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Guest Editor's Note

U.S. Black scholars have articulated important differences between schooling and education, where schooling functions narrowly as a tool of oppression and education operates more broadly, to facilitate freedom.[1] Understanding the differences between schooling and education provides a fuller understanding of the socio-historical and cultural factors that have influenced the educational experiences of Black people in the United States.[2] Education in the United States is historically contextualized by segregation, marked by the intersecting politics of race, class, and gender, and framed by varied academic and social discourses. To embark on a study of the education of Black people in the U.S. thus invites contradiction in that there is no singular Black experience.

There is, however, a history of Black educators whose work has inspired others to teach, to question, and to change. Educators such as W.E.B. DuBois believed that Black teachers would teach Black children in ways that would create new possibilities and hope for the entire race. Recent work on Black educators by several scholars follows DuBois' thinking by identifying specific concerns over who should teach Black children; their work has examined Black teachers in segregation,[3] the role of Black women teachers,[4] the role of Black men teachers,[5] and the absence of Black teachers.[6] Other scholars have explored a number of different issues that relate to the pedagogies of Black teachers including: their curricular orientations,[7] the voices of Black teachers,[8] the politics of respectability,[9] and teaching as a political act.[10] Many Black educators have taught their students in resource deprived circumstances, with the hope that students would transcend that deprivation. Their pedagogy was marked by the politics of despair and hope, inseparable conditions specific to those whose lives are framed by oppression.[11]

The articles in this special issue of Vitae Scholasticae complicate understandings of Black educators and Black education by revealing ways in which historical and contemporary Black Americans have educated in formal and informal contexts to affect interpersonal and institutional change. In so doing, the educators highlighted in this special issue exemplify practices of education as freedom in areas of politics, social activism, curriculum development, and leadership studies.

The practice of educating for freedom represents a political act.[12] Jared B. Stallones makes the connection between education and politics explicit in his article, "Education and Politics in Texas: The Legacies of Laurine C. Anderson and Edward L. Blackshear," which chronicles the lives of two Black male Texas educators whose commitment to procure resources for African American education necessitated that they also be skilled politicians. Stallones presents Anderson and Blackshear as politicians who, though diverse in outward appearance and political approach, used their educational positions (as Superintendent of Colored Schools in Austin, Texas and as Principal of Prairie View) to garner influence in the political realm in order to improve African American lives. While their work occurred in the political realm, the commitment of Anderson and Blackshear to African American education and well-being positions the practices of both men as education for freedom.

While Stallones' article makes connections between educational and political spheres, Karen Meadows' article, "The Desegregation of Public Schools: Ruby Bridges, Millicent E. Brown, and Josephine Boyd Bradley – Black Educators by Any Means Necessary," conceptually links the personal sphere to education and politics by sharing the biographies of three female desegregation pioneers. Meadows argues that social activists Bridges, Brown, and Bradley exercised agency in their personal decisions to desegregate white educational spaces and, in so doing, also served as informal black educators whose courage and activism modeled practices of freedom for the Black community and the world.

The topic of the appropriate curriculum for Black learners has been broached by notable Black scholars such as Carter G. Woodson[13] and Asa Hilliard.[14] Montgomery's article "Marva Collins' Method: Providing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy" extends this discussion through emphasis on Marva Collins' contribution to culturally relevant curriculum. Montgomery calls attention to the narrowing of school curricula in ways that disadvantage minority youth in schools and contests this troubling trend by upholding the exemplary work of Marva Collins. In Collins' work, Montgomery sees practices of culturally relevant pedagogy that enhance the educational well-being of Black youth in schools. Montgomery's contribution to this special issue, then, is recognition of ways in which culturally relevant curricula facilitate practices of education as freedom.

Though the educational practices of Marva Collins have been widely publicized, there are many other Black educators whose exemplary work has not received the attention it deserves. The final two articles in this special issue pay homage to these exceptional yet unsung Black educators. Bray's article, "Perspectives and Possibilities from a Veteran Educator: An Understanding of Agency," chronicles the pedagogy of Dr. Nettie Web, a vet-

eran educator whose advocacy for children was evident throughout her career. Bray connects Dr. Webb's advocacy work to themes of social justice and spiritual practice. Like Bray's article, Karanxha, Agosto, and Elam's article, "Journey of Elam: The Pedagogies of a Black Female Public Intellectual," also highlights themes of social justice and spirituality. The authors conceptualize the servant leadership of Elam as a form of critical pedagogy that offers guidance and inspiration for fighting contemporary forms of injustice. They conclude that the "Elam Method" represented culturally competent leadership, a leadership that responds appropriately to the distinct needs of individuals and collectives.

–Donyell L. Roseboro
–Sabrina N. Ross
Guest Editors

Notes

[1] Noel S. Anderson and Haroon Kharem, introduction to Education as Freedom: African American Educational Thought and Activism, ed. Noel S. Anderson and Haroon Kharem (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), xi –xvi.

[2] Michael E. Jennings and Marvin Lynn, "The house that race built: Toward a critical race analysis of critical pedagogy," Educational Foundations 19, nos. 3–4 (2006).

[3] Adam Fairclough, A class of their own: Black teachers in the segregated south (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

[4] Sonya Ramsey, Reading, writing, and segregation: A century of Black teachers in Nashville, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

[5] M. E. Jennings and M. Lynn, "Power, politics, and critical race pedagogy: A critical race analysis of Black male teachers' pedagogy," Race, Ethnicity, & Education 12, no. 2 (2009): 173-196, DOI: 10.1080/13613320902995467; Wayne Martino and Goli M. Rezai-Rashti, "Male teacher shortage, Black teachers' perspectives," Gender & Education 22, no. 3 (2010): 247-262, DOI: 10.1080/09540250903474582.

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[7] William H. Watkins, "Black curriculum orientations: A preliminary inquiry," Harvard Educational Review 63, no. 3 (1993): 321-338.

[8] Michele Foster, Black teachers on teaching (New York: The New Press, 1998); Christopher Pole, "Black teachers: Curriculum and Career," Curriculum Journal 12, no. 3(2001): 347-364, DOI: 10.1080/09585170110089628.

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evant teaching' among African-American teachers,"Teachers College Record 100, no. 4 (1999): 702-724; David S. Cecelski, Along freedom road: Hyde County, NC and the fate of Black schools in the south (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

[11] Cornel West, The Cornel West reader (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999).

[12] Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Continuum, 2001).

[13] Carter Godwin Woodson, The Miseducation of the Negro (Las Vegas: IAP, 2010).

[14] ASA G. Hilliard, III,"Race, identity, hegemony, and education: What do we need to know now?" in Race and Education: The role of history and society in education African American students, ed. William H. Watkins, James H. Lewis, and Victoria Chou (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001).

Education and Politics in Texas:
The Legacies of Laurine C. Anderson and Edward L. Blackshear

Jared Stallones

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In 1896, Laurine C. Anderson and Edward L. Blackshear swapped the two most influential positions in Texas black education. Blackshear left his post as Superintendent of Colored Schools in Austin, the state capital, to lead Prairie View Normal Institute, Texas' only state-supported institution of higher learning for African Americans. Anderson, recently fired as Principal of Prairie View, moved to Austin to take the position Blackshear had vacated. The two men could not have been more outwardly different. Anderson was a slight, scholarly Republican educated for the ministry and adept at the details of administration, while Blackshear was a husky, outgoing Democrat as much at home at political rallies as in the classroom. Despite appearances and political affiliations, though, the two men had much in common. Besides serving in the same posts over a number of years, the two shared a struggle for resources to further black education in Texas in the face of an increasingly dominant and rigid white power structure, and they held a common commitment to improving the lot of African American Texans through education.

The most thorough analysis of the work of these two men appears in George R. Woolfolk's dated but insightful history, Prairie View: A Study in Public Conscience, 1878-1946. In that book, Woolfolk sometimes casts these two Prairie View principals as innocents in a world of power politics beyond their grasp. This paper provides a more nuanced view. Using a variety of archival resources, contemporary accounts, and secondary sources, this piece

portrays the two men as shrewd politicians who used the fads and fears of the dominant white political and educational establishments to the advantage of African American education. It begins with a brief overview of the state of public higher education for black Texans following the Civil War. Then, Laurine Anderson is profiled and his political struggles are outlined followed by a description of his demise as principal of Prairie View. Anderson was succeeded in that post by Edward Blackshear, and so the account picks up with Blackshear's elevation to the principalship and describes his political activities and ultimate demise. Throughout the battles for control of the curriculum in the schools and majorities in the statehouse that typified late nineteenth century Texas, Anderson and Blackshear continually played one side against another to gain a bigger share of the educational pie for black Texans.

Beginnings of Public Higher Education for Black Texans

In the years after the Civil War, the unpopular Reconstruction governments of Texas sought to build a centralized system of free schools where none had existed before, but an uncooperative population and occasional violence undermined their efforts. By the time Texans met to write their 'own' constitution in 1875, the schools were in shambles. The U.S. Commissioner of Education described Texas as, " . . . the darkest field, educationally, in the United States."[1] With an eye toward correcting the situation, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention provided for the equal, if not integrated, education of all races. Article VII, Section 7 of the Constitution read, "Separate schools shall be provided for the white and colored children, and impartial provisions shall be made for both." On August 14, 1876, the Legislature passed an act, "to establish an Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, for the benefit of Colored Youths and to make appropriations therefor," in part to meet federal Morrill Act funding requirements.[2] The college would be a branch of the nearby white A.&M. College, and under its supervision.

March 11, 1878 was opening day of the new Alta Vista Agricultural College for Colored Youth, but it proved to be a disappointment. L.W. Minor was the on-site Principal, and he prepared for 20 students. Only eight students enrolled. Thomas S. Gathright, A.&M.'s white President, attributed the low enrollment to the fact that "there is no demand for higher education among the blacks,"[3] even though Alta Vista attracted more students than the white college enrolled at its opening. The A.&M. Board declared the black school a failure and discontinued classes in late 1878.

Closing the only state-supported institution of higher learning for blacks in Texas was not a permanent option. Both the Texas Constitution and the Morrill Act required its continued operation in some form or another. At the

same time, Texas suffered from an acute shortage of teachers for its black common schools due to explosive enrollments in those schools.[4] The private colleges in Texas could not keep up with the demand for black teachers.

To help meet the need for black teachers, Governor Oran M. Roberts prompted the 16th Texas Legislature to reorganize Alta Vista as the Prairie View Normal Institute for blacks. Six thousand dollars a year was appropriated from the Permanent University Fund for the new school, to be matched by the Peabody Education Fund. Thus, on April 19, 1879, Prairie View became the first public institution for teacher education in Texas. It remained under the supervision of the white A.&M. College at College Station. With the appointment in October of Ernest H. Anderson as Principal and his brother Laurine as his assistant, Prairie View was ready to begin its new life as a center for black teacher education.

The term opened that fall with 16 students. Admission to the school was to be by competitive examination, but early admissions standards were necessarily lax, owing to the uneven quality of education in the lower schools. For this reason, although the Board had authorized a one-year course including arithmetic, grammar, geography, and Texas history, all at about the seventh grade level, the course of study was remedial.[5] Still, the school was a success. By the end of the term, enrollment grew to sixty, and additional students were turned away for lack of space. Apparently, Gathright was mistaken in his opinion that black Texans had little interest in higher education.

Enter Laurine C. Anderson

Born in Memphis in 1853, Laurine Cecil Anderson was among the first students to attend the public free schools for African American children in that city. He went on to Fisk University and studied for the Methodist ministry. He taught with Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute for a time, then followed his brother to Texas. His first position was as principal of a school in Brenham, but he soon made the short move to Prairie View in eastern central Texas. From the somewhat sheltered position of assistant to his brother there, Anderson launched into a number of political crusades.

His first foray into the politics of education involved the perennial issue of a college for African American Texans provided in the Texas Constitution. Article VII, Section 14 mandates a "College or Branch University for the instruction of the colored youths of the State." Questions of where, how, and when to establish it were bones of contention between the black community and white politicians until 1946, but these questions were just the fodder for debate. The underlying issue was whether and to what degree black Texans would continue to wield political power in Texas after Reconstruction.

L.C. Anderson and the Politics of Education

When the 16th Legislature recreated Prairie View as a normal school without discontinuing its connection to the Agricultural and Mechanical College, it confused the issue of the school's legal status. There was some question as to whether Prairie View could be simultaneously a Morrill Act college and also the constitutionally-mandated "College or Branch University for the instruction of the colored youths of the State."[6] A normal school could hardly be called a university, but if Prairie View did not provide higher education for Texas blacks, then Morrill Act funds for A.&M. would be jeopardized.

In the spring of 1881, Governor Roberts asked the 17th Legislature to clarify the school's identity. The Legislature decided that Prairie View, as a branch university, was eligible for participation in Permanent University Fund monies, and appropriated $8000 for the biennium. The independently-elected State Comptroller, William M. Brown, disagreed, however, and refused to pay Prairie View bills from the Fund. By early 1882, the school was insolvent. Roberts published an open letter in several newspapers eliciting sympathy for the school. Donations from individuals throughout Texas paid the bills for a few months, but a long-term arrangement was needed.

Governor Roberts asked the A.&M. Board for help. At its February 9 meeting, the Board voted to use accrued Morrill Fund interest, "not being needed to pay the Professors and officers of the Agricultural and Mechanical College"[7] in Prairie View's behalf. This solved the immediate problem, but Prairie View's legal status needed clear definition.

Roberts called a special session of the Legislature that summer in which it voted to pay Prairie View's debts from general revenues and schedule a statewide election to choose a site for the black university. The governor invited communities to nominate themselves for a place on the November election ballot. Prairie View nominated itself and L.C. Anderson promoted its cause in letters to newspapers around the state. In one, he argued that, "A high duty rest [sic] upon the state to furnish facilities for the education of the colored youths of Texas that they may be better prepared for the duties of citizenship."[8] With this statement, Anderson sounded a cry that would be of great use to the cause of black education in its struggle with the white establishment: the role of education in producing the 'right' kind of black citizens for Texas. The election was held November 2, 1882, and despite Anderson's efforts Austin was chosen as the site for the black university, but the penurious Legislature neglected to act. Prairie View remained the sole state-supported institution for higher learning for black Texans.

Anderson soon found another vehicle for his political impulses. In 1884, he joined an elite group of black educators in the formation of the Colored

Teachers State Association of Texas at Prairie View. Anderson was chosen as its first president and served in that capacity until 1889. Although one of its chroniclers has claimed that,"The colored Association has never participated in the activities of the State Legislature,"[9] it was from the start as much a political organization as an educational one. Its leaders felt that the political education of its members was a primary duty, and to that end,"Often various candidates for local, state, and national offices would attend the meetings of the Association for the purpose of campaigning. Sometimes members of the Association would speak to the assembly in behalf of certain candidates."[10] This activity became such a dominant part of the meetings that in 1899 the Association had to prohibit candidates from campaigning at its annual meeting.

That same year L.C. Anderson gained greater prominence in educational circles when he became Principal of Prairie View after Ernest Anderson died on October 29, 1885. Now L.C. Anderson stood simultaneously at the head of Texas' only state-supported institution of higher learning for African Americans and its most prestigious black teachers' organization. In this dual role, he soon found himself in the eye of a political storm concerning the direction of black education in Texas.

The Politics of Curriculum

Texas was on the verge of plunging into a decades-long struggle over control of the curriculum in its schools. The contest pitted proponents of a traditional classical/liberal education, those favoring the new manual training, and the agriculturalists against one another. Advocates for manual training saw useful skills as the key to gainful employment in an industrializing state. Black leaders were concerned that their young men were being squeezed out of traditional apprenticeships due to racial bigotry, and that career training in schools was their only option. White industrialists sought able factory hands. The agriculturalists feared losing their supply of farm labor if schools emphasized other career choices too effectively. Backers of a classical/liberal school curriculum believed that such an education was the path to social mobility and racial equality. The curriculum battles that these forces waged throughout this period were felt at every level of schooling and politics in both the white and black communities. Anderson and his successor at Prairie View would learn to exploit these struggles to extract resources from the dominant white political and educational establishments to benefit black education in Texas.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, America was an increasingly urban, industrial society, and its education system struggled to meet changing demands. There was growing pressure on schools to prepare students for

careers in industry. Businessmen like Andrew Carnegie decried the traditional curriculum as,

> . . . to waste energies upon obtaining a knowledge of such languages as Greek and Latin, which are of no more practical use to them than Choctaw . . . They have in no sense received instruction. On the contrary, what they have obtained has served to imbue them with false ideas and to give them a distaste for practical life."[11]

Many educators concurred. The Superintendent of the New Orleans schools told a National Education Association gathering, "We are living in a practical, money-making age . . . The big thing today is the reward, the dollar, and it is paid for practice and not for the theory and training behind the practice."[12]

Some favored an industrial curriculum for the black schools of Texas, as well. Many in the community saw that traditional apprenticeships were increasingly difficult for young black men to find and turned to the schools for training. Anderson agreed that some industrial education was necessary, but not at the expense of classical-liberal studies. In a newspaper article arguing his point, he wrote, "This question of labor is the disturbing one of the present and is destined to still further complicate politics, unless it is met and solved in the schoolroom. . . . this can be accomplished without materially changing the literary instruction given . . ."[13]

White Texans also found reasons to support industrial education for black students. To some it was a matter of conscience, "[I have] always felt that it was our duty, claiming to be the superior race, and having control of the government, to do all in our power that promised beneficial and practical results, to educate and elevate our colored citizens."[14] Some saw it as an economic necessity, "The people of Texas depend on Negroes and Mexicans for practically all agricultural and manufacturing labor. On account of the ignorance of the laborers they require constant supervision and in many cases lack the ability to obey orders. This great ignorance necessarily means an increase in the cost of production."[15] Better schooling was the answer.

Others opposed industrial education for black Texans. This was a time of growing resentment toward blacks and attempts to draw strict color lines in political and economic life throughout the South. Blacks were often denied membership in labor unions, pushing them out of the industrial trades. At the same time, white workers were moving into such traditionally black domains as domestic service. Paul B. Barringer of the University of Virginia expressed the fears of some whites when he asked the Southern Educational Association meeting in Richmond, "Shall we, having by great effort gotten rid of the Negro as a political menace, deliberately proceed to equip the Negro

of the future as an economic menace? Shall we, knowing his primitive racial needs, arm him and pit him against the poor whites of the South?"[16]

The version that finally impacted Prairie View originated with the Russian educator Victor Della Vos. His blend of manual, literary, and moral education in both theoretical and practical instruction was adopted by General Samuel C. Armstrong at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia and by Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute, where Anderson had worked. It dovetailed neatly with the emphasis on character education described in Prairie View literature, "Plainly a system is required which shall be at once constructive of mental and moral worth and destructive of the vices characteristic of the slave."[17]

Industrial education was formally initiated at Prairie View in 1888, with the creation of an Agricultural and Mechanical Department. Receipt of Morrill Act funds had always implied that the curriculum would include at least some agricultural and industrial components. Professor Randolph, a Hampton Institute graduate, led instruction in woodworking, printing, and mechanics. In addition, a Ladies Industrial Department was established under the leadership of Prairie View alumna Sallie Ewell to teach home economics.

The critics of industrial education for blacks need not have worried about Prairie View becoming an industrial training center. The industrial course was not even listed in the college catalogue until 1893, and Anderson's unique twist on the curriculum oriented it toward producing teachers of industrial arts, not merely artisans themselves. Besides, industrial education at Prairie View was already being undermined by the agricultural populists.

Agricultural education had been Prairie View's original mission and the initial lack of student interest did not deter those who saw Prairie View as a training school for farmers from pressing to institute their vision. When Prairie View launched its Industrial Department, it started an Agricultural Department as well. A graduate of Tuskegee Institute was put in charge. The agricultural course of study blended classroom instruction in farming methods and general academic subjects with fieldwork. The agriculturalists gained momentum in the 1890's, and funding questions were again a catalyst for curriculum change.

The Texas Grange lobbied Governors Roberts and Lawrence S. Ross to end instruction in the classical subjects at the land-grant schools in Texas. The Grange saw money spent on these as a violation of the intent of the Morrill Acts, although Justin Morrill himself argued that his intention was for Morrill Act money to fund liberal studies as well as industrial and agricultural training. Bowing to the pressure, Prairie View dropped Latin from the course of study, and a growing senior college program was discontinued. In a typically paternalistic statement, the A.&M. Board declared, "We believe

that it is not higher education, but practical education that the Negro race needs for its development."[18] Texas A.&M. also succumbed to the political pressure, and ultimately dropped courses in Greek and French, made Latin and Spanish elective courses, and instituted compulsory labor on school farms.

The Politics of Education Funding

As the struggle for political power between Republicans and Democrats heated up, Prairie View found itself increasingly at the center of political controversy. Some black Republicans saw education issues as a means to stop the erosion of their political influence, and the second Morrill Act offered a vehicle. Texas Republican Party Chairman Norris Wright Cuney led an effort in 1890 to lobby the federal government to rescind Morrill funds for A.&M. on the basis that Texas practiced systematic discrimination in its funding for black schools. There was some truth to the accusation. Throughout this period of Democratic state administrations, there was considerable inequality between black and white schools in Texas in terms of teacher salaries, county tuitions charged,[19] school buildings,[20] and school libraries. Governor Ross denied the accusation. He claimed that reductions in school spending for the years 1885-89 had been the result of an accounting error and that "white and colored children suffered equally" from its effects.[21] Responding to charges that funding inequities were politically motivated, Ross pointed out that most black teachers and some state education officials were Republicans, despite the availability of white Democrats to fill the posts. He concluded by reasoning that, "The Democrat loves his money as well as other people. How is it he pays so liberally to elevate and care for the negroes always found voting against him? Certainly there is only one explanation, and it is that the Democrats of Texas have agreed that the Negro shall enjoy equal rights before the law...cost what it may."[22] Whether or not Ross' eloquence was the deciding factor, his version held sway, and U.S. Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble consented to release the Morrill Act funds to Texas.

The animosity between black Republicans and white Democrats continued. Governor Ross divided the Morrill money 2/3 to A.&M. and 1/3 to Prairie View, but when the 22nd Legislature convened in the spring of 1891, it reallocated the funds 3/4 to A.&M. and only 1/4 to Prairie View. Later, black Republicans won a hollow victory when they prevailed on the Legislature to set aside unappropriated public lands for the endowment of the yet-to-be-constructed black university. The Texas Supreme Court overturned the endowment, ruling that there was no unappropriated public land left.

L.C. Anderson's Demise

The end of Anderson's tenure at Prairie View pointed up the vulnerability of the Prairie View principal. The immediate cause was a minor incident, but one of a type that was becoming all too frequent in an increasingly intolerant Texas. In an A.&M. Board meeting held at Prairie View in 1896, Board member D.A. Paulus made disparaging remarks about black rights, one of Anderson's passionate causes. Anderson blew up at him and was fired on the spot. Many felt that since Anderson's performance as an administrator at Prairie View had been above reproach he was purposely baited in order to give cause to replace him. T.W. McCall expressed the sentiment of many when he wrote in the Galveston News, "Why such a broad and progressive man as he [Anderson] is retired from the executive head of such a broad interest is yet to be shown to an inquisitive and dissatisfied public...it is demoralizing to our free institution and discouraging to true merit and manly courage when they are pushed aside for political preference."[23] The firing looked even more blatantly political when Anderson was replaced with a Democrat, Edward L. Blackshear. But with Blackshear, the white political establishment got an even more outspoken and effective politician than L.C. Anderson had been, and one who shared with Anderson the commitment to education as a means of advancing the cause of African Americans in Texas.

Enter Edward L. Blackshear

Edward Blackshear was born into slavery in Montgomery, Alabama on September 8, 1862. He learned to read and write alongside his master's children and attended the first public school for African Americans in Montgomery and an American Mission Society school. In 1875, at the age of thirteen, he entered Tabor College in Iowa. There he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1881, and later the L.L.D. He came to Texas to teach in 1882. In 1892, he became supervisor of all the black schools in Austin. This high profile position brought him to the attention of Governor Hogg, who appointed him Principal of Prairie View in 1896.

Blackshear showed himself adept at political maneuvering in his first Prairie View commencement. He invited the black educator best known to and most respected by whites, Booker T. Washington, to address the convocation. Washington spoke on June 4, 1897 to an overflow crowd of blacks and whites. Blackshear had shrewdly invited a number of important politicians and educators to share in the event. Texas House Speaker L. Travis Dashiell joined Washington on the stage, along with the other prominent white leaders in education and politics. In the flush of good will following Washington's address, the President of the A.&M. Board told the crowd that the Board

endorsed Washington's every word. Dashiell, too, praised Washington and Prairie View. On the heels of the Speaker's endorsement, Blackshear pressed the A.&M. Board for an expanded course of classical-liberal studies.

Typically, white leaders favored the gradual growth of a classical university at Prairie View. The Democrats, at their State Convention in August 1896, claimed, "The Prairie View Normal School should be enlarged, making provision for industrial features and gradually converting it into a university for the colored people."[24] Board Chairman W.R. Cavitt had laid out the plans as early as 1884. He asked, "But why not make Prairie View Normal School the nucleus of all the educational interest of the colored people in the State? First, and appropriately first, it is the training school of teachers. Such industrial features may next be added as the demand arises, until full instruction is reached in Agricultural and Mechanic Arts, and finally, when people are ready for them, colleges for classical and literary education and the learned professions may be established."[25] Some black leaders agreed. In 1896, Colored Teachers State Association President M.H. Broyles called for a course of college study to be instituted at Prairie View.

However, others held out for the black university promised in the Texas Constitution. Blackshear disagreed with this strategy. In a piece written for the Texas School Journal he argued that, ". . . if this were done, it would be the last of the 'University,' but of course, we do not dare express this as the general opinion . . . We are not in any way hostile to Prairie View . . ., but we believe that we should have a university on a broader scale equipped with first-class facilities."[26] But the Journal was a publication for all Texas educators, so Blackshear was giving a wide audience the impression that his view was the 'general opinion'. Moreover, the Journal had already carried an editorial call for political action on behalf of a separate 'colored university'. The Republican Party made a separate university a rallying cry, calling in its platforms of 1884, 1892, 1894, and 1896 for "extending to our colored youths the opportunities of a university education" apart from Prairie View.[27]

Despite this support, Principal Blackshear had to take the politically pragmatic approach. After assessing the forces arrayed against him, he shelved his dream of a separate university. Instead, he turned his energies to gradually building Prairie View's curriculum. In 1896, the school was reorganized into academic departments. There were separate departments for Science, Math, Pedagogy, History and English, and Music, as well as a Mechanical Department, Agricultural Department, and Girls' Industrial Department. In 1899, the Legislature renamed the school Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College. More classical elements were also added to the curriculum.

In his Biennial Report that same year, Blackshear called for a four-year Normal course followed by a three-year course taught at the college level.

He admitted that his chief aim was, "the improvement of the teaching profession and the offering of an opportunity for higher education for those desiring it until the State deemed it necessary and practicable to establish a branch of the University for negroes ordained by the State Constitution."[28] He added some teeth to his request by subtly appealing to the white establishment's fears of a radicalized African American population. He wrote,

> As there is probably no single agency in the state doing more than this institution to bring about that proper understanding and relationship between the races, which harmonized with Southern sentiment and tradition and which in turn is so essential to the peace, happiness, prosperity, and progress of both races in the South, there seems to be wisdom and propriety in an enlargement of the school to meet the growing needs educationally and industrially of the Negro race in Texas.[29]

The Legislature responded by appropriating money in 1901 for the ". . . maintenance of a four-year college course of classical and scientific studies" at Prairie View.[30] The A.&M. Board, though, authorized only a two-year course. Although this gave classical/liberal studies a foothold at Prairie View, Blackshear was not satisfied.

The winds of public opinion soon revived the question of industrial training for African American Texans. Blackshear adapted his approach to meet the new challenge. In fact, he was so convincing in this about face that he had to address the Colored Teachers Association in 1901 to, ". . . correct the general misimpression that he was against intellectual education for the race. He committed himself to an industrial, Christian, and higher education for his race."[31] His writings from this period seem to be directed at white as well as African American audiences and treat political as much as educational topics. In a 1902 treatise entitled "What is the Negro Teacher Doing in the Matter of Uplifting his Race" he agonized over the political implications of the teacher's role. He called the African American teacher, ". . . a herald of civilization to the youth of his people . . . the colored teacher, too, has always been conservative and has been the wise advisor of his people . . . Perhaps if only the Christian missionary teachers had come and the political missionaries had remained at home, all might have been better."[32]

In 1904, Blackshear ascended to the presidency of the Colored Teachers State Association. From this prominent post he could freely exercise his political skills, but he was not alone. The 1904 Annual Meeting was a hotbed of political maneuvering and debate on issues both large and small, whether they had to do with education or not. The Resolutions Committee on which Blackshear served urged principals to hold parents' meetings ". . . to awaken

the parents as regards the duties of their children . . . that the cultivation of moral sentiment and development of citizenship have the chief concerns of education."33 To this end, the committee called for systematic instruction in ethics and civics for African American students. Blackshear and Anderson served together that year on the Association's Advisory Council. In planning strategy for the upcoming legislative session they advised, ". . . we do not think it wise at this time to have two committees before the Legislature at the same session working for different objects."34 It also issued a strong statement decrying ". . . any discrimination on the part of labor unions or otherwise against free employment of capable Negroes in mechanical pursuits, and especially do we deplore the practices of white-capping, mob violence, peonage and like practices . . . which tend to drive Negroes from [their] natal districts."[35]

The crowning piece of political rhetoric at the 1904 meeting, though, was Blackshear's presidential address. It was a rambling and remarkable compilation of his thought up to that point on the African American community's need for self-reliance, the role of the teacher in the progress of his people, and race relations. It also contained subtle, but dire warnings to those in the white establishment who would deny educational opportunity to black students. He began by advising that, "The colored people must more and more improve to the full advantages afforded by the public free schools. . . They must not, however, depend entirely on the State for in many communities the term allowed by the State appropriations is too short to permit reasonable progress on the part of the pupils."[36] This was in keeping with his Advisory Council's call for black communities to tax themselves to support their schools.

Blackshear went on to praise the black teacher, but lamented that, "Better qualified teachers is a crying need of the negroes of Texas. . . . Good teachers are still rare."[37] Then he added a charge to the 'wise teacher' that was at once impassioned and embittered. He said,

> He should teach [his people] how to so shape their business dealings with the Anglo-Saxon people about them as to steer clear of racial invitation. . . . In short the colored teacher should be a peacemaker and he can do this without becoming what negroes, both during slavery and since, have opprobriously termed 'a white folks nigger'.[38]

In his speech, Blackshear could not pass up the opportunity to argue once more for a separate university for African American Texans, but this time his thesis carried more than a hint of menace for the white establishment. It began with a call to cede Prairie View to the agriculturalists and the advocates

of industrial training by incorporating it fully into the A.&M. system. Then, Blackshear reasoned,

> . . . the field would be clear for the subsequent fulfillment of the pledge in the Constitution of Texas to establish a university, or school, of liberal learning for the negro youth of Texas, where those who are to be the teachers and leaders of the life and thought of their race can receive the broad, deep and genuine culture essential to conservative and sane leadership. It is half educated, rattle-brained leaders who must lead if there are no better, that foment discord, create issues, and rush in headlong where angels fear to tread.[39]

The message to the political leaders was clear; either provide the promised university and enjoy harmony between the races, or risk the black community passing from "conservative and sane leadership" to the type of rabble-rousing, northern-educated activists that struck fear in the hearts of Southern Democrats.

But Blackshear was not done. He outlined his theory of friction between the races. The cause was, he explained, ". . . the greater flexibility of the negro mind and its greater capacity for adaptation on the one hand and the relative fixity of the Anglo-Saxon mind and inflexibility of its organized will on the other."[40] Lawless outbreaks arise, Blackshear noted, when innocent blacks are oppressed and cheated by whites. Then he concluded with yet another veiled threat: "When these racial outbreaks arise, the innocent are as apt . . . to suffer as the guilty."[41]

The Demise of Blackshear and the Decline of Black Political Power

In many ways this speech was the climax of Blackshear's political activities. He continued to be an effective administrator and educator at Prairie View, and to articulate its mission of providing higher education for blacks in the face of depredations by curriculum ideologues, but it was increasingly a defensive battle. Prairie View's first Bachelor of Arts degrees were granted in 1904. They were also the last that would issue from there for decades. The Colored Teachers State Association, with the active support of Blackshear, Anderson, and others, continued to call for Texas to make good its Constitutional pledge of a university for black Texans, but the calls fell increasingly on deaf ears. The political influence of Republicans and the electoral power of African Americans in Texas was rapidly slipping away. Beginning with the institution of the poll tax in 1902, the voting rights of African American Texans were eroded and eventually extinguished during

this era.

The end of Edward Blackshear's tenure as principal of Prairie View resulted from his involvement in a political battle that had little to do with education. Prohibition had been a growing source of factional strife in Texas since the failure of the first constitutional amendment to ban alcohol in 1887. In 1910, a prohibitionist Legislature was elected and quickly scheduled another constitutional vote for June 22, 1911. Determined not to suffer another statewide defeat, the prohibition forces invited all interested parties to join their cause, regardless of race or party. Many black leaders saw this as a chance to prop open the door of electoral participation that had been all but closed to them.

Despite all the efforts of prohibitionists black and white, the amendment failed. Blackshear and other African Americans who had stood with prohibitionist Thomas Ball in the amendment fight campaigned for Ball in the 1914 Democratic Party primary. Ball lost that election and James P. Ferguson became governor. He then exacted political revenge. In supporting an appropriation for Prairie View, Ferguson told members of the A.&M. Board, "I want to serve notice on you right now that E.L. Blackshear at the head of the institution has got to go."[42] The Board asked Blackshear to account for his political activities and seemed satisfied with his response, but Ferguson continued to apply pressure. Blackshear was forced to resign in early 1915.

Final Years and Legacies

The dismissal of these men from their posts at Prairie View did not end their contributions to education in Texas. Edward L. Blackshear moved to Fort Worth and then Houston to lead schools there, then back to Prairie View to head a multi-state agricultural extension service for black farmers. He passed away at Prairie View on December 12, 1919 and was buried nearby. In 1936, one of the oldest black elementary schools in Austin was named in his honor.

Laurine C. Anderson had a long and distinguished career in the Austin schools after his service at Prairie View. He served as superintendent of the black schools there from 1896 until 1929 when ill health forced his retirement. He stayed on as Latin instructor at E.H. Anderson High School, named for his brother, until his death on January 8, 1938. Within two days of his passing the name of Austin's black high school was changed to L.C. Anderson High School. During his tenure in Austin, he presided over a growing program of secondary education for blacks, the beginnings of a night school for adults, and one of the first manual training programs for black students in Texas.

It is unlikely that either of these men would want to be remembered as

political operators. They thought of themselves first and foremost as educators and leaders of their people. But the times in which they lived required that an effective advocate for black education be skilled in politics as well, even the politics of race. Race remains a major issue in American society. The movie Crash masterfully manipulates white majority fears of blacks and Hispanics for dramatic effect and Yale law professor Stephen L. Carter plays on those fears in his story "the Most Dangerous Children in America."[43]

Some educators have followed Anderson and Blackshear in using the fears of the majority culture to appropriate resources for schools. Across the country, urban minority children sitting in neat rows and wearing school uniforms, just like their affluent suburban counterparts, has become the picture of "success" for the school choice movement, and has fueled its growth. Today, millions of students, often children from impoverished urban minority communities, are educated in these alternative formats drawing funding from the public school system. The strategy of playing the race card in education works today just as it has in the past.

Notes

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The Desegregation of Public Schools:
Ruby Bridges, Millicent E. Brown, and Josephine Boyd Bradley – Black Education by Any Means Necessary

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Introduction

It has been 57 years since Chief Justice Earl Warren, in the Supreme Court case Brown v. the Board of Education, wrote the landmark decision that would usher in a period of school desegregation:

> We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs [are] …deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.[1]

The concept of "separate but equal" has been re-examined by the courts within recent years, most notably in Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 (2005) and Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education (2006). In these cases, the Supreme Court prohibited the use of race to assign pupils to public schools solely for integration purposes. As such re-examinations are taking place, it is appropriate to examine the lives of those who served as social change agents half a century ago to dismantle segregation practices in public schools throughout the country. To that end, in this

paper I explore narratives of individuals who bore the weight of an oppressed peoples' form of resistance, quest for equality, and rejection of inferiority by being the first black intellectuals to rupture the borders of white public spaces. How these desegregation pioneers perceived their role as social agents and how they interpreted their experiences resonate throughout their accounts and inform their identity as Black educators. I believe these critical histories provide insight and solutions for today's and for future educational practices.

Typically, these change agents were children.[2] This paper focuses on three young pioneers: six-year-old Ruby Bridges, who desegregated William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans on November 14, 1960; fifteen-year-old Millicent E. Brown, who desegregated Rivers High School in Charleston, South Carolina on September 3, 1963; and Josephine Boyd Bradley, who desegregated Greensboro High School (now Grimsley High) in Greensboro, North Carolina, on September 4, 1957. In addition to their role as students, they have performed important educative functions as adults. Bridges formed the Ruby Bridges Foundation to promote tolerance and respect of differences; Brown has served as an Associate Professor of History at multiple institutions of higher learning; and Boyd Bradley is Professor of African-American Studies at Clark Atlanta University.

Their experiences represent three distinct modes of navigation as Black pedagogues, and their narratives emblematize the intersection of separatism (the "separate but equal" practices still enforced despite of the Brown v. Board of Education mandates), race (their role as a change agents due to their racial identity), and societal biases (the perception of inferiority assigned to Black folks by society). Their stories are presented as tools for reflection and dialogue on one of the most important educational issues of our time.

Ruby Bridges: A Pedagogy of Socratic Questioning

Ruby Bridges recalled "how integration looked to me then, when I was six and limited to my own small world." As an adult, she "wanted to fill in the blanks about what was a serious racial crisis in the American South."[3] Ruby Nell, as she was affectionately referred to as a child, was one of four students who desegregated the public schools in Orleans Parish. Escorted by U.S. marshals, she did not enter the all-white William Frantz Elementary School until November due to stalling tactics by the school system. She explained that by enrolling at William Frantz she was merely obeying the wishes of her family—primarily her mother Lucille Bridges, who told her: "Now I want you to behave yourself today… and don't be afraid. There might be a lot of people outside this new school, but I'll be with you."[4]

One of the federal marshals gave Lucille Bridges clear instructions: "Let

us get out of the car first… then you'll get out, and the four of us will surround you and your daughter. We'll walk up to the door together. Just walk straight ahead, and don't look back."[5] Charles Burks, one of the marshals who escorted Ruby Bridges on her first day of school, recalled her demeanor:

> We expected a lot of trouble, but as it turned out it wasn't nearly as bad as we thought, even though Miss Bridges probably thought it was. For a little girl six years old going into a strange school with four strange deputy marshals… she showed a lot of courage. She never cried. She didn't even whimper. She just marched along like a soldier.[6]

In fact, Ruby Nell's arrival at the school forced the questioning of societal constructs, moral thought, parochialism, and hegemonic strategies that reinforced institutionalized racism.[7] Bridges recalled her six-year-old perspective on the arrival to school:

I remember that morning, I saw lots of people standing in the streets… They were shouting and throwing things… [I] recalled thinking, today is Mardi Gras, and I am in a parade.[8]

She also recalled her childhood perspective on the first day of school:

> Once we were inside the building, the marshals walked us up the flight of stairs… There were windows in the room where we waited. That meant everybody passing by could see us… All day long, white parents rushed into the office they were upset and urging and pointing at us.
>
> After my mother and I arrived, they [white parents] ran into classrooms and dragged their children out of the school… That whole first day, my mother and I just sat and waited. We didn't talk to anybody. When it was 3:00 and time to go home, I was glad. I had thought my new school would be hard, but the first day was easy.[9]

Few children returned to William Frantz following her arrival. One was Pam Foreman Testroet, who explained, "My father, Minister Lloyd Foreman, believed every child had an equal right to an education."[10] His point of view was atypical. Bridges was subjected to isolation (with the only teacher who would touch or teach her), a riotous environment, physical threats, and "daily crowds, abusive and taunting which hailed her for months."[11] The first grader walked through mobs that hurled epithets such as "nigger," "niggra,"

and "stupid;" moreover, she was surrounded by adult white men who terrified her as well as women and children who threatened her with harm and even death. Some protestors actually built a miniature coffin, displayed with a black doll inside as a prop for Bridges to view. Coles documented Ruby Nell's comments as follows: "They tells me I'm going to die, and that it'll be soon. And that one lady tells me every morning I'm getting poisoned soon… 'You little nigger, we'll get you and kill you. We're going to poison you until you choke to death'."[12]

Bridges' reflections demonstrate the innocence and idealism of a six-year-old and the perceptiveness and social consciousness of an adult. In seeking insight into how Bridges maneuvered between her childhood experience and her antiracism work during adulthood, I have compared her navigation of the personal, public, and political domains to Cornel West's concept of Socratic questioning. Drawing on Socrates' idea that "[t]he unexamined life is not worth living," West implores readers to look beyond the surface to explore what is right and wrong. He adds that such questioning "forces us to examine terrifying queries; …[it] means critically thinking, not just emoting and it is the courage [to fight] against complacency, conformity, and cowardice."[13] West further states that:

> Socratic questioning is the questioning of ourselves, the critique of institutions of authority, of dogma, of parochialism, and fundamentalism; …[it is a] means to tease out those traditions in our history that enable us to wrestle with difficult realities we often deny…Socratic questioning is the enactment of parrhesia—frank and fearless speech.[14]

Ruby Bridges' ability to speak frankly while critically examining her experience allowed her to continue to report to school for an entire year—knowing how she would be received, and not knowing what the outcome would be. This, plus her work in adulthood against "complacency, conformity, and cowardice" provide an example of heroism and determination. In this manner, the little girl who "marched along like a soldier" was able to "fill in the blanks" about one of the most pressing social and moral issues of her time.

Millicent Brown: A Pedagogy of Politics and Protection

Millicent Brown was one of eleven black students who desegregated, for the first time, public schools across the state of South Carolina during 1963-64. When I met Dr. Brown, she was teaching at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. She referenced a photo, printed in a newspaper, in which she was smiling while surrounded by white classmates at Rivers

High School in Charleston. The caption read, "The eleven 'first ones' encountered verbal hostility, bomb threats, ostracism and general ill will the first few weeks of the 1963-64 school year."[15] Brown pointed out that "the first few weeks" suggested the egregious acts of her peers only happened for a limited period. That—plus the smiling photo—illustrated, in Brown's mind, distortions in media coverage of her experience as a social change agent.

Like Ruby Bridges, Brown's role as a desegregation pioneer was strongly influenced by a parent—in this case, her father. Brown recalled:

> I came from a very political background; my father was president of the NAACP in South Carolina as well as in Charleston… so I grew up… quite to my benefit a little bit more knowledgeable and tuned in to the struggle. We'd been involved in every single demonstration, lawsuit; it was my sister Minerva Brown whose name was really the original plaintiff.
>
> My father believed strongly, much to his credit, that you don't ask other people to do things with their children that you're not willing to do… My father admired Martin Luther King, knew him; we met him when I was little. We were around him quite a few times… My father believed that you cannot ask someone to make a sacrifice that you're not willing to make and that stuck with me all my life.
>
> [My father] integrated everything: golf courses, beaches… You put your name on it yourself, much like I understand Dr. [George C.] Simkins [Jr.], here in Greensboro, North Carolina. You don't tell other people to put themselves out there if you're not willing to also.[16]

Brown responded to her role as social change agent by developing a unique pedagogy that was both political and protective. Drawing on a pragmatic savvy and sense of self worth that she had acquired while growing up, Brown exhibited a sympathetic disposition and feeling of responsibility for others on her first day at Rivers High:

> My very first day… I took on blame for why this whole thing wasn't working right and the poor little homeroom teacher, bless her heart—she was so nervous she didn't know what was going on… I started feeling responsible for her. I thought the lady was going to have a heart attack… she acted as if she'd never seen a black person in her life and she was being put into history and I know she was not comfortable with it.[17]

Brown's comments reflect her belief that all people are worthy. They also demonstrate her sense of knowing one's worth, which allowed her to sympathize or pity the oppressor's ignorance of her own worthiness. Brown's role as political protector is further revealed as she examines her own desegregation experience in a broader context:

> My coping mechanism in school really became the fact that I was a good student… You don't have to be smart to go to a public school. I think I earned the respect of some of the teachers and the students because I came and learned well and I excelled and I was better than a lot of the white kids, which shocked me. I think that buffered [me] a bit.
>
> I feel very sorry for someone who maybe wasn't as fortunate who maybe didn't bring the same set of skills in. They probably got seen as the typical stereotype of you can't do.[18]

Brown also demonstrated a protector mentality as she critiqued her own role as a desegregation pioneer. She made special mention of her relationship with Jackie Ford, the other, younger, black student to desegregate Rivers High:

> I didn't have a good feel for what happened with Jackie. When we were at that same school especially those first couple of years because very few blacks were a) willing to come over to the integration situation and b) we had this crazy system… where they just didn't let anybody who wanted to transfer, transfer… So very few people were actually coming over.
>
> If you know anything even now, what an eighth grader and a ninth grader go through compared to what a junior or senior go through, these are two different worlds. I've talked to Jackie about this; we were in different worlds… she had different classes, she had different recess, different lunch hour, so she was going through it alone and I was going through it alone and I've always felt bad, especially being older and I didn't have a way of being more supportive of her.[19]

Bridges and Brown found two unique ways to navigate from being a social pioneer to being a black pedagogue. A third approach was developed from Josephine Boyd Bradley's experience desegregating a North Carolina high school.

Josephine Boyd Bradley: A Pedagogy of Humando and Symbolic Schizophrenia

Josephine Boyd Bradley's chosen career as a professor of African American Studies can be viewed as an outgrowth of her experience as being the first black student to desegregate the previously all-white Greensboro (North Carolina) High School. As a senior, Boyd Bradley left the all-black Dudley High School and became a social change agent, supported by her mother, her former principal and the American Friends Service Committee (a Quaker group). As an adult, she reflected on the disparate circumstances of her existence, noting that—in symbolic terms—"Black folks are schizophrenic… no one else is expected to live in two worlds."[20] She recalled, "I began forming a private self to handle the pain and the fear of loss of the people whose essence I embodied as part of my life… I understood the necessity of maintaining a public self for survival purposes in the white dominated society." Boyd Bradley added:

> I learned very early on that there had to be two me's; there was the me that they saw and the me that was part of my family. The private self becomes the only thing that you have left to hold on to… the only thing that allowed me to stay centered. The public self comes about as a survivalist tool. The private self is always there, if I let that go then there's no me.[21]

Boyd Bradley also observed, "One could not… desegregate any public school in the 1950s with the private self exposed. To do so, was certain social and psychological death."[22]

Boyd Bradley's observation can be understood in Cornel West's characterization of the "veil" as well as his use of the term "humando." The "veil" was originally described by W. E. B. DuBois as the darker skin of blacks that acts as a physical demarcation of difference from whites.[23] West defined the "veil" as "the distorted perception—the failure to see the humanity and individuality of black people"—that was manifested in slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation.[24] The "veil" forced blacks "to live in two worlds in order to survive."[25] Eubanks further illustrates this idea:

> The Mississippi I grew up in had two cultures, a white… and a colored… mine was the colored culture, one in which poverty was common and those who challenged the status quo and supported integration and equality suffered economic and physical reprisal, even death.[26]

West incorporates the term "humando," from the Latin "to bury," to denote the historical demoralization and dehumanization of African Americans. According to West, U. S. culture engages in a form of denial, as evidenced, for example, in the Constitution. West states:

When you look at the U.S. Constitution you don't see any reference to the institution of slavery. That's called denial; that's called evasion; that's called avoidance. The conspiracy of our founding fathers and mothers. Why? Didn't want to be Socratic; it hurts too much. Talk about freedom for everybody but when it comes home and you got your slaves… [and are] controlling children and selling them like… cattle. You got hypocrisy and mendacity going on. Can you come to terms with that form of social death shot through the early American democratic experiment?[27]

The narratives of Boyd Bradley reveal her distinctions of the private and public self, as well as the symbolic schizophrenia required to navigate two different domains. Her comments also reflect West's sense of humando, or the need to bury the private self, present a fictitious public self, and maintain coexistence between the two. She observed:

> Inclusion of the personal, calls for one becoming an "outsider" within; of fulfilling, therefore, both the insider and outsider roles… In this situation, the outsider role necessitated seeing oneself from the white enemy's perspective—as an invader into an otherwise forbidden space. On the other hand, it became necessary to function as the insider, to remain socially, psychologically and racially grounded in such a manner that the mask—the persona—the statue of who to be in a hostile space, can be created long enough for my survival…
>
> For me the public self is exactly what you see, what I allow you to see. The private self is what I am when I'm with my mom and my family and people at church. So for me the private self is what I showed in church or at home… I could cry at home but I couldn't cry there, I wouldn't have dared cried there [at school].[28]

Boyd Bradley recalled that in desegregating Greensboro High School she endured verbal harassment, physical attacks, alienation, isolation, and a total disregard for her civil and human rights. She noted:

> Most of it was centered around their reaction to my even being in their space and so a lot of it was related to that… I guess I remember it because it happened so much was the ketchup spilling during

> lunch hour and egg throwing when I was trying to go to class and while that sounds like nothing when you have to go home and change clothes and then you don't know if you have to go back home and change clothes again. It gets to be pretty disturbing.[29]

Boyd Bradley also noted:

> I have struggled with the difficult and uncertain relationship between my private self and my public self. The act of desegregating a school necessitated my finding space—a safe space for the preservation of my private self…[30]

Desegregation Pioneers as Informal Educators

The African American collective tradition has always embraced the notion of nontraditional and/or informal educators. From the matriarch of the church to the gentlemen in the barber shop to a family member, the idea of informal education has been a normative pedagogical praxis for African Americans. In fact, nontraditional/informal education is viewed by African Americans as a critical type of development because it helps persons from a subculture to navigate within a majority society. The three distinct modes of navigation followed by Bridges, Brown, and Boyd Bradley provide an epistemology for others who experience trauma as an "instrument for…critical discovery."[31] In each case, the mode of navigation helped the young desegregation pioneer to survive an immediate, traumatic event. The specific approach was also helpful—in fact, seminal—in the pioneer's subsequent journey as a black pedagogue.

Bridges' Socratic questioning led her to impact students from her local elementary school through Harvard University, as she authored books, spoke at forums, and generated curricula that fostered tolerance. (The local elementary school was William Frantz, a result of Bridges' caring for her deceased brother's children).[32] Brown's use of political protection prompted her to become involved in political and civic activities and to serve on the faculties of Bennett College, North Carolina A & T University, and Chaflin University. Her concern for other desegregation pioneers such as Jackie Ford also led Brown to become principal investigator for the "Somebody Had To Do It" Project, which seeks to "identify those people who, as children, were the first to desegregate" schools.[33] The coping strategies Boyd Bradley developed at Greensboro High in order to save her inner self also informed her later work as a Professor of African American Studies. During interviews,[34] Boyd Bradley spoke frequently of how she drew on African American culture and family experiences by reciting the Twenty-third Psalm or singing "We've Come This

Far By Faith" as she walked by 1,200 high school peers who attempted on a daily basis to try to bury her humanity and define her as inferior.

Whether it is Brown v. Board of Education (1954), Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 (2005), Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education (2006), or the elimination of desegregation busing in Wake County, North Carolina (2011), the intersection of separatism, race, and societal biases are played and replayed, framed and reframed throughout educational histories. The courage, fortitude and perseverance embodied by Bridges, Brown, and Boyd Bradley reflect the strength of human spirit and a belief in self that merits attention today. The stories of these young pioneers who sought to desegregate schools and become black educators by any means necessary can still inspire those who take on future struggles to champion issues of equity and access in public education.

Notes

[1] Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

[2] David Cecelski, Along Freedom Road (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

[3] Ruby Bridges, Through My Eyes (New York: Scholastic Press, 1999b), 5.

[4] Charlayne Hunter-Gault (1997), "A class of one. Online news hour: a conversation with Ruby Bridges Hall," http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/race_relations/jan-june97/bridges_2-18.html (accessed January 5, 2005).

[5] Ruby Bridges, "History - My Story: Ruby Bridges Hall" (1999a), http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/printable_pages/spotlight_print_september.html (accessed June 15, 2004).

[6] Hunter-Gault, "A class of one. Online news hour: a conversation with Ruby Bridges Hall."

[7] Cornel West, Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).

[8] Eileen McClusky, 'Ruby Bridges evokes tears, smiles as she tells her tale," (Harvard Gazette, 2002), 2.

[9] Bridges, "History - My Story: Ruby Bridges Hall."

[10] "50 Years Later: Ruby Bridges Returns to School Where She Challenged Segregation," http://huffingtonpost.com/2010/11/18/ruby-bridges-new-orleans-school-segregation_n_785439.html (accessed January 10, 2010).

[11] Robert Coles, Children in Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 2003), 40.

[12] Ibid, 41-42.

[13] Cornel West, personal communication, April 22, 2005.

[14] Cornel West, Democracy Matters, 209.

[15] See Millicent Brown, Civil Rights Activism in Charleston, South Carolina 1940-1970 (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1997), 94.

[16] Millicent Brown, personal communication, February 23, 2005.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Josephine Boyd, personal communication, February 19, 2005.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Josephine Boyd, Wearing My Name: School Desegregation, Greensboro, North Carolina, 1954-1958 (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1995), 30.

[23] W. E. B. DuBois, "The Veil" and "Double Consciousness," http://xroads.virginia.edu?~UG03/souls/defpg.html (accessed June 3, 2011).

[24] Cornel West, The Cornel West Reader (New York, Basic Civitas Books, 1999), 104.

[25] Ibid.

[26] W. Ralph Eubanks, Ever Is a Long Time (New York: Basic Books, 2003), xii.

[27] Cornel West, personal communication, April 22, 2005.

[28] Josephine Boyd, Wearing My Name: School Desegregation, Greensboro, North Carolina, 1954-1958, 13-14.

[29] Boyd, personal communication, March 20, 2005.

[30] Boyd, Wearing My Name: School Desegregation, Greensboro, North Carolina, 1954-1958, 28.

[31] Paolo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Continuum International, 2002), 48.

[32] See the website of The Ruby Bridges Foundation, http://www.rubybridges.com

[33] Phil Sarata, Claflin Professor Tracking Experiences of Those Who Lived School Desegregation, http://www.claflin.edu/news/templates/Clafflin-Full-Article.aspx?articleid=512&zoneid=1 (accessed April 15, 2009).

[34] Josephine Boyd, personal communication, February 19, 2005; Boyd, personal communication, March 20, 2005.

Marva Collins' Method: Providing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

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Introduction

Teaching and learning in the United States during the last two decades has become increasingly standardized in an effort to raise student achievement. Federal legislation such as No Child Left Behind has prompted the use of high-stakes standardized tests to try to measure student progress, resulting in school districts deciding to use heavily scripted curriculum that promises increased test scores.[13] This drive for increased test scores has also prompted the narrowing of curriculum, particularly in elementary schools.[2]

In an effort to raise student test scores, school districts have begun focusing instruction on specific subject areas that are explicitly emphasized on standardized tests, namely language arts and mathematics, largely neglecting other subject areas such as science, social studies, and the arts.[3] While the use of scripted curriculum and instruction centered on language arts and mathematics is beginning to affect teachers and students across the nation, it is an especially daunting reality in urban schools that predominantly serve minority students.[4] The adoption of pre-packaged instructional programs focused only on raising student test scores has led many teachers, but especially those who serve our most economically vulnerable students, to become mere educational technicians, rather than educational professionals who create curriculum based on the unique needs and interests of their students.[5] More specifically,

> Instead of establishing relevant and meaningful curricular goals, identifying intellectually stimulating topics of study, and designing thoughtful learning experiences based on an intimate knowledge of their own and their pupil's interests and talents, teachers have been relegated to a managerial, rather than educative role.[6]

Thus, teachers are unable to trust themselves, their knowledge, philosophical stance and teaching experience. Instead of teaching to the needs of their distinct student population, they must follow district or state mandated curriculum in an effort to increase student test scores.[7] Such an instructional shift is frightening, considering that students come from diverse backgrounds and have distinct learning needs. Simply trying to teach the same material the same way to all students is ineffective.[8]

Recognizing and meeting the diverse, yet specific instructional needs of students from various racial and socio-economic backgrounds has deeply concerned educators and scholars.[9] However, scholarly and field-based research concerning the specific pedagogical needs of African American students has been lacking.[10] Although African American students predominantly attend our nation's urban schools and are thus greatly affected by the increased curriculum standardization and high stakes testing movement, it is important to note that,

> African American students continue to lag significantly behind their white counterparts on all standard measures of achievement. African American children are three times as likely to drop out of school as white children are and twice as likely to be suspended from school.[11]

Furthermore,"African American students make up only about 17 percent of the public school population but 41 percent of the special education population."[12] Such findings prompt important questions regarding the ways in which the distinct educational needs and interests of African American students in our nation's classrooms are clearly not being met or supported. Research on the ways that educators in urban schools, especially African American educators, are recognizing the unique educational strengths, challenges, and possibilities that African American students can bring to a classroom, and finding ways to structure their pedagogical practice to support the students, is not only needed, but necessary.

Drawing on the writings of African American educator Marva Collins, this paper demonstrates how her philosophy and pedagogy supported and met the academic and social needs of her predominantly African American students in Chicago. During Collins' early teaching in the Chicago Public Schools and her subsequent leadership of the private Westside Preparatory

School, she refused to be deskilled as an educator. Instead, Collins developed a set of unique instructional beliefs and style that made her a pioneer in the field on culturally congruent pedagogy. This occurred despite her lack of formal coursework in education. Collins was able to affect radical change in her Chicago school community and to gain national media attention in the 1980s and 1990s. She earned many awards, including being nominated for Secretary of Education under President Ronald Reagan, a position she declined in favor of teaching.[13] An analysis of works that Collins wrote or co-wrote—especially Marva Collins' Way[14] and "Ordinary" Children, Extraordinary Teachers[15]—reveals that her teaching resonated with the current notion of culturally relevant pedagogy. This idea will be explored in the context of Collins' life and career with particular emphasis on her instructional practice and curriculum development.

Marva Collins: Life & Early Teaching Career

Growing up in a wealthy African American family in rural Alabama during the height of segregation, Marva Collins was not able to use the public library and attended a school with few books and no indoor plumbing. Despite these experiences, Marva was taught to work hard and to give back to those in her community. Marva's mother always stressed manners, proper attire, and tidiness, while her father, a self-made entrepreneur, encouraged self-reliance and self-confidence. Although Marva's parents separated when she was young, they emphasized her family's historical legacy in the community and promoted her developing a strong desire for intellectual engagement and achievement. Even as a child, Marva was determined to be successful in school and be the first in her family to attend college.[16]

Marva Collins attended Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia, and earned a degree in secretarial science. Upon returning to Alabama, she began teaching typing, bookkeeping, and business law. Having had no formal training in the field of education, she noted:

> I didn't know anything about educational theory, and I have often thought that worked in my favor. Without preconceived ideas and not bound by rules, I was forced to deal with my students as individuals, to talk to them, listen to them, find out their needs…I followed my instincts and taught according to what felt right. I brought my own experiences to the classroom, trying to figure out how I had learned as a student. I remembered what had bored me and what had interested me, which teachers I had liked and which ones I disliked, and applied it all to my teaching.[17]

It was therefore within these early years of teaching that Marva Collins began to form her beliefs and philosophical stance regarding education and what mattered as an educator. She recognized that developing personal connections with students, in addition to differentiating instruction, was paramount to the learning and teaching process. Such realizations helped her form a foundation of pedagogical practice that later shaped her nationally recognized teaching in Chicago.

After teaching in Alabama for two years, Collins went to Chicago to visit a relative and ended up staying and getting a job as a medical secretary at Mt. Sinai Hospital. She rented an apartment in the Garfield Park neighborhood where she would later open her own school. Within a year, Collins got married, bought a home in Garfield Park, and decided to return to teaching. Since there was a teacher shortage, teachers in the Chicago school system did not have to be certified. She was able to instead obtain a provisional certification that, after three years of teaching, became equivalent to full teacher certification.[18]

Collins was hired to teach second grade at Calhoun South Elementary School. Although she did not have prior experience teaching such young children, she assumed the principles of creating a desire for learning, helping students understand why learning is important, and making children feel both worthwhile and confident, were the same as they were for teaching older students.[19] Collins worked diligently to be sensitive to her student's feelings, making them comfortable and secure in her classroom. Such concern and demonstrated physical affection for her students resulted in an established bond between Collins and the class, which clearly supported the learning process.

Although Collins followed the prescribed Chicago Board of Education curriculum, she quickly realized that it was below her students' ability. She began expanding the curriculum, incorporating group activities, and teaching phonics instead of the look-say reading method, which was popular at the time. Noticing that her students were bored with the required second-grade reading textbook, Collins began bringing in books from the library and bookstores, including *Aesop's Fables*, *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, the works of Hans Christian Anderson, *La Fontaine's Fables*, and Leo Tolstoy's *Fables and Fairytales*.[20] Incorporating such texts into her curriculum allowed for vibrant class discussions of morality and emotion, in addition to getting her students excited about reading.

Collins left Calhoun South Elementary after one year of teaching, when she had the first of three children. Although she would have liked to stay home and raise her children, she and her husband were not in a financial position to make that dream a reality. Instead, when her first-born son was six months old, she began teaching at Delano Elementary School, just down

the street from her home in Garfield Park. Collins taught at Delano Elementary twelve years, starting in sixth grade before settling into second grade. During her work there, Collins noticed many changes both in and outside the school community. Dedicated teachers that Collins looked up to retired, transferred voluntarily, or were shifted around to different schools according to administrative decisions. A principal with high expectations (who emphasized the study of classical literature and demonstrated that a "good teacher is one who continues to learn along with the students")[21] was replaced by one whose was primary concern was having a quiet and orderly school. Moreover, the Garfield Park area, once a respectable neighborhood, had become another struggling neighborhood in Chicago.[22] Collins was becoming disheartened with her work at Delano Elementary, noting that:

> The longer I taught in the public school system, the more I came to think that schools were concerned with everything but teaching. Teaching was the last priority, something you were supposed to do after you collected the milk money, put up the bulletin boards…straightened the shades and desks, filled out forms in triplicate, punched all the computer cards with pre-test and post-test scores, and charted all the reading levels so they could be shipped downtown to the Board of Education.[23]

Clearly, Collins was frustrated with the ways in which teachers were becoming explicitly deskilled. Instead of promoting best practices that supported the learning needs of her students, they were being reduced to educational technicians who merely delivered standardized curriculum. Collins' concerns grew as emphasis on IQ scores and standardized tests increased, which was in turn reflected in teachers' instruction. Specifically, Collins commented that "Nothing was important except (student) performance on standardized tests. Teachers were supposed to teach skills specifically for those tests."[24] Collins was further frustrated by the fact that although students could not read or write, they were promoted to the next grade.[25] These early steps in the standardization movement deeply concerned Collins, for she recognized that the decisions being made were not in the best educational interests of her students.

Despite frequent curriculum changes—often involving textbooks that were increasingly being written grade levels below that of earlier publications—Collins continued to maintain high expectations and went beyond the required curriculum. Although she met resistance from administration and fellow teachers, Collins scheduled walking field trips, taught Latin and Greek root words, discussed Socrates, and read aloud famous quotations and poems, in addition to teaching from great classics such as Emerson's Self-

Reliance, Bacon's On Education, and Thoreau's Walden.[26] Looking past the politics at Delano Elementary, Collins intended to continue to teach the total child, helping her students develop positive self-images with principles from her upbringing regarding "attitudes, manners, and grooming."[27]

Collins aimed to focus on her students in an effort to sidetrack the attitudes and comments of fellow teachers who ridiculed struggling pupils or publicly said, "I hate those damn kids."[28] She tried to look past a complacent principal who would revoke permission for her field trips when other teachers complained. Although Collins was showing signs of physical and emotional distress from the harassment she received from other teachers about the fact that her students were outperforming other classes, she tried to stay focused. However, during the 1974-1975 academic year, when the principal tried to move her from her classroom mid-year in order to give a retiring teacher an "easy class" for the spring semester, Collins vowed to resign immediately. Instead, in an effort to avoid neighborhood upheaval, Collins decided to complete the year. Fortunately, she was able to do so with her original class since enough parents (who were not expected to voice their opinions) registered complaints about the principal's decision.[29] However, upon the conclusion of the academic year, Collins resigned from Delano Elementary noting, "I still liked teaching, but it had to be in a place where I could be comfortable…I wasn't about to give up on teaching.[30]

Collins originally had planned to take the summer of 1975 to rest since the academic year had taken its toll on her physically and emotionally, but in July, a group of neighborhood women asked her to start and direct a private school for children in the Garfield Park area. Since Collins had strong opinions about teaching and learning, and was increasingly dissatisfied with her own children's education in local private schools, she accepted the position. She later remarked that she started this venture because "there were far too many children being recruited for failure, far too many excuses being used for not educating children."[31] Unsure of where to begin the school, Collins was pleased when the president of Daniel Hale Williams University (located on the west side of Chicago) lent his assistance by offering a basement classroom rent-free, as well as the use of typewriters and mimeograph machines. Collins then met with the Chicago Alternative Schools Network, a government-funded agency, which taught her how to open a private school and offered to pay her salary as director and curriculum development specialist. Finally, just before school started, Collins scrambled to find teaching materials. She was fortunate to gather books for her students from used bookstores and of all places, the Delano Elementary dumpster, which held Open Court phonics textbooks that her fellow teachers never used.[32]

Marva Collins' Westside Preparatory School

On September 8, 1975 the Daniel Hale Williams Westside Preparatory School (later referred to as Westside Preparatory School) opened its doors to a total of six students ranging from second to fourth grade, consisting of Collins's own two children and four neighborhood children. The early low enrollment did not come as a surprise to Collins, as parents felt leery about giving a new school a chance. Additionally, she charged sixty dollars a month in tuition, which discouraged some families from enrolling their children in the school. Despite the low enrollment, Collins was not discouraged and knew that, with time, the school would grow. She focused on the pedagogical needs of students, most of whom had backgrounds that were unfamiliar to her. She noted:

> I didn't really want to know their backgrounds. Knowing a child's previous record can sway a teacher's expectations. Each child came to me with a clean slate. Still, from the initial interviews I had with the children and their parents, I could tell that each had a problem of one kind or another.[33]

Giving children a fresh start and not wanting to know details about a child's previous negative schooling experiences often led Collins to take in students who had been overlooked, labeled, and/or expelled from the public school system.[34]

Collins did know, however, that each of her students was behind academically and needed to develop self-confidence. Collins also knew that she needed to not only motivate, but truly believe in her students in order for them to become successful. She started the first day of school by telling her students, "You are the best and brightest children in the world and there is nothing you can't do."[35] She promised them she would not let them fail, that she loved each of them, and they had the choice whether or not to take advantage of learning. In addition to bonding with her students, by praising and hugging them, Collins talked with her students honestly about their futures saying,

> No one is going to hand you anything on a platter, not in this classroom. Not in this life. You determine what you will be, what you will make of yourself. I am here to help you, but you must help me to do that.[36]

Students were motivated by Collins' straightforward acknowledgment of existing power structures that could harm them to take personal responsibil-

ity for their actions. Her candor prompted them. Collins also encouraged students to challenge society:

> You know boys and girls, there are some people who look at places like Garfield Park, and they say,"Oh children from there are not very smart. They aren't going to grow up to be anyone or do anything special." If you decide to waste your lives, you are letting all those people be right. No one can tell you what you will be. Only you have the power to decide that for yourselves.[37]

Such direct confrontation of society's low expectations of these students prompted in them to a sense of responsibility and self-reliance, in addition to an opportunity to openly recognize and challenge the status quo.[38]

Motivating and praising her students was a key factor in their success. Collins's students looked up to her, felt they could trust her, and slowly became willing to give her a chance. As Collins and her students bonded, instruction became more powerful. Focusing on heavy doses of phonics and vocabulary development, Collins was determined that her students would improve their reading skills. She corrected their written and spoken grammatical errors, making sure that they only spoke proper English.[39] She believed, to the angst of some of her peers, that "black English was another barrier confining my students to the ghetto"[40] and wanted to make sure that such a barrier did not hold her students back from the success they were capable of achieving. As in Collins' previous classrooms, the students read, studied, discussed, and wrote responses to classical literature including proverbs, poetry, fables, and fairy tales. Such works allowed Collins to teach traditional academic skills, in addition to moral values.[41]

By January of 1976, the number of students at Westside Preparatory School had tripled. All students were reading or beginning to read. Although Collins took on more responsibility with higher numbers of students, she continued to maintain challenging individualized homework and assignments, in addition to high expectation levels for all students. Despite financial struggles and momentary outbursts of frustration from having to work so diligently on a daily basis with a challenging group of students, Collins was making her mark on the Garfield Park neighborhood. Furthermore, she could not have been more pleased with the results from standardized tests. All of her students were reading at or above their grade level.[42]

After the 1975-1976 school year Collins decided to relocate the school because she wanted it to become independent of the politics at Daniel Hale Williams University. To begin this endeavor, Collins cashed out the $5,000 balance of her school pension fund and shortened the name of the school to the Westside Preparatory School. Since she and her husband could not find

a decent, affordable location for the school, they decided to convert the vacant upstairs apartment on the second floor of their home into a classroom. Her husband Clarence did the renovation work and Collins purchased used blackboards and desks from a suburban school that was getting new furnishings. A local friend and business owner helped pay for some of these items, in addition to a copy machine, record player, and set of children's encyclopedias. Collins wrote letters to businesses and banks in the Garfield Park neighborhood asking for donations of used materials – anything they could contribute to support the school. The response was disappointing, with only the Cook County probate court donating scrap paper. Collins realized the school would not be initially supported by the local community, noting, "whatever I had to do I would do myself. The school was going to make it. I would see to that."[43]

Over the next decade, enrollment continued to grow at Westside Preparatory School. Collins continued to focus the curriculum on the classics, focused phonics-based reading instruction, and individualized student learning. She additionally continued to explicitly teach the students about the challenges of the real world. Collins recalled, "I prepared my children for life. And I didn't mince any words in doing it. I didn't hesitate to discuss crime in the ghetto, drugs, prison, or teenage pregnancy."[44] Instead of encouraging her students to explore their own unique style in connection with their African American identity, she bluntly told her students that:

> No one was going to hire them for a job if they walked into an office wearing a pick in their hair, if they slinked into a room as though their hips were broken, or if the boys wore earrings or high-heeled shoes or wide-brimmed hats.[45]

While some argue that educators of African American students should help students recognize and celebrate what Collins referred to as "black consciousness," she instead commented,

> Many people allow black youths to take on extreme styles and mannerisms under the guise of finding their black identity – without pointing out the social and economic consequences. I reminded my students that blacks don't go to work only for blacks. I encouraged them to become universal people, citizens of the world."[46]

Thus, although Collins taught black history and recognized the unique cultural heritage of her students, she believed the most productive use of her teaching time centered on academic development and intellectual engagement, rather than raising black consciousness.

In November of 1977 the Chicago bureau of Time magazine suggested the magazine feature an article about Collins Collins and the Westside Preparatory School in its education section. The article resulted in a remarkable response of nearly $10,000 in donations from people all over the nation, letters from teachers with questions about her educational practice, and almost 2,000 letters from parents seeking her help and advice. Such responses became a pattern each time that Collins and her school were featured in local or national media such as the Chicago Tribune, People, Good Housekeeping, "Good Morning America," and "60 Minutes." Westside Preparatory School continued to grow and receive accolades. At the end of the 1978-79 academic year, with several students tested into grade levels higher than their age would warrant, according to the California Achievement Test given independently at a local Catholic school. Some students showed that they had progressed four school years within one academic year at Westside Preparatory School. Enrollment grew to over thirty students, and Collins finally hired a teaching assistant to help with the four- and five-year-old students. Collins told her teaching assistant, Mrs. Vaughn, that "To be a good teacher you need a comfortable pair of shoes and a strong pair of legs to get you through the day. No teacher sits in this school,"[47] Collins also gave explicit directions that "every child had to be praised and patted, hugged and touched every day."[48] With the help of Mrs. Vaughn and a parent volunteer who was a former teacher, Collins started the 1980-1981 school year with two hundred students and a waiting list of over 500 students. She was able to hire several new teachers and move the school—first to a few blocks away then to a rented space on the second floor of the National Bank of Commerce. Later, the school had a permanent facility of two adjoining one-story buildings on the edge of Garfield Park.

Westside Preparatory School: Past to Present

Over the last three decades, Marva Collins' Westside Preparatory School continued to grow and evolve into eight classrooms, with one teacher per classroom serving a total of 150 students. Spanning grades Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth Grade, the school's new leader was Marva Collins' daughter Cindy Collins, one of her first students. Students were admitted to the school on a first-come, first-served basis and no screening process was in place. Teachers were expected to dress professionally, as Collins stressed, and they did not have desks in their classrooms that they could fully attend to the needs of students. By constantly moving from student to student throughout the day, teachers were able to correct student mistakes before they became habits. High expectations of student achievement paired with student encouragement, praise, and affection from teachers continued to permeate

the school.[49]

The curriculum at Marva Collins' Westside Preparatory School continued to center on the Socratic Method, which involves a series of questions and answers aimed to improve reading comprehension, logical analysis, and general reasoning skills. In addition to the Socratic Method, daily recitation, including phonics and vocabulary development, was integral to the school's literacy curriculum. Students continued to be exposed to classical pieces of literature by authors such as Aesop, Robert Louis Stevenson, Edward Lear, Charles Perrault, and Robert Frost.[50] Failure continued to not be an option and Marva continued to guarantee that students as young as Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten who start the school year at Westside Preparatory would be reading within three months.[51]

A typical day at Marva Collins' Westside Preparatory School began with students reciting the school creed, which included "I will use this day to the fullest and I promise that each day shall be gained, not lost; used, not thrown away."[52] Such statements encouraged students to persevere and develop personal responsibility for their choices and actions. While the levels of difficulty for subjects evolved according to students' age and grade level, the following subjects and skills were taught or reviewed daily in each grade level: "Mathematics, basic math facts, logic drills, Proverbs, Phonics/Dictation drills, Poetry, Science, Social Studies, African American History, Algebra (6th -8th grades), Literature, English, Foreign Language, Computers, daily oral readings, comprehension skills, writing skills, Art, and Music."[53]

The high level of academic preparation that Marva Collins provided resulted in many of her students entering and graduating from the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities. Students from the school have become doctors, lawyers, engineers, and educators, among other professions. Moreover, Marva Collins received numerous awards for her work with African American youth on the west side of Chicago.[54] In addition to being featured in national magazines, newspaper articles, and television programs, Collins was the focus of a made-for-television movie, titled The Marva Collins Story[55] starring Cicely Tyson and Morgan Freeman. Although educators from around the world visited the school or attended conferences to see her in action and learn from her methods, Collins maintains that her work can only be duplicated in the sense that it is 'simply hard work.' She sums up her teaching philosophy with words from a poem she teaches her students: "If you want a garden fair, you've got to bend and dig…"[56]

While Marva Collin's Westside Preparatory School continued to thrive over the course of almost three decades, in June 2008 the school closed due to funding challenges. Parents and community members were saddened by the school's closing, which was reportedly due to decreased enrollment from parents choosing other educational alternatives over paying $5,500 annual

tuition. In a statement released by the school in June 2008, Collins shared that "We are closing our school…because the community we wanted to serve has not supported, or could not support the school, to the extent financial considerations demand."[57] Collins additionally commented, "My daughter and I went through some really depressing times, but there comes a time in all of our lives when you have to make tough decisions."[58]

Marva Collin's Pedagogical Practice

The classroom instruction and subsequent school curriculum that Marva Collins developed was clearly intellectually rich, academically challenging, and centered on reading classical literature such as fables, fairy tales, proverbs, and folk tales.[59] Collins' curriculum aligned with the Perennialist ideology, which stresses the importance of reading, writing, and reasoning in correlation with classical works of literature typically from the Western canon. Encouraging students to discuss such texts using the Socratic Method, as Marva Collins did, promoted students' critical thinking and reasoning skills, which are central to Perennialism.[60] Moreover, Collins encouraged her students to master concepts through repetition and drill. She aimed to make sure her students knew a little bit of everything, but especially key facts in regards to mathematics, language, and social studies. Current Perennialist scholars such as the controversial E.D. Hirsch consider the explicit teaching and mastery of such concepts key to the future success of students. Termed "core knowledge," Hirsch suggests that teaching students, especially minority students, such knowledge and concepts essential to their "full participation in the larger national society."[61]

Marva Collins continually emphasized her students' future participation and success within society. On a daily basis, she encouraged her students to challenge society's belief that they would not succeed. Scholars such as Hollins suggest that while Collins clearly had strong teaching practices, she aligned her students for future success by providing them with culturally congruent or culturally relevant pedagogy.[62] Culturally relevant pedagogy aims to "increase the academic achievement of culturally diverse students" by meeting both their academic and social needs.[63] More specifically, culturally relevant pedagogy "uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant and effective…it teaches to and through the strengths of these students…and is culturally validating and affirming."[64]

Current scholarship has suggested that culturally relevant pedagogy is necessary in order to ensure future success for minority students. Scholar Lisa Delpit, in her seminal 1988 article titled, "The Silenced Dialogue: Power

and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children," discusses the idea that there is a "culture of power" and that the rules of such a power structure reflect the rules of the dominant culture. Delpit, among other scholars, suggests that explicitly teaching minority students the rules of the dominant culture, in addition to discussing the existence of such a power structure, is central to the students' future, full participation in the power structure of society-at-large.[65] Marva Collins aimed to explicitly teach her students this culture of power both through formal curriculum choices and also in the ways in which she told them the truth about power structures operating in society at large. Additionally, Collins consistently encouraged her students to use Standard English, often correcting their grammatical and spelling errors, and reminded students that their active participation in the learning process is key to their future success.

Delpit has identified key ways in which teachers can effectively practice culturally relevant pedagogy to reach urban minority students.[66] First, Delpit suggests that using product-versus-process approaches is important. Marva Collins realized that her students were not going to learn how to read and write well by osmosis. Instead, she laboriously taught phonics, decoding skills, grammar, and composition. Furthermore, she corrected student mistakes so that they would not become habits. Second, Delpit recommends that teachers see the innate capabilities of minority students and "do not teach less content to poor, urban children, but instead, teach more!"[67] Recognizing that—as Woodson suggested—children who do not come from middle-class families begin school with less content knowledge than their middle-class peers, teachers of these students must teach more in order to catch them up. Marva Collins demanded that her students learn more than the district's curriculum required. Even as an early educator, Collins realized that certain concepts and work were too easy for her students and, in turn, began making the curriculum more challenging and setting standards higher. Third, Delpit suggests that teachers must demand critical thinking, while also ensuring that urban students master basic skills such as mathematical operations, grammatical conventions, and specialized vocabulary. Marva Collins, through use of the Socratic Method, encouraged the daily development of critical thinking and reasoning skills. Collins furthermore advocated for the mastery of the skills Delpit mentions, as advocated by Hirsch.[68]

In addition to providing specific instructional methods to increase urban student achievement, culturally relevant pedagogy scholars such as Delpit, and, more recently, Tyrone Howard, encourage teachers to recognize and build upon the "cultural capital" or strengths minority students bring to the classroom. As Howard suggests, minority students should not be viewed from a deficit perspective because their cultural experiences do not always align with those of the dominant culture.[69] The home culture of minority stu-

dents must not only be respected, but celebrated. Moreover, the classroom environment must foster teamwork and build upon the strong family values experienced at home.[70] Marva Collins worked on a daily basis to create a sense of family in her classroom, often asking students to think about how their actions and behaviors affected their classmates. Furthermore, Collins left Delano Elementary because she was frustrated with her colleagues' deficit thinking. She recognized that such thinking was not only wrong, but inappropriate and counterproductive.

Another important factor, if not the most important, in the success of urban, but more specifically, African American students is a "sense of connectedness, and a sense of caring." Delpit comments that,

> Children of color, particularly African American, seem especially sensitive to their relationship between themselves and their teacher…it appears that they not only learn from a teacher but also for a teacher. If they do not feel connected to a teacher on an emotional level, then they will not learn, they will not put out the effort.[72]

The importance of teachers who truly care for and believe in African American students achieving success can therefore not be understated and was key to Marva Collins' success. She realized the importance of bonding with her students. Collins praised them regularly, often saying "I love you" or referring to them as "peach" or "sweetheart." Collins showed them physical affection by hugging them and helping them wash their face or fix their clothing. Moreover, Collins knew that being forceful was not going to change and motivate some of her most challenging students to learn. Specifically, in regards to a struggling student, Collins commented,

> Eventually, with lots of praise and lots of hugging, his defensiveness would melt. The one thing all children finally wanted was the chance to be accepted for themselves, to feel some self-worth. Once they felt it, children became addicted to learning, and they had the desire to learn forever.[73]

Moreover, Collins recognized that the most important work of a teacher centers on the relational part of the learning process, from being persistent and helping struggling students build a sense of confidence. In reflections on her work as an educator, Collins wrote,

> Being a teacher is to become a part of a kind of creation. A creation of knowing that miracles occur because you cared, loved, and patiently kept polishing until the dark corners of a child's mind

> become brightened, and as you watch those formerly sad eyes become luminous, you then know why I teach. You know that there is no brighter light ever to shine than that which comes from a child's eyes formerly hidden in the dark.[74]

Marva Collins recognized that teaching in an urban school offered a distinct challenge and often commented that her success could be attributed simply to hard work. In addition to such hard work and dedication, Collins was a pioneer in providing her students with culturally relevant pedagogy, which led to their eventual success. She recognized that pre-packaged instructional programs or district mandates were not going to reach and help her students to learn. Instead, Collins worked diligently to develop her own curriculum and teaching methods in an effort to meet her student's needs. In a time of increasing standardization and high-stakes testing, it is important to reflect upon Marva Collins' method and success. As educators in all types of schools, but especially urban schools, we must recognize that standardization has the potential to disrupt powerful teaching practices and interfere with experienced teachers who instinctively know and, in turn, provide what their students need most.

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Perspectives and Possibilities from a Black Veteran Educator: An Understanding of Agency

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Introduction

This article presents the life history of a Black veteran teacher leader, Dr. Nettie Webb, who dedicated thirty-seven years of professional life to work in schools. Prior to her retirement in 2003, Dr. Webb spent an entire career in Greenburgh, New York, as a teacher, language arts coordinator, union member, and building principal. She continues to work on school board committees and is an active community member. Webb has earned two masters degrees, one in elementary and early childhood education and another in educational administration and supervision. In 1990 she received a doctorate in education from Syracuse University, with a focus on language arts teaching and curriculum.

As a Black woman who has earned a doctorate, Dr. Webb is unique. In March 2001, the United States census reported a total of 177 million Americans over the age of twenty-five.[1] From this total population, 1.2% attained doctoral degrees. Among persons in Dr. Webb's age range (fifty to fifty-nine years old), a total of 525,000 earned the doctorate. Only 143,000 were earned by females, and only 20,000 were earned by Blacks.[2] The numbers provide a context in which to understand Dr. Webb's achievements.

Life narratives such as Dr. Webb's can provide insight into factors that foster and sustain teachers and teacher leaders. They are "powerful instruments in maintaining or transforming practice"[3] in that they allow teachers to "transport to another place" and "imagine something different."[4] The specific focus of this article is Dr. Webb's agency—a term that evokes the

theoretical complexity of her work as well as the connection between her theory and practice. My specific research question is, "What does a thirty-seven year educational career tell us about the role of agency in teaching/teacher leadership?" I begin by defining agency and utilizing scholarly literature to offer a theoretical framework. Next I explain my methodology and explore the concept of agency through Dr. Webb's own words. Finally, I present three categories from the data that illuminate how Dr. Webb, in various professional positions, developed the capacity to continue her work.

Defining Agency: A Review of Literature

In defining agency I have paid special attention to the interplay between the private, personal, and individual on one hand, and the public, professional, and integrated networks on the other. For purposes of discussion, I use the term "individual" when referring to the first category and "networks" when referring to the second. Agency is the expression of our human capacity to contribute, by individual actions, to outcomes affecting the networks of our lives.

Across various disciplines, authors have represented agency as part of an essential human struggle. Bakan dedicated an entire work to the "duality of human existence," which he identified as "agency" and "communion."[5] Kegan articulated the "two great yearnings in human experience" that exist in "lifelong tension"—the desire for independence and the desire for inclusion.[6] Kegan addressed the expression of this tension in the postmodern era by citing the continuous rebalancing that must occur between the pull of agency to be independent (the individual) and the pull of communion (the network).[7] Within this context, each person has her/his own dominant narrative but may not be able to alter it while taking in new information. People remain open and accepting but cannot shift, in Collins' words, from a focus on "which version of the truth will prevail" to one of creating new versions of the truth.[8] Agency, therefore, involves a continuous process of reshaping. Toward this end, Eisner's work offers perspective on valuing the process as well as product of the reshaping.[9] Like a spring moving simultaneously in all directions, we humans are continually grappling with who we are as individuals in relation to a given network as well as attempting to master more integrated versions of the self in relation to our complete community of networks.

From a social justice perspective, agency involves the right of each person to enact her/his own values while respecting others. The interconnectedness of individuals with their networks means that all things personal are also political. This is illustrated by Walker's study of Black educator networks that become effective learning environments when all adults are contributing

members.[10] Such networks create an interpersonal level of learning while fostering life-long/professional growth that benefits the collective.

Research Methodology and Design

Life history research "is based on the fundamental assumption about the relationship of the general to the particular."[11] That is, it assumes that "the general can best be understood through analysis of the particular."[12] This study focuses on Dr. Webb's particular life story and agency, thereby illuminating the more general process of becoming a teacher leader.

The primary source of data collection was recorded interviews. I interviewed my subject on fourteen separate occasions for a period of time ranging from sixty to 120 minutes. The initial eleven interviews were in-depth conversations about Dr. Webb's life and were completed over a four-month period. Once the initial, semi-structured, formal interviewing was complete, I began the analysis. It was striking that Dr. Webb did not reference or even mention the word agency. Therefore, the subsequent phase of dialogic interviews began with an interview on agency.

In my analysis, I made use of traditional qualitative strategies—in particular, constructivist methods that included (a) concurrent data collection and analysis, (b) a two-part process for coding data, (c) utilization of comparative methods, (d) memo writing and (e) integration of a theoretical framework. I established trust through the following techniques: (a) prolonged engagement, (b) extensive member checking, (c) peer debriefing and (d) keeping a researcher journal.[13]

Naming Her Own Agency

This section draws solely from my first dialogic interview with Dr. Webb on the topic of agency. When asked about her own agency, she said:

> I can tell you very simply what my agency is. My agency is my spiritual background. I cannot separate anything that I do from that, and the difference I think for me is that I do not proselytize. I do believe that by demonstration of what it is that you believe… [you] will be that kind of model. There is an expression that is often used, "Either you are going to talk the talk, or walk the walk"… I do not just talk the talk. I believe in walking the walk.

For Webb, agency was and is spiritual life, practiced over time. She did not hesitate to identify what agency was to her, and she immediately delineated the integrated, personal nature of agency. In addition, she made plain

her chosen way of exercising her agency publicly, which is by action rather than words.

Dr. Webb broadened this stance by articulating that her "style" is what has worked for her and that she has confidence in it because it has been validated over time.

> …I have always been described as a person who is very diplomatic because I do not have to scream and yell. My style has worked for me, and so in looking at what you are saying here as far as agency is concerned; to me it really is [that] I have been able to validate the way in which I operate. Everybody has their own way of operating… I can confront. But confront in a way that allows each person to …agree to disagree. That to me is very important and it was something that I had to learn. That not everybody is going to agree… And I may not particularly like your disagreeing with me, (laugh) but, I can understand it.

Dr. Webb clarified that the practice of a spiritual life does not need to be everyone's expression of agency. What she offered here is a position that allows her to act out her beliefs, respect that others have their own beliefs, and stand up for her own while leaving enough room for everyone to "sort of walk away," to have their dignity. Dr. Webb's personal agency weaves across private and public lives, which she differentiated as the interview continued.

> Now, here is the other part of it that really is interesting. If we are so distant in our thinking, I can dislike that person and not want to really interact with that person on a personal level… but professionally I can. And that's where I have been able to make my separation. Because I can work with anybody professionally. Personally, if we are so completely different philosophically, you will not come into my personal space.

> …[I]n my dealings with people, …I have learned how to keep my own counsel. And that is a part of it as well. I have to do that self-talk. Is this something that I want to do or something that I do not want to do? And if it is not comfortable, I am not going to force myself into any situations that are gong to make me uncomfortable—personally uncomfortable.

The ability to keep her "own counsel" provides Dr. Webb with a consistent, ever-ready resource as she engages in personal and professional life across the private and public spectrum. One can see here the parallels

between her steadfast beliefs and her ability to engage in "self-talk." If Dr. Webb's beliefs are her vision of how she will contribute—her map, if you will—then her self-talk is pausing to locate herself, check her bearings, and affirm both her route and destination.

As Dr. Webb continued, she made clear that she was talking about more than the human capacity of free will and choice. In her view, the gift given to her is the ability to discern which choice to make, or the possession of clarity about how to proceed.

> I do know sometimes it's just a gut reaction that something is not right and those are the things that I will go to the mat for. Now, I guess the question is, what is it that will make me go to the mat? Well, there are some things that for me are absolute rights and wrongs… Through the research I can take a stance and say yes; these are the things I am going to go to the mat about… There still are some visceral responses and that visceral response is maybe my spirit that just says that it is absolutely wrong. And I cannot sit back and watch it continue to happen…that is the spiritual part. It's the knowing, it's the ability to discern what is right and what is wrong. And in my faith, one of the things we talk about, the gifts that you are given… I have the gift of discernment. That is a gift of the Holy Spirit… Everybody has different ones. That is what has really moved me through my life, that I know…we have a choice. To do this, to go to the right or go to the left, that ability to discern the right from the wrong.

Thus, agency becomes more than the mere capacity to choose; it informs and even guides the daily choices made. For Dr. Webb, "the spiritual part" is simultaneously the call to take action when confronted with injustice and "wrongs" and a calling to use the gifts one has been given. As Dr. Webb explained to me, in lay terms one might experience "a gut reaction" or "feeling" that can be taken into account. And one may see a range of choices about when to contribute and how to be in the world. However, as Dr. Webb has made meaning of it, ultimately there is no sensible choice but to follow the guidance of her higher power about how and when to act. It is an unacceptable option to not answer her calling or not use her gift of discernment to contribute.

Dr. Webb has named her spiritual beliefs and practice, brought forth from her spiritual background, as her agency. While this is an integrated construct, she delineated her personal and professional expressions of it and made clear she "had to learn" to "agree to disagree." Her ability for self counsel, trusted gut responses, and gift of discernment not only enabled Dr. Webb to make a

choice, to choose from "right and wrong," but also to have unwavering confidence in her gift as a choice-maker. This articulated sense of personal agency about her own choices fosters her strength to move beyond the private and personal and into the more public and broader professional areas of work.

The interaction between individual and network has the potential to leave both changed. That is because each discrete network is not only driven by mission and structure but by individuals who take part in and contribute to it. By engaging in collaborative knowledge-making, individuals not only learn new content or make new meaning, they also build capacity. In this way the process, product, and trajectory of a given network is altered by each individual who contributes.

The following pages present three categories that emerged from Dr. Webb's life history. They show how Webb drew continued capacity for her individual work from the various networks in which she participated. The information is shared in the understanding that personal agency in teaching/teacher leadership is individually defined and both fostered and curtailed by the networks in which the individual participates.

Risk is in the Eye of the Beholder

The category of risk makes visible the individual ability to choose certain actions or reject them. Dr. Webb's choices were informed by the risk she perceived. I carefully use the word "perceived" here not to imply that someone other than Dr. Webb had a more accurate perception of the risk, but to underscore that the only relevant assessment of risk is that of the person who will take the action. What Dr. Webb made clear during our second interview was that the greatest risks she encountered were those that required giving up the financial security of tenure.

> …I looked back at my resume and it is every eight years that I was making a change… I went from one tenure area to another tenure area to another tenure area. I have had three tenures in my career. Three. Which is a lot…These were major changes… [W]hat I realize now is that I really was a risk taker. But here was an opportunity to do something else and accept another challenge. Looking back, I think with whatever it was that I have done, I have not been afraid to accept challenges. The challenges have no question been challenges.

Dr. Webb's realization came with the clarity of hindsight. In the moment she embraced the excitement, the opportunity and challenge. The idea of the risk, as she or others around her may have perceived it, did not curtail her

desire or ability to act. In her words, we can glimpse the excitement of the moment, which de-emphasized the risk. The next excerpt from the second interview illustrates how Webb was able to take risks, in part by seeing them as challenges to face and opportunities to embrace.

> I am going to fast forward to [right] now. What I realized is that I am only limited by my own fears…You get to a point where you realize if you risk, you risk… [Y]ou will just continue to accept those challenges and the challenges are not maybe so big after all. You have to know that it is not going to be easy. I do not think that anything has ever been easy but I do know that I think I have the self-confidence enough, now, to just step out and do… choose to do it, or I can choose not to do it. And that is a very comfortable feeling… I know that I have the motivation that will make sure that whatever I do is reflective of what I stand for. And if I stand for what is important and stand for what might be considered that perfection…, it will not be. Fess used the expression "half-stepping". I would make the full step. I would just go.

One should note how Dr. Webb is simultaneously naming the accumulative wisdom of now understanding her actions as only being limited by her own fears and the comforting feeling of having the broad choices that retirement brings. Her sense of individual agency is in balance with the larger context of people and networks precisely because she understands it as a reflection of what she stands for and what she can contribute to the larger context rather than as stemming from an illusion of personal omnipotence. She recognizes what she stands for might be seen as high, even "perfection;" however, she makes it clear that she is inclined to take the "full step." She is not afraid to reach for her own standards, embracing her own ability to choose when and how far to step.

Dr. Webb's willingness to step out was echoed again in the following selections from interview seven. Her lifelong stance as a challenge seeker, opportunity embracer, and lifelong learner makes evident her understanding that each "pinnacle" is also another beginning.

> I do not ever feel that I know it all. That is why learning something new is absolutely exciting, even now in my retirement. Because once you are completed you are done. And I do not think I am done by any stretch of the imagination. (Laughing) I have got a long way to go. I want to have a long way to go.
>
> …[S]elf-actualized means, to me, you have reached the pinnacle.

> Well I have not reached the pinnacle yet. I have not. I may have reached the pinnacle as far as my degree is concerned, but I still have not reached the pinnacle of what I have to learn and to share… So why would I not take advantage of some of these opportunities that have presented themselves. I have always considered myself a life-long learner… I love learning.

Through her recognition of one pinnacle being another beginning, we understand the wholeness, the completeness, the integrity, the integrated understanding with which Dr. Webb sees her life and work. One accomplishment better prepares her "to learn and to share" across her entire life, a life filled with various relationships and multiple networks. While she certainly celebrates her achievements in any particular location, she maintains an understanding of herself as the whole of the intersecting locations. With this approach there are bound to be risks.

Webb's integrated version of self enables her to transfer lessons across experiences, roles, and versions of self, to inform her risk assessment. Of equal importance to being able to transfer these lessons is the ability to transfer the sense of personal agency to act in the face of risk. This next excerpt from interview eight shows how Dr. Webb believes that her experience as a researcher, an early childhood educator, and a community member served to garner her respect and credibility over time.

> You know, some people will talk a good game about what they would like to do and kind of yes you to death, but then when it comes to actually putting something into place it is a very different story… I think… [many people did not make] disagreements to my face because they knew that I was grounded in the research about what was important for young children. And they could not refute that… If anything, they would agree and, "Yes, you know, we have got to do this" but they would not get into a debate with me. (Laugh) No they would not.
>
> …The other part of it is that they knew, or they know, my history in this district. They also know my reputation, not only among parents but among teachers as well. [Sure there are] some teachers who I am sure would be ready and willing to vilify anything that I stood for because it went against what they believed in. But having had enough contact with many of the teachers who knew the quality of my work, whether they would agree with what it was that I was [standing for or not], they knew that I was standing on solid ground. That I know. I know that there is a healthy respect for my work over the years.

Credibility: An Integrated Understanding

Credibility reinforces the necessary interplay between the individual and her/his networks. For Dr. Webb to establish and maintain credibility as a teacher/teacher leader, she had to have the respect of her colleagues, the parents, and fellow community members. Establishing credibility was not something she could do alone, and her colleagues spanned local, state and national circles. Because she worked for decades in the same community, she often had established credibility with members of three generations of the same family by teaching the grandchildren of students she had taught as a young teacher decades earlier. And having lived her entire life in the area, almost every network she was a part of circled back to the community.

Her interwoven networks prevented Dr. Webb from maintaining totally separate and isolated professional and social locations, but they also provided her with more locations of authority and a more integrated credibility or greater cross-location integrity. The following excerpt shows how she perceived her credibility to be an essential component of her effectiveness as a leader.

> I think my first year… as a principal, [for] the teachers with whom I worked… the whole issue [was one] of credibility... [T]hat was a deciding year for me. During the interview [for principal], I had said if there was some stance[s] that needed to be taken, whether they were popular [or] unpopular… I would do it. They also knew [me as] being a credible teacher because I had been the language arts coordinator. [I] had done the demonstration lessons and always talked about a high standard of performance. They also knew that if there was a colleague who needed to be spoken to about some issues, that I was going to speak to that colleague, colleague-to-colleague… [T]hose kinds of things had already been demonstrated. Now the question was, would that transfer over into the principalship? Would I really be able to be objective yet fair in dealing with staff members? It took a while to really tease that out, but the more I sat and the more I observed, the more I realized something is not connecting with this teacher. And of course, the teachers in the building knew that this teacher was dysfunctional… They just knew it… They knew… even though no one said anything to me, I know that they were sitting back and watching,"What will she do?"

As Dr. Webb revealed during our fourth interview, being an effective leader was not only about proving herself to others in the given networks and the community at large but also about enacting what she had said and

believed to be right.

> …[H]ere was a teacher who had had excellent prior evaluations from the former building principal and an outside evaluator and this was going to be her tenure year. But I had to document what was not happening. That [documenting] was a critical piece… Do what you say you believe in. Do not just give lip service. And it was a hard stance to take particularly knowing that this teacher was in a tenure year. That was very traumatic. That was very traumatic for me.

Thus far, most of Webb's talk about credibility has acknowledged internal and external challenges. The following section from interview nine shows the satisfaction and fun that permitted her to continue "going, doing, and growing."

> …Some of the fun that I would have is if a teacher needed to go someplace, I could say, "Well, I will teach the class… [For example] when we had the teachers observing teachers, I covered classes while a teacher would go observe another teacher… that was some of the fun. When there was the time… earlier when I was doing that, there was more time… I like to be in there doing; I am a doer. That is the other part of the leader; you have to be a doer. You have to do. You have to keep going, and doing, and growing.

As Dr. Webb continued, she named the locus of her personal agency—not in attempts or ability to control what will happen, for that she leaves to a higher power. Nor was it in attempts to ensure her path would be easy. Instead, Web's personal agency rested in the capacity to address the mix of challenges that were certain to come and to deal with them with the highest level of integrity possible.

> …Whoever said it was going to be easy? There are going to be trials and tribulations no matter what you are like and it is how you deal with those trials and tribulations… [You need to] look at them as making you stronger, because I do think that with what I have come through, it has made me stronger. Then you realize that you continue to grow as a result. And how does growth occur? Growth does not necessarily occur when everything is going perfectly well… [Sometimes there is] a little bit of pain. There has to be a little bit of suffering. There has to be a little tension, and when you come through it you realize you have learned something from it.

Once again Dr. Webb returns to her overarching quest for growth; growth through credibility and growth through challenges. In this next section we will hear her talk about the centrality of feedback in order for such growth to occur.

Feedback as a Desired Professional Responsibility

This category above all the others addresses the connective tissue between the individual and networks. In the initial minutes of interview one Dr. Webb named feedback as one of the most important elements and responsibilities of being a teacher and teacher leader.

> [Feedback] was always something that was really very serious for me… When I became the reading consultant, I had to spend time interacting with teachers and giving them feedback about what was happening with their children. But I also realized that the kind of feedback that I gave had to be the kind…that was not going to be threatening [but] would help them help the children… That really would be what I would consider the beginnings of my teacher leader role. Because I had to be able to understand that I was dealing with another human being. And I know how I felt when someone would give me feedback. It was the way in which that feedback was given. We always talk about giving constructive criticism, but you can give criticism in a way that will make people feel very, very uncomfortable even if it is called "constructive."

The above excerpt shows Webb's thinking about how delivery of feedback could work most effectively and expediently to address children's learning. She saw relationships and communication as integral to the role and responsibility of a teacher leader. As she continued, Dr. Webb placed an interesting focus on the outcomes of such communication on the culture and effectiveness of the school. It is clear from her own words that she not only values the process or means but also the product and end.

> But what is absolutely critical for me is having the staff members at least have enough respect for each other that they would be willing to hear what the other has to say. And I think that goes back again to building that culture in which the expectation is that we are all part of this. We are all in this together and we have some responsibilities to each other, to really allow for the dialogue to occur. So we are all working for the success of the school. The success of the children. And we are here for the children. [But] you have to model it. It

> has to be modeled… It is not lip service. It is showing. You have got to show me.

Dr. Webb did not exempt herself from the feedback loop. While feedback is intended as information to support growth, it is essential that it contains detailed and specific information grounded in observation.

> I remember being a classroom teacher and saying, "I wanted feedback; I needed feedback." How was I supposed to grow if someone could not give me feedback?… What was I doing that was making a difference for the children? What feedback could you give me about what I was doing that made me have the reputation that I had? Everybody needs to get feedback. I wanted feedback.

Discussion of Integrated Understandings

Dr. Webb's life work provides an illustrative example of personal agency beliefs; her perceptions and experiences related to risk, credibility, and feedback can serve to inform teachers and teacher leaders. Her ability to assess the context and maintain belief in her own capacity shows how her personal agency is grounded in the larger community of her life. It is from this type of dual grounding that we see her increased courage to take risk, to not be afraid to fulfill her vision across networks, and to integrate her faith across her life. We also see how the co-existence of internal and external credibility helps one to move forward in one's own learning while simultaneously embracing the leadership opportunities offered in a network. Finally, Webb's description of the importance of feedback shows how it is the vehicle in which we can bestow credibility and validate or resist the direction of the whole network. Feedback underscores the individual's need for interplay with others in the human struggle to integrate new understandings.

Conclusions

What this life history research offers is insight on how individual teachers, teacher leaders, and teacher educators can access and enact their personal agency. Rather than trying to eradicate the human complexity of wanting to be both independent and involved (by methods that increasingly burden teachers with scripts and teacher leaders with test scores), I suggest we embrace the kind of example offered by Dr. Nettie Webb.

Currently, we try to envision what public education will or can look like in the postmodern knowledge economy. Hargreaves describes our society as one that demands an educational professional who has personal agency

along with the ability to enact it in multiple networks.[14] The teacher, or teacher leader, must embrace risks, face challenges, accept and incorporate feedback at the speed of the twenty-first century while relying on her/his own sense of internalized credibility. In this context, the framing of risk is pivotal to an educator's trajectory.[15] Risk can be understood as creative, rather than as a failure of compliance in a school with a lock-step curriculum and tightly linked accountability measures. Dr. Webb did not speak about risking the wrath brought upon the non-compliant; for her, risk was something she took to pursue what she believed was important and valuable.

The forecast of the increased centrality of interdependency of individuals has become a reality. The age-old stereotype of teachers shutting their doors and doing what they want has been eradicated by a culture of monitoring and corrective action. Of course some teachers did work as rogues and needed to be more accountable to the collective; however, as Dr. Nettie Webb shows, not all did. By knowing the life history of those who displayed a consciousness of the collective good, took risks, faced challenges as learning opportunities, and sought feedback and collaborative learning networks, we can better understand how to build on their legacy. By focusing on teachers and teacher leaders like Dr. Webb—whose own sense of agency was balanced by relationships with others—we can foster and sustain leaders capable of reimagining as the situation calls for while drawing on collective capacities.

In our twenty-first century hurry, we risk forgetting the people and their stories, along with the history that enveloped them. Narratives like those of Dr. Webb remind us of our possibilities that exist in these times of uncertainty and struggle.

Notes

[1] National Center for Educational Statistics. Digest of Educational Statistics. (Washington D. C.: U. S. Department of Education, Institute of Educational Sciences, 2002).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Kathy Carter and Walter Doyle. "Personal narrative and life history in learning to teach,"In Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, ed J. Sikula. (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillian, 1996), 129.

[4] Robin D. G. Kelley. Freedom dreams: The black radical imagination. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 9.

[5] David Bakan. The duality of human existence: An essay on psychology and religion (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), 246..

[6] Robert Kegan. The evolving self: Problem & process in human development (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 1982), 107.

[7] Ibid Kegan, 109

[8] Patricia Hill Collins. Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment (New York: Routledge, 2000), 252.

[9] Elliot W. Eisner. Two visions of education. Keynote at the New Teacher Center Symposium, San Jose, CA. (2006).

[10] Vanessa Siddle Walker. "Organized resistance and black educators' quest for school equality 1878 -1938," Teachers College Record 107 (2005): 355- 388.

[11] Ardra L. Cole and J. Gary Knowles, Eds. Lives in context: The art of life history research, (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2001), 13.

[12] Ibid.

[13] See Ivor Goodson and Pat Sikes. Life history research in educational settings: Learning from lives (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2001); Irving Seidman. Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and social sciences, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1998); Gretchen Rossman and Sharon F. Rallis. Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003).

[14] Andy Hargreaves. Teaching in the knowledge society: Education in the age of insecurity (New York: Teachers College Press, 2003).

[15] Elliot W. Eisner. Two visions of education. Keynote address at the New Teacher Center Symposium, San Jose, CA.

Journey of Elam:
Her Servant Leadership Pedagogy as Public Intellectual

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We explore pedagogical moments reflecting the social justice inspired servant leadership of Dr. Donna Elam in her journey as a public intellectual. Using auto/biographical methods, we examine critical moments in her work across contexts: conducting diversity workshops, providing professional development for principals and teachers, and leading district and regional interventions in response to court orders to racially desegregate. We focus her leadership through the lens of critical pedagogy. In the journey of Elam we find an expression of critical social justice leadership that is inspired and empowered by the values of public service, spirituality, and humanitarianism. This auto/biography contributes to our knowledge of educational leadership practiced by Black female educators and supports Dr. Elam's motivations to pass the torch and pay it forward.

The experiences of women of color in academe have been recently explored in edited books and themed issues of journals such as the Negro Educational Review and the Journal of School Leadership.[1] However, the pedagogy of their educational leadership is under-explored. The purpose of this article is to fill the gap in the literature as part of this special issue. The experiences of female leaders of color and their life stories help us to understand what has shaped their experience, subjectivity, and practice. As Dillard explains in her work on female educational leaders of color "...our interests originate as much out of our own personal biographical situations and previous and current life circumstances as out of a sense of what we are work-

ing to bring into being."[2]

Our interests in leadership preparation and development among women of color have led us (the first two authors) to collaboratively explore the life of Donna Elam (co-author). We wanted to know more about her work preparing principals for culturally competent leadership. We start by framing our study in a framework of critical pedagogy and servant leadership to describe Dr. Elam's public intellectualism through her life experiences, principles, and pedagogical moments. We conclude with her servant leadership contributions inspired and guided by Civil Rights leaders and mentors. Dr. Elam is passing the torch and paying it forward through her service in the sphere of education.

This journey represents for us the leadership development of a public intellectual who is a servant leader for social justice. Public intellectuals "...address particular problems for particular communities as well as for all of humanity."[3] Dr. Elam's method of working for the betterment of people across diverse social groups includes various principles and pedagogical acts. Cusick argues that in addition to the diversity of modes needed to respond to the diversity of wants and interests of the public there is one guiding norm for public intellectualism: "the prescriptions and expectations for local betterment must never exclude or overrule another group or the whole of humanity; your own freedom cannot come at the expense of another's."[4] Bound to this description of a public intellectual are the values of public service, spirituality, and humanitarianism. Despite the calls for leadership for social justice preparation, leadership departments and faculty have not engaged in sustained dialogue confronting race and class nor have we learned "how to incorporate such a dimension throughout our preparation programs."[5] This journey of Elam is an opportunity for educational leaders and those who, like us (first two authors), work in leadership preparation to see the terrain of educational leadership through the window of experience Dr. Elam's auto/biography offers.

In this collaborative journey, Dr. Elam participated in several roles. First, she provided sources of data such as curriculum materials, photographs, awards, protocols, stories, and newspaper clippings. Second, she served as ethnographer immersed in organizations that provided her opportunities to advance equity and mentor on so many fronts. Last, she performed the role of historian who provided detailed recollections of her life's journey as an educational leader. As co-author she graciously provided the data for this auto/biographical account through conversations and storytelling as well as clarification and details during member checks in which we sought verisimilitude or likeness between her recollections, our interpretations, and her interpretations of ours.

Bullough and Pinnegar provide interrelated guidelines for conducting

quality auto/biographical self-studies in teacher education which we apply to this study of leadership.[6] They remind us that: articles need to be readable and engaging, themes should be evident and identifiable across the conversation represented or the narrative presented, the connection between autobiography and history must be apparent, the issues attended to need to be central to teaching and teacher education, and sufficient evidence must be garnered that readers will have no difficulty recognizing the authority of the scholarly voice, not just its authenticity. Our efforts to create a quality auto/biography reflecting these guidelines are supported by the biographic data we have generated and interpreted: conversations, interviews, observations, audiotapes, field notes, stimulated recall, "stream of consciousness" responses, and collaborative authorship. These forms of biographic data have been described by Butt and Raymond in the context of learning from the lives of educators.[7]

We situate this auto/biography in the tradition of critical pedagogy and critical social justice leadership. These are the assumptions of critical social justice leadership identified by Ryan and Rottman: social institutions are human creations which disadvantage some groups more than others, patterns of disadvantage are not always visible, and social justice is more than resource distribution. Social justice is inconsistent with the idea of just dessert, favors equity over equality, permeates all aspects of education, and calls for hope.[8] We characterize the leadership journey of Dr. Elam as servant leadership grounded in the ethics of (racial) justice and critical spirituality.

While we recognize Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber's assertion that "one of the most interesting omissions in theory and research on leadership is the absence of discussions of followership and its impact on leadership,"[9] we also recognize that the practices of servant leadership among women of color also need to have spaces carved for their expression. We focus on the journey from her perspective rather than those of her followers. According to Greenleaf, assessment of impact should be guided by questions such as: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? What is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?[10] Through the life of Dr. Elam we learn of conditions of those least privileged in society and her impact on these conditions through the dialectical relationship of her leadership and followership.

Working in Big and "Small Hateful Places"

Dr. Donna Elam was born in Brooklyn, New York, to a family that identified as Negro, Colored, and Caribbean. What started as teen rebellion became a political act as she began to identify as Black in solidarity with the

Black Power Movement during the 1960s. Thus her racial identity has been socially constructed over time in response to the political times and shifting meaning of racial terms. That she now identifies as Black is not only a reflection of personal choice but also a response to social constructions of race in which she is geographically and historically embedded. In sharing why she identifies as she does she revealed, "It's the walk." She clarified the meaning of this phrase during a member check. "Being Black to me is political as well as cultural and ethnic. Growing up in my era, claiming your blackness meant I celebrated Black power and attributes of being a woman of color. It was a way of building your own self-concept of self-acceptance—first understanding that you were not always accepted or embraced—but it didn't stop your voice, your advocacy for self and others, and sharing the gifts and talents that God gave you with the world!"[11]

This explanation reflects her standpoint and echoes the argument made by Roseboro and Ross that Black women are subjected and assigned a subjective position (as Black woman) by an oppressive social structure, whether they claim this position or not, and are then expected to transcend hate, espouse care, compassion, and love while uplifting humanity.[12] It also reflects that her lived experience with racism has informed her racial identity in connection to spirituality, self-worth, and sense of purpose. She continues to identify as Black, "even in small hateful places" where de facto racial segregation is still a common practice.[13]

Dr. Elam's entire formal schooling took place in Catholic schools in New York. She graduated (Magna Cum Laude) from York College, majoring in elementary education and specializing in early childhood. She finished her Master's degree in special education from New York University (NYU) and she acquired her Doctoral degree in education from the same university in 1995. In most of her professional work, she has worked to dismantle educational systems cited for discrimination against children of color. Her source of formal power derives from her positions in institutions, i.e., Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and courts. However, she understands that passing a court order or policy does not ensure social or institutional change. She has worked tirelessly at guiding systems "full of hatred" to implement structures and processes, facilitating workshops to encourage people to "shift paradigms, change their views and beliefs."[14]

Her first job in public education was working with boys she described as over-aged with special needs. While working in Long Island, she noticed that many children were misdiagnosed and misplaced into special education, especially minority students and English language learners. She began working to mainstream these children, and found it difficult to move students into general education and shed the label of special education. She later worked at one of ten federally-funded centers for civil rights, the Equity Assistance

Center, Metropolitan Center for Educational Research, Development, and Training at NYU from 1987 till 1997, where she held different positions working on diversity and equity issues in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, as well as teaching and supervising student teachers.

One of the first projects while at NYU was to develop systemic training with the Department of Education for New York City on "Children of the Rainbow" curriculum after the school district was embroiled in controversy with one of its units titled "Heather Has Two Mommies." This work ushered Dr. Elam's entry in training and staff development on equity issues that more often than not are marred by resistance and unwillingness of people to engage with what has been known in the literature as "courageous conversations."[15] Later she started a private consulting company and contracted with equity center collaboratives of the OCR to work with school districts in most of the southern states that were placed under court desegregation orders. In her work across the United States she has noticed that "racism is everywhere," not in "some distant time."[16]

Dr. Donna Elam works at the University of South Florida and holds multiple job titles: Associate Director for program development and external affairs of David C. Anchin Center, senior David C. Anchin Center research associate, and visiting faculty in the College of Education. Her research and work deal with leadership and public policy analysis in public (k-12) and higher education, data and achievement in urban schools, student resiliency, institutional structures, arts education, learner centered leadership in "urban" contexts, and culturally competent leadership. However, when you ask her who she is and what she does, her responses range from "a leadership resource for diversity," mentor to graduate students, to someone who provides training and a forum for undergraduate and graduate students, principals, and teachers to have "courageous conversations on race" and how it connects to student achievement, to making a difference, and finding solutions to the issues in education that are affected by racism and its effects. While she sees the impact of racism everywhere in education, she states, "It's amazing how little they [students, teachers, and principals] know about [race]." In addition, she serves on many advisory boards and committees at the federal and state level including state commissioner, faith based initiative and community outreach leader, Attorney General's working committee on hate crimes, commissioner's task force on school choice, president and co-founder of the state's association for multicultural education, regional chair for the National Association for Multicultural Education, executive board member for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Institute for Non-Violence, special director for Magnet Schools of America, and president-elect of USA/Africa Institute.

Pedagogical Moments

In the search for pedagogy, educational researchers "must not only focus on the observable dimensions of pedagogy, but also actively investigate the personal, relational, and improvisational dimensions of pedagogy in teacher education."[17] We use Freire's framework, pedagogy of the oppressed, to describe Dr. Elam's critical pedagogical stance.[18] We begin with auto\biographical contextualization and continue to trace her practice as a female educational leader through pedagogical moments. The pedagogy of the oppressed as a humanist, libertarian, and pedagogy of praxis (dialogue, reflection, action) leads to transformation of the oppressed.[19]

Hope, high expectations and equitable excellence

Critical Social Theory (CST) builds a language of criticism and depends on the mutual engagement with the social world as we construct and interact with it. CST theorists bring a discourse of hope in their writings (Leonardo, 2004). "Critical social theorists have made it known that quality education is as much about teaching students the ability to read the world more critically (ideology critique) as it is imagining a better world that is less oppressive (utopian critique)."[20] It is about building a better community for all people where hope is a "constitutive part of everyday life."[21] Dr. Elam asserts, "You have to give teachers the hope and let them know how much power they have that no matter what, they can make a difference. And they keep motivating (students) and they keep pushing (students)." She found inspiration in the current president's (Barack H. Obama) speech on education and the value of the profession. The centrality of hope in her work manifests itself as she encourages principals to persist.

When the Washington D.C. Education Trust brought her in to work with 75 principals to address diversity issues in struggling school systems and schools facing closure, she compared their "failing" schools to those in all the cities that reflect similar characteristics and are succeeding. She told them, "... you didn't come here to fail, you came here because you thought you were going to make a difference in a child's life. So what happened and what can we do to help you get back to your dream?" Additionally, Dr. Elam saw the need to focus on the connection between beliefs and expectations. "When I started working with these educators, it became so clear that we have to enable educators to take their beliefs and expectations through a process that allows us to measure those beliefs and high expectations in a class or in a school and show teachers – what their beliefs about high expectations look like in policy, practice, and instruction when we have high expectations." Dr. Elam's quote shows her focus on high expectations toward education steeped in equity and excellence—equitable excellence—that developed in her early

practice as a novice teacher. Whether watching a Broadway play or musicians—she would observe an excellent performance and think of how it contributed to a "formula for excellence" in education. She argues that educators have to be so good at what they/we do because "we can make a difference... we just have to get teachers to believe that they have the power to make the difference. I try to encourage teachers when I'm working with them even when they give up." From Martin Luther King's dream tied to protests for civil rights to critical pedagogues to visions of revolutionaries, hope has been a virtue of servant-leaders.[22]

Critical spirituality

The role of spirituality in teaching and leadership has been described as pedagogy of the soul and of the spirit.[23] Spirituality continues to be underexplored although it is a theme in recent research on the educational practices of women of color.[24] Scott argues that the ambiguity in researching spirituality for its multiple meanings and expressions, which can change over time, requires that researchers have some comfort with uncertainty.[25] He advocates for a narrative inquiry approach that relies on storytelling. "It is not about mastering an understanding of spirituality in order to research it but rather opening a space for engagement and for narration of experience that requires participation and shifts in our epistemological certainty."[26] To engage in spiritual narratives is to engage in counter-narratives to the dominant discourse in educational leadership where critical spirituality is marginalized.[27] The necessity of discourse on the role of spirituality for women of African descent who navigate work in departments of education within the academy continues.[28]

We had noticed Dr. Elam say "I prayed" multiple times, so we asked her about the role of spirituality in her life and work. Here is her description:

> [The role of spirituality is] major. If it wasn't for my belief in God I wouldn't be able to breathe. That's how I hold on. I pray everyday, every single day before I speak, and sometimes well I pray a lot but I have learned how to really step into prayer, I ask that my words touch the hearts and the minds of (people) that I am allowed to speak to in order to make a difference. I pray right before every keynote. Every day I wake up I ask God to let my words make a difference. Guide me wherever you [God] want.

Dr. Elam follows in the tradition of public intellectual educators like Anna J. Cooper who wrote, "It is God's own precaution to temper our self-seeking by binding our sympathies and interests indissolubly with the helpless and the wretched."[29] Dr. Elam conveys a belief that her work is also

guided by God and directed toward the education of children; "I have been blessed with a gift." Cusick urges "everyone [to] devote their labor to improving the situations of the worst off: the poor, the starving, the homeless, the sick all need to be cared for and given the chance for a productive life if any of our lives are to have any worth."[30] Dr. Elam has answered this call by dedicating her life's work to improving education of poor children of color.

According to Daniel Hay, spirituality is relational and underpins all ethics.[31] It is subversive and politically significant because it counters the dominant secular and individualistic culture. He advocates for spiritual education. In a similar vein, Ryoo, Crawford, Moreno, and McLaren advance a pedagogical notion of spirituality that resonates with ideas of intersectionality and anti-oppressive education.[32] They describe critical spiritual pedagogy as a pedagogy of integrity that recognizes all aspects of identities as opposed to the fragmentation which occurs when educators only recognize the intellectual subjectivity of learners. Critical spiritual pedagogy works toward humanization as it counters fragmentation, Othering, and exploitation. It instead provides interdependent communities of support and love that uplift the capacity of others to act against oppression.[33]

"The Elam Method"

Dr. Elam uses "The Elam Method" to lead toward academic achievement for students of color. This method allows movement along a continuum of cultural competency assessment and prepares teachers to utilize the knowledge and skills necessary to work with diverse populations.

> We have to have a balance between the affective domain and technical skills. We can keep training teachers on the teaching skills and it's going to work with 70% of the population ideally, that 30 % is still tied to cultural competence of how do you reach the children you are not connected with? What is it in their background that you're not connecting with? They can be in the same class, what is it that we are not doing?[34]

She asks that educators know their students as well as their content and profession.

Culturally competent leadership

According to Elam, Robinson and McCloud, Cultural Competence in the school setting is a process based on a clearly defined set of core values and principles that support policies, practices, behaviors, attitudes, and structures that enable educators to work effectively across the cultures their students represent. A second element of cultural competence is the acquisition and

institutionalization of cultural knowledge and the adaptation to diversity in the contexts of the communities being served.[35] Culturally competent leaders must be able to gather, analyze and report disaggregated student achievement data in such a manner as to not alienate teachers and parent groups – nor inadvertently undermine the reason it is required that may result in confirming racist and stereotypical attitudes that they are meant to dispel. It requires school leaders to examine the academic and cultural implications of the data. Elam, Robinson and McCloud further contend that cultural competence is necessary, but not sufficient, for cultural competence cannot be separated from achievement as students need access to rigorous curriculum, highly effective teachers (with deep content knowledge), comprehensive staff development and support services for teachers, and use of data to monitor achievement.

Dr. Elam tries to ensure that people of color have the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the courts. She argues, "This is what people deserve, I am not asking for something people are not due. Poor minority people have the right to access public education of quality." She continues, "I don't beat people up. I want them to work and make a difference in children. Therefore, your approach must be direct about what the real issues are and talk about racism and talk about inequities and injustices … and hope you can impact the people. I hold on to prayer to resist responding to the negative remarks made about groups of people, when I know that they are speaking through frustration and not through total malicious intent."

Work with principals

The role race plays in leadership preparation and promotion of people of color is also important to note. According to Dr. Elam, principals are not prepared to confront racism in schools, noting how little principals know about race. She perceives widespread, persistent, and inequitable support for principals of different races. Dr. Elam recalls, "Every time that I visited the white female's school there were central office people in that building all the time, high visibility, coverage in the newspaper, on panels. Black female [at the school headed by a black female] never saw anybody that was there for extra help from the central office, nor did I see it with the Black male. The assistance provided (or not provided) to minority principals is often inequitable." Dr. Elam's statement is consistent with Brown's findings on the inequities in the employment conditions of African American leaders who tend to be employed in urban school districts that are underfunded with scarce resources, uncertified teachers, and underachievement.[36]

Dehumanization meets humanizing pedagogy

Dr. Elam sighs, "There have been days when I thought 'there is no hope,'

when I thought 'I can't teach you. I cannot teach you to care about children as human beings'." Just over a decade ago, while working in Mississippi, she entered a school district that was cited for its over-referrals of African American children for disciplinary intervention. In a meeting with about 70 high school teachers, she highlighted issues of achievement and asked teachers about related issues. The following interaction was Dr. Elam's introduction into a year-long endeavor to address the disproportionate discipline referrals between black and white students.

Dr. Elam recounts this episode. "...This white teacher raises her hand and she says, "you're here because of the Office of Civil Rights cited us for discipline." I said yes I am. "Well we think that if corporal punishment was not banned we wouldn't have this problem." According to Dr. Elam, this type of comment surfaced three times by both black and white teachers. They claimed that ever since corporal punishment went out, their scores went down. She continued, "Jokingly I said, so do you think if you beat children they'll learn to read?" To this, the woman raised her hand and sought clarification. "So this is about the discipline problems we have had with black children?" Dr. Elam, responded, "Yes it is". The woman continued, "So if we found someone black to beat the children would that be OK?" Dr. Elam's response was, "How could you say that?" Then she replied, "Thank you for saying that." Dr. Elam conveyed to us, she thanked the woman for speaking what she imagined others were thinking. She continued to state "Right now all you want to do is beat the children into submission... and think that's going to impact their learning [positively]. That has nothing to do with it. I said thank you for trusting me to say this but we have some work to do." Dr. Elam persisted in her work with the group.

According to Freire, "the oppressed, having adopted the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines," are fearful of freedom.xxxvii The images of beating children into submission help us to recall that in times of slavery it was not uncommon for black people to be beaten as a punishment for attempting to gain freedom, instilling a sense of fear in association with the quest for freedom. As Freire describes, confusing freedom with the maintenance of the status quo can serve to camouflage the fear of freedom. This fear can threaten the awakening of critical consciousness as it appears a threat to the status quo and thereby leading to this confusing sense of freedom. In the situation she described, both black and white teachers spoke in defense of corporal punishment. Those who might have disagreed remained silent during this meeting.

Our analysis of this situation through critical pedagogy returns to Freire's description of the oppressed who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed. He argues that the oppressed who are resigned to the structure of domination "are inhibited from waging the strug-

gle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires. Moreover, their struggle for freedom... threatens their own oppressed comrades who are fearful of still greater repression."[38] Dr. Elam describes how people of color would approach her in the bathroom and say what they would not say in public or thank her for the opportunity to speak anonymously. She later describes a pedagogical strategy that allows anonymity.

As an outsider working with school districts under court order, Dr. Elam is aware of how oppressive spaces promote silence. She explains, "In Mississippi and Alabama there were black people who would not say how conditions truly were because they lived there. Once we (outside consultants) left they remained. So, I started asking teachers to write anonymously about concerns or issues on blank sheets of paper. What would you like me to consider as I am working in your district. I started this practice because teachers would not speak in the group sessions, even when the sessions were small groups, but as soon as we would go on a break, individuals would approach me to speak confidentially." The use of note cards allows people to name issues but remain anonymous. As a result, I would begin a session announcing the use of the note card and state, "identify what you have experienced or observed someone experiencing that presents a challenge to your instruction." Some teachers work in an environment of fear. The voices of teachers of color can be silenced, requiring pedagogical acts that encourage participation without added risk.

Pedagogy of love

Dr. Elam worked with a school district in Georgia where, as she described, "the little black children... had colds and their faces were crusty, dirty, runny noses and it was dried up on their faces. I noticed it because there were so many of the children." At one point she approached a child and said, "Baby come here and go to the bathroom, go wash your face". She describes her expression of connectedness, concern, and care. "I just followed him to the bathroom, I took a towel [and said] 'wash your face.' They were (white administrators and the superintendent) watching..." as she continued approaching many other children in the halls and classrooms handing them tissues and helping them clean their faces. Dr. Elam continued to describe this situation, "They're acting like our children are lepers. There is no excuse to have children look like that in a classroom. They were treated like untouchables. I said I have never seen anything like this. All the teachers were prim and proper and the children and their faces … unbelievable!"

In this instance, enactors of domination and dehumanization reveal "lovelessness" while Dr. Elam shows her love and care for "the unwashed" as an act of courage not of fear, [for her] love is commitment to others… commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation."[39] Her experiences raise

questions about the equity of access that students have to learning environments enriched by connectedness, concern and care. According to Freire, "lovelessness … lies at the heart of oppression."[40]

Problem posing pedagogy

Dr. Elam uses "problem posing" as opposed to "deposit-making" of information to facilitate the cognition, provide connection, and raise the consciousness of those (students, teachers, principals) in education in relation to the world.[41] Data usage is a way for Dr. Elam and educators to bridge their differences and come to a common understanding of the issues. For example, when she works with school districts under a desegregation court order or cited by OCR for discrimination, she reads directly from the consent decree without summarizing or paraphrasing. In this way, the seriousness of the situation is identified and addressed in a serious and targeted manner. When issues of inequities and /or injustices are addressed, authentic solutions can be developed to modify or eliminate the policy or practice in which the malpractice occurs.

She recognizes that full exposure to the myriad of special and economic issues that many children face can overwhelm her audience. She describes her pedagogical approach to move participants in their awakening of critical consciousness or conscientização which helps to challenge and/or surmount the situation of oppression. Conscientização is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence into a perception of a situation as an objective-problematic, a movement from emergence to submersion. To do so, "people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity."[42]

We interpret Dr. Elam's approach as one that fosters an awakening of critical consciousness among her participants as she incites personal reaction and provides information to help impact their thinking about the relations between student achievement and structural conditions. According to Dr. Elam, "You have to shake people up so that they see the humanity in the children no matter where they come from. Then take it to research and then impact the thinking of teachers and that's the strategy that I keep on using." By providing a fuller picture of the reality of poor children of color she challenges a deficit view that situates the problem in the child.

She uses data "to address the denial that issues exist in education" and to counter resistance from those who would presume that she is a woman of color who might be operating from a personal agenda or has an axe to grind.[43] She describes the differences in how black and white participants respond to data she presents during workshops:

> You will have two groups hear the same data, more often whites will try to rationalize the issue or give an example that is an exception to the rule. This is an attempt to dispel what you're doing. Blacks will tend to listen to it so they hold on to that one thing that works so that they can talk about replication. One strategy is in disbelief that solutions exist while the latter strategy is for hope. Both positions are important for change to occur.

Strategically, Dr. Elam appropriates qualitative data for the purpose of continuing the dialogue with a targeted and undeniable focus, removing the debate and subjectivity to a position which becomes solution-oriented. She couples this pedagogical act with others that serve non-dominant ways of knowing and learning such as dialogical walk-throughs and focus groups.

Dialogical walk-throughs and focus groups

The practice of using 3, 5, or 10 minute walkthroughs to monitor curriculum and instruction among teachers has become a task of the instructional leader.[44] Its roots are in the social efficiency movement of Frederick Taylor and its name varies according to the amount of time taken to conduct a classroom observation.[45] In contrast, Dr. Elam uses dialogical walk-throughs that reflect Freire's notion of the dialogical educator who works in an interdisciplinary team to reveal the themes through investigation and the re-presentation of the themes as a problem in which people can intervene. Dr. Elam reminds us that the most effective professional development in her experience has been job-embedded, where the newly learned knowledge and skills are implemented and time is given for discussions with colleagues that include feedback from administrators. As a way of gauging the issues Dr. Elam conducts walk-throughs of instructional teams in the lowest performing schools. She describes her observations of the performance of a weak team and her interactions with principals and teachers.

"The teacher was there-soda, potato chips, kids running (during class time)—kids saw me and ran to their seats. The principal walked in after me—followed by the area superintendent. They were livid." Dr. Elam understood that this teacher (white male) had given up. Additionally, every fifth grade class was off-task. She told the principal that her response could not be punitive for she feared teachers would not allow her to return. Dr. Elam arranged with the area superintendent to get substitute teachers so that all the fifth grade teachers could visit a high performing school with similar demographics (urban 98% free and reduced lunch). She designed a protocol for teachers to use during the visit and accompanied them at the school. Demonstrating a dialogical process, after Dr. Elam visited the school, she and the team "debriefed and prioritized." She helped them with setting up their

rooms and brought in additional people to help with instructional issues. Dr. Elam visited the school again. "We went through the classes [and] we couldn't believe that they were even the same classes. That's why I said I would just do walkthroughs. The principal said, "If you had told me this would have worked I would not have believed you."

Dr. Elam also talked with teachers to shift their thinking and start talking about their achievement, successes and challenges, implementing new strategies, and discussing how these strategies were working. She organized focus groups so the teachers had a safe forum to discuss issues facing teachers in their classrooms, stating: "In the focus groups teachers expressed the amount of professional development received, but reflected on the fact of not having enough opportunity to implement the learned strategies in depth before receiving additional professional development on another new skill." This, in fact, was an unanticipated outcome. The district provided outstanding professional development, but perhaps offered too much, too soon. This oversaturation of professional development had a negative impact on the teachers.

As the above examples reflect, her approach to leadership development includes several if not all of the aspects of Freirean leadership noted by Miller, Brown and Hopson: humility, faith, hope, critical thinking, and solidarity. According to Miller et al., leaders working from a dialogical approach are open to new thoughts, do not assume that they alone have the answers, have confidence in people to name and describe their realities, draw on others' experiential knowledge, are hopeful about change, and find a sense of solidarity with others with the recognition that their realities and those of their colleagues are intertwined.[46]

Carousel of deficit thinking: Round we go - where we'll stop nobody knows

Excavating people's beliefs and views on any issues is an important and difficult process. The difficulty of such a process is exacerbated when these issues are raced and classed deficit views of students and their families. Awareness of such views is the first step that can lead to critical reflection and transformation. Such transformation then could lead to teachers and leaders taking action to build anti-oppressive schools where all children have access to an education rooted in excellence.

Dr. Elam conducts a carousel activity that challenges participants to respond quickly, without sufficient time to formulate politically correct answers. Working in small groups she asks them to name the challenges and successes in their district. Then she offers sentence starters that groups have to complete quickly: "The teachers are ..., the parents are ..., the children are ...". Groups share comments and look for agreements and absences. The purpose of the activity is to quickly assess and collect initial thoughts and status

of their system, as well as to incite their willingness to participate—to get buy-in. She shares that the activity often exposes patterns of beliefs, lets participants feel listened to, and reveals deficit thinking such as students are unmotivated or the parents don't believe in their children's education. She describes a place in which the comments were negative and directed at the children without reflection on their work as teachers.

Why They Marched

The importance of chronicling the journeys of those who came before in the struggle for social and economic equality is recognized by Dr. Elam in her children's book, Why They Marched: The Struggle for the Right To Vote, in which she captures the personal journeys of those who participated in the Selma March during 1965.[48] Inspired and guided by Civil Rights leaders and mentors in her personal and professional life, Dr. Elam is passing the torch and paying it forward through her service to education. By documenting her contributions to education we hope to fill in the gap in the scholarship on the leadership of black women as public intellectuals. Her march continues as she follows in the intellectual tradition of black leaders working to support the oppressed and advocate for social justice/anti-oppressive ideas and practices. "From the earliest works of Maria Stewart and David Walker through Fredrick Douglass and Alexander Crummell, black speakers, writers, preachers, and teachers have worked to transform society and liberate all those who are subjugated."[48]

As a servant leader, Dr. Elam challenges institutions' and communities' beliefs and actions operating through educators, for such institutions are the result of human creations. She places herself in vulnerable positions toward the humanization of people through transforming education. To do so, she provides evidence that exposes how some people and communities are more disadvantaged, sometimes in ways that are not immediately visible. What she makes visible and clear is that such disadvantages are not isolated instances in educational institutions. On the contrary, systems of privileging and denying privilege are pervasive, systemic, and interconnected across institutions. In addition to advocating for an equitable distribution of resources, she points to injustices in how intangible goods are developed and distributed (i.e., lack of connectedness, concern, and care).

This auto/biography of a public intellectual offers several pedagogical lessons to those who prepare leaders through a framework of social justice. For instance, the notion of culturally competent leadership is informed by the care she gives to structuring workshops, coaching, and conducting dialogical walk-throughs in which she takes into consideration the individual and collective experiences that shape the interpretive lens that learners and edu-

cators bring to the learning context. She also models preparation that is informed by a critical consciousness of the cultural and historical meanings coded into artifacts (i.e., school names, grants, consent decrees). Her leadership model is infused with hope, guided by spirituality, and predicated on the values of public service, spirituality, and humanitarianism. From her pedagogy of struggle educators can learn to lead toward critical social justice through persistence, connectivity, and the dialectical purposes of service and leadership. We conclude with Elam's response to a student who asked her, "Do you really think you can teach people to be culturally competent? Isn't it that you are either culturally competent or you are not?" Dr. Elam responded, "I think we can teach people to a point, and then you hope that it impacts their heart to influence their mind."

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