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GRITS
(GIRLS REARED IN THE SOUTH):
AFRICAN-AMERICAN TEACHER-ELDERS,
THEIR BELIEFS ON EDUCATION,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHER PRACTICE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative inquiry based on narrative research examining the perspectives of four retired African-American Teacher-Elders. All of these participants were born, reared, and taught in the South. Three of these Teacher-Elders were involved in the (de)segregation process. The fourth Teacher-Elder had retired by the time desegregation came into being.

As Shujaa (1996), Dempsig and Noblit (1996), West (1994) and Mir' on (1996) point out, while African-Americans fought successfully for desegregation of schools, the implementation of desegregation was carried out by White school boards and administrators. Thus, African-American voices were silenced—and yet, African-American teachers potentially could have helped the newly desegregated schools to support the achievement of African-American children.

The purpose of this study was to bring out voices that were undervalued during the desegregation process (African-American teachers of African-American children) in order to find the implications of their stories for education today. The overall questions of this study are: (1) What are the experiences of African-American Teacher-Elders who were involved in (de) segregation?
(2) What are the implications, from their life experiences, that will be beneficial to those stakeholders involved in the schooling of African-American children today for academic success?

Six key findings emerged from the analysis of transcribed text of the Teacher-Elders' collective stories. From these findings came eleven implications which included the ways in which classroom contexts can influence education, pedagogical concerns, and some broad principles for interactions with African-American children. The lessons were: Teachers must not depend on state of the art materials, must create a climate that invites community, facilitate teaching by knowing the parent(s) of the students, teach delayed gratification, explicitly teach racial pride to encourage the academic success of African-American students, teach the importance of respect toward authority (Elders), begin teaching with an assumption that each student can learn, begin teaching at the students' academic levels, teach academic skills to ensure self-reliance for African-American children, teach that materialism does not define who one is, and embody spirituality as an essential factor in the education of African-American children.
Dedicated to the memory of my Mama, Mary Robert Hurst Gordon
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"We" are, therefore, "I" am.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

"Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for:
the evidence of things not seen."
Hebrews 11:1

Education and access to schooling have always been an aspiration of African Americans (Proctor, 1995; Giddings, 1984; Comer, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Hale-Benson, 1986). African American enslaved ancestors were not legally allowed to read, write, or be educated. Books were snatched from their questioning hands for fear that knowledge would give them access to freedom. According to Proctor (1995), this in itself was the main reason for not gaining access to freedom, this inability to be educated. The long and tedious struggle of the civil rights movement in the United States illustrates the central point of education in the fight of the African American for equal opportunity and full citizenship. African-American leaders have made great sacrifices to insure that these rights would be fully gained and exercised by all Americans in the generations to follow.
Background of the Study

The Process Of Desegregation

Desegregation and today’s present conditions for African-American students is far less than conducive to their ready success in the world. According to Ladson-Billings (1994), the public school system in the United States in urban settings, including alternative schooling programs, suggests that attempts to desegregate the public schools have ultimately not been as beneficial to African Americans as previously thought. The question posed by W.E.B. DuBois in 1935 is still being asked today in 1998. Why are African Americans again asking for separate schools? According to Bray (1981), African-American students are still lagging behind their White counterparts on all standardized assessment tests of achievement. Elderman (1987) states that African-American students are three times more likely to drop out of school than White students, and twice as likely to be suspended from school for perceived disciplinary problems.

Meander (1991) claims that the procurement for material goods has become the top family and individual priority. He believes that African Americans have a generation of children who are imitating what mass media and corporate America have defined them to be. Kuykendall (1992) states that these children are stimulated by the media and technology and are not taught how to problem solve. Myers (1988), West (1993), Proctor (1995), and hooks (1994) assert that African Americans have a generation of young people who
believe that identification with things is more important than self-worth. This goes totally against the grain of the African conceptual framework of spirituality.

From a spiritual frame, many equated a "good" education as their children going to well-equipped schools with White children. This, they thought, would result in equal educational opportunities for their children. This equal treatment would mean that African-American children would be treated with the same dignity as White children, because they would share the same educational space, take the same educational courses, and use the same educational materials.

African Americans are beginning to realize that their vision of equal educational opportunities cannot be met just by being in proximity with White children. What is needed in these schools is a vision of education that challenges the fundamental structure of schools as they exist—one that would not reproduce the same inequitable social hierarchies that existed in society (Tate, Ladson-Billings, & Grant, 1997). African Americans want to see their children as well prepared as White children with the ability to experience, in their curriculum, the accurately recorded contributions of the African-American culture. This desire is still not properly being met.

**Has Desegregation "Worked"?**

One reason desegregation has not worked as well as it should is because some voices were missing, specifically African-American teachers, who had the expertise to provide the necessary steps to transition from
segregation to desegregation. Because power plays a critical role in American society and educational system, the beliefs of those with privileged positions are taken as the only reality, while the beliefs of those with less power are dismissed as insignificant. It is the educational institutions of this country that limit the possibilities for the poor and for people of color to define themselves and to determine the "self" that each should be, involving only a power outside of the individual. Others, who have the power, determine how one should act and how one should be judged (Delpit, 1993).

The minority voice was silenced, especially in the field of education. One hears constantly that the African-American child must be given a "voice." As difficult as it is for White educators to hear the voices of African American children, it is equally difficult for them to hear the voices of the teachers of color. Consequently, according to Delpit (1993), teachers of color all too often withdraw themselves from these educational settings and ineffectively complain among themselves. Whites and others need to realize that there is another voice, and then proceed to honor and include that voice.

Another reason why desegregation may not have contributed positively to African-American children's academic success is directly related to who was making the decisions concerning the "definitions" and procedures. The local school board voices (which are usually dominated by White parents and members of the White business elite) during the process of desegregation, were those that were listened to for decision making. These school systems
were dominated in the majority by White, wealthy school board members, White administrators, and White teaching faculty members in the inner city, where the population is (just the opposite) dominated by African-American students. Edwards (1996) states that today's African-American teachers have dwindled down to fewer than five percent in number.

In addition to the dwindling number of teachers of color, Bell (1992) states that racism is also a "permanent factor" to consider when examining the failings of desegregation for African-American children. Most district teacher education programs require little or no work on racism. However, when it is incorporated, it still tends to be very weak. Therefore, racism is either not addressed or is poorly addressed, and response remains inadequate.

Many of the stakeholders in the inner-city school system do not live in the same community in which they teach. Lightfoot (1978) states that for desegregation to be successful, there will have to be a way to incorporate the cultural wisdom and experience of African-American families and to have a meaningful collaboration with parents in the community.

It is, therefore, my purpose to examine and bring these voices left out of the decision making regarding desegregation to the forefront. The purpose is to gain knowledge on the best educational techniques for the success of the African-American child. The overall questions of this study are: (1) What are the experiences of African-American Teacher-Elders who were involved in (de)segregation? and (2) What are the implications, from their life experiences,
that will be beneficial to those teachers of African-American children involved in
the schooling of African-American children today for academic success? The
answers to these questions will have implications for all teachers of African-
American children.

The following format will be used in this dissertation. Chapter 2 consists
of the (re)view of the literature pertinent to this study. Chapter 3 entails the
methodology and procedures incorporated in this study. Chapter 4 contains
two sections: The first section involves the participants of the study telling their
stories, and the second section consists of the analysis of these data. The final
chapter, Chapter 5, will report the implications of this study.
CHAPTER 2
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Black Commandments

You must love yourself and your people. You must believe that you can do anything you can set your mind to. You should let no circumstances remove you from the center of your dreams. You must never forget whence you came.

You must reach back to others.

You must serve. (Gloria Wade-Gayles, 1993)

Introduction

African Americans have looked to the educational system to help ameliorate substandard economic and social conditions. African Americans have looked to integrated public school systems as African American's ticket to freedom and equality. Those in the educational setting have tried new and innovative ways of trying to assist the African-American child to reach his or her best self in today's present educational system. Yet, a dilemma still remains. "What is missing? Why are not larger numbers of African-American children finding academic success?"
One overlooked source of wisdom is that of the Elders within the African-American community. As will be seen, it is keeping with African and African-American cultures to consult with Elders. In order to understand what Elders might have to say, it is important to be aware of several significant aspects of the African-American community, including spirituality, family and community, and authority.

In this chapter of my dissertation, I will discuss, review, and analyze the literature related to these topics.

African-American Communities And Families

Billingsly (1974) points out that it is difficult to define the concept of "family" because there are so many different family structures. African-American family structures have their roots in African family structures and can be very complex. Information about African-American families is critical for teachers to understand as they enlist family support for learning in the classroom; of course, teachers who are culturally sensitive to the African-American culture do not necessarily make this information explicit (as will be seen in the interviews with the Teacher-Elders), yet it forms part of the background for understanding the African-American culture.

According to Paris (1995), there are many common factors that exist among the various African cosmologies. Paris states that there is a vast amount of anthropological and ethnographical evidence that supports his claim that basic and systemic elements, themes, and concepts are recurrent in traditional
African thought and practice throughout the continent. Through a steady growth of similar evidence, Paris also supports the claim that more African culture was transmitted throughout the Diaspora than was formerly thought to be the case. Thus, according to Paris, the African-American experience cannot be fully understood apart from its connectedness with its African homeland.

In the following section, there will be an examination of the actual African communities and families, as well as the communities and families from which enslaved Africans proceeded as they relate to contemporary African Americans. As will be seen, the structures of these families and the role of the community have been misunderstood, which has led to the forging of ineffective connections between educational institutions and African-American communities. Furthermore, the long survival and centrality of Elders to the African-American community will be apparent.

African Community And Family

According to McDougal (1996), the strong African family is not a nostalgic dream, or a fantasy, or even an heirloom. McDougal believes it is a living, formal structure, based on the management of family resources. This structure, according to McDougal, gives shape and meaning to relationships between people whose ties begin primarily as biological. In order to understand African-American family structures, McDougal examines African-family structures. McDougal’s work makes abundantly clear the centrality of Elders to family and community decision making across tribes and groups.
McDougal (1996) observes, for example, that in Ghana, there are no individual landowners. He states that land is owned by the families. It is his belief that these families, however, exist as extended families or clans. He asserts that, since the ownership of land is central to the functional organization of the family, the family is an economic as well as a social unit. Some of these extended families, McDougal says, are organized as monarchies, headed by the occupant of a "royal stool," in the case of the Akan people of the West. He points out that this head is linked to sacred or royal kin among those in the North.

McDougal (1996) claims that, among the Ewe of the East, there are no monarchs. There, large families exist with a recognized head who makes certain decisions for the entire clan. The family operates, McDougal affirms, like a small corporation, or a trust in this sense. The head of the family acts as the "CEO" and the principal Elders operate as the board of directors or board of trustees. A major difference is apparent in the fact that the "shareholders" have more power to call meetings and are more proactively involved in decision making.

McDougal (1996) found that among the Ewe, all blood relations descending from a common ancestor are defined as family. Among others, a family consists of all the members of a single household. This is similar to Western culture in which the nuclear family typically is composed of parents and children. At each marriage in Ghana, according to McDougal, the
traditional family is two extended families joined: that of the husband and that of the wife. McDougal further emphasizes that every Ghanaian belongs to two families: their father's and mother's. According to McDougal, this arises from the belief that every child is an amalgam of the blood (mogya) of the mother and the spirit (ntoro) of the father.

Whether the families are patrilineal or matrilineal, an African's extended families (unlike African-American's extended families), according to McDougal (1996), have a governing structure. Management of all family assets, the guidance of the family and each of its members, and the resolution of family disputes lie ultimately with the family council, he asserts. McDougal further indicates that each council is made up of the family head and the family elders. According to McDougal's (1996) research, the family head in the Ewe culture is typically the oldest living man from the most senior generation, while other of his generation form a council of elders that advises.

The head does not always originate by seniority, McDougal (1996) claims. It is only recommended. As an option, McDougal points out, the head can be selected in what amounts to a democratic election. By voting, McDougal also notes, the branches of the family can select a relative who, perhaps, has distinguished himself or herself in politics, business, the arts, or service to the family. According to the author, the most senior person could be deemed unfit, incompetent, or disrespectful to the family by refusing to call a
family meeting or attend one. This family head arbitrates disputes and makes decisions on the disposition of property, McDougal declares.

Apparently, McDougal (1996) says, "This is how African American people operate social institutions—not only families but churches, fraternal organizations, civic associations, and businesses" (p. 5). He feels that it is there to be observed and extrapolated into contemporary African-American life. In his examination, McDougal found that the nuclear family has apparently so few people (even less in single parent households) that it sometimes is a poor second to youth peer groups, including gangs. It is McDougal's belief that one might even say such peer groups are an attempt to re-create the extended family, which has a lot of strengths that are sorely missed in the nuclear family structure of the United States.

The Enslaved African Families and Communities

Prate, Louie, and Shimkin (1978) contribute to the general understanding of African-American culture and lifestyles by studying and attempting to explain in detail the institution of the extended family. They describe it as a multiple descent group, which acts as the carrier of values, emotional closeness, economic cooperation, childcare, social regulation, and other functions in many African-American communities. Louie, Prate, and Shimkin define the extended African-American families beyond simple blood ties or groups of related cooperating households within their community.
A family, according to Billingsly (1974), is usually understood to be a group of individuals related to each other by ancestry or marriage and living together in the same household. It is his belief that when one thinks of African-American families, one is likely to think of a group of people of African heritage related to each other by blood or marriage who also live together in the same household. It is important to note, that Billingsly suggests this standard definition of family proves inadequate to describe African-American families.

Thompson (1974) states that the first people of African descent were brought to Jamestown, Virginia. Billingsly contends that they originally were indentured servants; however, they were later forced into what has been termed "legal" slavery in 1661. More than 200 years later, in 1863, these Africans were emancipated. Since that day, African Americans have lived in a racially divided society established on the doctrine of "White supremacy" (Thompson, 1974). Obviously, this situation has an impact on the educational and career prospects for members of the African-American culture.

Tucker (1995) is another author who considers African family structures in relation to African Americans. He states that, under the influence of European Christianity, slaves traded matrilineal polygamy for what Margaret Mead once described as a "brittle monogamy, this is monogamy that is broken periodically into a series of marriages and divorces." This trend continued after slavery was abolished in the United States. Tucker supports Gutman (1973) in his book, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925*, where he
states that 80% of African children were living in intact mother-father families during slavery.

Gutman (1973) shows that African Americans had their own marriage ceremonies (e.g., "jumping the broomstick") and that their rules against cross-cousin marriages differed sharply from the permissive attitudes of White Southerners. Tucker (1995) states that Gutman's point is twofold: (1) African families remained largely intact through slavery and beyond, and (2) their marital customs were not simply copied from Whites, but represented a continuation of African traditions.

Under these conditions, Tucker (1995) states, it has been easy enough for African-American women to abandon marriage and depend on the subsidies of the welfare system for economic support instead. In Scanozi's (1977) work, the conclusion is drawn that the traumatic method of capture, the horrendous conditions of the Atlantic passage, and the living in chattel slavery eroded many long-held African traditions, including those connected with the family. According to Scanozi, for the first time in history, the American system of slavery in the history of civilization uniquely insisted on the "subhumanness" of its victims. He declares that, consequently, slave marriages were seldom recognized. His research illustrates that husbands, wives, and children could be separated and sold at the will of the owner. Slaves, particularly females, had no sexual rights. He also points out that gone were a slave's economic rights. For more than the 200 years slavery existed, slaves had no opportunity to carry
out occupational or family patterns approved of and freely indulged in by the dominant society. Obviously, the role of the Elders would have been eroded, or lost, for many of those enslaved.

Rowan (1974) and West (1994) state that most African Americans today are still reeling from these losses. Historically, according to Scanozi (1977), the study of the African-American family has been perceived as a "problem" or "series of problems" needing solutions. Not until recently have studies of African-American families included a look at the middle-class families and even "stable" poor families as well as those in seriously troubled economic conditions. According to West (1994) and Bell (1992), recent research removes victim blame and focus on the roles of racism in society as a struggle for African-American families.

Scanozi (1977) insists that a view of the historical perspective will aid in the comprehension of the current situation involving African family systems. He suggests, through survey research studies, that the tribes from which Africans were stolen maintained strong viable family patterns. It is his belief that marriage there had involved not just the two individuals entering the bond but two or more large kinship groups. According to Scanozi, these groups shared a vested interest in the marriage, quite often in the form of exchanged goods and services. It is his belief that these marriage and family patterns were organized through a series of ancient customs and rituals. Not only the kin but also the entire tribe supported them. Here males held a dominant family position.
Therefore, he concludes that today’s African-American people experienced a family system possessing orderliness and continuity.

According to Paris (1995), the value of African family life was preserved throughout slavery and it continues to be the primary basis for all moral and religious development in the African-American community. It is his belief that the devastating experience of slavery influenced the consciousness of the Africans throughout the Diaspora, however, African family structures remained central. Through no fault of African-Americans, Paris reiterates his belief that African-American ancestors had been permanently uprooted from the security of their communal and family belongings and exposed to an alien environment of humiliation and deprivation. He continues that, in spite of being hated and despised, African American ancestors gradually built their own culture of meaning and value here in this new land. It is his belief that the conditions of slavery revoked the structural arrangements for viable family life. Paris and Scanozi (1977) both believe that the arbitrary dictates and odious interests of their owners, proscribed the enslaved Africans entire life. These new American situations further explain that the slave’s marriages were, generally, not allowed and (even when they were allowed) had no standing in civil law. This was due to the fact that both partners were legal property of their owners, as were their children. He contends that the owner could do with them whatever he chose to do with them.
Paris (1995) contends that, "in preserving" their humanity under the most threatening conditions imaginable, African slaves maintained (in their consciousness) the most fundamental values of family life in which they had been nurtured prior to captivity. These values to which he is referring are as follows:

(1) The natural cohesion of blood relatives, (2) the undying presence of maternal bonding, (3) deep respect for the practical wisdom of the elderly, (4) the power of the elderly to bless or curse, (5) deference of the younger to older siblings and the responsibility of the latter for the former, (6) unquestionable obedience to the authority of parents and the elderly, (7) a communal ethos of generosity and unselfishness, and (8) belief in life after death and the reunion of the entire family with God in the spirit world. (p. 90)

Despite the devastation of slavery, the centrality of the Elders to African society has survived across to African Americans. Gutman's (1976) study provides support for this by showing that, in spite of everything else, a high degree of intergenerational family relationships did occur during slavery. There stands evidence, Gutman illustrates, that those slaves were able to transmit their family values to subsequent generations. His study further adds plausibility to the argument that the moral values of the enslaved were not rooted in the moral code that existed (or failed to exist) between slave owner and the enslaved. Instead, according to Paris (1995), the enslaved brought their moral character with them into slavery as indelible evidence of their humanity.

Contemporary African-American Communities and Families

people had no false impression about their lack of power. However, African Americans believed firmly in their united strength. Wade-Gayles states that this strength was the total African-American community united and rooted in values that made one proud of self. According to her, African Americans prior to desegregation did not identify themselves with the definition given to them by Whites. These African Americans instead validated and legitimized themselves. According to Gayles, this is what anchored African Americans in surviving and achieving in spite of the odds against them.

Boyd-Franklin (1989) challenged the idea that there is such a thing as the "Black family." African Americans are reminded, according to Boyd-Franklin, that there is a vast amount of diversity within and between their communities within the United States. Boyd-Franklin (1989) proceeds to identify two predominant types of family structures in general:

1. African American extended families in which relatives with a variety of blood ties have been absorbed into a coherent network of mutual economic and emotional support; and,

2. Nuclear families which range from a nuclear family within an extended family culture to nuclear family with no extended kin.

Boyd-Franklin (1989) examines the works of Billingsley (1968) and Hill (1977) in consideration of various African-American family structures today. These authors would suggest that family structures may also consist of a parent and child living in the home of a relative (uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces,
nephews, or grandchildren) in various combinations with even non-blood relatives and boarders, and long-term guests.

Ascgebbrebber (1975) identified some structural characteristics of the extended Black family in America:

1. The relative strength of parent-child and sibling ties in African American families;
2. High degree of visiting, contact, and various types of economic and social support among relatives beyond the nuclear family;
3. Bilateral orientation, but with the matrilateral kin often given more weight;
4. Extended kin groups existing in a social environment in which primary-type relations are extended into the larger community;
5. High degree of residential propinquity among related households;
6. High value placed on children and motherhood;
7. Responsibility to children diffused throughout extended families;
8. Frequent foster age of children with relatives or neighbors;
9. Care for dependent and highly mobile family members, adults, or children;
10. Emphasis on respect for elders;
11. Dependence of the strength of marital ties on certain conditions, e.g., social support by in-laws and strong economic interdependence between husband and wife;
12. The possibility of the undermining of a marital tie, when it conflicts with another kinship loyalty;

13. A "segregated" husband-wife relationship;

14. The existence of marital relationships with strong public sanctions and economic bases and, on the other, a number of private liaisons between men and women. Furthermore, there are some other values and activities characteristic of Black families;

15. An emphasis on family occasions and rituals, particularly birthdays and funerals;

16. A religious orientation;

17. A high evaluation of family and individual moral "strength" as a human quality; and

18. A lack of complete correlation between "strength" and respectability and economic achievement.

Elders continue to be an important source of wisdom for African-American families. Yet, despite the strengths of the African-American families, African-American people continue to struggle with significant inequities. These inequities have economic consequences. According to Ascgebbrebber (1975), between 1972 and 1980, the number of African-American children living with just their mothers rose 20%, while the African-American children receiving Aid For Dependent Children (AFDC) fell by 5%. It should not be surprising that African-American and Latino single parent families have higher rates of poverty.
than White families, since the earnings and job opportunities of people of color, more often than not, reflect continued educational and employment discrimination. Between 1989 and 1992, nearly one quarter of the 1.7 million children, who fell into poverty, lived in two-parent White families. Many of these families thought they would never be out of work, need food stamps, face homelessness or hunger. According to Ascgebbbrebber, the shrinking middle class is misled into thinking that those below them on the economic ladder are pulling them down when, in reality, it is those on the top of the ladder who are actually pushing everyone down.

**Economic Struggles: The Absence Of The Male Figure**

Often, the African-American male is portrayed as the individual who cripples his own family by either being absent, or a hindrance, or a burden to the female and her children when present (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; & Scanozi, 1977).

Moynihan (1965) is convinced that the absence of the father in African-American families is the cause of their most serious problems in adjustment, behavior, and organization. Furthermore, he has indicated, the male youth become emasculated and will tend to perpetuate the cycle of father abandonment in their future relationships. It is also important to note that Moynihan's observations remain unsupported by any psychological research. At this point, one of the definitive works which concerns the effects of a father's absence from his family is that of Lamb (1981). He points out that research on
this topic is characterized by a lack of methodological strictness. The subjects studied (children from father-absent and father-present homes) often are from vastly different socioeconomic backgrounds. Lamb (1981) contends that it is also critical to take into consideration the circumstances relating to the father's absence (divorce, death, military service, etc.). It is Lamb's belief that these factors may also have a tremendous influence on a child's development. However, Lamb goes on to state that one should not discount completely all studies on father absence. It is just as important, he indicates, to realize that (in some cases) father absence can be considered advantageous, disadvantageous, or neutral, depending on one's perspective.

However, Adam (1978) presents a unique view and issue when looking at this situation. His work points to the fact that there is a disparity between the number of African-American males and African-American females.

Rowan (1974) indicates that there has been a steady decrease in the ratio of African-American men compared to African-American females since the 1920's. He affirms that one explanation for the gap is that African-American males, as a rule, die earlier than the females from heart disease, lung disease, chronic alcoholism, auto and industrial accidents, homicide, suicide, and drug addiction. Availability of African-American males for African-American females is further reduced, says Rowan, by the number in prison, killed in war, and married outside their race. Only now can one begin to understand fully the plight of the African-American family.
Over half a million African-American males are either in prison or jails, on probation or parole, Hacker (1992) pointed out, "In the 15- to 25-year-old age group, the mortality rate for African-American men is now 3.83 times that for African-American women, with the principle cause being gunned down by a member of their own race" (p. 80). Statistics of this sort demonstrate the fact that African-American males are endangered; this endangerment has implications for the whole African-American community and culture. Statistics of this sort point to the imperative of changing institutions (such as schools) in order to avoid further losses within the African-American community.

**Economic Struggles: The Downfall Of The Welfare System**

Tucker (1995) proclaims that welfare disrupted the process of family formation. In a practice traceable to Africa, a young woman would have one or two illegitimate children who could be supported by her nuclear family. Only when the children began to grow (or the girl became pregnant again) would her family force her to seek a husband, Tucker reported. It is the belief of Tucker that, Aid For Dependent Children interrupted the process, since now, when a young woman's children become more disruptive (or she becomes pregnant again), she no longer has to choose between imposing on her parents or finding a husband.

With Jewell (1988), Tucker (1995) relates that the female can go on welfare and receive a small, but steady, income for her own household and become eligible for medical care and even housing subsidies without the
assistance of a husband. Jewell confirms that (in the absence of social-welfare programs), when African-American families were restructured, the length of time the modified structure remained stable was generally determined by the African-American female becoming economically independent of her family, due to marriage or employment.

Besharov (1966) alleged that the current welfare law discourages marriage by imposing steep financial penalties on couples who wed. Believing that the poorest welfare mothers were disproportionately African Americans, he affirmed that they also suffer the stiffest "marriage penalties." The evidence suggests, Besharov adds, that these penalties, by poisoning attitudes about marriage and reducing the marriage ability of many African-American men, are implicated in the low rates of marriage (and inversely the high rates of illegitimacy) throughout the African-American community. According to Besharov, the total national benefit package for a mother on welfare with two children is worth upwards of $8,500 annually, with another $4,500 worth of annual Medicaid benefits, and (to the 30% lucky enough to receive them) about $5,000 annually in housing benefits and subsidies. Most long-term welfare recipients, he says, simply cannot earn this much in their first jobs, but, even for those who can, work often "does not pay."

Holding the tenet that because an African-American single mother is one third more likely than Whites to be on AFDC (38% versus 28%), each, therefore, faces much steeper marriage penalties. Besharov (1966) makes the
statement that the median single African-American mother will suffer a marriage penalty of nearly a $1,900 loss, compared to the White median of $1,575. Significantly, he indicates that this represents almost 9% of the African-American couple's earnings, compared to only 4.6% of the Whites' annual earnings. This illuminates the issue of why the marriage rate of African Americans is one half that of Whites and why (although rates in both groups have been declining in recent years) the African-American rate has been declining faster, the author further reports.

The most popular explanation, according to Besharov (1966), is the lack of marriageable African-American males and the varying attitudes about marriage and responsibility in the African-American community. Besharov argues that, according to the lack-of-marriageable-males, a myriad variety of forces (including low earnings, unemployment, incarceration, and death) conspire to reduce the ratio of eligible African-American men to African-American women. It is his belief that a man's marriage ability embraces his ability to contribute to an economically advantageous union. Marriage penalties, as he apparently views it, have their greatest impact on African-American women. In turn, this would make African-American men disproportionately less marriageable (compared to White men) than they might otherwise be. Besharov goes on to state that, although this issue/fact would be expected to result in lower marriage rates for all African-American women, its
greatest effect would be actually on never-married teen mothers, since their potential mates are seemingly likely to be low earners or unemployed.

**Conclusion**

First Lady Hillary Clinton (1996) has held that many people want to return to the old way of life, but, she states, that life was not so "picture perfect" (p. 2) back in the 1950s either. The assertion was made that life for African-American children, who grew up in a segregated society, did not, in reality, find life that easy. According to Hillary Clinton, the highest priority in America should be educating and empowering people to be the best parents possible. She expresses the belief that education and empowerment start with giving people the means and encouragement to plan pregnancy itself. In that way, they have the physical, financial, and emotional resources to support any children they may have. She also supports the tenet that African Americans, as a village, need to help families develop their children's brains; and, if they are not going to do this, then they must admit that they are acting not on the facts present in evidence, but according to a completely different agenda.

Although people cannot go backwards in time, as Hillary Clinton points out, African Americans can use the strength of their history to move forward. They can uphold the valuable tradition of listening to the wisdom of the Elders in order to move into the new millennium.
Spirituality

Iyanla Vanzant (1996) states that "If you want to know the end, look at the beginning" (p. 3). In order to understand African-American culture, in general, as a whole, it is important to be aware of spirituality, as well as the role of the church in African-American life. Spirituality sustained the Africans in this foreign land and the African Americans throughout history in America (Parker, 1995; Wade-Gayles, 1995; Vanzant, 1996; Gates & West, 1996; Jewell, 1988; Taylor, 1997; Murphy, 1994; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1988). According to Overton-Adkins (1993), spirituality is a concept that relates to the institution of the African-American church but which is not completely contained by that institution. She states that spirituality is broader than religiosity. Specifically, one does not need to be religious to be spiritual. In the following section, I will define spirituality and its many roles within the African-American cultures; consider the African-American church and its functions; and discuss how spirituality influences the perseverance, coping skills, and moral development of the African-American people.

The Many Facets of Spirituality

The literature on spirituality is focused in four areas. There is differentiation between spirituality and the institution of the African American: (1) church, (2) the centrality of spirituality to the concept of community and self, (3) the importance of faith, and (4) makes evident that the maintenance of spirituality as the foundation of African culture. Boykin's (1997) commonly
accepted definition of spirituality is that of a belief that all elements of reality contain a certain amount of life force. Furthermore, spirituality involves believing and behaving as if that which is not observable and nonmaterial (but still a life force) has governing powers in the individual's everyday affairs. Paris (1995) asserts that, through this force, one remains continuously sensitive to "the spiritual" and it takes priority in one's life. This goes beyond ordinary church affiliation, connoting instead a belief that physical death can be transcended and that there exists continuity with one's ancestors.

According to Vanzant (1996), spirituality is very important to the African American. It is the conceptual framework of their being. Vanzant defines spirituality as "the state of thought directly linking the mind to the one creative cause of life" (p. 272). She states that spirituality is a state of consciousness that grows and unfolds through disciplined activity relating to spirit.

Spirituality, then, is the active awareness and acknowledgment of the presence of "Spirit." Spirit, when capitalized, is a name for God (Vanzant, 1996). Zappone (1988) adds to Vanzant's definition, suggesting that spirituality is the relational component of religious living; one that comprises four distinct though interconnected dimensions, namely: (1) relations with God, (2) self, (3) others, and (4) the world.

Several writers (James-Myers, 1993; Appiah, 1995; Paris, 1995; Hale-Benson, 1986) point out that the conceptual framework of African people is that of spirituality. The concept of self in the African culture is communal that of
"We" are, therefore, "I" am. "I" is the individual and the infinite whole. "We" is the individual and collective manifestation of all that is (James-Myers, 1993; Hale-Benson, 1986; Vanzant, 1996; Mbiti, 1970; Paris, 1995). James-Myers (1988) and Paris (1995) believe self includes all the ancestors, the yet unborn, the entire community, and all of nature. James-Myers (1993) further states that within self, one will find worth because the self is not a separate, finite, limited being, but an extension of all that is. African Americans must accept that each is an individual and unique expression of infinite spirit. Finally, according to James-Myers (1993), the spirituality of a people refers to the animating and integrative power that makes the principal frame of meaning for individual, as well as, collective experience.

Spirituality: The Importance of the Wisdom Of The Elders

According to Proctor (1995) and Taylor (1993), faith played a large part in the lives of African American Elders. This faith should be an indication of how they persevered, that is, that their faith sustained them. Proctor suggests that when one actually believes that change is possible, it causes one to act in harmony with that faith. As you then live it out, what has been the unseen evidence begins to appear in reality. Because there has been belief, the very act of believing makes it so. This is the substance of things hoped for and, when faith is operational in this way, powerful things happen (Proctor, 1995). Proctor further states that African Americans must never become too sophisticated to believe. Their parents and grandparents were strong women
and men, sensitive and sensible. Despite the many forces arrayed against
them, they moved the race forward. DuBois (1935) states that the ancestors
are the ones who took the race to higher levels. It was faith and their spirituality
that gave them the inner security to know that they would find their way when
there was no light to be seen. Proctor (1995) also believes that today too many
African Americans have lost their souls to fear, anger, pain, and suffering.
that suffering is of value for African Americans as it helps to build character.

From an African perspective, humans must realize that no one is
separate from the Spirit. Therefore, spirituality must be a continuous aspect in
the lives of African-American children in their sojourn to liberation.

Overton-Adkins (1993) states that spirituality is broader than religiosity.
Another belief of Overton-Adkins, is that African Americans realize there is a
guiding force that is greater than all humanity. African Americans accept the
force as it operates in the World and in them for it is grounded in
connectedness, not just the supernatural force of a God but to community.
According to Taylor (1993), the most meaningful things in life are ultimately
relational, causing African Americans to question their spirituality (Bell, 1996;
Billingsly, 1968; Hale-Benson, 1986; James-Myers 1993; Mbiti, 1970; Overton-
Adkins, 1993; Paris, 1995; Taylor, 1993; Vanzant, 1996). It is rooted in the
African past.
The Elders and ancestors lived constantly with the idea of Spirit working in all of nature and in their lives. Overton-Adkins (1993) affirms that all people need a place where they belong; a place where they can draw strength and a sense of self, no matter where they may find themselves. She also asserts that today's world expects African Americans to be boisterous. This is not the African framework. According to Taylor (1993), the African culture stresses balance, harmony, peace, and flexibility. This is part of the legacy. Also, according to Taylor, African Americans have come too far from the horrendous effects of racism and in equality not to go the distance in acquiring liberation.

**African-American Churches Strengthen The Family**

Hill (1993) declares that the African-American church serves as a social service agency in strengthening families and enhancing the development of children and youth. Numerous support service centers have been set up within the communities to address the needs of the family. Hill also believes that, historically, the African-American church has assisted orphans and homeless children. He furthermore asserts that most African-American orphanages were founded by African-American religious institutions. For example, Billingsly (1992) mentions Father Clements, who founded the "One Church, One Child Program," where African-American churches committed to adopt at least one foster child. The African-American church can be a major resource for family support practitioners and programs in the inner-city communities (Hill, 1993).
According to Hale-Benson (1986), the African-American church is a kind of extended family which provides material, human, and ideological support in the African-American child's socialization. She states that this extended family organization of the migrant camp, and the family organization of the working crew, all emphasize cooperation rather than competition.

According to Woodson (1933), the African-American church is the great asset of the race. It is the capital, according to him, in which the race must invest to assure its successful future. Woodson (1933) states:

The African American church has taken the lead in education in the schools of the race; it has supplied a forum for the thought of the "highly educated" Negro; it has originated a large portion of the business controlled by Negroes and in many cases, it has made it possible for Negro professional men to exist. (pp. 52-53).

Continuing, Woodson states that the Negro church, during recent generations, has become corrupt. According to him, the "highly educated" Negroes have turned away from the people in their churches, and the gap between the masses and the "talented tenth" is rapidly widening.

Paris (1995) quotes W.E.B. DuBois as stating that "The Black churches in America antedate the African American family as an institution" (p. 98). He further states that, as the social obligations among African Americans were rooted in the linguistic extension of kinship relations into the wider community, the churches eventually became the principal institutional barriers of the tradition. Paris also explains that their symbiotic relation with the family, coupled with their use of kinship language in their internal relations, greatly
facilitated their functions as an extended family. The importance of this fact cannot be overlooked.

According to Murray, Swann, and Cox (1987-1988), Project SPIRIT, a Carnegie Corporation sponsored program of the Congress on National Black Churches, has worked within the African-American community, particularly its church, to try to strengthen African-American families. They believe that this church has played an integral role in sustaining the African-American family since the days of slavery. According to Murray, Swann, and Cox, the African-American church in the 80s, while continuing to respond to spiritual needs, has been paying more attention to economic and social development within its communities. According to them, the African-American organizations, such as the NAACP and the National Urban League, have become increasingly alarmed at growing evidence of the fragmentation of African-American families. They state that the negative outcomes for many African-American youth, as a result of poor academic performance, premature sexual activity and pregnancy, substance abuse, and homicide, are especially troubling. It is their belief that the African-American church, historically, the spiritual anchor for its people, is also intensifying its role as a major resource for dealing with the social and economic problems of the African-American poor.

The African-American Church And The Community

Wade-Gayles (1993) states that the African-American church encouraged its children to dream beyond the boundaries of their world and to
realize their dreams and what they entailed. Reading skills were improved in Sunday School and in tutoring programs. Leadership skills were taught in oratory speaking by delivering speeches in front of large audiences. Within the African-American church, according to Wade-Gayles, the message of high self-esteem and pride was a daily sermon. Wade-Gayles states that the African-American church not only focused on saving the souls, but the African-American church also concentrated its efforts on encouraging the completion of school and the foundation of and support of a reading program, a leadership institution, and a counseling center. She states that, in all of these services, the focus was on developing the children into articulate, respectful, well-mannered, responsible, well-disciplined, and self-affirming individuals.

Fulwood (1996) affirms Thomas Terril, a history professor at the University of South Carolina, when he stated that the African-American church was founded as a way of standing up to the White man. According to Fulwood, this church represented a desire by African Americans to state, "I want to put some distance between myself and slavery," (p. 3). The earliest individual African-American churches, according to Fulwood, were places in the South which were comparatively free from incursions from Whites. He believes that the African-American church, itself, was a place that Whites would not go, and, therefore, Blacks did not constantly have to be looking over their shoulder for Whites to step in. According to Carol Stack (1996), by the end of the 1970s, the great migration had turned back on itself. Fulwood states, in that, it is estimated
that "10,000 African Americans have returned to rural communities every year since about 1975" (p. 3). In the same article, Fulwood also states a quotation by C. Eric Lincoln, that the returning African Americans were having no impact on the rural churches because, "the people who have gone South in the last 20 to 25 years didn't go back to the cotton plantation of the rural areas" (p.4). According to Fulwood, they have gone to the urban and suburban areas of Atlanta and Memphis. According to him, these churches "aren't the big cultural factor they used to be" (p. 4).

The African-American Church And Economic Development

Sue Jewell (1988) concludes that the African-American church has been in the vanguard of mutual-aid networks as one of the chief providers of goods and services. According to Jewell, it has been the African-American church that has encouraged families to engage in cooperative sharing and mutual responsibility. She also mentions that it uses its own resources as a means of establishing and reinforcing values, beliefs, and behaviors.

In addition, Jewell (1988) testifies that this church became a mechanism for cultural delivery and social control. Throughout this article, she expresses her belief that it was not until after the government provided massive social services that the African-American church began to lose its authority. Through entrepreneurial initiatives, according to Jewell, the African-American church began to reaffirm its mission to economic development of the African-American community. The African-American church is believed by Jewell to be,
singly, the most economically wealthy and independent institution in the African-American community. It is no surprise that any social policy designed to assist the African-American family that does not give the church a central role will more than likely fail. As could also be expected, many African-American leaders have emerged from the ministerial ranks of African-American churches (Jewell, 1988; Proctor, 1995).

The Power Of The Spirit And Liberation Of African Americans

According to Proctor (1995), historically, "The African American church purportedly was the place where the power of the ancestors, through the Spirit, could loose the bounds, drop the imposed limitations of the mask, and ignite the power of the people" (p. 153).

Ceremonial freedom was a way for releasing enslavement; a visual form of liberation. The Spirit of the church is the ceremonial experience of God's absolute freedom in the body of the congregation. In word, song, movement, and music, the Spirit is brought down to become incarnated in the bodies of the devotees, showing them Its power to sustain, heal, and liberate the community. It was the Spirit of the church, according to Bell (1996), that was able to transcend the awful oppression that defined the lives of the oppressed. It was here, where the oppressed could be whoever they felt they truly were, not just "someone's chattel who was worked, beaten, raped, maimed, sold, and killed for profit or sport" (p. 1).
Believing that change is possible causes one to act in harmony with such faith. As you live it out, the unseen evidence begins to appear. Because you believe the very believing makes it so. This is the substance of things hoped for and when faith is operational, powerful things happen (Proctor, 1995).

A persistent faith propels African-Americans' faith in God, faith in their own worth and dignity, and faith in the idea that America's 250 million diverse peoples can cohabit in a true community that gives loyalty to the basic values of equality, compassion, freedom and justice (Proctor, 1995). When one has a strong sense of spirituality, the ability to persevere and cope is evident. According to Proctor, it is the same faith that their forefathers had that remains powerful enough to respond to African American's needs to support themselves in their endeavors today. This is the faith that carried the enslaved ancestors through hard and difficult times. It was faith that allowed them to pave the way for today's generations. The story of the persistent faith of their forefathers in the face of unrelenting oppression holds the clue to a possible solution to today's dilemma. It was faith, says Proctor, that steeled their spines to endure physical bondage and a zeal in their souls to prevail against evil. It sparked a light in their minds to keep in their vision the better day and inspired them to learn to embrace the great human conversation. With faith, they possessed a sense of eternity; a mystical state that converted their pain into song and the agonies they experienced into a durable, resilient crusade for complete humanity, that is, the substance of things hoped for (Proctor, 1995).
It is the belief of Henry Gates and Cornel West (1996) that the African-American church tradition generates a sense of movement, motion, and momentum that keeps despair at bay. For the African American, the concept of spirituality is viewed as an important construct and coping strategy. This is what has sustained them as a people. "Our churches are where we dip our tired bodies in cool springs of hope" (Wright, 1969, p. 317). "Perseverance of a person in faith and being able to cope with life pressures are the survival kit of Soul theology" (Mitchell & Cooper-Lewder, 1986, pp. 10-11).

**Education As Liberation: The Role Of Desegregation And The Role Of The African American Teacher**

Liberation is another of the factors that appears to be significant to the current problem of education and the African-American student. For the discussion of this study, liberation means the will to know and the will to become (hooks, 1994, p. 19). hooks (1989) whose work supports Friere, also refers to education as being a form of liberation. She identifies education as the "practice of freedom" (pp. 62-63).

Within this section of the text, a discussion on the impact of education and its connection with (de)segregation and liberation (which include the role African-American teachers, family, and community play) will take place.

**(De)Segregation: African-American Teachers, Family And Community**

According to Wade-Gayles (1980), segregation proscribed narrow places for African Americans. It was the African-American family, African-American
schools, and the African-American church combined that showed the African-American child the world to claim and to change. It is her belief that the African-American students were expected to perform in the segregated schools. These students prior to desegregation, according to Gayles, aspired for what White schools received without making any request. Such items consisted of new textbooks, new teaching facilities and equipment, money and respect. In spite of the lack of these things, she states, these African-American children received a comparably good education. Within the African-American schools and churches, these African-American children did not feel inferior to Whites in well-equipped schools. She contends that, if anything, they felt superior. The African-American teachers were tough, challenging, and uncompromising in their insistence on excellent academic performance and exemplary character, she reports.

Walker (1996) relates that, although the portrait of African-American segregated schools had inferior facilities, secondhand books and materials, as well as poorly paid and undereducated teachers, the "whole picture" consisted of more than just these things. The portrait, however, fails to indicate how African-American teachers, principals, and parents were able to create a learning environment, in spite of the odds against such a triumphant undertaking. These schools, she shares, consisted of a climate where support, encouragement, and rigid standards enhanced student aspirations to achieve. She proceeds to emphasize Sowell's (1976) data on six excellent African-
American schools, where "students described the teachers and principals who would not let them go wrong; teachers who were well-trained, dedicated and demanding and who took a personal interest in them" (p. 211), even if it meant devoting personal money and time outside of the school day. She tells us that African-American teachers did not give the students the choice of learning or not learning. Instead, it seems, failure in not learning was unacceptable to teachers, family, and the community. It is Foster (1997) who quotes Anna Julia Cooper, a famous African-American educator in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as saying that desegregation cost a severe/high price to the African-American child because racial pride would no longer be taught in integrated schools.

Wade-Gayles (1980) states that salvation required one to keep the Ten Commandments. According to her, self-esteem and the survival of the African-American people required one to keep other commandments that were not in the Bible. Stated at the beginning of this chapter are the Black Commandments that Wade-Gayles believes were important in the education of the African American:

You must love yourself and your people. You must believe that you can do anything you can set your mind to. You should let no circumstances remove you from the center of your dreams. You must never forget whence you came. You must reach back to others. You must serve.

Wade-Gayles also states that African-American history was taught every day in these classrooms. She alludes to the fact that the chalkboard was always full of names, dates, and events of prominent African Americans. Walker, Dempsy,
and Noblit (1993) claim the segregated school is most often compared with a family, where the school's faculty (with parent-like authority) had almost complete sovereignty in molding students learning and ensuring student discipline. It is Dempsy and Noblit who state that children would, at times, bring the problems from the previous weekend, or evening, and African-American teachers would help diffuse the dilemma. These "invested" teachers would, according to them, visit students' homes and eat with their families. To Dempsy and Noblit, the families and teachers had such a strong relationship that teachers could go to the homes of the students whenever they felt it was necessary. It is their belief that having the parents' support cut down on many potential discipline problems.

According to hooks (1989), education was not just for self. She goes on to state that the purpose of knowing is to serve those who do not know. This education is referred to as being the practice of freedom. Casey (1993) indicates that the role of the African-American teacher was meant to "raise the race" (p. 152), with the accepting of personal responsibility for the well being of one's people, and especially for the education of all African-American children. African-American teachers once drew strength from the African-American community, she says.

Foster (1997) states that the numbers of African-American female teachers are declining. She attests to the fact that an educated African American's occupation (at one time) was limited to either teaching or preaching.
According to her, one main difference to teaching and preaching was that teaching was open to women on an equal basis. She continues, stating that, historically, African-American teachers were more likely to be employed where there were larger numbers of African-American students and where schools were segregated.

According to Walker (1996), Cecelski (1994), Dempsy and Noblit (1993), and Foster (1990), African-American teachers and principals provided nurturing as part of the school experience, by the high expectation to which the students were held and by the positive support of the community. Walker further states that these African-American teachers and principals broadened teaching by incorporating the subject matter, as well as focusing on the needs of the whole child. During this time, Walker says, the teachers and principal functioned as parents to the children, in effect, providing many of the experiences that the parents could not offer. In turn, according to Walker, the parents became the parents of the school. She affirms that these African-American teachers and principals together created the caring environment that nurtured these children, in spite of the inadequate resources.

Tate, Ladson-Billings and Grant (1996) state that in the Brown vs. Education vision, represented hope among African Americans. It was the Supreme Court who maintained the rights of African Americans to have equal access. According to the mentioned researchers, African Americans were led to believe that African-American children would have the opportunity to attend
better equipped schools and African-American educators would have the opportunity to compete comparably for a wider range of school positions. However, according to the named three, the Supreme Court's decision could not be immediately translated into action. Many of the White schools acted as if the Brown decision never occurred, Rist (1979) indicated. Furthermore, Schofield (1991) relates that resistance, regarding desegregation by Whites, resulted in physical attacks on African-American students, legal delaying tactics, and the founding of over 3,000 private academies. Through the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, "the federal government achieved the legal leverage it needed to ensure that the de jure (state-supported dual systems) segregation of the South was changed" (Tate, Ladson-Billings and Grant, 1996, p. 34). They state that the mathematical solution of Brown perceived that the South would close down its African-American schools and, therefore, place the African-American educators' jobs in jeopardy. According to Tate, Ladson-Billings and Grant, African-American students would attend previously all White schools. They felt that the Brown model lacked vision. African Americans soon realized, they stated, that the educational goals for their children were not being accomplished by just experiencing education by being in the same room with White children. These same authors indicated that the African-American people did want to see the cultural understandings of children of color (as well as White children's cultures) celebrated. Still, according to them, this ideal has yet to become a reality.
They state that the first generation (1950's) sought to stop and eliminate physical desegregation; the second generation (1970's) attempted to eliminate inequities within the schools rather than between schools; and, the third generation (contemporary) actually began to see the achievement of equal learning opportunities and outcomes for all students.

Both Bates (1990) and Simon-McWilliams (1989) showed that the idea of a good education has been shattered for three generations. The first generation (1950's) had to deal with the effort to stop and eliminate physical desegregation. According to them, this effort has experienced some progress in urban and suburban areas. It is their belief that this is, however, true, more and more today. Too many urban areas are becoming increasingly populated by predominantly poor African Americans, poor Whites, Latinos, and Southeast Asians, with an income base of below poverty level.

The second generation (1970's), according to Bates (1990) and Simon-McWilliams (1989), made efforts to eliminate inequities within schools rather than between schools and has demonstrated only slow progress. It is their belief, as well as the belief of Oakes (1985) and Irvin (1990), that children of color are deliberately tracked to lower academic areas than Whites, suspended from school more often, and are placed in special education classes at the drop of a hat. They all state that the standard curriculum has been designed to meet the needs, interest, and lifestyles of White students. They allude to the fact that
more of the children that are bused out to desegregate schools are children of color.

The third generation (contemporary), that has been shattered in the failed plan for desegregation involving the presentation of equal learning opportunities and outcomes for all students, is showing mixed outcomes. Statistically, according to Bates, McWilliams, and Hahns (1987), more children of color are completing high school and attending college. However, the number of college aged students of color who are not completing higher education, or dismissed for one reason or another, is disproportionately high and growing. Still Bates and McWilliams say that, in spite of the above failures, there still can be a realistic vision of school success and good education for African-American children and other children of color, if the vision is rooted and grounded in the country's rhetoric of democratic principles of equality, equity, and respect.

Contemporary View Of School Achievement For African-American Children

According to Kuykendall (1992), schools are not serving African-American children productively. Standardized test scores reflect these disparities. "Data on suspensions, expulsions, retention', and dropout rates indicate that far too many African-American ... youth are being 'distanced' from mainstream America" (p. xii). The following statistics are based on her findings:
One out of every four Black men between the ages of 20 and 29 is either in jail, on trial, or on parole; the leading cause of death among 18 to 24-year-old Black men is murdered by other Blacks; the fastest-growing homicide population is Black males between the ages of 11 and 22; the largest increases in poverty are among Blacks without a college education; more than two-thirds of all Black children in female-headed households are poor. For those children in homes where the Black mother is under 25 years of age, the poverty rate is 90%; and Black youth are suspended from schools at a rate three times that of their White counterparts.

Mir' on (1996) compares the achievement rates, school dropout rates and drug abuse as well as violent behavior in the nation's largest 47 school district. His findings are as follows: "Data provided by the Council of Great City Schools (1992) indicate that, in 1990, the school dropout rate was 39% higher in large urban school districts compared to the national average. The 32% of the inner-city public school students scored in the bottom quarter on national standardized achievement tests in reading and in math the scores ranged 27.8%. Furthermore, only 5.3% of indigent, minority inner-city students met national math standards compared to the national average of 14.9% (p. 93).

Mir' on further states that students who are poor and are ethnic minorities, frequently begin school behind their peers as measured by standardized test scores. According to him the same measures of student academic achievement
on the California Achievement Test (CAT) continue to fall further and further behind their culturally mainstreamed peers. "At the end of eighth grade, they have on the average lost two years of achievement gains, and by the end of high school, four years (p. 11)."

According to Data Volume For The National Education Goals Report (1994) in 1992, the percentage of 4th graders who met the Goals panel's performance standard in mathematics ranged from 3% for Blacks to 23% for Whites. In the same year, the percentage of 4th graders who met the Goals panel's performance standard in reading ranged from 7% for African-Americans to 31% for Whites and for 8th graders in the same area in reading ranged from 8% for African-Americans to 34% for Whites.

In addition, Bates, McWilliams, and Hahns (1987) state that it is important to show that, even though schools today are not where they need to be, the Nation at Risk (National Commission for Excellence in Education, 1989) has efforts for a new reform for equal education under way. This new reform, according to them, is based on twin goals of equity and high-quality schooling and practical meaning for African American economy and society. Bates, McWilliams, and Hahns explain that "one cannot yield to the other in principle or in practice" (p. 43). They question the efficacy of literature on subject focusings on (a) adding the new "basics" (which is more reading, more writing, math, computer instruction, and technology) to the curriculum; (b) increasing the knowledge and competence of those who wish to teach by raising requirements.
and standards for future teachers; and (c) merely declaring, but not making the
effort to see to it, that equal educational opportunities are available to all
students.

Desegregation and today's present academic condition for African-
American children is not conducive to their ready success in the world. African-
American families are community oriented. Historically, it was hard to draw a
line between family and community. Now, since this is no longer true, this line
has eroded as the African American crossed the bridge of education to
liberation. As stated previously, Wade-Gayles (1980) reminds us that
segregation proscribed narrow places for African Americans. It was the African-
American family, African-American schools, and the African-American church
combined that showed the African-American child the world to claim and to
change. In spite of the many efforts for desegregation to be effective, three
generations have witnessed its limited success. The Brown debate and its
efforts to produce positive results have not provided quality education for
African-American students. The models for educational equity, coupled with
White self-interest, have not produced the desired outcome to this date.

Given the centrality of the Elders to African-American culture and the
silencing of their voices as well as the desperate situation of African-American
children today, now is the time to seek the wisdom of African-American Elders
as a basis for establishing excellent pedagogy for African-American students.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

We needed to look at the past through new eyes in order to determine what we might learn to help address the apparently difficult educational issue of providing an excellent education for all African American children.

(L. Delpit, 1997)

Storied Research

Greene (1995) states that the process of telling and retelling stories is a liberatory experience. According to Greene, this is especially true for those who have been marginalized by the dominant culture. Greene contends that telling stories provides an opportunity for us to pose questions about and understand our lives. Both Taylor (1989) and MacIntyre (1981) state that sharing our stories help us to see our connections to others. It is these stories that help us map out our paths in life and give us directions.

Some of the African ways of knowing consisted of spirituality, storytelling, and listening to the voices of the Elders. Clifton (1985) acknowledges the most valuable gifts in the African-American culture is the wisdom of the Elders. These Elders were once honored forebears who passed on their values,
customs, and time-honored strengths from one generation to the other. Dating back to Africa, prior to the captivity of the slave market in America, it was the Elders who were the gatekeepers of the community. According to Paris (1995), Africans believe the normative value of tradition is embodied in those who have lived to see old age and are now close to the transition of the ancestral world. It is the Elders, states Paris, who are able to relate the values of the tradition to particular situations.

African-American people have grown up hearing stories—stories from mammmas, daddies, uncles, aunts, grandparents, neighbors, deacons and the old mothers of the church. This is one of the ways in which African Americans have passed on their history. I will rely heavily on "story" as a means of conveying the pedagogical practices and concerns of the Elders to be studied. "'Storying' is an excellent way of caring for the soul. It helps us see the themes that circle in our lives, the deep themes that tell the myths we live" (Moore, 1992, p. 13). "Story" has gained acceptance as an appropriate methodology for transmitting the richness and complexity of cultural and social phenomena (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Foster (1997) states that "life history and oral history and personal narratives are forms of analysis that can bring the experiences of African Americans, including teachers, into view in ways that reveal the complexity of their experiences" (p. xxi). According to her, life history research offers
important understanding into larger social process by connecting the lives of individuals to society.

Noddings and Witherell (1991) state the following about stories: "Stories are powerful research tools. They provide us with a picture of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems. They banish the indifference often generated by samples, treatments, and faceless subjects" (p. 280).

Narrative histories place a human face on the stories told by statistics. Therefore, storied narrative research is congruent with African-American culture and is a good choice for the purpose of this study.

Narrative research has traditionally (Cooper, 1969) been used in the African culture. According to Foster (1997), histories and teachings passed down orally can be used to enable others to understand the experiences of African Americans (including teachers), which allows those not directly involved to comprehend what life is like. Thus, retellings present not only the events of the lives of individuals, but also give the listener a chance—through analysis—to examine how these events helped to shape and form the lives of these individuals in reference to their position in society. First-person accounts have often been used by African Americans to capture and maintain a running account of their histories. Understandably, these accounts provide volumes of information to scholars studying the habits, rituals, and customs of African Americans and also allows African Americans the opportunity of self-realization and definition.
The method for collecting data in this study, then are qualitative and storied in nature, allowing for an in-depth examination of the lessons the Elders, through their stories, have to pass on to today's African-American youth and their teachers regarding the conditions of education for the academic success of African-American children.

Research Question

The overall questions of this study are: (1) What are the experiences of African-American Teacher-Elders who were involved in (de)segregation? and (2) What are the implications, from their life experiences, that will be beneficial to those stakeholders involved in the schooling of African-American children today for academic success?

Who Am I?

I was born and reared in the South, Maysville, Kentucky. Being the youngest of eight children, I found life-feisty and mature beyond my years, in the center of a very loving family and a nurturing southern community. I received my elementary school education in a segregated school district. Even though we lacked adequate educational materials, we did not lack effective and productive educators. I eagerly grasped knowledge in this learning environment. School was like my extended family.

Going to school at John G. Fee was exciting. This was the only school for African-Americans in our town. The school housed grades one through
twelve. Many of the classrooms consisted of more than one grade and one teacher.

I could hardly wait to begin school. Everyone was friends and we all knew one another prior to our formal years of school. But there were four very good friends who played together prior to school and have remained friends to this day—Liv—a local pediatrician, Di—an office manager in a Southern college, Anna—a consultant for AT&T in New York, and me—a educational consultant and third grade teacher for an innovative school for professional development and school renewal.

Liv’s father was the principal at our school. Her mother was our third grade teacher. Di’s aunt was our first grade teacher and her uncle was the janitor of the school. Anna’s next door neighbor—who happened to be her surrogate mother—was our fourth grade teacher. My godmother and namesake was our second grade teacher. Prior to school, we had the notion that we were going to be special. We just knew that we were going to inherit special privileges from our extended family members. In reality, we were not treated any differently from the other children even though we had special connections to the teacher. Everyone was honored and valued.

This school was not just for academic learning; it was used for social functions outside of the religious functions. We would attend ballgames, dinners, dances, and just community gatherings. We had no other place for social gatherings or entertainment outside of the theatre where we had to sit in
the balcony. Jim Crow was practiced throughout our community. These conditions did not break our spirits. We lived in our own little private world outside of the dominant culture.

There were several occasions for preschool children to attend the local Black school. One in particular was the annual school picture day. Our parents were allowed to take pre-school children to school to be photographed. This was special for us as well as our older siblings. They would love to share their younger brothers and sisters around the school. School visitation days were acceptable for younger siblings or family members who were visiting. In particular, there was the annual Fall Festival where practically the entire community would be in attendance. There would be music, food, dancing, reunions, and raffles. This school was fun, nurturing, and caring. The teachers instilled in the students that no one was a failure. There was pride in self, community, family, and efforts. A student wanted the approval of their teacher, therefore, you gave your best.

There was no running or loud talking in the hallways. Everything was organized and usually predictable. We had a structured routine. Everyone and their positions were valued. The janitor was treated with the same respect as the principal. Every adult had the right to discipline and mentor. There was no one like the janitor, Mr. J. We all loved him. It was a treat to go to the boiler room and receive treats. He would take our mittens and warm them. He would
He was a valued member of the school as well as an upright citizen in the community.

John G. Fee was a school of community. It was not only a gathering place for community members but a place where a community atmosphere was present. We were taught to share and to help one another. If a peer was having difficulty with a concept, it was the proud responsibility of those who understood the concept to assist the other.

Each day would begin with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer. Scripture was incorporated throughout the curriculum. Bible verses were memorized and practiced. Often, your classroom teacher would be your Sunday school teacher and spirituality would be celebrated from Sunday to Sunday. You knew what was expected. You completed your task and you completed it well, with no excuses. Parental contact was ongoing. If there were problems in the classroom, the teacher would make contact with them by notes, phone, or home visits. They were in charge of your well-being while you were in their care.

Our textbooks were worn out, outdated hand-me-downs from the White schools. We understood that these poor conditions were not a reflection on who we were for we were taught to stand tall and proud. Right along with Dick, Jane, and Spot, our curriculum consisted of daily lessons on Black history. We were taught to emulate those who had gone before us. Our school family taught us that our good efforts were not just for us individually, but that we had
a responsibility to help lift the race. We were taught skills as well as morals. Personal narratives were a way in which the teachers taught us morals and values. Skills were taught at the blackboard. One couldn't wait to go to the board to solve a problem or diagram a sentence. Spelling bees were always a plus. We understood the concept and were able to apply that concept to our everyday living. This is what teaching was about.

Home economics was a required subject for all females. We knew that taking care of a home was important. Etiquette was a must. There were formal teas for us to attend—white gloves and all. We knew the correct table place sitting and which eating utensil was used for what. We learned how to sew as well. One of our first projects was making an apron. This was learned prior to cooking. They were to be meticulous. Seams pressed. Stitches were to be neat, etc.

The school lunches were taken seriously. These lunches were well balanced and they served as a primary source of good food for students who might not have a nutritious meal at home. The aroma of the great food would filter through the hallways. There were no preserved ready-made meals. Our meals were prepared fresh.

The African-American community took education seriously. Parents, teachers, neighbors, and church family all instilled the value of education in the children. Education was our means to an end. Therefore, there was no time for
playing around. School was an exciting place for learning and discovering the mysteries of life. Life was a vast new world to be lived to the limit.

Our teachers were our neighbors. We worshipped together. Many times they were our Sunday School teachers. On Wednesday nights they were in attendance at Prayer meetings with our parents. They were our extended family and they had the parent-like authority to discipline us.

Then came integration, which I wrote about in Postcards of the hangings: 1869 (Thomas, 1997). What a tremendous adjustment was needed when integration took place in our school system. "School system" is a broad term. Actually, our "school system" was initiated from one building. Because of the need to serve more students in an appropriate manner, the "system" was divided into two blocks, consisting of grades one through eight and nine through twelve. In an effort to comply with federal regulations, grades nine through twelve were integrated immediately. By the time I reached eighth grade, integration was complete throughout all grades. An experience of this nature always holds the potential of being traumatic. During this period of my education, I was often oppressed or ignored and always disparaged by new negative forces due to my beautiful black skin. Anyone who knows the standard procedures of racial denigration can vouch for the fact that insults frequently vary in degree in the direct proportion with the skin tone of the victim. In my case, the deeper the pigmentation, the worse the insults. Tears and heartaches replaced the joy and enthusiasm that I once felt toward my world.
and myself. I was visible— but my needs were invisible. Consequently, my
interest in education waned. I became an introvert. The African American
teachers I once had and emulated had now vanished. They were replaced by
White teachers. I went from being "Queen of the Show" to "Janitor." I was on
foreign soil. I was now faced with extremely disturbing taunts, not only by
students who perhaps didn’t know any better, but from teachers who should
have known better.

Mid year in tenth grade, I was sought out by my White English teacher.
She heard me read and was astonished by my fluency and animation. No one
took her seriously. I described her in Postcards of the Hangings: 1869
(Thomas, 1997).

She was rather short and plump with short curly gray hair that was
always in an unruly mass. Her clothing was usually long dark dresses
that she topped off with high-top black laced up shoes. Her conversations
usually consisted of her tales of her and her friend "Jesse James." She
encouraged me to engage in the Arts. I embraced the arts as my
alternative means of communication. (p. 48)

This White teacher made a conscience choice to support me in achieving
academic success. She saw promise in me as well as my needs. I didn’t
realize that I was about to embark upon a magnificent journey.

I share this story with some hesitation. I don’t want this message to be
misconstrued, that she was "The Great White Hope" or that African American
teachers are not needed. To the contrary. African American children do need
to see teachers who look like them and who can show them the world as it is.
These teachers have the ability to walk the children through real life situations and show them how to get through life's hurdles. Nor am I not saying that White teachers cannot and should not be a part of the African American child's education, nor that I could not or should not be a part of White children's education. I am simply saying that I was one of the few fortunate ones who found someone to take an interest in me. However, there were many, many more of my classmates who had no one to allow them to have a voice.

As I matured, it was only natural for me to go into the field of education. I felt it was my duty and obligation to be that bridge for other children who need to have someone to be their advocate. Someone to nurture them. Believe in them. Begin where they are and yet have high expectations for them to be successful.

I know that there are too many African American children who will not succeed without this strong foundation. Therefore, I commit myself to stretch and sturdy my back, long enough for these children to walk safely across to liberation.

During the years of my formation, as a child, I found sheer joy in listening to the Elders and their stories. These Elders and their gems of wisdom—through storytelling—helped mold me into the individual that I am today. I learned from their example. The Elders refused to give into the oppressions of life, as African Americans, or to segregationist policies that were meant to beat them down and destroy their very being—their soul. Their racial pride, their
strong constitution, and their persistence have instilled in me the resolve to be a proud African-American female. Soon I will have the opportunity to become an Elder and pass the torch of pride, strength, and persistence to the next generation.

With recent reframing of the research endeavor as ideological in nature, there is the recognition that the perspective from which research is undertaken is significant to the results of the research. Issues of location are important in this work. One of my goals in this dissertation is to bring out the voices that have historically been undervalued. As Shujaa (1996), Dempsing and Noblit (1996), West (1994), and Mir'on (1996) point out, while African-Americans fought successfully for desegregation of schools, the implementation of desegregation was carried out by White school boards and administrators (Shujaa 1996). Thus, African-American voices were silenced—and yet, African-American teachers potentially could have helped the newly desegregated schools to support the achievement of African-American children.

Therefore, I approach this research with a sense of connection with those who are a part of the research in a narrative format of life/lines. It is Casey (1995) who tells us that the act of honoring the interpretations of narrators has an ancient and enduring history. I use the word "I" in this section and across this document in order to provide a sense of personal accountability and to demonstrate that connection.
Important aspects of my ideological stance as a researcher are my own experiences as a student in segregated schools (1st-7th grades) and desegregated schools (8th-12th grades). The centrality of this experience to my development as a researcher and as a teacher cannot be overestimated. This research would not have existed but for the experiences I had as a student in two very different public school systems.

Participants In The Study

Who Are These Women?

The present study will be based on information gathered from the perspective of four retired, African-American, Teacher-Elders who were involved in teaching during segregation. Three of these Teacher-Elders taught in the Columbus Public School system during (de)segregation. The fourth Teacher-Elder taught in Tennessee and was not involved in desegregation. They each experienced the "separate but equal" laws in the United States. These participants were raised in different environments and experienced the brand of racism that was characteristic to their area. Regardless of where they were raised, each participant is aware of the marginal position that they, and other African Americans held in the dominant society.
How I Came To Know These Women

Three of the Teacher-Elders who participated in my research are members of a national African American teaching society, The National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa Inc. The purpose of this Sorority is to stimulate professional growth among teachers; to foster true sisterhood; to promote the highest teaching ideals; and to encourage the development of the potential of youth.

They asked me to become a member based on my exemplary teaching performance, my strong involvement in advocating for children of color within the school district, and as "they" say, my youth (since the majority of them are senior citizens.) These Elders took me under their wings and freely gave me advice on how to educate African American children. I was amazed by their wisdom, their ability to nurture, their sincerity. Being in their midst was comparable to the care and support that I had in school during segregation. I was once again back home.

One of the annual events of Phi Delta Kappa is to have a Christmas luncheon. This is a time when all of the sorority sisters within our local chapter gather together for good food and good conversation. The atmosphere of December's (1997) luncheon was full of gaiety and many simultaneous conversations. At my table the women decided to share stories of their teaching careers. They were all excellent storytellers, all vying to tell their stories at the same time. There was much laughter, hand-clapping, and
"remember when" stories. Immediately through my imagination, I became an participant within their stories.

It was during that Christmas luncheon that I realized that I had to somehow capture these stories and include them in my dissertation. I shared the idea with my advisor, who also felt this would be an excellent possibility. While I was trying to formulate a way to incorporate their wisdom in this study, one of the members asked if I would participate with her in preparing the chapter’s Black History Month program based on these women’s experiences. I formulated a questionnaire based on their experiences as educators during the process of desegregation. I typed the questionnaire and forwarded them to the Sorority committee chair. She distributed them to the members during our regular meeting. Once these questionnaires were distributed, filled out, and returned to us, the Black History Chairperson shared the findings with me. They were magnificent! I realized from the extensive responses on the questionnaire that these Elders would have many rich stories to tell and that these stories had implications for education today.

The participants in my study were selected through a process that Foster (1991) calls "community nomination." What this means is that the researcher depend upon community members to judge people, places, and things within their own setting (Ladson-Billings, 1994). When I asked the other three Black History committee members who they thought would be excellent participants, they suggested the women who now are the participants for my study. I cross-
checked the nominations by asking three of the officers within the sorority who they felt would best support my study. These officers suggested the same women, based on their honesty, straightforwardness, their record of exemplary teaching within the district, their seniority status of being retired Teacher-Elders within the district, and their involvement with (de)segregation.

I shared with these three Teacher-Elders, who became three of the participants in my study that I would like to include their wisdom and beliefs in my study for the advancement of African American children's academic success. In turn, they each expressed their concern that today's African American youth are in dire need of guidance both academically and behaviorally. These participants were eager to offer their wisdom from a lifetime of practice in hopes of assisting educators so that they may create academic success for African American children.

**Why I Chose These Women**

I chose these women based on the following criteria:

1. Community nominations based on openness, forthrightness, history as excellent teachers,

2. Varying embodiments of Blackness (coloration),

3. These women were from the South where segregation may have been most keenly felt and resistance was strong, so these women could tell something about the tenacity and strength of these Black women teachers, and
4. All of these teachers were elementary teachers, which was the perspective of this study.

The fourth participant is a 95-year-old ex-school teacher who lives in Tennessee. She was referred to me by a member of the African American community who felt that this woman would be an asset to my study. This Elder was visiting the city for a few days and I was able to capture her wisdom during her brief stay.

Research Questions

The overall questions of this study are: (1) What are the experiences of African-American Teacher-Elders who were involved in (de) segregation? and (2) What are the implications, from their life experiences, that will be beneficial to those stakeholders involved in the schooling of African-American children today for academic success?

Data Collection: Interviews

Data collection consisted of two interviews with three of the participants, and a single, long interview with a fourth participant ("Vivacious Lady") who was available only for a brief period of time. The specifics of these interviews are discussed below, following a brief discussion of general procedures about data collection.

As with Ladson-Billings (1994), I devised a tentative interview protocol for both interviews for the purpose of having a good conversation with each participant. Because all the participants were knowledgeable about African-
American culture, I was able to allow for African-American norms, values, and communication styles, as does Ladson-Billings, that helped shape the dialogue. Each interview was audio and videotaped, and then transcribed immediately after the interview in order that the information would be fresh.

Collins (1991) states that a basis for concrete experience suggests that only African-American women can truly know what it is to be African-American women. According to her, this underscores the significance of two types of knowing: knowledge and wisdom. For most African-American women, those who have lived through the experiences about which they claim to be experts are more believable and credible than "those who have merely read or thought about such experiences" (p. 208). According to Ladson-Billings (1994), teaching is best explained by those who teach.

Dialogue is central to the interviewing process that I used. According to Ladson-Billings (1994), dialogue implies talk between two subjects, not the speech of subject and object. hooks (1989) states that "dialogue is a humanizing speech, one that that challenges and resists domination" (p. 131). hooks (1991) also states that what is important about dialogue with other African Americans (based on Toni Morrison's (1987) phrase), is that they are able to "Give voice to the 'unspeakable' because there are so many aspects of Black life that we talk about in private that we don't really find talked about in books or essays" (p. 5). Ladson-Billings states that by "talking with" rather than "talking to" other African-American women, African-American women have the
opportunity to deconstruct the specificity of their own experiences and make connections with the collective experiences of others. She continues stating that the "give and take of dialogue makes struggling together for meaning a powerful experience in self-definition and self-discovery" (p. 155). Ideally, data collection consists of a transcendence of what is verbalized to include what can be collected also from the "inferred." African Americans tend to "read" each other well. Faces, hands, and bodies all work together to help illustrate what is being said (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

My comfort in allowing the interviews to be dialogues (instead of interrogations) allowed the women to feel comfortable and therefore contributed to the quality of the data I collected.

Interview One

Prior to the initial interview, I asked the participants where they would like for me to conduct our sessions. Two of the women requested their private homes, one requested the Metropolitan Library Branch near her home, and the last participant requested the home of her son and daughter-in-law, where she was staying for a brief visit.

With each participant, we conversed with one another on a very informal basis before beginning the interview. Conversing was important because it built rapport, trust, and allowed each of us to be put at ease.
We continued to converse as I set up my interviewing equipment, a video camera and tape recorder. The conversation eased into the interview questions. These questions were still in the format of conversations.

During the first interview—conversation— the following questions were asked:

1. Tell me something about your background. Where and were you born? Tell me something about your family history. Where were you educated? Where and when did you begin teaching? Why the teaching profession? When and where did you retire?

2. How would you describe your teaching philosophy? What do you believe "works?"

3. If you could revamp teacher education so that teachers would be more effective with African American students, what changes would you make?

4. As an educator during segregation, what was your role as educator inside and outside the classroom?

5. How did you handle the mismatch between what you wanted to teach and what the administration or policy makers expected (for example, curricular mandates, philosophies)?

6. What do you feel was lost during segregation? What do you feel was gained?
7. What can we learn from the experiences of African Americans during segregation and the desegregation process? Why is it important?

8. What is your legacy to educators regarding education and African American children?

There were personal moments of laughter and tears. I responded to each as I would to any friend or Elder. We held hands during emotional periods. We laughed with one another. We connected as one. These stories had breaking points where the participants (those in their private homes) would leave the area of the interviewing and share artifacts, photographs, histories, and other personal items with me.

Due to the fourth participant's brief visit in the city for one day, I viewed the opportunity of interviewing her as a perfect opportunity to get her perspective on teaching African American children during her era for academic success. Her interview was extended to cover both interview sessions into one.

**Interview Two: The Questions**

There are two parts to this section of interviewing. The first part deals with the second set of questions and the second part relates to the metaphoric construct from the literature. The participants who live in the city allowed me to continue the second interview in the same locations. The procedure of conversation and setting the equipment up were in the same format as interview one. The following interview—conversation—questions were as follows:
1. How would you define education today? How should it be?

2. What does the word "struggle" mean to you? How do you incorporate struggle as a natural ingredient for life?

3. How do we get our African American children to recognize who they are?

4. How do we instill self-confidence in our African American children?

5. Do you see a weakening of Black churches? Black families? Black institutions? Black infrastructures?

6. How do you suggest we place our "higher power" in the center of race relations?

7. How do you feel that we can best get our African American children to think in terms of what can really satisfy them, not momentarily, but deep satisfaction?

8. What do you see as the missing links regarding African American children and education?

9. What are some of the relationships of spirituality and education? How has this changed over time?

10. How did the schools and community interact with one another during segregation? How did this change over time?
Figure 3.1. Metaphoric Construct of Literature review.
Following the interview questions during the second interview, I presented the Teacher-Elders with a metaphoric construct representing the relationships between African Americans, liberation, and education that came from the literature read for this study.

In this section I described both the rationale for using this metaphor and how I developed the metaphor.

The use of a concrete representation of a metaphor in interviews has a precedence in the work of Cris Warner (and Pat Enciso's work, which Warner mentions):

During the video viewing of the individual drama activities, a diagram of this spiral of engagement was given to the subjects so that they could indicate to the researcher how deeply they interpreted their engagement in the drama. As the debriefing interview progressed, the participants observed the video and moved shapes on the diagram, representing themselves in the drama to show where they were in the relation to other participants and to the unfolding action of the drama. This technique is similar to that used by Enciso (1990), who conducted research focusing on the nature of engagement in reading; its use was suggested by her study. Through the process of interviewing, viewing videos, and creating and moving cut-out shapes, subjects were able to demonstrate and later discuss (with references to the cut-out shapes) the subtle relationships, feelings, predictions, concerns, and memories they experienced at they participated in the drama (p. 63).

Concrete representations can help people discuss abstract relationships. I used this method because I wanted the women to have an easy way to deal with difficult abstract relations. The use of metaphors is a common linguistic characteristic of African Americans, as Hoover (1987) points out (p. 90).
metaphor made it easier to identify and discuss relationships between concepts. It helped the Teacher-Elders and me to visualize where the African American community was in the process of liberation. While I didn't see the metaphor as a difficult construct for the women to grasp, given the bulk of information that had already been given to me during these two interviews, however, I did feel it was part of my research responsibility to share with these women what I had learned in the literature and to see if it matched up with what they were thinking to see if I could metaphorically capture what they were saying and what the literature was saying about the academic success of African American children prior to desegregation.

I chose to use the metaphor of education being a bridge to liberation for the African American community. The metaphor of a bridge has a powerful history in the African-American culture. Rivers have historically meant a way of obtaining freedom for African-Americans during slavery. The Ohio River, for instance, was one of the last barriers to freedom. Those ancestors who were enslaved could visualize this landmark but they also knew that the only way to get to that physical destination was by crossing that mighty Ohio River. African Americans have waded in waters—high waters, muddy waters, cold waters, and sometimes even drowning waters to get to that freedom. A bridge across this river would have been a connection—a vital link to freedom.
The African-American struggle for education is part of the struggle for equality and liberation. In this sense, education becomes a means, a link to liberation. A bridge to liberation.

Bridges are worthless or would collapse without the support of cables or some way of connection to the shores they link. Just what these cables might be in the metaphor of the bridge as education is suggested by the literature (re)view in chapter 2: family, community, authority and spirituality. All of these factors contributed to the strength of the bridge and to its ability to link the two shores.

After the second round of interview/conversational questions, I presented each participant a copy of my metaphorical construct of a bridge. I introduced the bridge to each participant as a summary of the literature that supported my study. At this time I had precedence for story. People who tell stories, specifically, African Americans, trust one another. My intent in the first interview was to establish a level of trust with the participants that would allow me to ask those very hard questions in the second interview. The second interview allowed me to take on a more research oriented stand and share the metaphoric construct which allowed me to facilitate the conversation that I had with each of the participants. I framed the conversation such that each could critique the metaphor, such as: What do you think is missing from the literature? Do you agree with what the literature might be saying? How would you position these cables? Do you feel this is a fair representation of where we are as
African-Americans and their struggle to liberation? Each had suggestions to offer. It was my intent to gather them as partners to construct meaning out of their experience. I used the visual metaphor to act as a prompt and catalyst to stimulate thinking about the academic success of African-American children. Their responses are woven into the discussion in Chapter 4.

Data Analysis

Data analysis took two forms: Case study and analysis across the four cases. I chose to do case studies for this dissertation for the following reasons, based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) discussion of case studies:

Case studies build on readers tactic knowledge, presenting a holistic and lifelike description that is like those that the readers normally encounter in their experiences of the world.

Case studies are the primary vehicle for emic inquiry. This type of reporting is best suited for the reader in that the inquirer tends toward a reconstruction of the respondents' constructions.

Case studies are effective vehicles for demonstrating the interplay between the interviewer and the interviewees.

Case studies allow the reader the opportunity to examine for internal congruity.

Analytic Methodology

After I transcribed the data from both interviews, I analyzed the transcripts for the major themes that appeared to be common across the women's stories. I categorized each paragraph of the women's responses according to themes that emerged from this data set. After I completed each individual interview in this way, I combined these interviews into one large
document and sorted them by the categories that I had assigned them. This sorting allowed me to find the themes that were common across the women's stories. I used the table function of Microsoft Word 97 for Windows to sort and store the data.

Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility entails the degree to which the interpretations constructed by the respondents mirror those presented by the researcher (Lincoln & Gubba, 1985). Patton (1990) elaborates on the same belief and pinpoints this issue into three questions for the achieving a credible study:

1. What techniques and methods were used to ensure the integrity, validity, and accuracy of the findings?
2. What does the researcher bring to the study in terms of qualifications, experience, and perspective?
3. What paradigm orientation and assumptions undergird the study? (p. 461)

In answering question one, in the process of gathering my data, I audio and videotaped to capture more than mere sounds of people's voices. Furthermore, I sought participants who have integrity. According to the sorority members of the Phi Delta Kappa, Gamma Phi Alpha Chapter, these participants have a reputation for being honest and forthright. Finally, when two or more of the participants brought up the same issues, I used the data of each to support the other.
In answering the second question, I observed as an "insider". According to Bishop (1992), an insider perspective is more likely to give authentic view of what members of the cultural group believe to be true about themselves, whereas an outside perspective gives the view of how others see the particular groups' beliefs and behaviors. Living within the culture leads to an understanding of the distinctive nuances of the culture.

In answering the third question, narrative (re)search is congruent with knowledge sharing traditions within the African-American culture. Therefore, the design of this research did not get in the way of the data collection process.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the assumptions from which I have developed my research methodology and the data analysis techniques used to answer my research questions. In the next chapter, I will present my research findings.
CHAPTER 4
DATA PRESENTATION AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Most of these old ladies become reflective,
so much that they become living history books.
They tell stories and sing songs of their historic past. They string together
praise-names and retell the happenings of their community over and over
again.

(Buchi Emecheta in Gumbo Ya-Ya)

Introduction

According to Foster (1997), histories and teachings passed down orally
can be used to enable others to understand the experiences of African
Americans (including teachers), which allows those not directly involved to
comprehend what it is like. Thus, retellings present not only the events of the
lives of individuals, but also give the listener a chance—through analysis—to
examine how these events helped to shape the lives of these individuals in
reference to their position in society. First-person accounts have often been
used by African Americans to capture and maintain a running account of their
histories. Understandably, these accounts provide volumes of information to scholars studying the habits, rituals, and customs of African Americans and also allow African Americans the opportunity of self-realization and definition.

I chose to write the first part of this chapter with participants speaking in first person. During the process of desegregation, these women's voices were largely undervalued - references to this being made in Dempsing & Noblit (1996), West (1996); Shujaa (1996), and Mir'on (1996). Silenced. I would like to honor these Teacher-Elders at this crucial time, when America is in the midst of major educational reformation, to allow their voices to be heard and properly valued. These women have such a way with words that I felt it would be a disservice to them and possibly even disrespectful to try to "interpret" what they have to offer by "rephrasing" their words before analysis. It is these voices that one will have the opportunity to hear as they relate their lives and experiences concerning education (Casey, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Foster, 1997).

I chose to substitute pseudonyms for the real names of these participants to give the reader a more vivid picture of these ladies as they tell their case stories. The first lady I call Vivacious because she is sprightly, lively, and truly animated for her age, as well as very experienced not only in teaching but in the lessons of life that were quite harsh during her professional career. Even during the interview she demonstrated a sense of humor and was able to discuss the hardships of the past without begrudging anyone, and exhibited progressive thinking even during her time of retirement. Today it is more
acceptable to avoid these hardships and struggles that she experienced and step back from the greater good of community service by claiming to be a "victim." Her Spirituality was apparent in her professional life in that despite any personal hardships she may have encountered, her thinking and actions were geared toward the greater good of properly preparing and educating African American students to function as literate, productive citizens. The Vivacious Lady would have a difficult time understanding the modern concept of "victimization."

The second lady I call Free Spirited Lady, since she truly demonstrated that "what came up, came out." She was a risk-taker by all means. She told the facts and did not offer to sugarcoat her words or actions. Just like Harriet Tubman, this lady "didn't take no stuff." Her wisdom, her honesty, and her spunk readily appealed to me. If ever there were a Black Southern Belle, this lady would hold the title. I was fascinated by the stories she shared regarding her childhood. Also, I was fascinated by the method her parents used to shield her and her siblings from racial ridicule. Her parents pointed out that those in positions of authority perceived them as a problem, while those with the power were actually the ones with "a problem." Wisely, her parents explained life situations in an appropriate manner so as not to cause undue fear during their critical developmental. Never did her parents speak to their children with the idea that they were denied rights because of their race.
The third lady I call Resolute Lady. I adopted this name for her because of her determination and persistence. There is a common thread that goes through all of the ladies of this generation, the Resolute Lady's determination was shown in how she provided educational materials for her students even though none were available officially; her persistence was demonstrated by ensuring that her students fully understood academic concepts.

The fourth lady I call Stalwart Lady. Her strong educational beliefs were sturdy, vigorous, and tough. These characteristics tell us that her generation obviously put more value into spirituality than what is apparent today. Her success is obviously due to her family's strong belief in formal schooling leading to a productive life through self-reliance. This lady is clearly a product of a positive family dynamic.

Why "GRITS"?

Grits is a Southern staple that can be used to supplement any meal. Generally, it is the Southern staple at breakfast; the first meal of the day to get you started. In addition, my aunt used to say, "Girl, get some grit in your crawl!" which meant, to stand up for myself and be heard. To me, this is what these women stand for. They stood up and spoke out for what they believed, and they remained a "staple" part of whatever scene they were in, until desegregation. Regrettfully, this was a time in African-American history when their voices were not heard, for whatever reason. This research finally gives them that opportunity to share their experiences with a new generation.
During our first interview, one of the participants was wearing a fancy T-shirt that had the inscription "GRITS" on it in gold lettering. Spelled out, the lettering stood for "Girls Reared in the South." This reminded me of the Southern cuisine of grits. These ladies, like the Southern staple food, reminded me that they, too, were the staple of my research. It is their stories and experiences, as Southern women and Teacher-Elders, that once provided education for and sustained and encouraged African-American children in their charge.

The Women's Case Stories

This section represents the four case stories of the Teacher-Elders who made this study possible. These case stories are an amalgamation of face-to-face interviews, eye contact, and audio and video taping. Each story allows the participant to speak in the first person. Prior to their stories, I will give a brief, written description of each participant. Each case story focuses on the overall research questions: (1) What are the experiences of the African-American Teacher-Elders who were involved in (de)segregation? and (2) What are the implications of their life experiences that will be beneficial to those stakeholders who are involved in the schooling of African-American children for academic success? This section will provide readers the opportunity to read each of their personal stories relevant to my questions and to this study. In the beginning of each of their stories, readers will find a brief description of each
participants. After these ladies introduce themselves, I will do a research analysis on the data collected.

**Girls Reared In The South: Case #1 The Vivacious Lady**

In struts the 95-year-old participant, free of any devices to assist her mobility. She is stylishly thin. Her complexion is light in coloration. Her hair is silver and curly. She is wearing a white blouse, bright yellow slacks, and non-corrective black shoes. She gracefully sits in her chair and smiles at me, waiting for me to tell her exactly why I am interested in her life story. She states:

I was born in Denatobie, Mississippi, in 1903. They say I am 95. Figure that out. I was named after my Granddaddies. I'm sorry to say this, but they both were White men: my Daddy's Daddy and my Mama's Daddy. My Mama and Daddy both went to Lane College and got married. Must not had much sense. My Daddy died when I was a little, bitsy thing—5 months old. My Grandmother raised me because my Daddy died and my Mama was real light, and a friend of hers went up to Chicago and passed for White, so she sent for my Mama. My Mama couldn't get no job there in Pontentaw with no Black baby. She went to Chicago to live and passed as White. She and her friend got jobs there in Chicago as White gals. My Mama worked in a drug store, at first, and then she worked as head of taking of picture show strips. Her
job was to see to it that they were in good working condition.

Quite naturally, she couldn't take no Black baby, so my
Grandmother, my Daddy's Mama, reared me and every summer
somebody would carry me to Chicago to my Mama. I got to go
and see all the free movies I wanted to.

My Grandmother, whom I called Mama, raised me. She
had three children: my Daddy and two sisters. They all three had
White Daddies. My Mama's Daddy was White, too. When I was
growing up, the children were not allowed to come to my house to
play, because my Grandmother had a White man. But, all of us
went to school together, and we got along just fine. My
Grandmother worked hard. She wasn't no slave now! She ran a
boarding house. She took in washing and ironing. Also, she
milked cows. She did all of that to make a living. You know, I
never lived in a rented house. Now, isn't that something? My
Granddaddy bought her that seven-room house. She rented it out
and folks that came to pick cotton would come and stay there.

My Daddy had two sisters, and I don't know how they got to
college to save my soul! One of them accepted me as hers. She
was my guardian. She went to Oklahoma to teach school. She
was one of the top teachers there, too. I stayed there in
Pontentaw with my Grandmother. Now, Pontentaw didn't have no
high school there for Negroes. The White folks, now, they had a high school. The Negroes had to go to Memphis to high school. I had to go to Memphis and stay with my other aunt to go to the Negro school. Memphis is about a couple of hours from Pontentaw where my Grandmother lived. I graduated from high school in Memphis. I was third in my class. We had to use White folks' books, when they were through using them. When the newness had worn off of them, or a new edition came out, the books were sent to the Negro schools. Yes, that is the way it used to be.

I went to Le Moine College and met my husband there. That's where I stayed. I married there and had three children and I am still there. I married young. Guess I wanted to be a Mama. I finished college after I married. My husband got real sick. He was a letter carrier. He got real sick, so I had to go to work to get some money. There wasn't much a Negro could do unless they wanted to be White folks' servants, or nurse White folks' children, so I decided that I wanted to teach school. This was about the best thing a Negro could do—teach school—or work in one of the two Negro banks. There were two Negro banks there and a Negro store. So, I went back to get my teaching certificate. I taught fourth grade until I retired. Now, you know I didn't teach
White folks' children, just Negro children. Where I live was a big little town. I was in the county seat. I was in the biggest towns there was.

Whites and Negroes didn't mix together, which was fine. They stayed in their place, and we stayed in ours. We got along fine! Beautiful! Every now and then, you might find a house on the borderline. We had our Negro churches, of course, Methodist and Baptist. I am just a plain, old Methodist. They had a Colored Methodist, but I was just plain, old Methodist. The White people's churches ruled our churches. There was one big leader. We were separate with one ruler.

When I taught, I wanted my children to learn in school, so they could make a living and have a better life. Education has been the only bridge to freedom. What other bridge would we have to travel on, if it weren't for education, so that we could get a good job? You have to go to school to get a good education and that takes money. We had to use the books after the White folks got finished with them, or when they decided they couldn't use them anymore. We were accustomed to it, though. Now, our White folks didn't tear up their books. In the little big town that I came from, everybody wanted their children to be educated.
There were only a very few who didn't go to school. We had truant officers to keep them off of the streets.

Later years, White and Black tried to get together and make a better town. It worked okay. The relationship between African Americans and Whites got better in the later years. One or two got married. Now, we have a Black superintendent and a Black mayor.

I didn't teach during desegregation. I don't think no one lost a thing during desegregation. We got White folks' books, so we had the same things they did. They were just a little old. I believe the White teachers were just as dedicated as the Black teachers. They had Black children, and they wanted their scores to go up. They didn't slack none. I had a White lady that taught next door to me, and she worked as hard as I did.

The kids accepted me as their role model. They would say, "Oh, that's Ms. [her name]!" Teaching was wonderful! You had contact with the parents and great grandparents. Sometimes, the kids would bring notes to school to give to me asking for money to pay their rent. I would give it to them. Most of the time, I got the money back. We were like family. One of my fourth-grade student's Mother died recently, and he saw me at the funeral. He said, "I'll never forget you and what you did for me. You made me
what I am today." That was enough of what I needed! He makes pictures. That is what he is doing. A photographer. He's making a good living. I was proud of most of them. There were some I like to wring their necks off. I had a great relationship with the parents. Some of them called me "cousin."

In school, we had prayer every morning. You know, they cut that out! The kids would select who was going to do devotion. I don't know what they do now. All these little boys out there don't have that teach them to be religious-oriented. About half don't go to church and the little fellows need to be taught a little something about God. They say they took it all away—no prayer, singing, nothing like that. Today, we are going to have to ask the Man Upstairs to help! That is the way I feel. You're going to have to go one or two generations back—not too far though—to see what you can do with the Mamas. Now, if she is shacking up with so-and-so, you had better not bother. You'd better leave that alone.

Today, our children can go anywhere they want. He can go to the church he wants. School. Anywhere, in my hometown.

Education, to me, means getting a good job that will give you everything in life to make a good life. We need to tell our Black children who they are. I don't think there is too much telling now. They observe it all around. Spirituality and education need
to go hand-in-hand. My hopes are that they are going to get better. One thing I'd love to see you do is get to know the parents first. If you can get in with the parents, you have it made. You got to get that friendship before you get that support, and ask that Man Above to help you.

Girls Reared In The South: Case #2 Free-Spirited Lady

As I ring the doorbell to her house, she graciously opens the door and asks me to please move my car off the street and place it in the rear of her driveway. She is dressed in white slacks, gold sandals, and a bright peach T-shirt. She is very fair in coloration. When I first met her, I thought she was a White woman patronizing my sorority. This shirt had the outline of a woman wearing a wide-brimmed hat with gold letters spelling the word "GRITS" inscribed above the picture. With the letters, the words were spelled out stating, "Girls Reared In The South." She held the door open for me and allowed me to enter her home, which was decorated with Black Art. She directed me to her family room that was full of beautiful family portraits and memorabilia. She proudly introduced me to her family through their portraits. Her tone of voice was very soft as she told me about each one.

My Mother had five children and then my aunt died, who had one girl and adopted a boy. The boy was an albino, but a genius. And, then, we had cousins in the country. From time to time, one or two of them were at our house. That made, at all
times, in our house seven to eight children. We had plenty of reading materials. I don't know where we got it from, except that Mama cooked for White people, and she brought it from their house. Either the old magazines and things like that, but we, all of us, could read before we went to school. We could write, too. We had spell-downs every Saturday. My Dad would line us all up. He was a marvelous storyteller. He only went to the fifth grade, but he told a story like he was a participant. He would say he was crossing the Alps with a group of people and, then, when he got tired of us, he would just have us sitting on the edge. We would then ask him, "What happened next?" And, he would tell us, "I'd left about that time." That was as far as he was going that day. It was amazing how he knew the pronunciation of words, not having been to school. I find that most of those people in that era, my Mother and my Father, were good at counting. He could do math and everything in his head quicker than we could with pencil and paper. But, we had a lot of reading materials. We were not allowed to go and use the libraries. We had our schools, but they had limited books that we had to pay for and they were old. My Mother saw to it that we had a lot of reading materials and, I suppose, she got it from these people she worked for. I never did question about that, but I just knew we had.
I was the second child of five. There were three girls and two boys. The way my Mother did it, I had two brothers who went to the Army and, so, they were able to take care of themselves. They came out with the GI Bill. My Mother sent my albino cousin to Tuskegee, because she didn't know what to do with him. He was a genius. She had sent him to Stillman College, which was in walking distance. That's where the other cousins who came up from the country went. They all stayed with my Mother. One day, the President of Stillman came down to our house and told my Mother that my albino cousin would not be able to teach, because the kids would make fun of him. My Mother told him that he would have to tell him [the cousin] that, since he had made all "A's." The teachers should have done a better job of advising him. So, she sent him to Tuskegee for the other two years. They did show him how to fix his hair, and they provided him with corrective glasses and placed him in a job when he graduated.

I had an older sister. I was the second one. The way my Mother did it was, when we finished college, we had to send the others. That was all there was to it. I sent for my cousin. She had a very high IQ. She had a scholarship to Talidaga College, and she went two years. I said, "Someone as smart as she was should have more advantages." In the meantime, I was here and

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I sent for her. She went another two years at Ohio State. It seemed to be a mistake. She was lost there. She didn't know how to use the library. She had no one to guide her or anything like that. But, her grades were good, and she graduated on time. This was in the 40's. They [names the college] asked her why didn't she go back down South and get a job? She went to work for one of the prosecuting attorneys downtown here. She didn't understand racism here that well, because it was hidden. When we were down South, we were not allowed to go to places where we would be ostracized. My Mother used to tell us that the food in those places was not fit to eat. She would tell us things like that. My Dad wouldn't permit us to ride the busses. Now, he would ride it. He was so White-looking that nobody could tell what he was with those blue eyes. I used to ask him if he was passing for Black. My Mother would not let us associate with poor Whites that lived near us, but she did allow us to associate with the wealthy White kids that lived near us. This was her segregated idea. She thought that, socially and economically, we were just a little bit higher than the poorer White folks' kids. In the South, they didn't (in our world—Black social world) put emphasis on how much money you had. It was morals. The millionaire that my Mother worked for had higher morals than anybody. He was a rich
person that she had heard about or anything like that, and he
taught his children that way.

My younger sister went to two or three Black schools and
was not satisfied. She got married. We decided that it would be
better for her to go back to school and finish. In the meantime,
she had two children. So, we got together and decided that it
would be best for her to go back to school, and that she could do
whatever she wanted to do about her husband. She sent him
back. She was living in the "projects." My brother paid her rent
and my sister, Helen, bought all their clothes. Sara and I paid her
tuition, and she went back to Stillman, which was a four-year
school now. She finished Summa cum laude. Then, she went to
the University of Alabama for a Master's degree. That's the way
my Mother did it.

What really bothered me about Alabama was that people
couldn't get jobs, and they couldn't go to school where they
wanted. I remember the lady my Mother worked for asked my
Mama if I could come and work for her when I got out of college.
She said she would pay me thirty-five dollars a week. That was
big money then. My Mama told her no and that was the reason
she was sending me to college, so that I wouldn't have to work for
folks like her. My certificate was in "home economics." When I
came here, I could only teach home economics, but it was filled so I would have to wait until she died to get that position, because they only had one position. I went to work in an aircraft plant here. I was considered an electrician. My husband said that I couldn't put a bolt in place. He never liked that and was after me all the time to go back to school and get my teaching certificate. I went to the board because I knew I had enough hours. He [superintendent] wouldn't even acknowledge me because he saw on my application that I was "colored." He wouldn't acknowledge me, but I went ahead and took a seat and waited for him to respond to my presence. He suggested I go to a Black suburban school here. I refused and told him to go there! I had just as much education as he did!

My Mother did have foresight. She made us take education courses, along with home economics, because she knew we needed something else. If we couldn't get one kind of job, then we could get another kind, she thought.

My husband was in the police department. Everyone knew him because he had risen so far. He was a very smart man. They were on civil service and each test he took he was almost first, so they had to promote him. They had one chief and one inspector. That's the way the city was set up. Then, he passed
the test second. This was in the 50's, and he was the first Black
city inspector in the United States. They wrote him up in Ebony
and all of that.

I worked here first in a school where there were both
African Americans and Whites. This was before desegregation. It
wasn't what you call "integrated." The poor Whites, who had lived
on the west side of town, were displaced, so they had to go to this
one school where I taught. They were in a "rebuilding" program.
They went there until they were able to move. During
desegregation, I was sent to an all-White school, and I mean all
White! There wasn't even a colored janitor. They sent me there
because of my coloration.

You couldn't tell that I was Black. I was as White as they
were. During our first PTA meeting at this school, it was
overflowing because everyone wanted to see who this "colored"
teacher was. When the principal introduced me, I stood up,
turned around, and all these people were hanging out the door, so
I turned around so that they all could get a good look at me. They
were really nice. Being in the Black school, what we would do,
was visit the children's home. I did this [visited homes] at this
school. They [Whites] were surprised! I wanted them to get to
know me, and I wanted to see what they had that was different
from our children. They had things, like books, all around. They
took their kids on vacations and out to eat at least once a month.
Our children didn't have these opportunities. Eventually, I went
back to the schools that had our children because I thought I
could do the most good there.

Girls Reared In The South: Case # 3  Resolute Lady

This seventy-plus participant pulls up to the library parking lot next to me
in her bright, red sporty, 1998 Camry with gold trim. She is smiling as her car
windows are rolling up. She is wearing a green and white cotton blouse and
green slacks with brown shoes. Her white hair is cut into a short "Afro." The
reflection of the sun is on her brown skin. She greets me with a hug and leads
me into the library into a section where she sits in front of a black and white
portrait of Elijah Pierce, a famous African-American artist. She begins her
story.

I was born in Sampson, Alabama, which is about 100 miles
southeast of Montgomery, Alabama. Sampson is a little city that
sits between Alabama and Georgia. The soldiers, when they
were called, were sent to Ft. Benning, Georgia, to be enlisted in
the service. I was the oldest sibling of five children that my
parents had.

We never had a kindergarten class for the Negro children
in Sampson. I remember there was a little girl by the name of
[names the schoolmate]. She was about two years older than I, and my parents let me walk to school with her to keep her from going by herself. I never got the idea that you ate at school. I would always bring my lunch back home. When I got to the first grade, my teacher would eat my lunch until, one day, she decided to tell my Mother that I didn't eat lunch. She, also, told her that I never took off my book-bag. I was so proud of that 49-cent book-bag that I never took it off, even when I played. I shall never forget it. We had very few books because we only got books from the White schools. Some of the pages were torn. I never knew what book I had, unless I could tell from the thickness of the book, or opened the page to see, because they would use the books two, three years before we got them. Very seldom did you see a book with a back. When I bought my first new book and opened it and heard the cracking sound of the newness to it, that was like music to my ears! How proud I was that I had a brand new book! I can't remember what kind of book it was. It could have been a music book because I liked music, and my parents wanted me to take lessons. We had a couple, a man and his wife, that taught music theory, since there were no pianos in Black homes. We lived diagonally across from the church. My Grandmother would keep the key to the church. I remember once waiting for my
Grandmother to come on, and she wanted me to get the key and bring it to her. We walked together just to put the key outside the nail on the front porch. Now, why did we have to do that? I never thought about it much until I got older, and it became so funny. Everybody that wanted the key knew where Miss Lillian kept the key—right outside on the front porch, on the nail. We would go to the church and practice music. We had a piano there. We had to depend on a lady who came to teach piano all the way from Birmingham, which was about 200 miles. There was no motel there, so they had to room with us. There still isn't a motel in Sampson. We do have a traffic light, though.

Sometimes, people were paid with food. I remember one of my Mother's classmates paid him with food to teach. Sometimes, they would get so far behind, that they would give him things like homemade syrup, just whatever they could get. He said he always chose a family with a lot of kids, because he knew they would have a lot of food.

Going back to the classroom, now in the second grade, I sat in the front row because I was so thin, and I wasn't very tall. Most of the younger children had to sit in the back. I remember that I broke my arm once playing Springboard—that's what we called it. You would place two boards down and one would jump
on one end while the other jumped on the other end. A boy ran across the board and threw me up in the air, and I came down on my left arm. It hurt so badly, that I stood by the building with tears coming down my face. The teacher never discovered that I was in pain or hurt. When I got home that afternoon, I didn't know what to do about it. My Mother asked me why was I standing by the porch all by myself. I told her that something was wrong with my arm. I explained to her how I hurt my arm, and she took me uptown to the doctor (White), and he put it in a sling for me. I was supposed to be in a church concert to sing. My parents asked me if I felt like I could still do it, and I said yes. We had to travel and, since there were no hotels, I had to stay with a lady by the name of Miss [Lady's name]. I remember having to sleep with a lot of quilts because the only heat was from the fireplace, and you might not have any heat in the room, so they loaded you up with quilts. Anyway, I got up and sang at the church a solo called, "It Pays To Serve Jesus." I got a standing ovation. Whenever we had something like this, there was always plenty of food. We would go outside for dinner under the big shade tree, and they would spread the table. I remember that time that I was so hungry. But, my Mother was gathering songs for me to sing while others were saying, "pass the chicken, pass the cake." I said, "Oh Lord!" I
wanted to eat, but she was more interested in getting music for me to sing. When we did get a chance to eat, all we had was leftovers. After we ate, we went back home and, then, she would start on me the next week with these songs. I had to be patient. I lived through it because there was no way out. I used to tell my students that, "If you don't use what you have, you will lose it." Because I stopped singing when I was about nine or ten years old, I would tell them now I can't sing, but I make a good number in the choir.

Mama would get old magazines and, honest to goodness, she would go and teach us math out of them, reading out of them and even spelling. At that time, we didn't have a library. Mama would read the Bible to us, talk about that, and explain it to us. Then, we went to Sunday School.

I remember [teacher's name], my fifth-grade teacher. She was so hard on the boys. Once [names a classmate] had done something, and she brought him in front of the class, so we would know not to do that. I can't remember what it was that he had done. All of our grades from 1st to 12th were in the same building. The principal never had an office with a table. He had a corner in the 12th-grade room. You know, that stayed with me when I was teaching. I never used a desk. If we got a
blackboard, it was one from the White school. They would give it to the higher grades. I remember that, if anybody built anything through the summer and had boards left, the PTA men would get those boards and paint them, so we could use them for blackboards. It was difficult to try to read the writing that was on them. You would almost have to guess what it was, or ask a teacher. You were afraid to ask the teacher too much, because it looked like she would be annoyed that you were asking.

You graduated from the ninth grade. First time, I had on stockings. They were just as wrong in color for me as anything, but I was so proud that I was wearing stockings! We managed to live through going to school in the same building, with the conditions like they were. We had about 30 or 40 kids to start out with, but they dropped out for different reasons. There were four of us in my high school graduating class. Instead of having a valedictorian and a salutatorian, they didn't dare say that we will give it to one of them because their relationship was where they were living. The teachers were living in homes at the time with families.

My Dad wanted me to go to Spellman to college. I didn't care about going anywhere, but I knew I had to go. My Mother and Dad went to college for one year and slipped off and got
married. Of my Dad's two sisters, one taught for 45 years and the baby-sister taught for 43 years. They raised what they ate, and the one that taught for 45 years just died this February. We never heard of a counselor in school.

So, the only place I could go was to Selma University. That was a junior college, and it was supported by the Black churches. I went there and met other girls and boys who had done the same things. We had a dorm. The two boys from my graduation class went to Alabama State, which was in Montgomery, Alabama. It was a four-year school. I would go to the dormitory and stand there for 30 or 40 minutes looking in the building. One day, the matron of the building called me to come in, and she asked me, "What is it you do every day when you go over and stand there?" I said, "Those typewriters fascinate me." We never had a typewriter before. My Dad found out, and he said, "Baby, I can't afford it, but I am going to get it for you," and he bought it the next year.

I liked Selma. We were like a family there. When I got ready to go to college, it was just like a funeral, or people going to a fire. They knew I was going somewhere to get more education. They brought what they could to help me (little towels, little wash cloths, and toothpaste). They brought it up there and stood
outside. It was just a yard full of people. After graduation there, I went to Alabama A&M. It was my duty to graduate and get a good job and help send the other kids. It was a religious thing to do then. If you were the oldest one, you had quite a bit of responsibility. That's where I learned leadership—right at home. My aunt sent for me the summer I graduated to come and stay with her and my uncle. She wanted me to go to The Ohio State University and experience a "mixed" college. I went, even though I had no intentions of staying. I didn't want to go because I was going to go back to Alabama and work. I had enough work in Alabama. No foresight at all. I did go and even graduated with my Masters. I went back home and taught and helped send the others to school. Everyone went except one brother who went to vocational school.

You know what I did? They put this in the newspaper back home, too. At the school where I was teaching, we didn't have anything, and I even had to share a piece of chalk with the others. We would borrow back and forth. We did this with one eraser, too. We asked the kids to bring in a soft cloth from home to use as an eraser, and we would just share things like that. So, I said to the children one day, "All the cotton isn't gone because all the kids that ride the bus (the ones that lived in the country) haven't
started school yet. So, who would like to go Saturday and pick scraps of cotton? I will give you half of what you make and then we will buy supplies with the other half." They all wanted to go, and I think we got enough. I went to Montgomery and bought supplies. They wrote it up in the paper, "Teacher Not Too Dignified To Pick Cotton."

I came back here and went to work in the Columbus Public School System. At the time, the school I taught at was in a poor district with poor African Americans and poor Whites that were bussed to my school even before desegregation. During desegregation, I was a principal at a school where we were paired with another school that had poor Whites and poor African Americans. All the kids did was fight with one another.

**Girls Reared In The South: Case # 4 The Statwart Lady**

After I rang her doorbell, this seventy-plus lady opened the door and welcomed me into her home with a bright smile. She is wearing a blue denim, sun-back dress that had a V-shaped drawstring back. Under the dress, she was wearing a white T-shirt. She mentioned to me that she felt it was appropriate to wear the T-shirt under the dress, since I was coming to visit her. On her feet, she wore black sandals. Her dark bronzed skin was glistening as a ray of the sun shone on her face. She led me into her dining room and invited
me to sit in one of the chairs there. Periodically, she gazed out the south
window as she shared her life story with me.

I was born in Harriman, Tennessee. My Grandfather, who
was born in 1865, the son of a slave, was a teacher. My Father
was a teacher and my Mom taught before she married, and she
then said she had her own classroom at home. She didn't need to
leave home because there were 10 of us (although she lost three
as infants). I say I am the third child, but, actually, I'm the fifth
child. Actually, seven of us survived and, until about five years
ago, our family was intact with you-know-my parents. My Mother
was 95 when she died. I handled my Mother's death well, and I
was, I think, more emotionally attached to my Dad, since we
shared the same occupation. I had really wanted, at one time, to
become a journalist. That's what I would have been, if I hadn't
become a teacher. I told my Daddy that I was going to write a
book comparing my Grandfather's tenure as a teacher and his and
mine. I interviewed him, and I still have him on tape, but I haven't
been able to play it. My Grandfather started grooming my Father
to be a teacher when he was his student. I don't know if you
realize that in rural towns there are one, two, three, four teachers'
schools in a room, and the teacher teaches more than one class.
Well, my Grandfather was my Dad's teacher, like my Dad was my
teacher. My Dad was my teacher fifth through eighth grade. I assume his Dad (I don't know the exact grades), when the other teacher would be absent, I think, my Grandfather was in, maybe, a two-teacher situation at the time. I'm not sure. But, he would let my Dad be the teacher. I went back to Harriman to be a teacher my second and third year of teaching. I taught in a dual system: all African Americans in the Black schools and all Whites in the White schools. In other words, there was no desegregation at the time I was in schools. Even in my Grandfather's own classroom, I think my Dad would tell me that he taught spelling and things like that. He intended my Dad to be a teacher long before my Dad wanted to be a teacher. There was no high school education provided for them. Beyond eighth grade, they were on their own. My Dad took a job with a private family, and it wasn't in Dayton where they were living at the time (Dayton, Tennessee). At that time, all you had to do was pass a test and, if you were sufficiently knowledgeable to pass the county test, you could become a teacher. My Mother went to normal school—what they called "normal school." It was Tennessee State. It was normal, and I imagine now that it would be equivalent to high school education. I just imagine that's what it is. That's what my Grandfather had been through. He went to Morristown College. It was really
normal, too, although they called it "college." My Grandfather made an appointment for my Dad to take the tests. He came for him in a horse and buggy and took him to take the test.

I was inspired to be a teacher because of my Dad. I looked around at the success of people, the people I seemingly enjoyed being with. Maybe I'm sounding snobbish. They all seemed to be educators and you really didn't have much of a choice. Either you went into private homes, or became a beautician, or you went to school. Teaching is all I ever really wanted to do. I played school before I went to school, with my dolls, and I was "Miss Dorothy." My middle name is Lou, and my brothers used to call me "Lou" You know, because I felt like I needed to be titled. "Miss Lou" is what they used to call me. I mean, you know, affectionately.

When I was in school, we had such pride in our race and in ourselves. Although I considered that we were poverty stricken, we didn't think of it that way. I use the term now because I realize we were. But, everybody was just poor, you know. We just didn't think it was a handicap, and our teachers, more or less, made you think that they were helping you get to the next level. I remember, when I went to Knoxville College, the first freshman assignment I had in my English course was "Why did I want to go to college?" I remember saying, "to increase my earning power," when I was
teaching here during desegregation. Now, it's true that those children were probably from the same economic level that I grew up on, but I never ever, ever, ever, looked at those children as if they didn't have value, or they were not able to be college material. I was appalled to hear these young Caucasian teachers in the teachers' lounge, you know, more or less, not having any real, real interest because they said, "No one here is of college-level, anyway. They are going to just be second generation welfare recipients." I couldn't believe that! I just could not believe that they would have an attitude like that. I never ever, ever, ever felt that way! You don't take that attitude into the classroom. You take the attitude, "I am going to start right where you are and we're going to work with what we have, and we are going to make progress." If I can help a child go from level one to level two, that's progress to me. That's why you are there as a teacher. A teacher is not there to really just think, "Well, why put forth the effort?"

I would take courses at The Ohio State University, as part of my educational growth. We would get points for taking courses. I remember I took this one course, and I could not get anyone to agree with me that the garbage collector was to be respected the same way as the surgeon. They just simply would
not! They just "poo-pooed" me. I just could not get them to value that work the same way that they would value these skilled surgeons in the hospitals. I would tell them, "Now suppose you didn't have a garbage collector and all that rubbish would be everywhere. I just feel like, in the scheme of things, that that person has dignity just as well. That person has a family. That person has someone who loves them." But, I was alone. I was alone voice in the wilderness trying to get someone to come to my side. But they wouldn't even acknowledge me. They just didn't say anything. It's almost as if you haven't spoken. You know, it's really bad. To me, I think that's worse than maybe entering that debate is to dismiss you.

Common Themes Across The Women's Stories

As stated in chapter three, I analyzed the Teacher-Elders' stories, using themes which emerged from the data. I aggregated the categories and was able to identify six themes that were common across the women's stories that tell the conditions these Teacher-Elders felt needed to be in place for African American children to succeed academically. One theme that emerged from the study was segregation entailed a lack of access to opportunities but did not preclude excellent education from occurring. The second theme that emerged was family and community were intertwined. The third theme that emerged was racial pride when explicitly taught aids in the success of African American
children in education. The fourth theme that emerged was authority in teaching African American children is essential to the growth of African American children. The fifth theme that emerged was pedagogy is culturally relevant and deals holistically with the individual child's needs. The sixth theme that emerged was spirituality is central to the African American child's growth. I will focus on each of these themes, why they seem important, and their implications.

Finding #1: Segregation Entailed A Lack Of Access To Opportunities

I never knew what book I had unless I could tell from the thickness of the book or opened the page to see... and they were torn. Very seldom did you see a book with the back on it. And, when I bought my first new book and opened it and heard that crackling of the newness, that was music to my ears because how proud I was that I had a new book. (Resolute Lady-Interview 1)

Each of the participants shared her memories on being educated with textbooks that had been discarded by the White schools. Once the White schools discarded their worn-out or outdated textbooks, the books were handed down to the Black schools. This was a blunt act of racism. However, it is not the only aspect of segregation that is important. In spite of inferior supplies decreed by the White school board, African-American teachers and principals, along with the African-American parents, were still able to provide an atmosphere that was conducive to learning. According to Sowell (1976) and
Walker (1992) these schools are remembered as having atmospheres where support, encouragement, and rigid standards combined to enhance student self-worth and to increase the aspirations to achieve. Black teachers and principals, in the segregated schools, would not allow one to go wrong. These teachers were dedicated, demanding, and took a personal interest in each of the children.

These schools, according to Sowell (1976), were compared to the structure and operation of a family. The teachers and principals ran the schools with parent-like authority and exercised almost complete autonomy in molding students' learning and in structuring strong discipline. Foster (1990; 1991), Cecelski (1994), and Dempsey and Noblit (1993), each claim that the nurturing provided by the teachers and principals was part of the schooling of the African-American child, who profited/benefited from the high standards and from the strong support of the community.

And when I think of my own situation, I realize how bare the necessities were in my little school and, also, in my high school and my college wasn't, you know, way up the ladder when it came to facilities. I wonder how much the world would have changed, if there had been more access to education a lot sooner? (Resolute Lady-Interview 1)
Today, African-American children have access to materials that these Teacher-Elders did not have. Yet, they are still falling short in the arena of academics.

You know what I did? They put it in a newspaper at the school where I was working. We didn't have anything, and I shared one piece of chalk with my aunt. We would borrow it. I would use it and, then, send it over to her. Okay, we did that with one eraser, and we asked the kids to bring a soft cloth from home to use as an eraser, and you would just share things. So, I said to the children one day "All the cotton isn't gone because all the kids that ride the bus (the ones you call the country kids), they haven't started school yet." I said, "Who would like to go Saturday and pick scraps of cotton? I will give you half of what you make and, then, we will buy supplies." They all wanted to go because it was fun for them. We did that and, I think, we got enough, and I went to Montgomery and bought supplies. They wrote it up in the paper, "Teacher Not Too Dignified To Pick Cotton." (Resolute Lady-Interview 1)

This teacher felt it important enough to swallow her pride and pick cotton to make money for supplies, which was one of the most demeaning forms of labor, particularly for an African American. Picking cotton was a reminder of the injustice that had been placed on the African American during slavery. The
ancestors had to relinquish all pride and be at the mercy of the slave owner. Still, picking cotton seemed to be the easiest way for this participant to earn enough money to purchase the necessary materials that were so vital in performing the duties of an educator. Having these materials would have made her teaching a lot easier. In spite of the inadequacy of funding and materials, these teachers expected and produced student excellence.

The participants spoke of lack of access to power. They would feel so powerless that they would have to have something in order to make up for that loss. There would be those times when someone in the White race would deny African Americans opportunities that were due to them, that they would have to find something to replace that loss with something positive. That "something" was usually plenty of food for the family to enjoy. This, they felt, no one could take away from them. This bounty of food was usually something from their garden.

But, I do remember, she used to say, "We're going to have what we want to eat, because nobody can tell us what we can [have] to eat. So, that's one freedom we can have." And, so, she always prided herself in having, you know, a balanced meal on the table.

(Stalwart Lady-Interview 2)

They could eat anything they wanted without any restrictions. According to the Resolute Lady, this was an example of "finding your freedom where you can and not letting anyone steal your joy from you."
Money was scarce and the route to liberation was through education. Education, as one participant stated, cost money. During the time that these participants were in school, the teachers would live with different families in the community. One participant discussed how they frequently did not receive money as payment; rather, their services were exchanged for goods.

One of my Mother's classmates said they paid him with food to teach and, sometimes, they'd get so far behind, they would give him things, like homemade syrup! Just whatever he could get. He said he always chose a family with a lot of children, because he knew they had a lot of food. (Resolute Lady-Interview-1)

Lack of money did nothing to destroy their thirst for education. The African-American families pooled whatever resources they had to provide their children with an education. Not only did the families feel that education was extremely important, but the teachers did as well. They were willing to go "into the trenches" to find creative ways to raise their race.

One of the participants spoke about not having a high school for "Negroes" in her community. Education was important enough to her to sacrifice her home and move to another town several hundred miles away to receive further education. It was not unlikely for relatives to take their extended family into their homes, in order for the children to receive adequate education.

While one attempted to acquire the education that was so longed for, there were still limitations on how far one could go.
... the only thing that really bothered me about segregation at home was it never bothered me about not eating with them, not traveling with them, because we walked all over Tuscalousa anyway, but what bothered me was education and that we couldn't get jobs. Even after we did get educated. (Free Spirited Lady-Interview 1)

African Americans believed in the possibility of the American dream and the upward mobility provided through academic betterment and collective racial progress. African Americans knew that the White race had the power but, at the same time, they believed that Black people had agency all the same. Gates (1996) states that African Americans knew that the power the White race had was like "a shifting fluid thing, like mercury, and that some of it was always seeping away, puddling up before somebody else" (p. 11). The African Americans, during segregation, forced themselves to believe that times were changing and that they would be ready with their education to move to "higher ground." The vision of African Americans was to always obtain as much education as one could possibly obtain (and to always be enemies with racism).

There is an old saying that "education is the one thing that nobody can take away from you." Parents knew that their children could not get decent jobs through which they could provide adequately for themselves and their families without an education. "Professional" jobs, then, were usually limited to either teaching or preaching for African Americans, and African-American females
most often chose the former. However, now that there are laws to protect the African American from being denied free access to upward mobility, why are there still "glass ceilings" when it comes to employment and advancement?

A theme that emerged from the interviews with the women was the lack of access to opportunities in relation to education during segregation. These women remembered, in particular, the inadequate materials to which they had access during their schooling. Yet, what they also remembered was the high level of caring their teachers had for their learning and the great lengths to which these teachers went to ensure that the learning took place. Teachers spent their own time and money helping students learn—through obtaining supplies the school board would not provide and even through helping families with rent money. Thus finding number one is: Segregation entailed a lack of access to certain material goods, but not a lack of access to excellent, cultural specific-teaching.

Finding #2: Family and Community Were Intertwined To Ensure Student Success

Martin (1985) offers the existence of the African American "helping" tradition theories regarding female equality and pro-social behavior in children and argues that the pattern of African American self-help spread in the community through fictive kinship and racial and religious consciousness.

Each participant regarded the family as important in the process of obtaining an education. African-American parents knew their place in the
schooling process. These parents felt comfortable in visiting the school at their leisure. The teachers and administrators were friends, neighbors, and church members, and the parents had some control over the school, which was one place where they felt valued. Soon, the schools became tools that molded the African-American communities. They helped the students and parents understand what was being taught, why it was being taught, and to recognize and aim at the precise roles for which these African-American children were preparing themselves. Today, not enough African-American children are encouraged by their parents, schools, and community to continue their education.

Well, in my generation, I would ask, "Where is your son or daughter going to school?" Today they say, "Are you going to school?" Parents ask the children. When we were growing up, it was a foregone conclusion that we were going. There was no question. (Free Spirited Lady-Interview 2)

The current school climate is not as inviting for African-American parents to visit as in the past. In restructuring the school climate, educators and administrators should consider ways to incorporate programs where the educators at least attempt to get to know the parents on an individual basis.

We became good friends. You got to get that friendship before you get that support. And ask that Man Above to help you. That's the only thing I can tell you to do. I paid more rent. Children

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would tell me that their parents needed rent money and I'd send it home with some child. (Vivacious Lady-Interview 1)

Traditionally, in the typical African-American community, teachers were held accountable to the community and had to teach, if they wanted to maintain their jobs. They also took responsibility for the well being of the children, e.g., through providing rent money when necessary. Student academic performances were relevant to the life and experiences and needs of the African-American child. There was constant communication with the parents and the parents were part of the school governance.

Today, many African-American parents are not actively involved in any part of their children's academic lives. There is a misphrased goal: "How to get African-American parents interested in their child's schooling?" This goal assumes that parents are not already interested and that the reform must be "how to get" the parents' interest. This particular goal must be rephrased into the following question: Are there barriers present that are prohibitive for the African-American parents in a manner where they have traditionally been supportive? If so, then what can the schools do to eliminate these barriers?

Traditionally, children were taught leadership abilities within the family. Once you completed college, you were expected to "reach back" and help another family member obtain their education.
It was a religious thing. If you were the oldest, you had quite a bit of responsibility. You had to send the younger children to college once you finished. (Resolute Lady-Interview 1)

"Lifting as we climb" (Woodson, 1933) was not taken lightly. This was an assumed role of each of the family members. During these times, African Americans realized the necessity of at least an adequate education, which, for African Americans, was hard to come by. It was a struggle. Yet, education was necessary to be truly free. hooks (1983) speaks of education as the "practice of freedom." Literacy has been a right for which many African Americans have struggled. Literacy did not mean just to have the knowledge to read and write. It meant that an individual has the opportunity to become an academically informed individual. For African Americans, education is a concern that is rooted and grounded in the reality of political awareness, where knowledge has formerly been structured to be used in the service of maintaining White supremacy and other forms of control.

To the African-American family, even today (as in the past) education means an "investment." For a family member to receive his or her education did not mean that this was an individual accomplishment, rather it was a "family accomplishment."

The African-American conceptual framework is that of spirituality (Myers, 1988). Since integration, this conceptual framework has weakened. Their children have become materialistic, a worldview based on individual competition
instead of community and family successes. How can African Americans provide a community where children are not worried about competition? How can they provide a community where one is not only his brother's keeper, but his brother's "brother?" Another participant shares that it was not just the nuclear family that helped one another, it was the responsibility of the "extended family" as well.

My Mother had five children and, then, my aunt died who had one girl and had adopted a boy who was an albino—but a genius. And, then, we had cousins in the country. And, from time to time, one or two of them were at our house. So, that made, at all times, in our house, seven, eight children. And, we had plenty of reading material. I don't know where we got it from, except that Mama cooked for White people, and she brought it from their houses, either the old magazines and things like that, but all of us could read before we went to school and write, and we had "spell-downs" every Saturday... We weren't allowed to go and use the [White] libraries. Our schools had limited books that we had to help pay for and they were old. (Free Spirited Lady-Interview 1)

Not only was acquiring a higher education a proud moment for the individual and the immediate family, but it was important to the community, as well.
When I got ready to go to college, it was like a funeral, or people going to a fire. They said, "Miss [her name] is going somewhere!" I don't know where. Someone said, "She's going to school again. I don't know about that. Miss [her name] is going somewhere," and they brought what they could to help me, little towels, little wash-clothes, toothpaste. They brought it up there, but they stood outside. It was just a yard full of people. "Miss [her name] is going some place." (Resolute Lady-Interview 2)

According to Asante (1987), within the African-American community, the worldview of African people is, "You are, therefore I am." Thus, when an African American achieved success, the community felt that success as well, just as if they had experienced the pain of failure, as a whole. African Americans were not deluded about their lack of power, but they did believe in their strength. When one received this success, that meant one more was on the way to "raising the race."

Today, African Americans experience brothers killing brothers, Black on Black crime, and many other ills that are destroying the African-American family and community. Neighbors and/or Elders no longer have the right to reprimand or discipline others' children when they are in the wrong. Today, they have allowed the community to move from the "we" posture to the "I" posture. Given these unfortunate setbacks, how can the African-American community regain the community support it once had? Is that support sufficient for success in
today's society? Why does not Asante's worldview theory of "we" apply to today's African-American community? How do African Americans strengthen and intensify their engagement and renew their spirit of unity and connection that once enabled them to come into being?

We were taught the prize was at the end, not in the getting, but in the end. So I wanted to get to the end whether I liked it or not, I wanted to get there. (Resolute Lady-Interview 2)

These Elders shared their stories of how they and their families experienced working long and hard toward a goal. They were not to focus on how hard their trials were for the moment, but to endure and stay focused on the rewards that were to come. They and their parents could have easily surrendered to hard times, but that was not what was important. The importance was on enduring to the end. This is when their religion and faith sustained them. The stories of their predecessors kept them focused.

Today, the African-American youth is interested in immediate gratification. These children are being raised in a society where many of them feel that someone owes them something. There virtually is no concept of working toward a goal or "delayed gratification." If desires cannot be received now, if one must wait for the process to occur, then those things are not worth having. Too many African Americans have lost the belief and the worthy feeling of earning through sacrifice and struggle.
According to hooks (1989), struggle is necessary to the liberation process. Increasingly, African Americans are led (by the dominant culture) to believe that to yield self and to assimilate is the best way to survive. Thinking it would be the proper solution, African Americans fought for (de)segregation for access, not assimilation. According to Gayles (1980), "We wanted what White schools received without asking and what we did not receive in spite of begging. But even without those material things, we were still convinced that we were getting a good education" (p. 8). When (de)segregation became a reality, African-American children did not know how to respond to the new situations facing them. Some of the leaders in the African-American community instructed the children to use the same mannerisms as the White children. They taught that "White was right." Self-definition and self-determination were lost. Today, due to integration, many African Americans work extremely hard at being validated and legitimized by White standards.

Historically, African Americans had to validate and legitimize themselves. Wade-Gayles (1993) states that "surviving meant being Black, and being Black meant believing in our humanity, and retaining it, in a world that denied we had it in the first place" (p. 6). During segregation, African Americans used the negative treatment that was demonstrated by White people toward them to spur them forward. Gayles refers to this as "being pushed back to strength." This negative, turned positive act, was in reality pushing the African American to a point of gaining strength.
A second theme that emerged from the interviews with the women was that family and community were intertwined. Each of these resources demonstrated a commitment to nurturing the child as well as have high expectations for them. The community members would support the children financially, materially, and spiritually. Regardless of where the child was academically, the family and community had expectations for each one. The oldest sibling was supported by the parents to reach higher accreditation's beyond high school. Once they completed their education, it was the responsibility of the older sibling(s) in supporting the younger ones as they strive to acquire their education. Based on Asante's theory that "We are, therefore, I am," These women stated that African Americans need to teach their children that they are meant to be more than their sister's keeper, they are meant to be their sisters’ and brothers' sister. Ideally, teachers must be involved in their teaching community. Even though they may live outside of where they work, they need to find ways in which they shape some of the communities interest. I also learned that teachers and principals were partners in the rearing of the child. Parents would relinquish their parent-like authority into the hands of the teaching community. I also learned from these women that the community invested time, interest, and money into the concept of educating the communities children. Thus, finding number two is: Family and community were intertwined. These two resources in the African-American community
demonstrated a commitment to nurturing the child and having high expectations for him or her.

Finding # 3: Racial Pride Should Be Taught Explicitly

During segregation, the teaching of racial pride was a constant. Names of prominent African Americans and prominent dates and events in African-American history were a part of the daily curriculum. African-American teachers, parents, and community members expected excellence from their youth. Each and every one of these children was expected not only to achieve, but also to accomplish great things!

When I first started teaching, we, in the South, had to learn a lot about Negro history. I didn't teach it once, but everyday. I taught what Black people had done. One little boy had asked me, "Why are you talking about all that Negro stuff?" I said, "Well, what do you consider yourself to be?" He said, "I'm Colored." I said, "That's okay for you to be Colored [sarcastically], but did you know . . . ?" I started to tell him what some Black people had done who had invented certain things, and he was amazed! And, then, I had some man who was well versed to come to speak to my class and talk about everything we had done and what Black people had invented. His attitude changed after that man, but there is going to have to be more teaching about that. (Free Spirited Lady-Interview 2)
DuBois (as cited in Foner, 1970) warned, "The elimination of the `Negro school will change forever the content of the curriculum for African American children... Teaching of Negro history will leave the school and with it that brave story of Negro resistance" (pp. 283-284). DuBois could not have been more accurate in his statement regarding the loss of the African-American experiences in the schooling of African-American children that resulted from desegregation. Even though there are all Black schools in many of the African-American urban areas, they are typically mere fixtures. The character of these schools has changed. Administrative and classroom practices deny the African-American student the necessary opportunities and resources to reach his or her fullest potential. These schools are not in tune with the personal aspirations of the African-American parent and child. Contemporarily as needed, how do African Americans incorporate cultural relevancy into the curriculum and not offend the other cultures?

During desegregation, the burden of the changes to be undertaken was left on the African-American child without the aid of the African-American "voice." White parents did not want their children to be bussed into the African-American schools. African-American children with the better academic skills were bussed to the White schools. The better-prepared, African-American teachers were transferred to White schools, while many other African-American teachers lost their positions altogether. They were replaced by White teachers. White parents did not want African Americans to teach their children. If there
was to be any giving, it was left up to the African Americans. This was not the dream of (de)segregation that the African American had longed for. Again, (de)segregation was about a process, or a procedure, carefully worked and theoretically based on "need."

As far as some kind of magic x-ray coming out of your head over into my head just because there's proximity. That is not true!

That is not true. (Stalwart Lady-Interview 2)

According to these women, during the initial onset of Desegregation, many of the White teachers did not have the same high expectations for the African-American child as the African-American teachers. They felt that African-American children were even "grade" level and that they were just another generation of welfare recipients. Racial pride was diminished and neglected within the curriculum.

The Teacher-Elders also suggested that during this same period of time, African-American children were not disciplined in ways that were respectful of their culture. Therefore, these children did not—could not—view learning from the proper perspective. The longstanding value of education being the means to an end was no longer the focus for the African-American child.

I think that if the non-Black teachers were more aware of the culture differences. And, I always felt they were a little weak on discipline. And, I felt like it didn't take students, especially black males, long to know they could do just about anything with Miss
so and so. And I feel that they learn to goof off more. In addition, there were lower expectations from them because I told you about at [names the school] the young Caucasian teachers that just come in there. One of my years there, I guess I'd been there maybe about five years then, most of the older teachers had retired and were being replaced by these new teachers right out of college. And they just came in there thinking, why, you know, why worry there's no college material here. And I couldn't believe that. Because I never ever, it never occurred to me to feel like they couldn't achieve. And when I take my own situation and realized how bare the necessities were in my little school and also in my high school, and then my college wasn't, you know, way up the ladder when it came to facilities. I wonder what I could have been, if I had those advantages. (Stalwart Lady-Interview 2)

Again, I want to remind the reader that these women were speaking about the time during the initial onset of desegregation. Many of the White teachers during this time (as well as today) were afraid of the African-American child. They did not know how to discipline them. Many did not think that the African-American children had the ability to learn the same curriculum as the White children. The curriculum was watered down. According to the Teacher-Elders this is what happens when you have low expectations of children. As the women tell us, If one has high expectations, the children will rise to the
occasion. These participants had the ability to know when a child was not performing his best. Historically, these were African-American teachers teaching African-American children because they lived in the community and had the ability to know when the African-American child was doing his/her best. This may or may not be the case today. Teachers of African-American children often times do not live in the same community and do not know these children outside of the classroom. These women also stated that the White teachers did not have the experience to know when the African-American child was not performing to his or her potential. The African-American child, as any child will, took advantage of these circumstances, especially African-American males.

The theme that emerged from the interviews with the women was about racial pride. The women talked about teaching "Negro" history on a daily basis. As they were teaching, they brought in resources to show the accomplishments of African-Americans. Desegregation was an attempt to place African American children in proximity with White children as a strategy to increase African-American learning skills. All of these African-American educators were replaced by White teachers and racial pride was no longer an element in the learning of the African-American children. The non Black teachers had lower expectations for the African-American students and were not able to be culturally effective in their methods of discipline. These women shared that children of today have little opportunity in mirroring themselves in the educational setting. Thus finding number three is: Racial pride was taught on a daily basis. African-American
children were taught to believe in themselves, even when the world was against them. One had to find joy in creative ways.

Finding # 4: Authority In Teaching African-Americans Is Essential To Their Growth

Authority within the African-American culture is granted by the community and comes with a certain set of responsibilities. Authority is not granted merely by positions or degrees. Within the traditional African-American community, the Elders were given much respect and care. It was the responsibility of the community to check periodically, even daily, on the elderly and, in turn, the elderly looked after the children within the community. If an adult saw a child misbehaving, it was that adult’s responsibility to discipline that child and, then, report to the appropriate parents what had happened. The parent would, in addition to the Elders, then discipline the child for his or her wrongdoing. The bond that once was present in rearing children is now gone. Few even know their neighbors these days.

It has been years that you have been able to speak to someone else’s child. Every now and then you will run across someone who will say if you spoke to their child, they would appreciate it. Even in church, they don’t want you to speak to their children.

(Free Spirited Lady, Interview 1)

As stated earlier, the family climate that was present in the community made disciplining the child a shared responsibility. The discipline was truly
genuine and was administered in a caring, tender, and non-threatening manner. In essence, it was the collective role of the entire community to keep the children in school. If an adult found a child not in the proper place, (particularly when the child should have been in school), that adult would take the responsibility of correcting the child and sending that child where he or she needed to be. The parent(s) were then made aware of the child's whereabouts. If one was educated within the community, everybody was. Everybody tried to keep each and every child in school. Everybody wanted their children to be educated. The schools had truant officers to keep the children off the streets and in school, and that was done more often than not.

Everyone, even teachers, took on the responsibility of caring for the child in their classroom holistically. If the child needed food, clothing, or personal grooming, the teacher took on this responsibility to see to it. It was not uncommon for a teacher to volunteer personal time, or money, to assist the child in "being whole." These participants each had their own stories of how they aided the African-American child. The schools were a family school.

You should have seen that child. I took her aside and told her, "Do you look so pretty today. Now try to keep your hair combed. There is no sense in your hair being all up in the air. You have a comb don't you?" I said, "If you don't, I'll bring you one." The kids had more respect for her because they didn't think of her as anything except the fighting. She was so mean because she had
no pride. That is what we are going to have to do whether the children are ours or not. We are going to have to make ourselves interested and try to help them. (Free Spirited Lady, Interview 2)

In today's society, one would be hesitant in going this far for fear the parents would be offended. Some parents might see this as "meddling in others' business." During the area prior to desegregation, parents supported the input from its community of Elders. At the same time, there were some who would take advantage of the situation and expect one to take on too many responsibilities. As one participant stated, many of today's African-American children are raised in such a violent atmosphere that one is afraid to give them assistance, out of sheer fear. Many of today's youth do not value their lives and, thus, they do not value others' lives, or possessions, either.

According to these Teacher-Elders because of the lack of authority within the African-American community and family is perhaps a cause of violence. They stress that because society has often placed too little consequence on misbehavior, that this too is possibly another reason for such terrible acts of violence performed by African-American youth.

Even though, in today's world, that is almost impossible because the small children will try to take advantage of you. They have come up in such violence atmosphere that their life is not worth very much. You would help people more, but you are afraid. Like in my house, I could have somebody to stay here, but I am afraid.
I need a smaller house. I have four bedrooms. This house is deceiving from the outside. I would probably move, if it weren't for my neighbors. They look after me. If a truck comes up and looks like it doesn't have any business here, they will say, "[Her name], who is that out there?" Her husband takes my garbage out and brings the cans back in. Those are little things, but they mean so much. It saves me a lot. This man next door, when it snows, will get his snow blower out and do my driveway after his. When I was gone to my Mother's six months at a time, they looked after my house, got the papers, etc. And, that is the only reason I am still here. I can't find any place I'd be satisfied with. (Free Spirited Lady, Interview 2)

In the past, people helped one another. The extended family was nearby, if assistance was needed in order to provide for the children. Though parents had to work to provide for the family, many times the children had to be left in the care of the community without any expectations of monetary rewards. The members accepted that it was readily the community's responsibility.

Students were aware of the support that the parents gave the teachers as disciplinarians. The guiding principle in the African-American community was that, if you received a reprimand from school, then you expected to get another when you arrived at home. The same was true of well-meaning neighbors. I, also,
would like to see people value education more and quit maligning us. This respect I don't think we're having it either anymore. It used to be that young people would move off of the sidewalk. They wouldn't use profane language, if an elderly person was passing by. I've seen them, you know, they use the f-word in everything. And it's just if, you know, the same to me. In other words, "Don't you dare think I should stop saying this just because you're an old woman!" (Stalwart Lady, Interview 2)

It is frightening, but true, that there are children today who would be just as likely to rob, beat, kill, or rape an Elder for mere amusement. They know that the elderly fear them and, therefore, they take advantage of the opportunity. They have no fear, because they know they face few/light consequences. The sad, but modern, story is that parents have been known to even be charged with child abuse by their own children, if they discipline their children. Because of the current state of child abuse, more and more focus is put on the rights of the child and much has been taken away from the parents regarding discipline. Over-correction of the situation has left the parent too often virtually "unarmed." The school curriculum is a place where children are encouraged to take action to defend their rights. In the proper perspective, vigilance for the child's rights has its place and can be necessary. Taken to extremes, it can be absolutely dangerous.
One participant spoke of how children were expected to address their Elders with titles. Even today, titles are extremely important to African-Americans. Titles and degrees are important factors for everyone but teachers must somehow demonstrate that the individual is greater than any titles bestowed upon them.

Before I left school, one of them said to me, "Miss [her name], what's your first name?" I said, "Mrs., but you'd better not call me anything else. Mr. So and so said we could call him—that was the reading teacher and math teacher—and, so, I asked him, "Why do you have these children calling you by your first name?" He was young. "I don't have any hang up about that." I said, "Now listen. They don't need anymore playmates." (Free Spirited Lady, Interview 1)

Within the African-American community, titles have been, and in some places still are, extremely important. This was a carryover from the days of enslavement. White owners would refer to adult men as "boys," and adult women were referred to as "gals." The Elders in the enslaved community were often referred to as "uncle" or "aunt" by the White community. Giving one a title was a way of acknowledging that they were now attempting to redevelop the respect that had been taken away once. This teacher was a product of integration where the African-American child began to lose his or her identity and began to assimilate with the White culture. The community that kept the
African American anchored was diminishing rapidly. This participant felt it was her duty to remind the younger teacher of his responsibilities to the child and to the race. This is one of the breakdowns of relationships in the community as well as the role of authority.

Traditionally, it was common practice for the teachers to visit the homes, when they felt it necessary. The relationships of parents and teachers were so strong that they did not wait to be invited. Parents went when they deemed it necessary. It was not an uncommon practice for teachers to visit the homes and eat a meal with the family. Parents were always available, if needed to support the schools’ efforts. All were working together toward a common goal. If a teacher went to visit a child’s home after school, generally, there was a problem that occurred that day and immediate attention was considered necessary.

When the homes of today’s youth are so uninviting and dangerous, the challenge before teachers of African-American children is how to incorporate this nurturing and caring atmosphere, based on commonly accepted criteria, in the schools and community that was such an essential part of the rearing of yesterday’s African-American children.

Each of the participants spoke of how important it was (prior to desegregation) for children to care for their parents once they were unable to care for themselves. There was not a need for nursing homes. Children had
been loved and cared for by their parents, and now this was their turn, if they were physically able, to give back the same quality of care they once received. Well, my brother, when he was in his 90s, I believe, (or late 80's), he had a wife and two children, but he left. They lived in walking distance—my sister and my brother. But, he left his house and went down to Mama and stayed six years with her. So, what was left for us to do was figure out a way to help [names her brother] out. So, we did. I was the only one without a husband, so I would go and stay six months in Alabama, and, then, come back here, and, then, my sister in Birmingham would stay six months. We did that for about four years, and it got to be too hard for us. So, we told the others they would have to take part, to which they did, and so we spent three months at a time until she died. And, we just went down, stayed three months. And my sister, Ella, who is very bossy, said, "Well if you can't take your turn, you just have to hire somebody." (Free Spirited Lady-Interview 1)

Another theme that emerged from the interviews with the women was that of authority. They described how today's families do not allow non-family members to have authority of children as was the case in the past. It is the responsibility of the authorities—teachers—of helping the children to reach their potential. According to these women, the teacher is responsible in aiding the child holistically. It is their belief that the ways of today's children is not the
child's fault, but the fault of society. African-American children are being raised in a violent atmosphere. These women pointed out that African-American children need to have and show respect for their Elders. Historically, African-American Elders have been the gatekeepers of their society. It is the belief that these people have lived a long life that is rich enough to prepare the next generation on which path in life to take. Thus, finding number four is: Authority was central in the development and growth of the African-American child. The role of rearing the child was a joint effort between the community and the family. The authority was Biblically based.

Finding # 5: Pedagogy Dealt Holistically With The Individual Child's Needs

...if you don't have a good foundation for something it's hard to build. You've got to make sure that they know them and I'm not just talking about rote learning. Telling yes. You give it to them, they give it back to you. No. You have to have some real experience and you can look in a child's eye and tell if they have got it. The minute they get it you see the spark and you know they have it. And I just think that every child might not learn as much but you make sure he learn as much as his ability and potential for learning. (Resolute Lady interview 2)

This participant shared that it is important for teachers to teach African American children skills. Within the educational setting, many of the African American children do not have that strong skill foundation that their White
counterparts have. For various reasons, many of these children are reared in homes where academic skills are not taught on a daily basis as it may be with White children. As stated above, skill building is not about rote memory. Skills are useful tools that are useful and usable in order that one can communicate effectively in standard literary forms. It is about knowing the rules and when to apply them. The talk is about making sure African American children write fluently. Fluency is not solely what they need. They need skills in writing complete decent sentences (Delpit (1995). They do not receive the reinforcement at home on the techniques of writing and spend time at school on learning how to be fluent. Take for instance the vital necessity of for success—oral and written forms demanded by the dominant culture. Knowing these skills are critical to survival in getting access to the culture of power. African American children whose culture is outside of the dominant culture are not in tune to the cultural nuances that are hidden. They are so normed and invisible that unless you make them visible, African American children will not be able to call them. Therefore, these skills must be explicit when teaching the African American children.

I said there was a lady that she just could not teach that child how to add and carry. And this little girl in the back said I'll help the teacher. So she helped her. So she said to the little girl, tell me how you did that. She said I told her when she had too many over
here to tote them over there. Tote - not carry because that's what she was used to hearing. (Resolute Lady, interview 2)

These women shared that there had to be some connection of language understanding between the teacher and the child. They believed that to teach African American children you must be familiar with their language. Far too often African American children are not successful on standardized tests due to language discrepancy.

I said this quart jar, I am going to put 2 pints of water in it and it will fill it up and I ask the kids how much water can I get. You can get two of these little ones out of there and I said can I get more? No. Why? Because I didn't put any more in and I was letting them know that whatever you put into somebody whether you get a chance to reap it or not directly or not, indirectly you will.

(Resolute Lady, interview #2)

These women explain to their students the value of education. They spoke to them in "real" language these children could comprehend on the importance of education for Black people. They were able to give instructions on how to survive. Their responsibility was to prepare the students for life-real life.

I call it abuse skills...We want to use it that it is not polite and not human like and we pass this on down to our children. You would be complacent with what you had if no one else would have more.
We want you to be in a group that is going to strive for more and more sometimes is not what you want all the time. don't rob your child. Hear him out, and find out why he feels this way about certain things. Find out why. Sometimes they hear without the word teacher and let him teach you something and you can learn quite a bit and you can learn why he feels this way or how he feels being like he wants to be. (Resolute Lady, interview #2)

This particular teacher pushed students to be inquisitive. She allowed them to explore and ask questions "why." These children are thirsty for knowledge and it is the responsibility of the teacher to quench that thirst. Many African American children today do not receive this support at home due to various reasons and therefore this knowledge seeking through the forms of questions needs to be reinforced at school.

She said I ate out and I pointed out to her, why eat out when I have you know, you could saved that. I have a verse on the back of a card that says the Lord can move a mountain by moving one pebble at a time.

These teachers taught their students by the use of parables. Just as Christ used parables to teach, so did these women. Parables are story-like forms that these children can extrapolate from and apply to their daily living. Again, teaching was not bound by the subjects of the three "R's". Teaching was whatever would benefit the child holistically.
Like my mother said about a recipe, follow the directions the first time and when you live by that recipe you know what needs to come out or add. (Resolute Lady, interview 2)

These teachers agreed that in order to teach a new concept effectively, follow the directions given and then find out where the student is academically and then teach the child based on where she is in her knowledge building. Once you have assessed this, then you can give them what they need, whether it means remediation or excelleration.

In our reading situation you know what is too hard for the children.

If the regular textbooks were too hard, I would recommend kind of make them your own (Free Spirited Lady, Interview 2)

These women stated that many times the regular basal would be difficult for some of the children. Books in general were scarce. What these women did was find or either make materials at the level of the student. On many occasions, the students would assist in making them. It was their belief to begin where the student was and then assist them in reaching their potential.

Because materials were not available, this did not hinder them in supply what they felt would be in the best interest of the student.

Well now, a lot of books I would put up as reference It would never be said that I never opened them but I used a lot of my own methods of teaching the children. Because the books were too hard. In the reading program they did order a lot of different
reading material. I made a lot of my own. I had the children make them to. What they were interested in. We learned how to make a book. We made them. We did logs from day to day and we sat it up as a book.. They like things like that. Because some are visual, some are auditory, etc. I think you have to see where they all are. . (Free Spirited Lady, interview #2)

These Teacher-Elders realized that the students did not all learn the same way. They allowed students to experience learning based on their learning style strengths. They were concerned that the students understood the concept of what was being taught and then allowed them to reinforce what they had learned through various ways.

I think that's one thing I try to do with my students is to keep them wanting to know more and to keep learning and everything. (Free Spirited Lady, interview #2)

These Teacher-Elders instilled in their students to always strive for more- -stretch yourself. The way they instilled this ability was through reading to the students that would allow them to create imagery. They taught them that you can go anyplace you want through books and stories. They taught that you could be whatever and whomever you wanted through books and stories. This in turn created a desire to aspire for more than the mediocre. These women stated the African American child does not have this ability today due to the
instruction of modern technology. They were not against modern technology, but they felt that it had hindered today's children's creativity.

...because my mother used to read us stories at night. And she used a lot of the AESOP fables, because they taught morals. So, I found that if you could devour stories that you could always, you could get out of your little town or out of your environment and you could push the walls away. Well, that's what I told you before. I wanted children to get that sense of wonder, and sense of excitement, and sense of joy from learning. Because I found that you could go on trips, you could visit all kinds of places just by getting your atlas or your geography books. (The Stalwart Lady, interview #2)

With the aid of literature, these teachers were able to teach morals. They adopted teaching to the African ways of knowing. One way of knowing that they adapted to their teaching was through narratives. These students could extrapolate what they learned through stories and then applied the moral to their daily living.

The theme that emerged form the shared how they taught primarily using the biblical technique interviews with the women was regarding pedagogy. These women of sharing lessons through parables. It was their assumption that a child needed to be taught holistically in order that she take these lessons and apply them to everyday practices. Teaching morals was important. Also, these
women stated that the teacher must take the stance as the one with authority and be addressed verbally as so. African American children do not need another playmate, they need guidance. These women felt that African American children need to be taught skills particularly in the areas of oral and written forms of communication for survival purposes. Thus the finding for number five is: Pedagogy dealt holistically with the individual child’s needs.

Finding # 6: Spirituality Is Central To The Education Of African-American Children

African Americans are spiritual beings. Spirituality and education always went hand-in-hand in African-American communities. Teachers were active members of the community church. The community responded by treating them with honor and respect equal to that of the ministers of the churches they were attending. The most logical place for support was in the African-American churches.

If we had a levy, then that pastor would get everyone of those parents to vote. I remember going to one of the ministers, and speaking with him about lack of parental support in the PTA. Don’t you know, he got those parents in his congregation to participate. He was trying to save their souls and we were, too.

(Resolute Lady-Interview 2)

Historically, the main route to liberation was that the church fed into education. Many of the higher institutions were founded and funded by African-
American churches. Therefore, the colleges had a religious foundation. This was also true of the schools. Students were taught from the Bible as well as from the text. Molding one's character was based upon religious doctrine. Today, any form of religious reference is banned from the curriculum. The preacher would preach from the pulpit, getting the parents involved in their children's education. He was trying to save their souls and so were the teachers. How does one demonstrate spirituality in the classroom, when it is prohibited by legislation?

Today, the African-American church makes some effort to be responsible for scholarships for a few of the children in the church, normally at the local level. The interest that the Black church takes in the education of its youth and the role it plays in the school system are not as strong as they once were.

I belong to a church club that we adopted a college student. One of our graduating seniors. And we're not paying tutors, cause, after all, it's just our dues. We have one money-making activity. We sell community birthday calendars. And, we make about $1,000 on that, but we couldn't pay anyone's tuition. What we do is give spending money. We give them a check every month that could pay for haircuts or beauty parlor. We had a girl for her years in, she was taking nurse training and she's out now. So, we chose, two years ago, a young man, and he was going to OSU. And, I really don't know what his major is or whether he had
chosen it. But I found out when I went to meetings Sunday, that he went to Texas to look for a job during the summer. And, he's telling his Mother that he is dropping out. I'm wondering, you know, it seemed like, it just hurt me so, because he had such promise. And, I had asked his Mother about him because I noticed I didn't see him in church anymore. When he first was up there, he was still coming to church, and to the early service. And, then, I noticed, he started (his appearance started) changing. He started having little spikes in his hair. But, that's all right. I mean, you've got to express yourself. I see nothing wrong with that. But, then, I asked her about him, about three months ago, and she said, "We don't see much of him." Now, he was staying on campus, but he was still having contact with the family. He said he is trying to be more independent. And she said, "I think he wants us to pretend that he's not right in the same city." And, anyway, I found out Sunday, that he is dropping out and looking for a job in Texas—of all the places! But, it seemed like everyone just thought, "Well, bring in another name for the next meeting." And nobody thought, "Let's try to save him." (Stalwart Lady, Interview 2)

Where is the commitment to education that the African-American church once had? Has the African-American church gotten so involved in the
materialistic world that it has forgotten the historical commitment regarding education made to the children? How can spirituality and education find common ground? Is the church attempting not to "offend" sensitive members?

These Teacher-Elders emphasized that children have become too materialistic. They have abandoned their conceptual framework of spirituality and have replaced it with material goods. Today's children will acquire "things by any means necessary. Their worth is valued on what they have and not who they are. Their conceptual framework of spirituality has been dismantled. Not only do they seek for material possession, but the more you have, the better off you are.

We did that because we wanted to do more. We thought Nike's were the best and Grant Hill and they are on TV and we have to compete with those things. Those evils what I call them. The kids start with these kids playing that basketball and all so they should be truthful, now here comes the spiritual part about it to let them know that if they can't read or keep up academically or after awhile you are to old to this at a young age. It is not going to last, level with them and let them know that they have to be prepared today. TV is no help. They say look at this, he's sharp and some of that stuff I wouldn't want to wear. A. has everything Filah. I tell her that doesn't make you any better or a better person. You
already are. I'd love you even if you had on just your night pajama's. She said most people don't feel that way.

Sadly, one of the most segregated places in the United States on Sundays is the church. One of the participants shared an article that she read about a White man asking a Black man to play golf with him. The Black man asked the White man, "Why don't you ask me to go to church with you? America was founded on its Christian beliefs. This participant stated that racism and Christianity did not mix. She stated that the Commandment that says "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself" is the hardest commandment to live up to. This is where and when the Higher Power comes into racism. The question remains: How can one claim to be a Christian while being a racist? How can one love God but hate his brother/neighbor?

There was one little drug store in my little town with 700 and some people. And, I had, like, 15 cents on Sunday to spend. You were to put a nickel in Sunday School, no, I think you were suppose to put the dime in Sunday School, and you had the nickel for yourself. You could get an ice cream cone for a nickel at that time. So, that was my thing to do on Sunday after Sunday School—buy an ice cream cone. There was only one place to get it, and that was at the drug store. And, I can remember going in there and asking for a vanilla cone, or whatever flavor I had ask for. And, I can remember the man taking a cloth and telling me,
"Don't lean on the counter," while wiping it off. That was so hard for me to understand. What did I do to the counter? I'm a child. My Mother never sat us down and said, "There's going to be people who will mistreat you." She let us find out. I don't know which would have been the better.

If a person has not learned what Christianity is, as well as learn all the things a Christian life can do for him or her, then he or she is not going to get along well. Spirituality is supposed to assist one in attaining his or her highest moral level. Education is intended to teach what will make one successful in life.

The last theme that emerged from the interviews with the women was the role of spirituality. In the past, education was supported by the church in many ways, including the political support for passing school levies. Parental support for the schools was highly recommended from the ministers from their pulpit sermons. Ministers saw schools as being a partner of the church in the job of the saving the souls and the mind. The church today, still supports schools through monetary means, but the church may not be working as zealously in an effort to save students' lives. Spirituality also influenced the women's understanding of racism. The women recognized that racism and Christianity were incompatible in ways of thinking and believing. These women shared that since integration, the African-American child has dismantled this conceptual framework and has replaced it with the framework of the dominant...
culture which is one's worth is measured by material goods and status. These children are obtaining material possessions by any means necessary. In order to be accepted into society, these children have bought into this belief. Thus, finding number six is: Spirituality was the central thread that wove the tapestry together. Spirituality as an assumed role in the life of the African-American community. The African American conceptual framework is that of spirituality. Once this framework is shattered, the foundation of the individual crumbles.

Conclusion

The overall questions that this study addressed are as follows: (1) What are the experiences of the African-American Teacher-Elders who were involved in (de)segregation? (2) What are the implications from their life experiences that will be beneficial to those stakeholders who are involved in the schooling of African-American children?

Six themes emerged from the data:

1. Lack of access to certain material goods, but not a lack of access to excellent, cultural specific teaching.

2. Family and community were intertwined.

3. Racial pride was taught on daily basis.

4. Authority was central in the development of African-American children.

5. Pedagogy dealt holistically with the individual child's needs.

The implications of these findings will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5
LOOKING BACK TO GO FORWARD:
LESSONS BY GRITS FOR RECLAIMING ACADEMIC SUCCESS
FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN

...arriving on a nightmare, praying for a dream...

(Maya Angelou, Presidential Inauguration, 1993)

This chapter is not the ending, but a new beginning, a call to reexamine some old practices. It is written, not as a finalization, but, rather as a way of truly looking back at the past to see what really worked for successful academic achievement for African-American children. Thus, it is not my intention to present conclusions. The efforts expended in and on this study were never intended to proffer the consummate answer to the basic questions explored here. Instead what is made available is a "possibility"—one befitting thought for careful consideration as a solution. It is my intent to allow the freedom to question myself and others who are engaged in finding practices which will edify those engaged in the process of helping all children to be successful in
meeting their full potential. This is the journey we take in teaching Other People's Children (Delpit, 1995).

Throughout this research, I have dialogued with several retired, African-American Teacher-Elders whose voices were disregarded in the structuring of desegregation.

Shujaa (1996), Mir' on (1996), Dempsig & Noblit (1996), and West, (1993) have all alluded to the apparent practice of the historical exclusion of African American voices in regard to policy making that directly affects the African-American community. It has been my intent, now, to listen and present these voices in order to grasp a better understanding of how to best meet the needs of contemporary African-American children in their quest for academic success. This study indicates that there was academic success during segregation, in spite of inadequate facilities in the schooling of certain "deprived" African-American children. With reflection on the practices which produced those successes, it has been my purpose to glean from what was ventured those bits of policy and practices prevalent in the occurrence of success and incorporate them for availability to African-American children today.

Although the "legally segregated" school is no longer permitted in this country, what Ladson-Billings (1994) called "White flight" and "politic ing" have actually allowed the dilemma of the African-American child in the segregated, sub-standard school to continue. The net result is that today's African-American children, particularly those schooled in urban settings, are effectively
denied an adequate education and are, therefore, in a less favorable condition than their predecessors who attended segregated schools.

Racism lives. If one agrees with the argument put forth by Bell (1994) that racism is a permanent structure in American society and that schools (as institutions) are themselves not immune to varied practices of racism, then one way to provide leadership that will foster strong self-esteem, racial pride, and the enduring desire to strive for one's full potential academically, is to enact in schools a conscious pedagogy and leadership capable of seeing and prepared to eradicate those oppressive structures.

I have examined the findings of this study and have attempted to format the implications into lessons, or suggestions, for effective paradigms for teacher education (in-service and pre-service) as a way to address academic success for African-American children, school renewal and reform, and multicultural education.

Throughout this document, I have stressed the importance of spirituality, family, community and authority in relationship to the African-American child and his or her academic success. Historically, these factors have been critical in the education of these children. Since desegregation, these factors have been ignored and eliminated in the schooling of these children.

We need to employ teachers who are willing to contemplate these issues seriously. These teachers must be aware of the permanence and prominence of racism and challenge the policymakers to bring about a change in the
schooling of these children, as well as the overall enhancement it gives the employees, students, parents, and activists in the community, not just in words or in their private thinking, but in action. When Bell (1994) speaks of the permanence of racism, he is not legitimizing it, he is letting us know that it is in the center of education and not on the perimeter.

Those Who No Longer Teach, Still Teach:

Eleven Implications For Teaching That Supports The Academic Success Of African-American Children

To reiterate, the findings of this study are as follows:

1. Segregation entailed a lack of access to opportunities but did not preclude excellent education from occurring.
2. Family and community were intertwined.
5. Pedagogy is culturally relevant and deals holistically with the individual child's needs.

Each of the findings of the previous chapter has implications for practicing teachers. I am presenting the implications of this dissertation in a way that is congruent culturally, spiritually, and pedagogically for me, as an 155
African-American woman and teacher, who has attempted to hear this set of stories, analyze them, and put them forth in a way that honors the women who shared them. I want to talk through the implications operationally as a set of lessons because that is indeed what was learned.

The following chart (Figure 5.1) shows the implications of the study discussed here as lessons for teachers of African American children.

Lesson #1: Teachers must not depend on state of the art materials.

These Teacher-Elders' stories demonstrate that having inferior supplies did not stop them from providing a high quality atmosphere for learning. While segregation provided the previously absent materials, it destroyed the relationships. This destruction of relationships between teachers and students has led to African American children rejecting education and therefore losing their connection with this pathway to liberation.

Lesson #2: Teachers must create a climate that invites community.

These Teacher-Elders shared the involvement of the community when it came to its children's setting and obtaining their educational goals. The church was involved in motivating the child academically, as well as getting the parents to take an active role in school functions. Whenever the teachers needed the support of the community, they would let the request be known to the minister and he would address those needs from his pulpit. These women shared their
Findings of the Study

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<td>Family and community were intertwined.</td>
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<td>Racial pride when explicitly taught aids in the success of African American children in education.</td>
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<td>Authority in teaching African American children is essential to the growth of African American children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedagogy is culturally relevant and deals holistically with the individual child’s needs.</td>
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<td>Spirituality is central to the African American child’s growth.</td>
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Lessons for Teachers of African American Children

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<td>#3 Teachers must facilitate teaching by knowing the parent(s) of the students.</td>
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<td>#4 Teachers must teach delayed gratification.</td>
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<td>#5 Teachers must explicitly teach racial pride to the successful matriculation of African American students in education.</td>
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<td>#6 Teachers must teach the importance of respect toward authority (Elders).</td>
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<td>#7 Teachers must begin teaching with an assumption that each student can learn.</td>
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<td>#8 Teachers must begin teaching at the students academic level.</td>
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<td>#9 Teachers must teach academic skills to ensure self-reliance for African American children.</td>
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<td>#10 Teachers must teach that materialism does not define who one is.</td>
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<td>#11 Teachers must embody spirituality as an essential factor in the education of African American children.</td>
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Figure 5.1 Implications of the Study
experiences of the community supporting them when they went off to obtain higher knowledge with praise as well as financial support.

These Teacher-Elders also shared that they invited community members into the classroom to model their roles as productive citizens.

Asante (19987) shares with us that the African and African-American conceptual framework is that of "we." "We are," therefore, "I am." The Elders expressed the belief that we live in a society today in which the trend has long been toward competition, i.e., individual against individual. This concept is in direct opposition to Asante's thesis of, "We are", therefore, "I am." According to these Elders, teachers of African American children must come to a daily realization that one is meant to be more than their sister's keeper, they are meant to be their sister and brothers' sister.

Introspectively, I thought, "How have I incorporated this lesson?" In response, I knew I had instilled in students that it is the responsibility of each to assist his or her classmates when asked for help. If one of us does not comprehend something taught, then no one does. In this way, they gather that success is not based on individual understanding, but on whole group understanding. I, then, hear the Elders' voices saying, "We are only as strong as our weakest link."

It is also important, in a community-oriented classroom, that the teacher be involved in the community. Prior to desegregation, they had shared that the
great majority of the African-American teachers were also a part of the community. Teachers were neighbors to the children, attended the same churches, and were role models within the community. In addition, the teachers were friends with the parents. Teachers frequented the students' homes and ate meals with them. Scheduling a meeting with a parent to discuss the progress (or lack of same) of a child with a concerned parent was not out of the ordinary. Teachers were expected to attend PTA meetings and participate in PTA functions and activities. This organization, in its inception, and at this time, was, in reality, a joint effort of parents and teachers. During these PTA meetings, teachers had a chance to share their concerns with the teachers.

Within these schools, teachers and principals had the support of the African-American churches in the education of these African-American children.

Lesson #3: Teachers must facilitate teaching by knowing the parent(s) of the students.

The Teacher-Elders' stories revealed that the parents of the children must be a partner in the education of their child. Teachers need to become a part of the child's community. Parental support is essential and the way to receive that support is to know the parents and gain their trust. These women revealed that it is imperative to become friends with the parents. In other words, get to know the parents on a personal basis. They shared stories on how they gave their time, money, material goods and resources, to these children and their families outside of the school day.
According to these Teacher-Elders, contact with the parents is to be on a regular basis to give feedback on the child's progress or lack of it. Trust is gained by showing a genuine interest in their child's welfare.

Another practice that is important to the education of African American children is to share home telephone numbers with parents. This can be instrumental in gaining necessary support. If there is a need for a brief conversation, the availability is there.

Lesson #4: **Teachers must teach delayed gratification.**

Teachers of African American children need to provide opportunities for students to experience a process that may take a longer period of time to achieve, and which has not had its stumbling blocks removed, but will, hopefully, have a positive outcome. It is critical to be able to work with students and to share with them the possibilities that obstacles may occur when least expected, to delay or drastically change outcomes. As they occur, we must assist the children in learning how not to get discouraged. This is the time for faith, the time to hold on, the time to trust, the time to be spiritual even though what physically stands before the person looks dire.

These children need to see that it may be necessary to change course, to delay a plan, or to alter a mindset, however, this does not necessarily mean that the goal is abandoned. As the Teacher-Elders would suggest, more "struggle" is needed and, therefore, teach the children that struggle is an inevitable process or real-life situations.
The important lesson here, however, is that my participants showed tenacity and determination that resulted in academic success for their students. These Teacher-Elders revealed that today's African-American children are eager for their needs to be met immediately. What these women shared was that they instilled in their students that the "prize" was at the end and not "in the getting."

One practice, to promote this lesson is to encourage the students to engage in silence and reflection and to seek the answers to their questions within themselves. As teachers we must also assist them in devising a time/goal schedule showing the process of: a) steps necessary to complete a project; b) possible obstacles in completing the project, and, c) estimated time of completion of the project.

Lesson #5: Teachers must explicitly teach racial pride to encourage the academic success of African American students.

These Teacher-Elders shared their beliefs and practices on teaching African-American history and the contributions of African-Americans. This was practiced on a daily basis. Whenever the opportunity would lend itself, these teachers invited successful African-Americans from the community to share their experiences and contributions to their communities and to society-at-large.

It was the Teacher-Elders' belief that non African-American teachers are not strong enough on discipline. It is their belief that, in particular, African-American males are the ones that are not disciplined correctly. They felt that
non African-American teachers are either too soft or they don't demand respect from the students, which led to low expectations, and, in turn, these students were expected to do little or no academic work.

All students must have the opportunity to celebrate diversity. These students should not be taught tolerance, which has been traditionally taught as a superficial acceptance of various ethnic, racial and cultural groups rather than a more meaningful understanding through a more in-depth study of what Cortes (1990) refers to as "objective and subjective culture." Objective culture being defined here as the external elements of a group such as food and clothing, and subjective culture defined as the internal elements of a group such as values, beliefs, norms and expectations. Rather than depending on textbooks to accomplish this, perhaps more depth, meaning, and value could be experienced by the students by having actual community members share their knowledge and "subjective culture(s)" within the classroom setting.

All children need to understand that all cultures have contributed to our American history. It is important that students understand that no one particular racial, ethnic, or cultural group dominated history. The contributions of all groups are analogous to a tossed salad, i.e., each vegetable has its own flavor and that flavor makes the salad more palatable.
Lesson #6: Teachers must teach the importance of respect toward authority (Elders).

This practice, too, has Biblical or spiritual roots as a commandment received by Moses and taught in every African-American church. Unfortunately, in today's African-American community, Elders are not respected and cared for the way they have been respected and cared for in the past.

In examining the roles teachers should play, the Teacher-Elders stated that today's children do not need another playmate or friend. Realizing this in the past, these African-American teachers easily assumed the responsibility of demonstrating their parent-like authority.

With the introduction of desegregation, African-American children have lost the sense of caring they felt in the hands of a teacher who historically treated them like "kinfolk." Today's African-American children still expect and want the teacher to care enough to dispense loving discipline. Students instinctively need and want discipline and guidance. Too frequently, busy parents have relinquished this authority to the hands of the teacher. Many African-American parents, who have themselves experienced the inequities of American public education, have replaced the idea of formal schooling with the idea of materialism as a connection to society at-large. It appears that these new materialistic "values" have been transferred to their children. These concepts of materialism and permissiveness are contrary to historic African-

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American values. Traditionally, these children would have been disciplined by instructions from the Bible, not by Dr. Spock.

These Teacher-Elders revealed that in today's society, they cannot speak to children in the authoritative manner as they once had. It is their belief that the parents have traded sound discipline for obtaining material goods for their children. They shared that African-American children take advantage of the Elders today due to living in such a violent atmosphere. Elders today, according to these women, are afraid to discipline these children out of the fear that their very lives may be threatened. This leads to these children little respect for their parents.

Several examples for teacher practice might serve to illustrate the implications of the critical role of authority in teaching African-American children.

1. Children should address teachers and other adults as Mr., Mrs., or Dr.

2. Children should have lots of opportunities within and outside the school context to interact with Elders.

Lesson # 7 Teachers must begin teaching with an assumption that each student can learn.

These Teacher-Elders stated that, at the time of the initial onset of Desegregation, many of the White teachers felt that African-American children
were "just another generation of welfare recipients." Sadly, this idea is still quite prevalent among many teachers of African-American children today.

The first step, in this process of restructuring the schools, is to challenge the notion that African Americans cannot be academically successful. One place to begin the attack on these deep-rooted sentiments, is in the Teacher Education programs.

My recommendation is to recruit teachers who are genuinely interested in the schooling of African-American children. A strong effort to recruit African-American teachers is crucial but not exclusive of recruiting culturally sensitive White teachers.

Regardless of their race, these potential teachers must be interested in and concerned with the achievement of the African-American child. We have teacher preparatory classes full of teachers who prefer to teach children with backgrounds similar to their own. They often, admittedly, have the belief that their way of learning is the only way of learning. These pre-service teachers need to be in the stewardship of excellent veteran, African-American teachers in order to be able to learn from proven practices, possibly through a process akin to mentoring.

These teachers can probably benefit most from having the opportunity of being immersed in the culture of the African-American child. One might say, "In order to fit in, the African American needs to understand the dominant culture." My response would be that African Americans have generally been acculturated
to, and/or assimilated into the dominant culture as a means of economic and cultural survival.

For instance, a teacher of different culture may not understand the home language of an African-American child. This lack of understanding may cause them to, inaccurately, label him or her as "learning disabled."

In addition, these teachers may be too quick to judge the parenting skills of the parents of these children and condemn them for whatever appears different from their fundamental beliefs and/or background(s).

By utilizing this proposed mentoring idea the prospective teacher can take full advantage of the numerous resources that these children have within their community. If one can observe and absorb the implications of how family and community dynamics function, it would - inevitably upon extrapolation - prove of great value in helping the African-American child attain the highest academic achievement. As an example, if a child were not performing at his or her best, Ma'Dear (the grandmother who is the matriarch of the family) may be the one to contact to get this child back on the correct path, simply because of the traditional respect and affection afforded Elders.

Far too often, White mainstream teachers are exposed to the superficial fostering of multiculturalism, in the forms of externals, such as food or clothing. Multicultural education is not solely, or primarily, about food or clothing. Significantly, it is about the way one views the world, learns, responds, and embraces all parts of life. Ladson-Billings (1994) states that perspective
teachers - particularly White teachers - view culture as a possession of other people. Too infrequently, they have not taken adequate time to acknowledge and examine their own culture by delving into its depths. They are, apparently, already assuming that their methods are the ultimate truth regarding pedagogy and practice. It is, therefore, critical that institutions of higher learning properly prepare the prospective teacher to be able to effectively teach in any classroom, neighborhood, city, region, etc., having high academic expectations for all children, especially, African-Americans.

Lesson # 8: Teachers must begin teaching at the students' academic levels.

Each Teacher-Elder shared the importance of beginning instructions at the appropriate level of the child's understanding. If instructional materials were not available they were handmade by the teacher or by the students. It was the Elders' unified belief that, at the onset of the school year, it was their responsibility and duty to evaluate the child and take that child at least to the next level of learning before that child advances to the next learning level.

Lesson # 9: Teachers must teach academic skills to provide self reliance for African American children.

In order to be academically successful in the American culture at-large, the African-American child must be proficient in standard English. These Teacher-Elders felt that African-American students need to be taught phonetics, grammar, and syntax without compromising their rich cultural language traditions of the African American community.
African American children are fluent when it comes to rapping, storytelling, and composing poetry. It is imperative that teachers of African American children build on these strengths. The perspective teacher may want to stress that there are special places where their language is acceptable and practical. Sometimes their home language is useful in their comprehension of a concept. After the concept has been obtained, they must be encouraged to use the language that is appropriate for school. They must be taught that it is acceptable to "register switch," i.e., to choose the appropriate language dependent upon the audience. The more they understand the rationale of when and where to "register switch," the more proficient they will become in overall language skills.

In addition to language skills, African-American children need to know the basic facts in mathematics as well as the thought processes utilized in acquiring "the answer" to a problem. More and more, math courses which were formally considered "specialized" (such as trigonometry and calculus) are now on the required list for many colleges and universities. Many African-American students, who may not have been expected to take higher level mathematics in high school, suddenly find themselves face-to-face with these advanced courses early in their college years. Without the proper foundation in basic mathematics, they will either be hopelessly lost or struggle desperately. This is a major implication for teacher practice in that pre service and in service teachers need to be taught (within teacher education) how to specifically teach
reading, writing, and mathematical skills in ways that are culturally relevant to all children.

Lesson #10: Teachers must teach that materialism does not define who one is.

We thought Nike's were the best and Grant Hill and they are on TV and we have to compete with those things. Those evils what I call them. The kids start with these kids playing that basketball and all so they should be truthful, now here comes the spiritual part about it to let them know that if they can't read or keep up academically or after awhile you are too old to this at a young age. It is not going to last, level with them and let them know that they have to be prepared today. TV is no help. They say look at this, he's sharp and some of that stuff I wouldn't want to wear. A (her granddaughter) has everything Fila. I tell her that doesn't make you any better or a better person. You already are. I'd love you even if you had on just your night pajama's. She said most people don't feel that way. (Stalwart Lady, interview 2).

These Teacher-Elders emphasized that children have become too materialistic. They have abandoned their conceptual framework of spirituality and have replaced it with material goods. Today's children will acquire "things" by any means necessary. The students' self-worth is determined by what they own rather than who they are. Their conceptual framework of spirituality has
been dismantled. Not only do they seek material possessions, but the more possessions you have, the better person you are.

Lesson # 11: Teachers must embody spirituality as an essential factor in the education of African American children.

One might inquire, "What does spirituality have to do with education?"

According to these Teacher-Elders, one cannot separate spirituality and education from the African-American child, for spirituality is the conceptual framework of the African and African American. Spirituality resides at the very center of the essence of being African and African American. Should this concept be dismantled, the individual loses "self". Thy further stated that a preacher and a teacher are considered to have similar roles - the salvation of the soul.

Historically, the African-American church has been the hub of African-American life. The churches and schools represented a unified effort in providing the necessary foundation for the African-American child to become successful. Traditionally, belief in a Higher Power teaches one that Power is "in control" and provides tools (in the form of a set of tenets) necessary for becoming successful. Without this strong, spiritual foundation, it is believed, one cannot hope to reach his or her highest potential.

In the nineteenth century, among freed African Americans, the spirit of African kinship was transmitted to the clergy, whom the community viewed as their primary leader, often possessing charismatic powers. They have been
viewed as the intermediaries, not only between the African-American people and God, but also between their people and the White community (Paris, 1995). It is the belief that the same spiritual guidance that aided their forefathers, in overcoming tremendous obstacles, can provide similar guidance to today's African-Americans. It is imperative, for today's educators, to allow spirituality to be incorporated as a daily practice. While it is difficult to define specific "teaching spiritual strategies," the explicit practice of quiet time, reflection, and ethic of care, respect for oneself and to others on the part of a teacher's daily life and for their students is key.

Since educators are unable to perform any religious practices in school, a retired African-American minister related that a teacher's daily life of spiritual behavior witnessed by students could transmit spirituality in a non-religious context.

At the beginning of each school year, the students and I compose a daily pledge designed to help us focus on our personal and educational goals and our responsibilities in striving to attain them. This is recited every morning after the "Pledge of Allegiance. Once these pledges are recited, a moment of silence is observed by all. Everyone respects the silence, as we bow our heads, whether or not they believe in God. They notice that, from time to time, I read Acts of Faith, by Iyanla Vanzant. Posted on my classroom walls are affirmations to encourage the children.
In retrospect, I contemplate the difference "knowledge of culture" can make when added to a circumstance such as this, especially when it is embraced with a genuine caring and concern for all students. This is how I was taught by my Teacher-Elders. This is how to teach: We must teach with our lives.
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