to interpret the results of the course from the perspective of the students based on the literature and what their experience through the course offers as evidence that addressing the non-cognitive issues embedded in a leadership class can retain the students on Ohio State’s campus that have the lowest retention rates and graduate them.

According to Teun Van Dijk, “Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (2001). The reason to use the students work as a form of data that would be collected and to use thick description and discourse analysis to code for patterns and themes that the students reveal as issues they have in their everyday life. Their everyday life issues tend to be centered on the non-cognitive issues and addressing those in class purposefully with a curriculum heavy in skill driven acquisition in leadership and civic engagement would reveal an innovative method in itself to help these students and justify the necessity of such a class.

Thirty-two black males took the two courses I taught (in 2008 and 2009). Students turned in most of their course materials in at the end of the term of the course and this became the data set along with the post class surveys. The data also includes in the appendices the graduation and retention rates of students at Ohio State in the past ten years. This information with the prior stated investigation of programs for African
American males across the country demonstrates the uniqueness of this kind of course and its justification.

The papers were centered around the content of the course per week. The themes were selected based on the learning outcomes of the course described in the syllabus. After coding for approximately seventeen different themes, the resolution was to focus on three that seemed to be the most salient and were consistent in both classes. These were also themes that were discussed each week and brought up directly or indirectly in the readings or by the men themselves depending on what they were experiencing outside of the classroom that was relevant to the course content.

**Classroom Orientation**

This class was run very differently from most classes even with the audience of students being as different as the class was in comparison to other courses in leadership and service learning. Some of the ground rules of the course were to actively participate in cultivating community. One of the methods used to do this was to get everyone committed to bringing food to class. This was based on the Maslow hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954). We were going to meet the basic human needs of each other in the class in order to establish a rapport.

The other initial classroom ritual we would do was the practice of the “hater bell” while people settled and got their food. Hater bell is an actual bell that the men would pass around to talk about what was going on in their lives. They would “ding” the bell when they had something to share that was not positive. And they could share a hug without a ding if there was something positive that they wanted to share. Most people
shared “dings” because it was a time that when events would happen in their lives, they were established in a community that was committed to listening to what they had to say, but more over would understand their plight. Things that were discussed included roommate issues, girls and relationships, microaggressive racist acts, current events, and isolated incidents like the attached hate letter that was sent to a few men in the class to their residence hall room.

Explanation of Each Week

Week One:

“Unplugging from the Matrix” is a term I borrow from the 1990s popular trilogy, the Matrix. The movie has a great scene where the hero, Neo, gets “unplugged” from the mega machine that is control of a futuristic Earth. Until that happens he has no clue that he had been living a life that was an altered reality. In the same way, the first week of class I wanted to have men “unplug” from their social reality. For them to take the familiar and make it strange was a process that they caught onto by using popular culture as a method to investigate the social world. The goal is to problemmatize all the idiosyncrasies of their everyday life and be more critical of their popular culture consumption by each week consuming aspects of popular culture we were all familiar with but most of the time were not thinking of what we were consuming.

The class began and ended with conversation. Conversation would be the way we would synthesize the material read outside of class and the men were also asked to bring their own knowledge to the course when and where it was relevant. This allowed for them to be a crucial part of the learning process and not passive.
Week 2:

Tatum’s work is a great way to start the class because as an introduction to understanding identity and blackness and how other racialized identities form helps to bring about a person’s awareness in the social world. There are other pieces that do this, but Tatum’s piece is good because it fits well with this class due to its membership. Why do students of all colors tend to self-segregate on predominantly white institutions of higher learning? This particular week would begin this ongoing conversation about the significance of this work.

This was the beginning of students studying race outside the confines of white patriarchy. They were looking at race and its construction with fresh eyes and ideas. Unpacking whiteness can start with looking at privilege. We also discussed the list that Peggy McIntosh outlines in her piece on white privilege. When students who have been othered and placed get a hold of that they realize that they can develop a language to talk about the events happening to them and in front of them.

Week 3

Understanding popular culture and using it critically as a lens to investigate the social world gives students a language of familiarity. Using terms like swagger and other words from hip hop for example can be used to develop ideas around community. Hip hop is breathed from community and protest music so it has a place in the classroom as a tool to think about ideas relating to black community especially.
Dave Chappelle’s Block Party was a great clip to watch to think with and against. The students are thinking with Chappelle in order to better understand an innovative way to form community and to look at community organizing. They are thinking against Chappelle in how could this situation be reproduced and the advantages to being a celebrity versus a person who is not a celebrity and the human capital present there. Dave Chappelle is a world renowned comedian and is well known for the Chappelle Show. He had an idea. He wanted to have a “block party” that would not just put amazing performers on stage together but to all bring people together. The process is captured through Dave’s meta-narrative positioned as the master storyteller. It is about using something familiar to frame a bigger story. The bigger story is about cultivating community. Music, food, and conversation is always mentioned in the discussion of community and gathering people.

Americans feel most united in the course of a year around holidays and celebrations. And probably holidays that involve food like Thanksgiving and Independence Day. This is because we can talk about the food, music, and conversations or events that happen at that time and be in constant reflection. This is also what Dave Chappelle is asking the viewer to do and participate in. He bused people from his home state of Ohio and invited folks from all over NYC area to create a climate of diversity and at the same time he was telling the viewer what he was doing. For example Chappelle on purpose inviting elderly members from Yellow Springs who did not even know the artists but drew them in with the travel experience and enthusiasm.
Week 3 has to sustain this kind of enthusiasm and investment or you lose the students. Using these series of clips from Block Party helps to organically shape some of the objectives of cultivating community and the entertainment factor is bonus. That is the promising pedagogy of taking the students’ lived experiences and equipping them with the skills to look at it differently. This critical lens around community garners them with an ability to think about programming and events differently and to put more energy and thought around food, music, and when they are bringing people together.

**Week 4**

In 1933 Carter G. Woodson wrote the book *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, and his work proved how history does not have to be about the winners’ story but can be used as a personal weapon for people who have been historically marginalized. Rethinking a weapon as a tool and not a weapon to be destructive, but as a weapon of self-reprieve is empowering. Talking about critiquing the education system in a classroom setting creates a state of dialectic, which being the tension between the systems the men participates in and at the same time is trying to speak to and about critically. The students were hashing over the various high school systems and what they learned and did not learn. This was not about pointing fingers but to create a since of empowerment from mental liberation.

Dr. Woodson was a pioneer and a leader during his career by changing the way people thought about the impact of an education that left out the histories of the people who did not win. Winning signifies who gets the power to tell the story. Deconstructing
that power dynamic allows for there to be a conversation about its impact. This opened space allowed for a beginning conversation about race and gender as performance. The categories of race and gender are pre-existing but are produced and reproduced by performance. Race and gender is a projection of norms, values and stereotypes projected on an individual and are just as tied into how those are interpreted and released by the individual in the choices they make to respond to that in their everyday life.

One of the other pieces the men read as a class was about coolness. Coolness predates what I discuss as swagger. Soon there will be another word but swagger at this time embodies all the social cues, idiosyncrasies, and methods that black men operate out of to draw their ontologies. When students begin being critical of what choices they are making in their lived experience they acquire a sense of agency. Students are equipped with a word or phrase that they can use and carry with them to discuss the lived experiences of their peer group. This disrupts what they think about as social norms and even their behavior which they may have thought about as normal is now examined.

Week 5

Unpacking male privilege at the same time as understanding the plight of the black male on campus by week 5 is just as complicated as the first couple of weeks. But now, there is an established community and feminism is introduced not in terms or the use of the word but in the way of thinking and theory that comes from the multiple waves of feminism and its literature by way of bell hooks’ work. Eating, laughing and thinking
together do not mean that everyone will agree but it does mean that everyone can be heard.

Being heard and having a voice is a part of feminism. Addressing the unfortunate situation of the black man on a predominately white campus has to include discussions that seem taboo to the classroom like dating, intimate relationships, intimate relationships with white women and the tension that is felt by black women, homophobia, parenting, relationships with fathers or the lack, and bromance. (Bromance is the platonic friendships among men.) Listening to every man in the class share story upon story is part of the learning experience for other men in the class. Some men would realize they were not alone and others realized that they had more resources than they thought and should demonstrate more gratitude.

The film that they watch is a classic piece from Spike Lee about the college experience of black students on a fictitious historically black campus. Besides the laughs and the 1980s feel the men of the class got the point. Discussing the relationships of black Greek community and the commoditization of the black male athlete are a both-and conversation because even if not a member of either, one affects the other.

Almost every black male on campus has to answer to if they are Greek or want to be Greek and they get asked if they play a sport. Attending a college where you are either in a binary or you must not even attend the school at all contributes to the plight of the black male. It is a situation that white men do not have to manage or even think about. This is why developing a language about their lived experience changes the way they perceive their sense of self and life purpose.
Week 6

The American Dream is not about aptitude or opportunity. For black men in America is has more to do with access. Limited access means that there are less opportunities and no way to demonstrate aptitude. Discussing how to be black and American takes learning about blackness and being American and collapsing those schemas on one another is a process. Talking about the history of Jesse Owens experience as a student on campus is a great starting place. Three university facilities named after him but he could not even live on campus. Of course this information is not given in the campus tour but that history is part of the social fabric of universities.

This helps students grieve when they have to navigate oppressive racism like during this class having a letter sent to their residence hall room that was from a white supremacist group (see appendices) and having the word “nigger floor” written on the button for the African American learning living program floor in the elevator. How could they access The American Dream when that dream was developed with them in mind? They have to create new pathways for success and excellence that teaches them to cultivate community and at the same time advocate for themselves.

Claiming an education means that they would be taking an active role in what was happening and not allow themselves to be acted upon. Adrienne Rich talked about what it means to claim an education and be a woman but this is not limited to the female experience but includes the plight of any group that has been historically marginalized.
Week 7

Bringing in guest speakers is one of the hallmarks of teaching this kind of course. About halfway through a course can you have a community developed enough that an outsider could come in and be welcomed. This particular week I invited a therapist to come in and discuss relationships. That would be intimate party relationships, friendships (including bromance), and family relationships. Doing this after having them read about what it means to be an emotionally intelligent leader fits.

The therapist was a trained trauma expert so she could also answer questions that they had about how to deal with heartbreak to overt racist acts that may have been inflicted by the police or a professor. She taught the men new coping mechanisms and tools to manage relationships and how to directly communicate. She also offered herself as a community resource and in the theme of community in the class she provided them stability after the class was over.

The other speaker the men really like was an accountant who was very enthusiastic about personal financial planning, Chad Combs. He brought them the beginning knowledge of financial literacy. This life skill was not known to many of them and understanding the RothIRA and moreover self-teaching oneself the skills to make wise financial decisions. A myriad of speakers that can teach them life skills and better understand the world is what keeps them engaged.

Week 8
The history that exists at Wiley College told through the film, the Great Debaters was another popular culture film that had depth and significance because these students had to negotiate race and so did the men of this course. They took pride in the triumphs of the Wiley students and were crestfallen when there were failures and the incidents. But at the end of that conversation was that reemphasis of claiming their education.

One of the other favored speakers was Joseph Ferguson who came and related to the men through music. By day he was a computer developer but by night he is known as DJ JoeFERG. He brought in turntables and also created a quiz with prizes. Then we had a conversation about social conscious music and the difference there is between consumer music. The conversation about the misogyny in music and the perpetuation of stereotypes and how sometimes the images consumed in mass production are also fulfilled by the consumer whether they be black or white when it comes to hip hop.

The men also understood that regardless if they wanted it to be this way, they represented all the images of their race and that was not something that their white male counterparts had to manage. The plight of the black male is that success as an individual is a credit to one’s race but is not seen as something their entire race performed. Yet, if they were to make poor choices, it would be that all black males make those choices. In order to change that stereotype they have to make good choices and then speak for those who make the poor ones.

Week 9
Developing a life mantra is part of the class requirement. Part of that is understanding service and what it means to sew that into the social fabric of how the men would live their everyday life. Service had been a weekly underlying theme but formally talked about this week because of their final project. Not to have even more projects due at the end of term like their other classes but this is a building moment. This class would culminate with a service project and a diversity immersion experience.

The service project would take the men an hour away to Springfield Ohio where they would work together to help Odessa Clayborne, an elderly woman, with her field, and she was committed to providing all those men with a home cooked meal. Their actions together brought them together as well as being co-laborers in a project that would ask them to communicate and depend on one another to complete the task. The meta-task was to get them to realize that it was not about the incident but it was about cultivating service in a meaningful way that brought it into their everyday life. The service had to be bigger than the class.

After several men getting poison ivy, others battling garter snakes and others facing the heat and outdoors; the men conquered the task at hand and by their reflection papers, were something that they held onto post class. This service project and the diversity immersion experience. I provided different opportunities that would fulfill the class requirement but at this point many of the men wanted to do the project as a group. Taking 12 of those men to the Jewish Student center to participate in Shabbat services was not just an awareness moment for all the men in the group; it was also another opportunity to bond.
The class session after the diversity experience was spent with comparing it to all the experiences that had that were familiar like church. For many of the men in the class thinking about religion and culture had been in the paradigm of Christianity and not inclusive of other groups because of lack of knowledge and opportunity. The class provided access to think and see differently but because of the nature of the university and the instructor’s ability to have connections to create new ways of knowing that adds to aptitude.

Week 10

The final class was an opportunity to talk about performance one final time and reflect on where they were at the beginning of the class and where they were now. Many of the men wanted to make sure that we had opportunities to gather together again. We also did a final dinner at my house where I could provide a home cooked meal. This was a borrowed practice of how campus life used to be with instructors living close enough to be engaged in the everyday life of their students.

Race and gender is as much as a performance as leadership is. Collapsing these on one another allowed from their conversation to not be linear, but just as Toni Morrison writes the way memory works, as a spiral or coil, this is the very same way the class concluded. There was a beginning and end only by dates but the knowledge constantly was fluid and would go back and forth with the way the learning process was going. This is why they had to turn in a final reflection paper called a capstone in which they would
choose a life mantra or motto that would carry them through their collegiate career and that they would go back to on repeat.

In the following chapter are the data and the analysis together. Using discourse analysis and focusing on the information offered by the men’s stories and their own interpretation of classroom readings, presentations, lecturetes, and guest speakers, the data reveals that the students mastered their own method to engage and discuss complex issues that fit into the non-cognitive factors that contribute to attrition.
Chapter 5: Presentation of the Data and Analysis

Presentation of the Data and Analysis

This is the presentation of the data and analysis together. The two for this project are presented together because of the method of using discourse analysis. Over 320 student reflection papers from 30 students who took the classes and their capstone projects were collected over a two year period. The reflection papers demonstrate how the students were thinking and processing the host of non-cognitive factors that they were and would encounter in their tenure in college. Then the data was coded for a range of topics in including swagger, race, racism, masculinity, leadership, education, music, family, and relationships. Eventually it was determined that three of those topics, race/racism, leadership, and masculinity were most useful for understanding how this course was an effective resource. Focusing on their words and their experiences to frame the outcomes and provide the space to look at the issues they face critically. The writing produced by the students does not comprise the full picture of the class; those writings are supplemented with commentary with the facilitator’s observations.

The goal of the class was equipping students with various soft skills, with understanding how social and cultural forces impact your life, and how you make meaning. All of those together help students to navigate life differently. The end product
is that the students have a heightened sense of awareness. For example, they know how to network. They know the hidden rules of social class. They know how important community is and that a person belongs to more than one community. They retain, they matriculate and they invest back into the school. They are more aware of the societal barriers that have historically prevented their peers from being successful. The upside down reality of that is that they invest in themselves. The following excerpts from the data serve as examples of how the students demonstrated their heightened sense of awareness. The data is divided into three of sections, representing the most significant areas of discussion and thought: racism/race; leadership, and masculinity. In each section, there is a provision of a number of excerpts, and each excerpt is followed with brief commentary to contextualize the student’s comments within the classroom curriculum. At the end of each section, there is a summarization of the issues that were raised. At the conclusion of this chapter, there is a synthesis of the findings from the students work and the lecturer’s observations from the courses.

**Racism/Race**

Almost all of the students addressed questions of race. In my discussion of the data, I focus on the responses of 30 who represent the range of ways of thinking about race.

Grant

“As unfortunate as this maybe, black students need to learn how to do a little "shuffling" to make it to the top and use that resulting power to empower other black people with the same opportunities afforded to them.”
Several students referred to the idea of what Grant calls "shuffling," though not always in such specific terms. Shuffling is a type of performance. It's a way to perform whiteness or not to be read as a militant black male. You already know that people might read you as a threat, so you would adjust your performance to conform to whatever might make your audience feel at ease or more comfortable. Importantly, Grant not only describes shuffling but also points to how the shuffling can result in power that can be helpful to getting opportunities for other black people. By this he means performance provided access. Other students discussed this as performing for “the man”. This was as if they lost some level of authenticity in this kind of performance. Somebody else talked about Colin Powell as an example of someone whose performance gives access to black male. Society does not read him as a stereotypical black male. Instead you read him as someone who has access to whiteness.

Grant

“Black people especially abuse their money on unnecessary objects. If black people were properly educated on how to use their money, there would be more rich and powerful black people and that would scare the white man in power. It also struck me how the article labeled America as a warrior culture. Normally, when I think of a warrior culture I think of Native American or African tribesman fighting with bow and arrows and scalping each other (which I am sure white society has engineered me into thinking that people are like that).”

This student’s comment was in response to a class during the 6th week to which there was a guest speaker who was a financial advisor. The guest speaker spoke about
compound interest, ROTH IRAs and compound interest. The conversation among the students focused on saving and investing young and having discipline around money. The students exhibited several “aha” moments around the presentation on financial literacy. The students realized that financial patterns are passed down through the family. During this period, credit card companies were permitted on campus, and many of the students took advantage of the opportunity to sign up for credit and then found themselves in serious debt. Garren pointed out that financial literacy is not discussed in college. It is assumed that you come to college with this knowledge. There are few resources for students needing financial advice, and at best, an advisor might show them how to print their credit reports.

The relationship to race and power is a curious relationship that the men in this class had to come to the awareness of and wrestle with over and over again. Capitalism and economic structures are interpreted differently because of the perceived lack of knowledge or access.

Guster:

“One quote that stood out to me was when a college student states ‘my dad says that if a black boy really works hard he can make it, he can go to school….’ I don’t think dad realizes how much those kids have been through by the time they’re thirteen or fourteen and old enough to go to high school.’ This statement stood out to me because a lot of white people feel like this student’s father feels, and they are oblivious to the many challenges facing black student that don’t affect white students. A disproportionate amount of black students live in
impoverished areas compared to those of white students. Nearly all black students have to deal with racism and diversity issues that many white students may never believe exist. It bothers me on a near-daily basis that many white students will never truly understand how it feels to be in the minority.”

This student held similar views as many of the other students in the class. They had learned to be equipped with navigating a Predominately White Institution (PWI) and at the same time this learning came with a sense of empowerment to start addressing issues when faced with them in a new way. They were developing “intellectual swagger.” That would be the confidence to use knowledge acquisition as a means to have dialogues about their own experience and the collective experience. Reading interdisciplinary works allowed for the men to think critically in different paradigms and have examples to support their experiences. They did not have to feel isolated in their experiences.

Darnell

“The language we use also determines the way we are viewed by society, specifically when discussing the use of the word nigger. In class I was hard to find evidence that showed that the word nigger can be used as a term of endearment, but when I said in my comment ‘we niggers’ in the connotation that signified ‘we are brothers’ everyone in the room smiled. I subscribe to the belief that the word can be used responsibly if the people are knowledgeable. I thought the comment made by a fellow classmate was interesting. He thought that if we flood the market with the n-word it would lose its power. That is a nuanced way of dealing with the issue and because nothing else has worked so far perhaps this
ridiculous proposal can hold water. The Huey Newton film showed how sometimes unconventional methods are the best way to find results. In the film they stopped accepting their way of life as the norm and started to edge out their own reality, which is a critical step in self actualization.”

Here the student is aware of the racialized self and that he has to navigate the world with this interpretation. Race is one of the social and cultural forces that shape and reshape how the men will move through the social world with different stereotypes and expectations that they may or may not be aware of. One of the non-cognitive factors that many of the men would or had experienced in college and at any other time period of their lives.

Ricky

“But my roommate was making claims that things like slavery and segregation are in the past so we shouldn’t talk about them anymore. What he does not realize is that those things still affect our country as a whole today. Whether we like it or not these events occurred and the necessary steps need to be taken in order to fix them. He said we do not need affirmative action and that racism does not exist to any substantial amount. But when I hit him with the things I have learned from this class he did not have much of an argument. He was bitter because he said if here were black that the scholarship money he would have received would have been double. But I made a claim to him saying that this is possible because African American males make only make up about 150 of
this year’s freshman. It does not even match up to the amount of white students
and about those getting affirmative action money, well a good amount of that is
going to white female students. All these things were not ones that he wanted to
hear and still he does not understand. I feel this is because he has no connection
to his background. He even said he is Polish but has no real pride towards his
race. That is where we are very different because being black and proud come as
one. I love being black and would never trade it in for anything. It is something
that connects all African Americans and makes us all a family and I couldn’t
imagine my life without it. I have learned so much and have doing a deeper
devotion to my community and my culture.”

This student had really grasped the idea that if you learn something, you have mastered
that knowledge if you teach it to someone else. That someone else was his roommate
who seemed resistant to what he had to share. But this did not dismiss or sway this
student from having confidence and authority about what he was learning in the
classroom regarding race and the polemics that come with that. He could navigate a
conversation on affirmative action and have an informed opinion about what that looks
like on a college campus and who are the most who benefit. When a person investigates
the numbers, the reality sets in. Most of the persons having opinions are not informed and
this is the social reality of race and racism as well.

A part of that class was to ensure that the men left the day feeling that they
understood the legislation and could use examples in a soft argument (we called soft
arguments “brain battles” in that the discussion may be charged but it was not to hurt
another person but to engage in a dialectical conversation.) One example that shared
with them is understanding Title IX legislation. Few persons are equipped as young
persons in the residence halls to think about Title Xi because it was before they were born
and the beneficiaries are mostly white women. The opportunity to discuss another
historically marginalized group who benefits from funding and legislation to play sports
becomes a benign piece of armory for the men to engage conversation about something
as dense as affirmative action. If it were not for Title IX women would not have the
WNBA or the success of Women’s Soccer on the international stage. But the legislation
was necessary 40 years ago to have that success and access today.

These sorts of discussions affirmed the men that they were not passive recipients
of education but that they were qualified and affirmative action represents opportunity.
Another example that we used in class was discussing the Appalachian students who in
numbers where more than the Black students on campus. Many of these students
qualified for financial aid and especially diversity scholarships. Most of their affirmative
action is not challenged because most of the Appalachian students identify as being
white. We then had to unpack white privilege and how white privilege allowed for there
to be a pass on the conversation about the benefits for white people when it comes to
affirmative action.

Jake

“Even though society today has gotten better in terms of race relations and
the toning down of racism in the country compared to how it was in the 1900s, the
underlying racism is still there. People still do not feel comfortable putting a
minority in office because the people of the dominant party are afraid of losing that power they hold over the minority. Putting a minority in office would sow that dominate race is losing its hold still being over the minority, and it give minorities hope and the sense that they are actually as equal as the dominant race. It wound open the doors for minorities to further question why it is harder for them to succeed in a society as the dominant culture, and would give them a valid point that the dominant race could not deny or have an answer for “If a minority is seen in such a regard as to become the leader of the country, why should there be any oppression or hardships for another minority to obtain leadership in the business field?” That is a fact that people of the dominant race know, and are afraid of what will happen if a minority is put into office, which is why even though the society has gotten better with regards to racism, we are far away from being where we want to be in terms of equality.”

The hegemonic structure in the United States happens to be framed and facilitated by white people as a reflection observed by man of the men in the course. The discussion around a set of attitudes against men of color being in positions of political or economic power is a perceived threat but also a lived experience that can be chronicled in United States history. Students had the space to discuss and analyze why they did not see black men owning NBA teams but plenty of black men playing the game. Staying with that example of the NBA there was recognition of power and money and its relationship that men came to understand. They were then able to take a small example like this and map
it only what was happening in the world with institutions like the G20, IMF, and the World Bank.

With new understanding comes opportunity. The men could make wiser decisions about their personal money and then discuss this with their friends and families. This was not information that had to keep with themselves but it was a basis for them to keep building knowledge on these said points. This kind of capital is not taught in mainstream curriculums in high school or college.

Taking something the men understand and then juxtaposing it when other concepts are a source of critical thinking and application. The continued challenge is to get them to wrap their minds around self-navigation and collapsing sets of knowledge on each other. Providing frameworks for new pathways of understanding is a source of empowerment because it means that they do not have to just digest everything that they are taught. They can wrestle with it and seek out their own information. They can contribute to their own knowledge acquisition.

Fred

“Some people think that racism is dead. No, it’s just hiding, it’s not socially acceptable to be a racist any longer, but one would argue that neither is smoking but many people still do that. Just the other day I was faced with some discrete racism. I went to the RPAC to try to rent a bike, about when I went to the equipment rental counter, the white worker automatically reached for, and handed me a basketball. This is the type of covert racism that we deal with today.
The same historic stereotypes that were created during slavery have endured and evolved into ones that we deal with today. These stereotypes are satirized in Aaron McGruder’s cartoon, The Boondocks. …The N word is a constant reminder of the discrimination our ancestors endured. We use it in songs and in everyday conversation, but it does nothing to affirm that we are black, which is evident already; so the word is moot. The word is a symbol of what we make it, just as my classmate alluded to the power of the American dollar, “Our belief in the dollar allows our dollar to be as powerful as it is.”

Understanding historical racism and social disenfranchisement is not about being sad but it becomes a sense of empowerment for the men. The emotions were palpable because the beginning of a class could begin with the emotional charge of them sharing their stories about being hurt by microaggressive racism in their everyday life but they can leave class with information and stories shared that allows them to know that they are not alone and that they are able to do something to make a difference in their lives and the lives of others. Knowledge becomes a means of a new kind of power.

Making the links from different disciplines including popular culture has become a method for them to navigate the social world. Words are the building blocks of every social institution. There are words that are charged with such a history that it shapes the way people think and live their lives. The mental work to detach the power from the word is challenging but the men are doing that work because it equips them think about the world differently. Popular culture as a lens to socially investigate is a tool that gives language to the manner in which they perceive the world. It gives them authority for
their own knowledge and a vehicle to use it. The class allows them to recognize that their individual and collective voice matters.

In confronting these various topics related to racism, the students demonstrated awareness not just of their own experiences but of the larger conditions that shape racism. Swagger as a state of being and performance allows for students to have language about their performance and self-concept that is not in the dominant culture. Awareness of how these ideas and perceptions connect to the dominant culture equips students to understand the world better and where they are in it. Swagger is not just a hip word from a Jay-Z million dollar record; it becomes empowerment and a tool to communicate and how to engage the social world.

Stereotypes do not have to become self-fulfilling prophesies. Examining them in a classroom setting can provide a space for the men to talk about it critically and vent about the issues around it. The pains of the stereotypes are real and present. Just as model minority as a myth hurts Asian students, the pressures of not being an athlete or defending your academic scholarship when that is not the perceived ability is the consequences of stereotypes.

**Leadership**

Using a clip from a cartoon movie to unpack emotional intelligence and leadership methods is a way to make the familiar strange. The students had read the literature but thinking about leadership differently can be done by taking a look back to think about leadership and its impact when the other is fictitious. The cartoon provides a
space for them to critique and think about leadership without the leader being assigned to a person. So thinking out loud as an exercise does not involve political party lines or leadership oppressing someone at the university that they may recognize as a group.

Once the men have had candid discussions in a lab setting because the characters are not real, they can map their thoughts and ideas onto real life situations. This is how a leadership class becomes a lab. There has to be innovative ways for them to make mistakes or to think about concepts without judgment or retribution. Using something familiar like a cartoon provides that opportunity much like medical students working on animals or cadavers before working on live humans. Leadership concepts can be taught in a practicum setting by using cartoons and historical icons. Then the conversation could be brought to a personal level or applied to current leaders who are local, national, and international.

Teddy

“We watched the final battle between the Autobots and the Decepticons as well as a battle between their leaders. This was a great opportunity to observe and analyze two vastly differing styles of leadership. Megatron, the leader of the Decepticons had a powerful and fear based leadership style that’s only aim was pure destruction. On the other hand Optimus Prime had a trust based leadership style. This was apparent with their respective interactions with their underlings. When something needed to be done, Optimus Prime didn’t even have to ask, one of the Autobots would gladly and willingly step up and volunteer themselves for that task. Megatron had to use fear and threats to get anything accomplished.
This difference was further illustrated in the final battle between Megatron and Optimus Prime. When it came time for the final battle Megatron was just randomly destroying everything that was between him and his goal, Optimus on the other hand felt obligated to help his friends and saw the final battle as a self sacrifice, going as far to say that “Megatron must be stopped no matter the cost.” In the end Optimus was successful in stopping Megatron; both of them were left with critical injuries.

Megatron’s underlings almost completely deserted him, but instead they laugh in his face for losing as well as kicking him. They then dragged him onto the shuttle, only to throw him off the shuttle as “useless weight” at the first chance they got. Afterwards the Decepticons had a mini power struggle since there was no clear way of passing down leadership. This lead to the separate factions of the Decepticons fighting aimlessly among themselves for power and leadership, and having the mentality that the strong survive (social Darwinism). The Autobots on the other hand cared deeply for their leader Optimus and were saddened by his critical injuries. In his last act before he died Optimus passed down leadership of the Autobots to the person he felt must worthy. This was symbolized by him transferring the matrix to him. This showed a more civilized and intelligent manner of passing down leadership within a group.”

Understanding concepts like leadership oppression and transitioning leaders is important when equipping students to be capable leaders in their own student organizations but this is also an important life skill. Being able to unpack the Social Darwinism in the film
takes a developed critical lens. Survival of the fittest is a quoted term even in the film. Some of the men picked up on that right away in their notes on the film when we discussed it afterward. Others had to hear some of the men explain what they saw and then they could all agree what took place. The fittest were the robots that were healthy. The ones who had escaped battle and the warrior robots who had been hurt during battle under their former maniacal leader Megatron had to suffer further under the new rules being instated by the robots who were suppose to be on the same team.

This form of Social Darwinism the men were about to discuss and make assertions to current events at the time like the banking crisis and lending practices. They were able to take the framework of the cartoon and use it to look at pressing issues in the news that were affecting the people of different populations at rates that depended on who had access to resources and who did not. And wrestle further with the question of who gets to make the new rules.

Brian

“Optimus Prime was a very caring and revered leader. During his battle with Megatron his soldiers wanted to help him and cheered him on. He obviously had a connection with his crew and they loved him dearly.”

This student was able to connect caring to what it means to be a quality of a leader. When the leader is a person with high emotional intelligence and willing to share in the group identity he is respected and there is not as much leadership oppression. This is because the leader who cares has the capacity to create community and collaboration in a way that a leader who lacks this asset cannot. Connecting with the group you are the
The leader creates a space that allows for the followers to know that the hierarchy is not about better or less than but about order and organization. The mechanics of order and organization are necessary but become secondary when the leader and the followers have a type of relationship that is about developing talent and executing outcomes.

Guster

“The Transformers movie showed strong differences in leadership style between Optimus Prime and Megatron. Optimus Prime encouraged his supporters in battle and he was a faire leader who did not disrespect his own people. When the battle was over prime was fatally wounded by the enemy, his supporters carried his body back to base to mourn his death. They respected him for his fair leadership style and they felt despair when he died…On the other hand, Megatron was a fierce and violent leader who led with violence and cruelty. Unlike Prime, however, Megatron was respected out of fear and not out of fairness to his followers so he was literally thrown overboard when it was confirmed that he would be unable to fight anymore. The differences in leadership style between Prime and Megatron reflected on how much trust/loyalty their followers had in them.”

Guster was able to see the role of the follower under two different kinds of leaders. The leader that does not have respect from their followers will not be able to get the best talent from their staff or co-laborers. Understanding that before these students are in any position of hierarchy or followership is important because they can anticipate their audience and the manner in which they want to participate. Whether it is in the
workforce or volunteerism as a means of participation that students choose to navigate and form a presence.

One of the culminating projects from the first class was a service project. This was about setting the tone for service for the rest of their tenure. Volunteering can become a part of the everyday life and does not has to be viewed as something separate. Spring quarter is a busy time for Ohio State and offered ample opportunities for the men to get involved in various activities. We discussed signature campus events like the African American Heritage Festival and also what it would mean for them to be a part of organizations known as the “big five.” These student organizations have either money or prestige and are dominated by white students. The big five on Ohio State’s campus are Ohio Staters Inc., Ohio Union Activities Board, Student Alumni Council, Undergraduate Student Government, and Fraternity/Sorority organizations. These groups are the ones that get most of the funding and competitive leadership applicants but they are still majority white and do not address any of the issues of students who are not mainstreamed. Students who are not in these organizations typically are either not involved or find their involvement in organizations that they can be passionate about and find membership with folks who are likeminded around issues that are not found in the Big Five.

Darnell

“In the Transformers’ clip we discovered that the way you lead may vary your effectiveness. We noticed that the Decepticons leader was not an effective leader because when he failed everyone turned against him and struggled for leadership.
Whereas in Optimus Prime’s camp they were sad to see their leader go and the succession of leadership was peaceful. People respond to a benevolent leader, thus as African American male we must keep in mind how we reflect on others.”

Leadership is about performance. This student recognizes the heightened scrutiny of a person who is the leader and especially if they are a black male and a leader. They have had to manage being labeled “athlete” even if they have never played a sport. They have had to answer to “affirmative action” conversations even though they have learned that their population is not the group that has benefited the most with that legislation. When performance has been established as the rubric, the men can make better informed decisions of what they want to do in life, in class, with their families and with their friends. Not just being an ambassador of their university, but also being an ambassador of the self.

Self-reflection is a tool that can be harnessed by investing in and studying leadership. One cartoon can begin a dialogue about the critical theory and historical examples of leadership and help the students create an understanding of why it is important and when it would be useful in their own lives. The simplicity of the framework allows for the student to complicate it any manner that they wish to do it.

Window

“Emotionally intelligent leadership entails competent leaders driving results, developing star performers and getting groups of people to productively complete the right work. They inspire and motivate people, resonating energy and enthusiasm. Resonant leaders bond with others by being self-aware and
empathetic. Leadership requires the ability to manage and retain top talent. These emotionally intelligent leaders have a lot of emotional self-control, great self-perception, and very conscious of others. …Being a community can make everyone in the group stronger and where tyranny can only make the leader stronger.”

Emotional intelligence is one of the core concepts discussed in this course especially with respect to leadership. Having self-awareness and contributing to community on purpose are soft skills that help develop a students’ resilience and situates them to be different from other people to an attractive leader. Developing a language to talk about the skills they are learning in the classroom and through experiences equip them to interview well and teach these skills to others. The grooming for job interviews and even scholarship interviews is a type of social capital that many of the men in the class had no idea how to negotiate in that space.

Jon

“Responsibility is probably the most important trait in a good leader. The Autobots have a structure and system for the transference of leadership so when OP died; they honored him and their history by transferring all the Autobot history and tools for leadership to the new Autobot leader, Ultra Magnus, smoothly.”

Accountability in an organization is paramount for the group to maintain itself and run smoothly. This allows for transition in leadership from year to year. On a college
campus leadership in organizations is yearly. This is faster than in most positions they would have in the job market but as training being able to manage this pace.

Juan

“Another thing I paid close attention to was that leadership is about relationships. You can’t expect to be a good leader if you don’t establish some type of relationship with your followers, and while this isn’t always possible, specifically when you are a leader of a huge following I believe it’s necessary to have some time of relationship with your closest followers because people won’t trust that you are capable of leading if they don’t have some time of relationship with you.”

Among the soft skills students can learn, relationships are part of every endeavor. Maintaining relationships and building new ones is part of maturing but also part of networking and working with others. Relationships indicate some level of trust, and people do not want to follow someone if they do not have faith in their abilities, integrity and character. With a relationship in place it is more likely that a person would follow that particular leader.

Jacob

“Power is divided into three categories’, public, civil and private. Organized people and money are found primarily in the civil category and can therefore affect the other two categories. Organizing people is started with creating relationships and finding common interests to address common needs. Once the relationships are built one must find from this group the ones that are able to lead and commission them to do so. An action plan is the next step, followed by the
actions themselves. It is very important that the community leads these endeavors because the community organizer is not a part of said community.”

Understanding that there are different kinds of leaders and that community organizing is a method of leading is new concept to young men and as a method is very useful when you are working with a group that you may not be a member. This is useful from class projects to internships and studying abroad to the first job post undergraduate education.

**Masculinity**

Timmy

“This behavior is very similar to the behavior mentioned of this generations’ black males in the reading Salvation. According to the text, the white man’s account of black masculinity states that black males are ‘obsessed with grandiose visions of power, they are willing to engage in coercive domination as a way of asserting control and gaining power.’ Where I come from this is exactly how most black males try to prove their masculinity. Society teaches and shapes their perception that being a man means being hard, violent, and misogynistic.

The very antithesis of this is the love, kindness and gentleness of a black man that characterizes his masculinity. Love is said to be a crucial, often missing element in Fathers and their relationships with their families, specifically their children. This element of Love is essential for all fathers to be good leaders in the lives of their children. A father who is present but doesn’t show that love and gentleness is just as bad or worse as a father who is not present.”
Thinking about love, fatherhood, and manhood is complex business. Here the student is attempting to wrestle with all three in order to further his understanding of negotiating what it means to be a man and how others perceive manhood. Manhood is not innate as much as it is learned and acted upon.

James

“The article on the *Confessions of a Recovering Misogynist* was very intriguing. It made me ask the question of whether or not I’m sexist in any way or form. In the past, men were the ones who worked and did manly things while women were suppose to stay in the house and take care of children. Today there are more women in the work force and they are making close to what men make nowadays, I feel that there is still a huge gap between the way women are seen and they way they should be seen. Although I knew that men and women aren’t always seen as equals I didn’t really take the time to look at issue as being that serious until reading this article. It made me realize that I know a lot of people described in this article. They don’t necessarily hit women, however they do often argue whether or not someone should or should not being doing something simply because they are a woman. I agree with the person in the article that in order for sexism to decrease there needs to be some type of dialogue between men and women discussing the issues instead of men just flat out blaming women. In order for men and women to coexist in society they need to see each other as equals instead of seeing one another as inferior. …Until black males learn how to truly love themselves, others and their children a cycle of negativity throughout
black families will continue. It is never too late for us to learn how to love, but we need to learn soon to make any real changes in the future.”

Thinking about personal relationships with a critical lens is one of the most difficult processes for the men to have gone through. That means they would have to hold themselves accountable to another level because they are no longer as ignorant to the social and cultural forces that have shaped them and the personal decisions they have made that composites their masculinity.

Discourse analysis as a the method for examining the students works and words to unpack how they were synthesizing the information from class, from each other and what they were coming to understand on their own. Focusing on these three themes was determined because of the repetition of their frequency in the reflections of the men and how the themes were directly related to how they lived their lives. The themes were also central to understanding the non-cognitive factors that they address in their everyday life.

The themes were the most relevant and assessable of the men’s collective lived experience. As they did self exploration of the topics in the course one could note the growth and level of awareness that increased do to creating the scholarly space to discuss masculinity, swagger, race and racism.

The students had an opportunity to operate in their new skills and knowledge by writing about it. They were listened to by their peers, the guest speakers, and the lecturer. Their thoughts were recorded on paper and their knowledge and experiences were validated.
Below is the self-reported information from the men who took the course. Every man who took the course has either graduated or will soon graduate, but not everyone responded to the request for post graduate information.

**Graduation of the Men taking the Course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Graduation</th>
<th>Post Graduation plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Currently enrolled in Law School at Ohio State and in the Masters Public Policy Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Graduate program in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Law school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Peace Corp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Fulbright Scholar/Georgetown University graduate school intl affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student H</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Capital Law School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Masters in Human Resources at Ohio State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student J</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student K</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student L</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Eventually wants to attend graduate school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student M</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student N</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Masters in Applied Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student O</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. Students Graduate and Post-Bachelor’s plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Two</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Medical School at Ohio State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Law School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Program Assistant at Ohio State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>IT support for a company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Masters in Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 7</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Enhanced Operator Maintainer at the United States Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Law School at Vanderbilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 9</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 10</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 11</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 12</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 13</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Job in a Law office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 14</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Applying to law school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 15</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Teach for America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 16</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from Post-Class Survey

The students used were decided on if their thoughts and ideas could represent more than just themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/Student</th>
<th>Student G</th>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Student 10</th>
<th>Student 3</th>
<th>Student I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before taking this leadership class, what was your</td>
<td>Before the class I was not as involved outside of class, as after.</td>
<td>My involvement was basically nonexistent. I participated in a club that met once a quarter,</td>
<td>I had little to no involvemen t on campus. I was in an introductor</td>
<td>I was a Resident Advisor at Stradley Hall and a Member of the Todd</td>
<td>That I can remember at the time, I was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement outside the classroom?</td>
<td>Having taken the class as a freshman allowed me the opportunity to expose myself to other campus activities and leadership activities which I could take advantage of more fully in the coming years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If that. After the class I became more involved and became a leader on campus.</td>
<td>I was very close minded all through freshman year and into sophomore year when I took this class. I had done a lot of volunteering and community service in high school but wanted to take a break when I got to College and didn't find the results I was seeking--just being a care free students focused on just school and social life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell Resource Center Leadership Program.</td>
<td>Involved with BuckeyeThon, Acacia Fraternity, Undergraduate Student Government, Ohio Union Activities Board, and I worked at the Marketplace.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What was your involvement since taking the class, I became the President of Minority Tennis club-president MinorTy My involvemen t jumped I was in the
have held a number of both paid and un-paid internships ranging from a position with US Senator Sherrod Brown's office, to Ohio Homeland Security, to translating media for an online news website. Psychology Student Association-secretary, president Psychology Book Exchange-founder/president Ohio Senate-Office of Senator Ray Miller Psychology Peer Mentor Psychology Tutor WrightChoice Pre-Law summer intern up a lot. I got involved with NABA (national association of black accountants) and OURS (ODI undergraduate recruitment society), groups for which I am now vice president and president, respectively. I was also attempting to get back in touch with the BRC after many months of no contact even though I came in with them through the early arrival program. In fact I had little contact the Undergraduate Black Law Student Association, Member of Team Smith, Involved in the Todd Bell Resource Center on African American Males, Page at the State House, Certified Basketball Official for OHSAA, Member of Men of Joy Bible Study group. Interfraternity Council (Director of Alumni Relations), USG Director of Member Development, OUAB Co-Director of Marketing, University Ambassador for UAFYE, Dell Regional Representative, Student HR Assistant for University Residences and Dining Services,
with the black community until I was into my sophomore year. This class was part of that initiative to get into that community and I still have many friends from that very class both casual and more acquainted.

member of the Sullivant Society and the Order of Omega, Buckeye Greek Leadership Institute Facilitator, attended LeaderShape and was on the Marketing and Selections Committee for the next year's participants, Central Ohio Buckeye Leadership Connection Facilitator, and
OMA
(whatever it's called now)
Peer Mentor,
and continued
with
BuckeyeThon
*I added
positions in
organizations
to show how I
moved up since
I that time I
was just a
general
member in
most
organizations I
was a part of).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you think this class had an impact on what</th>
<th>Absolutely. I didn't just get involved in anything, I became</th>
<th>Beside my answers stated in question 2,</th>
<th>I think I would have continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absofruitely. Because of the class I have opened</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
choices you made to get involved?

myself up to opportunities that are more community oriented - rather than professionally. For example, I have spent the last 6 months volunteering at the Columbus Literacy Council as a US Citizenship class teacher. Without the class, I may not have been as willing to contribute my time and talents.

involved strategically. I chose organizations that would set me apart in my resume and help me toward my ultimate goal of graduate school.

I would have to say the instructor, Patty, had more to do with my involvement than the class itself. Patty took me under her wing as she did for many and it was not in vain.

my involved regardless, but I think I chose to become involved with organizations that had more university influence (like OUAB, USG, and the IFC) and less with organizations that did not (Acacia). I think I also did this to show that a black male was capable of leadership in predominantly
| What did you learn about yourself taking this course? | I learned that despite time and resource constraints, I am still able to contribute great things to the community. The will is more important than the conditions. | I learned that I wasn't working hard enough. You (the instructor) pushed me academically and in my extracurricular activities. | I learned how much I have in common with my peers and that we have a long way to go as black men. Even in college we lack some of the maturity necessary to graduate from boys to men. I like to think I'm above that but I have many of the same traits. We are few and far between so the rare men that we are we cannot fail. One of the biggest take sways in my life is the class allows for more insight about the perception and stereotypes of the African American male. Consequently, the class played a role in encouraging solidarity and leadership with in the black students at Ohio State. | The main thing I came out of with this class is more confidence in myself and experience as a yellow brother. For the majority of my life, I semi-believed when other darker kids told me that I acted white, and sometimes I | Caucasian organizations (and not just BSA). |
I had from that class was one of Patty's mantras: don't peak in college. We go through our years here hoping to make the most of it thinking that this is the end of the road for fun and adventure. I hope I never forget this.

I wish that I behaved "blacker". But after that class, I was glad that I was educated, embraced the types of music I listened to and the type of clothes I liked to wear. And I especially, had no desire to be the BET black person that all the other people from my hometown aspired to be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did you learn about</th>
<th>I learned that although</th>
<th>Learned that the battle didn't end at</th>
<th>Once again I accidentally</th>
<th>Food is essential to a mans soul</th>
<th>I learned a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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people of color and history taking this course?

people of color have historically struggled to make changes and clear paths towards progress, there is still much to be done for real equality. Similarly, much as history will dictate, the accomplishments we complete are not entirely our own, it is upon the shoulders of giants that we, as people of color and otherwise, are able to dream and reach such great heights.

emancipation, it didn't end with Brown v. Board, Civil Rights act of 64 or the voting rights act of 65, it continues today. This was the most important thing that I learned in the class. Learned about the battle in the classroom, in the realm of societal pressures and perceptions and the battle that is waged daily against the structures that are in place to hinder black progress.

y answered this in the previous question. We have a long way to go. We have been and continue to face challenges that will most likely be ignored. I think it was in this class that we had the conversation about why MLK's generation fought so much harder than we do. My personal conclusion was that we aren't under the same pressure and that America has made us just comfortable enough to not complain. I'm not talking about a great deal about both. I think the most interesting thing I learned was about how racist some of my favorite cartoons used to be (Patty I started eating carrots because I like Bugs Bunny so much when I was little and the fact that some of his cartoons were so racist were out of control). I also thought it was
slave uprising or anything but we need to demand more.

interesting (and afterward it made total sense) why many of the top athletes in the world are black from slave games being used as a method of survival. I think what I enjoyed the most was how rappers now are basically blackface, and how the things that black people thought were cool were
hurting black people as a whole (this class needs to be taught in my damn high school).

As far as people goes, I enjoyed hearing about other black male experiences (especially between the darker and lighter ones). I think both got an understanding of why light-
skinned and darker-skinned people behave the way I do. I definitely think I got to enlighten people, and I definitely learned from other classmates who were a little more hood (real hood not fake hood like the black people I went to high school with).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you feel that the class</th>
<th>Indeed I did. In addition to</th>
<th>Yes. Learning the truth fostered a</th>
<th>Absolutely. We were being</th>
<th>I feel the class cultivated a</th>
<th>I believe it cultivated community,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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| What did you learn about leadership taking this course? | Leadership can be in anything. A leader is not always the oldest, or most decorated - or certainly the loudest. A leader can take any shape, form or volume. What leadership can be in is that a leader must be able to lead by example. An effective leader is someone who is not afraid to take a stand or make a change. | Leadership starts with competence. In order to lead anything you must have a firm understanding of the system and history. | Accountability for my race. We have to take the mantle because no one else will. | In order to be a great leader, one must be an exceptional listener and capable of addressing topics and issues that concern the group as a whole. | I think that what I mainly learned was that leadership was about action, and serving others. |
matters is the desire to effect positive change and to inspire others to do the same.

and not yourself. At that time, I was trying to do so much for me, and I think I was leading for the wrong reasons. That ended up biting me in the ass later when I was already involved with things before I took the class that drove me up the wall later my junior year (USG and my fraternity). When I put my
What did you learn from the service component to this course?

Service is our rent for living :-)  
People often overlook community service. The class was a good reminder.

Service is a humbling experience and allows one to take a self examination to see if they are truly appreciating life the way they should.

I learned that service does not have to be some grand thing organized by the Ohio Union with free pizza and T-Shirts from Abercrombie and Fitch.

| Table 2. Post class survey responses |
Having a post-class survey of the students’ experiences and reflections has also highlighted what worked for men in the course and also what did not work. Many of the men highlighted the importance of community and getting over the feelings of being isolated because of some of the majors they felt as if they were the person who looked like them. Who identified as black and for those particular students to be in a room where everyone looked like them build confidence. Their responses were also in congruence with the literature about black males by Cuyjet in that involvement outside of the classroom helps with resilience and persistence. These factors were able to be harnessed from this leadership class at a timely part of most of the men’s lives which on a college campus that is going to be in the first two years that they attend school. The student found a level of support and mutual respect that stayed with them beyond the class.

The final chapter is summary of the project and the conclusions from the dissertation. Also there is a discussion of the findings and other factors that may have influenced the project. There is also some discussion on the future of retention and what could be pushed further along because of this project.
Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion

Conclusion and Further Conversation

“Stories have been told to pass on history, religion, normative practice within cultures, and to impart worldview. Stories have been told to teach and to entertain. The best stories merge the two purposes seamlessly so that they become part of the cognitive background against what further thinking and decision-making occurs. But what makes story any more effective than the simple passing of information through bulleted lists.” – Lori Niles

Collecting the stories of African American men through the African American Male Leadership and Civic Engagement course has been the most enlightening part of this process. Their ideas, reflections, and assertions posited their lived experiences as worthy data collection. Typically, retention models have not relied on the students’ lived experience or the personal knowledge that they bring to the university. However, they are the experts on their experiences. In this class, they became a choir and I became the listener. There were many parts and I was eager to hear and read all of them. Although each story was individual, they constituted a larger whole, a choir of people singing together. In their stories are the tangibles that web a community together and allow. Their former classrooms did not regard their stories as relevant tools for success. The fact of valuing their lived experience was transgressive. The first ten to fifteen minutes of class was a time to eat and share stories. Important things were going on in their lives; for example, one of the students had just become a father. After that brief period, they
could understand the materials presented as an extension of themselves rather than as a package that they had to accept that was separate from their lives. Their lived experiences come into the classroom through the men telling their stories and sharing their personal knowledge. Retention becomes a by-product of all of the sharing of stories. It provides a source for a collective identity because the students’ recognize their shared experiences through their stories. It creates a network that can serve as the support mechanisms they will need to be successful in the university. They not only know each other’s stories; they know how to interpret them and to understand them as part of the issues raised in class. The students entered the class expecting a leadership class, rather than a class on retention. The focus has to be on skill acquisition and community, the by product is that the students will be retained because they have the skills to be successful. To create the possibility for both, it was necessary to create community, and establishing a forum for sharing what I will call “left-handed conversations” was one means for doing this. Through this process, retention becomes a by-product of their own making. The cultivation of community helps with overcoming feelings of isolation and provides a support space to talk about issues that occur inside and outside the classroom.

In this conclusion, I will review the usefulness of storytelling about lived experience in the classroom as one dimension of a class designed to promote retention through the creation of community. I will begin with a discussion of the usefulness of the class for retention by combining academic exploration of the conditions such as race with building a network of support.
There are many retention models that exist but none of the ones found during this project use the classroom as a means to retain African American Males, who still nationally have the lowest retention rate in higher education. Using a classroom as a retention model is the innovation that finally has happened. The creation of this class will hopefully start a national conversation about how to use the classroom as a social science laboratory that can equip students to navigate life differently. The competing theories of what works has yet to be shaped by harnessing the main reason why students attend college and that is the classroom. The classroom is the most flexible space to form the mechanisms necessary to navigate the collegiate experience yet it has been the most underdeveloped in this area. The class does many things like introducing the men to the culture of the university classroom, empowering them to have a voice though in many classes their voice may be silenced, and providing some missing pieces like the black male voice over time at the university to use in their metaphysical toolbox to add to their ability to be resilient. In 2010, OSU President E. Gordon Gee told the audience at the African American Family Affair that folks doing diversity work should be working their way out of a job. I think many people misheard him. I believe that he was correct in part. If we really want to see equity and equality, the goal is that it should be achieved and thusly the people who are committed to this work would be jobless when/if this would be successful.

Retention has been localized on the non-cognitive factors (as discussed extensively in my chapter on retention), which are important, but the method of addressing even those has been recycled in different packaging decade after decade. The
method of retention that has been limited to activities outside the classroom does not always help students inside the classroom. It does not prepare students for the isolation of being in the STEM fields or in Business if they are people of color and many times women. Developing a framework for students to use to negotiate their collegiate experience keeps them resilient. The literature on retention consistently reflects that the students who are persistent are more successful. Just like every child cannot be parented the same, neither can populations of people endure with the same method. The models of retention still focus on having the marginalized groups attend programs and activities that are mapped onto them. Few of the programs are equipping students with the historical context of their university and why the environment may be the way it is through structural and cultural forces. The methods have been limited to where students live and where students gather recreationally. Few methods have been employed to the garner attributes black males already have and teach them additional attributes that together will help them to navigate the classroom. How do you teach a black male to react when racist jokes are made or the surprise of his classmates that he is taking Biochemistry 611? The strength is found in part in the telling of their own story, listening to the stories of others and understanding that their story matters.

“We are ‘wired’ for stories, both through our early experiences of being read to and talked to, and by the nature of our brain function. Story engages emotion, releasing chemicals that are a powerful tool for retention. When we connect to a story, we do not engage vicariously in a situation. We engage directly and have a biologically grounded experience a grounded response to the story. Story engages
imagination about what could be, and therefore inspires hope. Story opens up the door to alternative paths of action and overcoming ‘mental blocks.’ Shared stories become shared experience in groups providing a common language and imagery for communication. Thus story is a powerful social medium as well as a powerful personal medium in which to develop the realm of possibility and entertain ideas that open the door to change.” – Lori Niles, (Using Story as a Transformative Device, p. 1)

The classroom can facilitate storytelling in a constructive and useful way. Using narratives as a method in the classroom, and allow students to share their stories that either contribute to the male, black, college or collapsing them all into one meta-narrative that gives agency to the students’ voices. Their collections of voices are the picture of black males on a predominately white campus. Whereas socioeconomic class does not make a difference in retention, the difference that does make a difference is listening and actively participating in the lives of these young men. Class is a factor but race is a cultural force that is easier to see because it is based on phenotype, and thusly easier to oppress a person who is not at the top of the racial hierarchy. Positioning this in the context of classroom gives the students another type of preparation and places their lived experience as important. Despite the class and economic backgrounds of the men, most will experience similar oppositions at Predominately White Institutions.

Observing and showing back to them their performance of masculinity, race, and how they encounter racism equips them to be persistent and resilient during their tenure at college. And just as the skills from any classroom are supposed to garner students with
skills that leave the four walls of the classroom, to be used in their continued live experience, profession or personal betterment, the classroom can become the structure and methodology to address the non-cognitive factors that lead to attrition and lack of persistence in African American males and other groups that have historically had low graduation rates. The classroom provides the literature and historical information as a resource for students to understand what they face.

The class works because it helps the students find their own voice and at the same time equips them with leadership skills to be a force in their organizations. It helps them find their sense of purpose and articulate that their lived experience is not in isolation. The class also helps them reinforce their strengths by developing their talents. The interdisciplinary nature of the course also demonstrated to them that they could find resources and do self-driven investigation of the history of black people in American and also evaluate the methods they had been taught and what had been taught to them as the canon of what should be learned. Now the men can decide that for themselves and that changes how they make meaning in the world and weighs on the choices that they make. The goal is to know better and become better so they can reproduce themselves by procuring excellence in other people, and that would not necessarily always be black males.

The class also incorporated examples from popular culture, especially swagger. Talking about, identifying, and thinking through swagger is one vehicle for African American men to begin to understand what they bring to the classroom, how they bring it, and how they might find their own voice, whether or not others are listening.
Developing a new way to make meaning affects their swagger. Their swagger is no longer defined by what is acted upon them or suggested to them but it is by their own making. They can choose to harness intellectual swagger and let that be what defines them and not the social and cultural forces that frame their black masculinity as violent, less than (white) male, unintelligent, and not valuable. Thinking about their place in the world from multiple perspectives creates the opportunity to think through circumstances differently. It is no longer about what defines them but how they will in turn define themselves. The class brings language to the concept of swagger as a both a cultural style and a way of performing identity as an intellectual resource.

Using sociological imagination as a device to equip students to overcome any adversity is equipment harnessed in a classroom and they can practice it in their everyday lives. A person can learn about sociological imagination in sociology 101, but do not learn to operationalize it. This course is just as much rooted in praxis as it is theory. Various works on retention of African American males focus one to two methods of addressing those factors that contribute to attrition and it is usually not coupled with a transparent conversation about those various issues. These kinds of conversations are not just about knowledge acquisition moments but also gaining the ability to practice. The opportunity to have “left handed conversations” or “kitchen table talk” provides a safe place but it also provides invaluable information. The students are acted upon and not in relationship with. The class brings it to relationships. The relationships to each other, to the instructor and the guest speakers, to the university, and perhaps most importantly, to themselves generates organically even with a design in mind. These authentic
relationships altogether is what knits community. And it is this community that provides the space and place for these men to matriculate, graduate and excel.

One of the students took Communications 367 or Persuasive Speech, and he was the only black person in the class. He came back to me to get help with writing his papers but also to listen to his stories. He told me that everything he experienced in the leadership class helped him to be successful in the course he was in. He decided to survey his class for a project and ask “what was their perception of the numbers of black students by percentage who attended Ohio State?” The class reported numbers from 20 percent to 50 percent! This surprised him and me when we met to frame his speech. I showed him the data that only 6.6 percent of Ohio State undergraduates were African American. This kind of experience could have had negative effects on Bryce’s experience, but he used it as a teachable moment for himself and his classmates. Racism, he learned, was systematic and so pervasive that even a class of students close to 100 people can have a preconceived perception that there were more of a certain group of people than what there really was. The number of students should produce a diversity of ideas or be a population that would produce something close to the actual reality of numeric representation. However, the outcomes revealed how subtle racism was. This collective ontology of black students on campus definitely is related to how black students are treated. Even though he learned all of these things in my class, when he got into a class where he was othered, he was able to draw on my class as a resource to understand the contrast. He was equipped to navigate life differently. He did not have to just accept things as they were and he could also make a difference even in a classroom.
where he was not just a minority but seen as a perceived threat. Success became a path that he paved his own, and at the same time would graduate on time and exceeds his own expectations of himself from that freshman year.

This is why classes like these are the next step in understanding retention and services for African American males and other groups of students who do not have the skills to negotiate college as well as others. It starts with telling the truth. One story told in the class was about Jesse Owens. Jesse Owens has a series of buildings at Ohio State named after him. Few folks know that when he was a student he could not stay in the residence halls because he was black. This is the history of this fine institution and the cultural residue is still present. By ignoring these kinds of facts we do not serve our students any justice. By being honest about the complexity of race, masculinity, and racism, we can empower our students to be a difference that makes a difference. Their lives become a contribution not just a testimony of a method that works. It should be all of our collective responsibility to listen and hear the stories of our students and recognize that we can do more for them than just encouraging them to earn a degree. We can equip them to define their own success and lean into their own means of achieving it. The classroom is used to recruit the best and brightest students, and it is this same reasoning we should use the classroom to retain and graduate them.

Recommendations for Further Study

After assessing this course, if done again there would need to be an addressing of issues of self-efficacy. Perceived self-efficacy is based on people's beliefs in their capabilities to garner control over their own functioning and over issues and events that
affect their lives (Bandura, 1986). Achieving a level of personal efficacy has the ability to affect life choices, level of motivation, quality of functioning, resilience to adversity and vulnerability to stress and depression (Bandura, 1986).

According to the literature students’ beliefs in their efficacy are developed by four main sources of influence. They include mastery experiences, seeing people similar to oneself manage task demands successfully, social persuasion that one has the capabilities to succeed in given activities, and inferences from somatic and emotional states indicative of personal strengths and vulnerabilities. Ordinary realities are strewn with impediments, adversities, setbacks, frustrations and inequities.

People must, therefore, have a strong sense of efficacy to persevere, this is important when looking at retention and graduation. The nature and scope of perceived self-efficacy undergo changes throughout the course of the lifespan. Addressing efficacy in a course that is committed to retaining students and addressing non-cognitive factors should be committed to building self-efficacy. This was an unintended outcome of the course because it was not something I was thinking about when I designed the course nor was it in any of the materials that I prepared and the literature I reviewed. I went to then draw on my experiences in my Master’s program in higher education and student affairs and the work done with Retention does speak to persistence. However, efficacy can be measured and giving the men in the class a pre-test and post-test or some type of instrument may strengthen the level of analysis for this kind of course and help to replicate it at other institutions of higher learning.
Challenges and Further Investigations

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." Frederick Douglass

In the attached appendix, the reader will find a resource and the revelation of a conundrum: there is no clearinghouse in higher education that is categorizing and collecting the programs, institutes, and centers on African American males. Attached is the attempt to put together some data on several institutions of higher learning. There is no consistency between these programs listed other than their focus on African American males and the reality that there are complex issues that need to be addressed that are embedded in a social and cultural context. The work that high education professionals must engage in is to clearly benchmark what exists, to take in to consideration historical context and social/political narratives of current and former leaders, and to examine the current social climate and situation that the black students must contend with in their everyday life. Sixty schools were examined and few programs were discussed in depth from doing an online search.

Short-Comings of this Study

The benefits and outcomes of retention are measured on if the students stayed in college and if they graduate. Retention needs to have more rubrics and assessment to how a course or programs impact persistence and resilience and the other coping strategies that students implore in order to be successful. There also could be a tracking of this cohort of students more formally because they are such a small number on most college campuses.
Another shortcoming was the process of self-selection and how this could have been a determining factor of the type of student who would take a course like this. For instance, students who self-select may not be at risk as some of the other students taking the course. However, the survey revealed that the students got more involved in the college environment and culture after the class was taken.

Education, moreover a class that specifically is addressing the issues that black men encounter at Predominately White Institutions is the kind of liberation that bell hooks’ discusses in her work. The course legitimizes that they have had an experience that separates them from other students and there has lacked a language for them to negotiate that space. That space is the social blackhole where the university loses students of color and retention and graduation eludes historically marginalized groups. This dissertation proposed a course that would fill the gap that existed in the literature on retention with respect to Africa American males in higher education. There has to be more attention to students matriculating 2nd to 3rd years and there has to be a better tracking system of those students. Sustainability for such a program would have to be comprehensive. There cannot just be a course but there has to also be a partnership with student life personnel at the institution to support the student as they attempt to function out of those new skills and ideas. The number of African American men in college is higher in the 2000’s than the 1990’s but the rates of graduation and matriculation has remained mostly unchanged. The university has an opportunity to truly offer equity and access to its diversity of students if the colleges learn how to serve the students with the
highest attrition. However, this project has proven in a small capacity that this is possible.
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Appendix A: Letter sent to Black Students in 2008 who lived in the residence halls
VIOLENT CRIMINALS OUGHT TO BE STERILIZED

Violent criminals ought to be sterilized if the evidence of their guilt is overwhelming, because violent people make lousy parents. Psychology Today magazine, on page 19 of the March 1994 issue, reported that the American Psychological Association has concluded that "parents who have a history of violence raise children with a greater than normal chance of becoming violent." Newsweek reported on page 47 of the July 23, 1990 issue, that a recent study had found that 80 percent of rapists were victims of child abuse when they were growing up. On page 52 of the same issue, a psychologist who has studied rapists is quoted as saying, "I haven't seen a rapist who didn't have a childhood horror story."

A few years ago, I read about a man who was sentenced to ten years in prison for fracturing the skull of his 4-year-old son. Does anyone seriously believe that gay is going to be a good father when he gets out of prison? Of course he won't, so why should we let him have more children? Or how about the man I read about years ago who stalked his ex-wife, raped her, and cut off one of her ears? Does anybody seriously think a man such as that is ever going to be a good father?

Of course, people shouldn't be sterilized for something minor, such as throwing a few punches in a barroom fight that do no serious harm. Also, people shouldn't be sterilized if the only evidence against them is the testimony of just one or two people who claim to be witnesses. But if the neighbors report a loud argument, and when the police arrive they find a guy drinking beer and watching TV while his girlfriend is unconscious on the floor with a concussion and broken nose, then we have overwhelming evidence of guilt.

Some people say sterilizing people is unconstitutional. All I can say is that I think the current Supreme Court will say the Constitution allows it.

Some people will surely say sterilization laws are racist, because the violent crime rate among blacks is much higher than it is among whites, and therefore the percentage of blacks sterilized every year will be much higher than the percentage of whites. Well, yeah, the percentage of blacks sterilized every year might be higher than the percentage of whites, but so what? Sterilizing violent criminals is good for society, regardless of the criminals' color.

BESIDES, THE TRUTH IS THAT BLACKS, ON AVERAGE, ARE LESS INTELLIGENT THAN WHITES, AND THE REASON IS GENETIC.

Sure, some blacks are smart. Colin Powell, Oprah, and Vernon Jordan come to mind. But they are not typical. Let's ask ourselves this question: if blacks are just as smart as whites, why is there no school on Earth where normal black kids do just as well as normal white kids? Sure, in some cities, the top 10 percent of black kids are gathered together into one school, so that school has a good level of achievement, but that doesn't tell us anything about normal black kids. Look at the book Savage Inequalities, written by a famous liberal educator named Jonathan Kozol. Kozol complains on and on in that book about how evil whites supposedly are, because they don't spend more money on black schools, but nowhere in the book does he mention a school where black kids are doing well. Isn't that amazing? Surely Kozol knows that the best way to convince people to spend more money on black schools is to mention some schools where spending lots of money has produced impressive results with normal black kids. That's just common sense. So why doesn't he do it? The answer is obvious. He knows of no such schools. Not in the U.S., not in Brazil, not in Africa, not anywhere.

Look at other books about America's racial problems, written by prominent liberals such as Ellis Cose, Matthew Miller, Carl T. Rowan, David K. Shipler, Andrew Hacker, Tamar Jacoby, Cornel West and Robert Reich, and you will see the same story. None of them mentions any school on Earth where normal blacks do as well as normal whites.

It would be easy to prove that more money is all black kids need to learn well, if it were true. Some liberal charity could take in ten black foster children and raise them in a boarding school in a rural area, away from crime, with enthusiastic teachers and no idiotic TV and rap music to poison their minds. The kids could be raised the same way Charles Darwin was raised. Even if the cost was $30,000 per kid per year, that is just a drop in the bucket for rich liberals such as Madonna, Oprah, Ted Danson, Woody Allen, Bruce Springsteen, Bono, Michael Jordan, Jane Fonda and Susan Sarandon. Why don't they pool their money and create a school like this? (And conservatives could do it too. Rush Limbaugh, Dick Cheney, Steve Forbes and William J. Bennett constantly tell us they aren't racists, and constantly tell us they know exactly how schools should be run, so why don't they prove it?) And when the kids grow up and they all readTeletext and Proust for fun and ace their calculus exams, that would be proof that when you spend enough money, you can get good results from black kids. So why hasn't that been done?

Actually, I bet experiments similar to that have been tried many times, but nobody talks much about them, because they all failed. Just look Douglas Brinkley's book The Unfinished Presidency, which chronicles Jimmy Carter's life after he left the White House. On pages 356-363, you can read about the Atlanta Project, Carter's attempt to improve black education. It was a failure. No matter what Carter tried, the black kids just sat there and learned nothing.
### Appendix B: Best Practices and Access Programs for Black Students and Black Males

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DEGREE-SEEKING SUMMER AND AUTUMN NEW FIRST-QUARTER FRESHMAN PERSISTENCE DATA

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*Definition changes with PeakeSoft system in 2009
*Prior years, Master’s = 15+ hrs.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of Enrollment Management

October 25, 2010

gsc/ENROLCOL.00/20.03.20.xlsx

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Group: Black or African American
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#### Columbus Campus

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<td>39 8.3%</td>
<td>6 2.4%</td>
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<td>215 63.0%</td>
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<td>216 64.7%</td>
<td>211 65.8%</td>
<td>224 86.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>258 70.9%</td>
<td>244 72.4%</td>
<td>212 82.9%</td>
<td>197 81.8%</td>
<td>39 8.3%</td>
<td>6 2.4%</td>
<td>7 3.1%</td>
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<td>112 62.8%</td>
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<td>16 8.3%</td>
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<td>196 92.0%</td>
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<td>112 62.8%</td>
<td>16 6.0%</td>
<td>16 8.3%</td>
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<td>249 86.9%</td>
<td>122 35.5%</td>
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**Total**

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Group: Male Black or African American

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of the University Registrar/STERRS
Full Time, Degree-Seeking, SU, All NQF
RetentionReportGenerator.mdb
Printed on: 10/16/2010
October 15, 2010

245
## Enrollment and Graduation Rates for NFQF

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of the University Registrar/BERRIS

Printed on: 10/16/2010