MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' REFLECTIVE RESPONSES TO THE

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND BELIEFS INVENTORY ABOUT AFRICAN

AMERICAN LEARNERS IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A

QUALITATIVE STUDY

A Dissertation

by

KAMALA VYCHEL WILLIAMS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2010

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

Middle School Teachers' Reflective Responses to the Cultural Awareness and Beliefs

Inventory about African American Learners in an Urban School District: A Qualitative

Study

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' REFLECTIVE RESPONSES TO THE

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND BELIEFS INVENTORY ABOUT AFRICAN

AMERCAN LEARNERS IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT:

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A Dissertation

by

KAMALA VYCHEL WILLIAMS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Approved by:

Co-Chairs of Committee, Norvella P. Carter
                         Chance W. Lewis
Committee Members,   Gwendolyn Webb-Johnson
                         Patricia Larke
Head of Department,   Dennie Smith

December 2010

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

ABSTRACT

Middle School Teachers' Reflective Responses to the Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory about African American Learners in an Urban School District: A Qualitative Study. (December 2010)

Kamala Vychel Williams, B.A., University of North Texas;

M.Ed.,Texas A&M University

Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee: Dr. Norvella P. Carter
                                   Dr. Chance W.Lewis

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the beliefs of teachers about their African American students. The Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory (CABI) was used to measure the perceptions and attitudes of urban teachers' cultural awareness and beliefs for the purpose of designing professional development.

The themes which emerged from the first study include: (a) teachers devalue students' home and family environment; (b) teachers' beliefs about their ability to teach all children; (c) teachers have negative perceptions of the school environment; (d) teachers and student have cultural mismatch; and (e) . The themes which emerged from the second study include: (a) teachers find the behaviors of students to be challenging and (b) teachers do not feel supported. In the third study, a constant comparative method was used to analyze the teachers' written responses.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memory of James C. Stewart (Popcorn Jim), my grandfather. He served the students and faculty as a chef in Duncan and Sbisa Halls at Texas A&M University from 1924-1971. During most of his employment, his own children would have been forbidden from attending this institution. He, however understood the value of education and instilled that value in my father and his siblings. Granddaddy, your legacy lives on today. May future generations be inspired and continue to pave new paths and achieve goals beyond what you could have imagined.

To my husband, John, and my wonderful children, Ashton and Johnston, who inspired me to take this journey. My prayer is that you will never accept limits others attempt to place on you, and you will both fulfill your predestined purpose.

v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many to whom I owe a great deal of gratitude for leading me both to and through this journey. Thanks to my husband John, and my children, Ashton and Johnston for encouraging, supporting, and being extremely patient with me. You are truly gifts from the Lord, He blessed me with the best, I am eternally grateful. Thanks Mom, Dad, Dahl, Demitri and Mother for everything! Whether you helped with homework, attended a school event, or offered a hand around the house when I was not available, I could not have finished this without your support. Dahl, thanks for rescuing me this summer. Dee, your expertise is invaluable! God has always made sure I was surrounded by good friends, both old and new ones, friends that offer just what is needed at a given time. Monica, every time I think of you, I am encouraged to stretch myself and get every bit I can out of life. Petra, only God could have sent you to me at this time. Thanks for your sacrifices of time. I am thankful for my many other friends, who encouraged me.

Thank you to my committee members, Dr. Larke and Dr. Lewis for your confidence in my ability to accomplish this task and your patience during the process. Dr. Webb-Johnson, you never fail to inspire me to dig deep. Your infectious spirit has spread to places you could not imagine. Dr. Carter, thank you for everything! Thank you for believing, inspiring, supporting, encouraging, and praying for me. There are no words to express my gratitude.

Thank you God, for seeing me through this process and for leading me to yet another phase of my life's journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GUIDING RESEARCH

QUESTIONS

American culture puts great emphasis on the importance of education for financial, personal and social success. However, there exists a national crisis in the educational achievement of students of color, specifically in the struggle to educate African American children. School success remains a struggle for children of color (Carter, 2003). This problem is compounded when we speak of students in urban schools which almost always include a disproportionate number of students who have different linguistic and cultural back-grounds from their teachers.

Research conducted over the last thirty years has documented the importance of the teachers' role in the academic success of students (Trentham, 1985; Collier, 2005). It has been well documented that teachers significantly influence the lives of children daily (Collier, 2005). It is important to study, understand and address the concerns, beliefs and perceptions teachers have about African American students. This study is being conducted to give further insight and benefit to educators regarding teacher beliefs as they relate to cultural awareness. Numerous studies have linked teacher effectiveness to teacher behavior (Trentham, 1985; Anderson, 1988; Benz, Bradley, Alderman & Flowers, 1992). These behaviors are driven by beliefs that significantly impact actions and instructional decisions demonstrated in the classroom (Collier, 2005). Teacher

_____

This dissertation follows the style of *The Journal of Educational Research*.

efficacy, the degree to which teachers believe in their ability to make a difference in student learning, has been identified as a critical belief system in terms of student achievement (Bandura, 1986).

The findings of this study add to the current knowledge on how beliefs impact what is done in the classroom and how the academic careers of students of color can be improved by addressing these beliefs.

Summary

The following study included three interrelated qualitative studies. This study investigated the open ended responses of middle school teachers in one urban school district. Each study utilized naturalistic inquiry with no predetermined findings. Inductive analysis was used for immersion into the details and specifics of the data to discover important patterns, themes, and interrelationships (Patton & Patton, 2002). This analytical process began by exploring the individual responses, then confirming the responses. A creative synthesis resulted in the findings in the study.

Power of a Teacher

Chapter II, which was the first study, explored the following guiding question: How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic concerns as it related to their roles as teachers of African American students?

Although schools are growing in diversity, the teachers of these schools are becoming more monoculture. In 2008, educational census data shows 65% of public school students were White, 12% Black, 15% Hispanic, and 4.5% Asian/Pacific Islander. In contrast, 2008 data shows that 84% of public school teachers were White,

6% Black, and fewer than 6% Hispanic (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009). This often creates a problem for urban students because middle class, European American teachers typically have limited experience with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Teachers that have limited experience with students from differing backgrounds often enter the profession with negative views of student of color (Worthy, 2005). The implications of racism, from a critical context are used to examine teacher responses to the Cultural Awareness Beliefs Inventory (CABI).

During the past three decades, researchers have confirmed disparities in the achievement of students between poor students of color and white students with greater economic means (Anyon, 2005). Numerous efforts continue to be made to identify causes for the disparities. The complex process of class reproduction that exists in society is examined and explained through Bourdieu and Passeron's cultural reproduction theory (1977). They propose that there is a set of particular cultural, social, and linguistic characteristics possessed by the people of advantaged backgrounds that contribute to the biased schooling process. The responses of middle school teachers to the CABI are examined through the cultural reproductive theory. The findings are examined while applying a culturally responsive framework. Recommendations for addressing the findings are included.

Power of Perceptions

Chapter III, the second study, investigated the guiding question: How do middle school teachers describe their greatest behavior management concerns as related to their professional responsibilities and their African American learners? Behavior and

classroom management concerns often take precedence over academic instruction in middle school classrooms. This poses additional problems for poor children of color who attend urban schools. Behavior problems are not uncommon in youth approaching adolescence but when this behavior is demonstrated by African American youth, it is viewed as even more problematic (Webb-Johnson, 2002).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that African American and other students of color face disciplinary actions and are referred to special education at higher rates than their European counterparts (Webb-Johnson, 2002; Webb-Johnson & Carter, 2007). These actions may be due in part to what middle school teachers believe is normal acceptable behavior (Webb-Johnson, 2002). What may be perceived as inappropriate by a teacher may actually be a student demonstrating one of the dimensions of African-American culture (Boykin, Albury, Tyler, Hurley, Bailey, & Miller, 2005a). Boykin (1983) offers nine dimensions of African American Culture that can assist in creating learning environments that represent culturally responsive pedagogy. Verve, one of the dimensions, is defined as the propensity for high levels of stimulation, energetic and lively action (Boykin, 1983, 2000). This active and energetic behavior is part of the socialization that is affirmed and encouraged in their homes and communities (Webb-Johnson, 2002). Expressive individualism is another dimension that could be easily misunderstood. Boykin (1983) defines expressive individualism as the cultivation of distinctive personality and proclivity for spontaneous, genuine personal expression. Unless one is familiar with these tenets of African American socialization, they may misunderstand.

Another compelling explanation for the excessive, often disproportionate number of African American students in school discipline is teachers' lack of understanding and inability to incorporate the cultural values, orientations, and experiences of diverse learners into the curriculum as well as instruction (Gay, 2006). This study gives insight into what middle school teachers identify as their greatest behavior management concern in an urban school district. The findings are evidence that classroom management must include the creation of classrooms environments that are personally comfortable, racially, and ethnically inclusive and intellectually stimulating (Gay, 2006). The findings of the study were examined and a discussion offers strategies framed with a culturally responsive classroom management paradigm.

A Constant Comparison of Teachers' Perceptions in Relation to: Behavior Management, Race/Ethnicity and Socio Economic Class

Chapter IV is the third study. In this study, a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to analyze the teachers' written responses from the two previous studies. The findings from the study constituted data for this study. The data was first open-coded- into categories and then axially coded to make connections between categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In constant comparison, the researcher decides what data will be gathered based on theoretical ideas. This allows the researcher to answer questions that emerge from the analysis and reflection on previous data. The data were analyzed again and compared with the new data. The units were carefully chosen to enable new questions to be answered. The cycle of comparison and reflection was repeated several times (Boeije, 2002). I followed procedures modeling three types

of comparisons for analytical approach introduced by Boeije (2002). The types of comparisons included: (a) a comparison within a single group using gender comparisons; (b) comparison between persons who share the similar experience using years of experience denoting veteran teachers with 7 or more years and novice teachers, less than 7 years; and (c) comparisons between different perspectives; comparisons by ethnicity.

In summary, themes used for analysis from the two previous studies are utilized to compare responses across gender, years of experience and ethnicity for two separate research questions. The first constant comparative analysis draws from the findings from the first study while the second constant comparative analysis draws from the findings from the second study.

CHAPTER II

POWER OF A TEACHER

Prologue

I went to public school decades ago, but the stakes are higher now. I have my own children, ages 13 and 16. How am I supposed to protect them? What if they face the same challenges I faced in school at an even younger age as an African American? What can I do as a mother to protect them? Inevitably, there have been many occasions to speak on behalf of my children, for example, I had to schedule teacher conferences and serve as an advocate for my children, especially my son. One teacher assumed my son did not have books at home and that he had never visited a library. There were occasions that were embarrassing for my son, for example, one teacher singled him out and asked if he needed the application for free and reduced lunch. In another instance, he was reprimanded and I received an email because he touched the percussion instruments as he walked into the band classroom each day. Was it his curiosity or the simple enjoyment he experienced from the sound of the bells that created an adversarial atmosphere for him and his band teacher? He has since chosen to not participate in band.

From my prior experience as a student and my growing knowledge as an educator, I am still left with feelings of anger, frustration and powerlessness about our public school system. The stories are too numerous to tell, but I was determined I would not be "usurped by the power of a teacher" (Rochon & Webb-Johnson, 2004). I would

do whatever it took to become advocates for my children. I was determined to be an informed, involved parent with a voice.

Over twenty-five years have passed since I first met one of my academic advisors, but the unpleasant memory of that day still lingers. I was scheduled to meet with Dr. Red (pseudonym) to evaluate my academic progress. I do not really remember specific details but what I remember, I remember well. Dr. Red sat at a desk in the hall to accommodate the students he would see that day. He was a middle aged White man with very thick glasses and not much personality. He took a look at my record from my first two semesters, which I will admit were not impressive, and then asked me where I lived. I proudly responded knowing that my teachers, who looked like me, cared for me, encouraged me, and had done a good job of teaching.

My previous teachers were always very encouraging. My mother, an educator herself, made it a point to meet them and share my parents' academic expectations. Dr. Red was not impressed with the small, poor, minority populated district in which I had been educated. He told me that based on my background that I did not have what it would take to make it in medical school. He advised me to change my focus and pursue other interests. Whether aware or unaware, his words would change the course of my life and shape my views of teachers and the power they hold.   In Proverbs 18:21 (New American Standard Bible) it is made clear that "death and life are in the power of the tongue…". Dr. Red, with his words which I believe were conceived from his heart spoke death to my long time dream of going to medical school and becoming a

psychiatrist. With no backup plan and no other interest to speak of, I pursued my degree in science but never attempted medical school.

After a few bumps, steep turns, and curves along the way, I found myself on a much different career path. I enjoyed successful careers in the environmental industry and healthcare management. It was only after my own children were ready to enter school that the painful memories of that meeting with my advisor resurfaced. I was determined that my children would be grounded in what I believed to be a sound cultural beginning. We commuted our children from the suburbs to an urban school for their early primary grades. During this time, I decided that in order to fully engage in the academic endeavors of my own children, a career change was required. After one semester of substitute teaching, I entered a Masters of Education program at a state university. The pieces began to come together. Most of my classmates were educators, but I came with the perspective of a parent. I remember sitting in my first class with nothing but educators and thinking, "My views are different, I don't see things as they do. I am taking classes for my children, not someone else's children." Each course took me to a deeper understanding of my personal schooling experience and some of the experiences my children were encountering. I wanted to learn more, not just about what happened to me in my advisement experience, but more about my own children and their experiences. A passion to know how teachers construct knowledge and how their beliefs are formed about Black children ensued.

It would seem that after years of supportive teachers and parents who were a constant source of encouragement, that one teacher would not have such an enormous

impact on my life. My parents had been "usurped by the power of a teacher." Beliefs have been shown to be a predictor of behavior. Dr. Red served as an example of what can happen when behavior is based on beliefs that are not substantiated by facts. As our nation continues to grow in cultural diversity, the stakes have been raised for my children.

Introduction

In our nation, school failure for African American students remains at disproportionately high levels (Boykin, 2000; Irvine, 2003, Nieto, 2002). African American students do not achieve academically at the same pace as their White counterparts when examining measures such as standardized test scores, high school dropout rates, graduation statistics and college grade point averages (Banks & Banks, 2004; Green, 2001; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Kober, 2001; Lee-Bayha & Harrison, 2002). In addition, African American students are referred to special education programs and are involved in higher percentages of disciplinary action at all levels of public schools, when compared to White students (Gregory & Mosely, 2004; Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study [SEELS], 2005).

Middle school for African American students is particularly important because it is during this transition that students often experience an awkward period of considerable social, emotional, physical and academic changes (Anderman, Maehr, & Midgley, 1999). This period between elementary and high school, usually includes grades 6 through 8. The district used for this study has intermediate campuses housing grades 5 and 6 and middle school campuses for grades 7 and 8. For the purpose of this

study, data has been taken from 7th and 8th grade middle school teacher responses. The learning structure becomes more complex in middle school as students move to a schedule of multiple teachers for instruction with less time being allocated to the student and more time on content. This transition often results in a change in student- teacher relationships (Feldlaufer, Midgley, & Eccles, 1988). Middle school students began to seek independence while teachers seek to balance discipline with this adolescent group.

During this transition, the African American male students may experience a dislike for school, a lower grade point average, and increased incidents of suspension and decreased perception of parent's approval of friends. In addition to the typical adolescent challenges of middle school, African American students are also confronted with overt and covert forms of race based inequity that is deeply entrenched in the educational system through which they must learn to exist and navigate.

As our nation strives to meet the challenges of improving the academic achievement for African American students in large urban school districts, researchers are beginning to explore the cultural awareness and beliefs of urban teachers. When examining the research to improve the education of African American students, mounting evidence suggests that cultural awareness and teacher beliefs may have an impact on the academic achievement of these students (Carter, 2003; Carter, 2008; Irvine, 2003;). Researchers have long concluded that teachers' beliefs appear to be the best predictor of teacher behavior, while also influencing teacher's perceptions and practices (Bandura, 1986; Brown, 2004; Dewey, 1933; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968).

Socio-Cultural Theories Related to African American Students

Critical race theory serves as a framework that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the marginal position of students of color. Critical race theory is supported by the social structural inequality paradigm**.** Proponents of this theory argue that schools are the result of racist philosophies, policies and practices which are maintained and reproduced in our educational system (Aguirre & Turner, 2004; Feagin & Feagin, 2003; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). The achievement gap and other race and class based social inequalities stems from resource equity (Anyon, 1980; Kozol, 1991; Kozol, 2005) . It is imperative to gain a better understanding of how racism through teacher beliefs inhabits classrooms and hinders the academic progress of students of color. Race is a powerful social construct and is a descriptor in my study.

During the past three decades, researchers have confirmed disparities in the achievement of students between lower socio economic and middle to upper socio economic students. In my study, I refer to this descriptor as class. Educational history scholars have documented the legacy of inequity based on race and class. Although some inequities have diminished, inequity based on race and class continues to persist (Anderson, 1988; Fultz, 1995; Tyack, 2003). Numerous efforts continue to be made to identify causes for the disparities. The complex process of class reproduction that exists in society has been examined and explained through Bourdieu and Passeron's cultural reproduction theory. They propose that there is a set of particular cultural, social, and

linguistic characteristics possessed by the people of advantaged backgrounds that contribute to the biased schooling process (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Numerous studies have linked teacher effectiveness to teacher beliefs and behavior (Trentham, 1985; Anderson, 1988; Benz, Bradley, Alderman & Flowers, 1992). These behaviors are driven by beliefs that significantly impact actions and instructional decisions demonstrated in the classroom (Collier, 2005; Good & Brophy, 1987). Teacher efficacy, the degree to which teachers believe in their ability to make a difference in student learning has been identified as a critical theory in terms of student achievement (Bandura, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory identifies perceived self-efficacy as peoples' judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance. It is a judgment of one's capability to accomplish a certain level of performance (Bandura, 1986). It was from this theory that Bandura arrived at the concept of teacher efficacy. He refers to teacher efficacy as the extent to which a teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance and learning (Hoy & Spero, 2005). Carter (2003) adds to the definition, a teacher's belief in whether or not they can make a difference in the lives of the children they teach. Others add that teacher efficacy is the teachers' belief about their ability to have a positive effect on student learning and achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gay, 2000).

Review of Literature

This review of literature addresses the impact of the cultural mismatch between the teaching force and African American students, race, the implications of class and

socio economic status, teacher efficacy on student achievement, and finally the challenges faced by middle school African American students. The purpose of this review is to provide a contextual understanding of previous research and set a foundation for my study.

Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy and expectations are intertwined and have been closely connected to student success especially in diverse classrooms (Gay, 2000; Carter, 2003). Bandura (2001) believed that highly efficacious teachers are more likely to use inquiry and student-centered teaching strategies than teachers with a low sense of efficacy. Teachers with a high sense of efficacy attribute effort as opposed to external factors for classroom outcomes (Carter, 2003). Through various studies, teacher efficacy has been found to mean different things, however, it remains constant that teacher efficacy is believed to be one of the most significant social-psychological factors that influence the work of teachers and is therefore central to educational reform discourse (Smylie, 1990). Teacher efficacy greatly impacts teacher behaviors, teaching practices, and student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Collier, 2005).

A low sense of efficacy can result when teachers are trained to identify areas of weakness for the purpose of developing instructional plans. As teachers are coached in a deficit model in education programs, they quickly develop this low sense of efficacy towards students who are often underserved. Low teacher efficacy is closely aligned with the deficit model. A deficit understanding reinforces the notion that when children possess genetic, cultural, neighborhood or family differences, they are inferior (Carter,

2005; Nieto, 2002; Valencia, 1997). The deficit models of thinking established under a racist premise have been far reaching and have greatly impacted the African American learner. Efficacy impacts expectations, while expectations impact teachers' beliefs and behaviors in the classroom (Carter, 2005). These teachers place situational conditions as the barometer for what will occur in the classroom. They regard students social, economic and environmental living conditions as a deficit that cannot and will not be overcome in the classroom.

The population of the nation continues to grow more diverse while teachers in the schools across the nation are predominately White. According to recent educational census data, 65% of public school students are White, 12% Black, 15% Hispanic, and 4.5 % Asian/Pacific Islander. The same reports show that 84% of public school teachers were White, 6% Black, and fewer than 6% Hispanic (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009). This demographic shift has serious implications for school children, especially children of color, because teachers' attitudes regarding race and class are closely tied to classroom dynamics and student achievement (Gay, 2000; Rist, 2000, Watson, Charner-Laird, Kirkpatrick, Szczesiul & Gordon, 2006). These White teaches may often perceive the differences between themselves and the students they teach as something negative to overcome or change (Cochran-Smith, Davis & Fries, 2004; Howard, 2003; Ketter & Lewis, 2001; Miron, 1996; Rousseau & Tate, 2003). It is important to recognize that perceptions and beliefs influence teacher efficacy and create barriers for the African American learner.

Race

Race is a term used in everyday language referring to the description of human groups based on physical characteristics. It has been defined as a social construct with no scientific credibility and has been maintained largely because of its cultural significance in a race conscious society. For many years, scientists have used faulty research regarding race and racial differences to establish, justify and maintain hegemonic practices and social domination (Lewis, James, Hancock, Hill-Jackson, 2008; Aguirre & Turner, 2004; Feagin & Feagin, 2003; Gould, 2008). Ethnicity refers to the reference group to which a person most closely finds a sense of identity (Boutte, 1999). Ethnic identification is often based on common history, culture, values, behaviors and other characteristics (Banks & Banks, 2004). Although the terms race and ethnicity are not the same, they are often used interchangeably.

In studies dating back to 1901 scientists and philosophers like Ellwood, were determined to justify racial domination by asserting that the behavioral tendencies of Negro children were not comparable to that of the Caucasian race children even when placed in the most favorable conditions (Ellwood, 1901). He believed that African Americans embodied an innate, fixed behavior that is nonresponsive to their surroundings or educational interventions. This behavior was later defined as racial temperament.

The philosophical studies and theories of temperament made their way to the study of the intelligence. In 1916, Lewis Terman, a psychologist in the United States military used IQ tests to determine the intelligence of 1,700,000 American soldiers

entering the war. The tests were used to determine those who would be trained as officers in the military. The army committee concluded that the results represented the distribution of intelligence. Following the use of intelligence testing in the military, Terman aimed at utilizing IQ testing to improve efficiency in American schools. In 1916 the release of *The Measurement of Intelligence* further fostered the idea that Blacks and other people of color were intellectually inferior to White children and should be separated.

These faulty tests served as justification for Whites to uphold racial discrimination, oppression and segregation. The results of these tests have negatively implicated African Americans in the educational system by claiming Blacks are inheritable intellectually inferior and education would not be the equalizer (McKee, 1993). Following this same vein of scholarship, McKee's (1993) citing of the well respected sociologist, Edward Byron Reuter's work stimulated new ideas of African American culture as inferior. Reuter believed that African slaves came to America with a primitive culture, demonic religious practices and were culturally retarded after emancipation from slavery (McKee, 1993). Claims were made by others of African Americans being part of a pathological culture and inferior to Whites. These ideas were not new; they were all woven into the social-historical fabric of American thought, entrenched into the hearts and minds of its people from the early days.

The false theory of superiority and inferiority based on human traits has rendered our nation to be racist. Racism is deeply rooted in the core of our existence and evolved with the goal of White supremacy by the global White minority (Welsing, 1991).

Racism encompasses the domination of social, political, economical and legal processes sustained to uphold categorizations and ideologies created by racial difference as a method of determining the recipients of society's resources (Lewis, James, Hancock, & Hill-Jackson, 2008).

Race and racism as a normal construct in the social order of American society is the basis for critical race theory. Critical race theory (CRT) emerged from critical legal studies (CLS), a move toward critically examining legal doctrine to expose its inconsistencies held to establish, maintain, and uphold the existing class structure in the United States (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Legal scholars Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman were not satisfied with the slow progress of racial reform in the United States, and believed the civil rights methods of reform were no longer effective. The theory is undergirded by the Gramscian notion of hegemony which describes the oppressive structure in American society. Racism and its influence in society were not included in the scholarship of CLS; therefore, CRT became a logical outgrowth of the discontent of legal scholars of color which includes the significant impact of race and the exposure to racism.

Tenets of CRT include storytelling, critiques of liberalism in favor of slow moving reform opposed to sweeping change, and objects to color blindness as a solution to racism (Richard & Stefanic, 2007). All scholars of CRT do not ascribe to each of the tenets; however, most agree on two key issues, understanding how white supremacy and oppression of people of color have been created and maintained in America and changing the bond between law and racial power (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT in

education assists in the exploration of interactions, perceptions, and intersections that confront status quo resistance while examining race and its role in education. CRT questions the normative acceptance of "Whiteness," while focusing on the social construction and reality of race in a race conscious society (Banks, 2006; Delgaddo, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Tate, 1997).

Class

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a widely used variable in school research. It is a construct that refers to different combinations of variables. The terms social class and SES are commonly used interchangeably by researchers without clarification. Social and economic backgrounds refer to one's access to, and control over, wealth, prestige and power. It is reflective of the ranking on a hierarchy based on wealth, power, and social status. Social class, defined in a Marxian sense is a group of people who share similar financial places. This understanding of the definitions helps clarify historical factors regarding access. Socioeconomic status refers to the position in society a person is determined to have based on a variety of factors including income, education, occupation, and wealth. Social class is more one dimensional while SES is more multi-dimensional.

The research linking the relationship of SES and school achievement is exhaustive. SES plays multiple roles in the educational process. It influences achievement directly and through behaviors and experiences resulting from SES. Parents can be considered a resource of SES. Their education, income, and wealth provide the social status or social capital in a hierarchical system. The level of education, values,

expectations, and school-related activities in the home is determined in part by the SES of the family. As different learning environments are established, different levels of achievement are experienced. Coleman's (1966), report is considered one of the most significant educational studies in the past century. His study examined how differences in physical, human and social resources related to school achievement.

Coleman found four major findings in his report. He discovered that the strongest predictors of achievement across all ethnic groups are the socioeconomic status of the parent. This included parents' education and income. The location of the school was also a factor. Factors that predict success include but are not limited to be strong predictors of achievement. All families regardless of SES bring something to the learning environment; therefore, academic achievement cannot be solely based on SES. Social capital which includes, ideas, behaviors, attitudes, values and language impact academic achievement.

These cultural and social characteristics have been labeled "cultural capital" and "social capital." Cultural capital consist of the experiences students bring with them to the classroom after they have been exposed to various societal experiences that consequently enrich their educational experiences (Vincent & Ball, 2007; Delpit,1995) These assets are not financial but are typically educational, social, and intellectual knowledge given to children. Social capital is based on group memberships and influential networks of support. Bourdieu and Passeron believe that every family transmits a particular set of cultural characteristics and social networks to their children and that they can help or hinder their academic success (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

This cultural social transfer is both dynamic and complex.

Bourdieu expounds on the cultural reproductive process with the extension of the concept of habitus. He defines habitus as a system of durable and transferable characters that make groups, institutions, and individuals generate practices conforming to embedded cultural principles and rules without any expressed regulation or explicit reminder of the rule (Lim, 2008). These conditions become challenging for students from lower social economic status because the habitus of schools systems are based on the cultural structure of the dominant group or class in society. Schools expect students to display, confirm and reproduce the existing institutional habitus. The results in the institution of school, including communication for academic engagement necessary for academic success, can be class-biased and function against working-class people who have a different set of cultural and social characteristics (Lim, 2008). Socio economic status (SES) differences partially explain some of the achievement gap, though not the entire race/ethnicity related disparity (Lim, 2008; Lee-Bayha & Harrison, 2002; Lubienski & Shelly, 2003). Many teachers hold a deficit perspective towards student from low SES backgrounds.

Black students continue to experience academic challenges and fall behind on state and national tests. Black students who on average, live in low-income households with parents who are less educated and often attend less funded schools all components of SES face increased academic challenges (Anyon, 2005). Research shows that students of color with differing cultural value systems may face discrimination and prejudice at school, with differing cultural value systems (Irvine & Armento, 2001).

Middle School Challenges

All students experience significant social, emotional, physical and academic changes during their adolescent transition from elementary to middle school. This period is awkward for all students but it is exceptionally difficult for African American males (Anderman, Maehr, & Midgley, 1999). During this transition, the African American male may experience a dislike for school, a lower grade point average, and increased incidents of suspension and decreased perception of parent's approval of friends (Eccles & Harold, 1996).

The learning structure for middle school is more complex than elementary school, and the academic expectations are higher (Eccles, 1993). Typically, middle school teachers have more students throughout the course of the day and the class periods are shorter, resulting in a change in student – teacher relationships (Feldlaufer, Midgley, & Eccles, 1988). This change in relationship is evidenced by increased distrust by students. As teachers grapple with maintaining discipline, middle school students are seeking independence and personal choice (Eccles, Midgley& Wigfield, 1993). Instructional strategies change as well in middle school. Elementary teachers commonly teach in small groups while middle school instruction is typically whole-class instruction. As students move into the upper grades, less concern is allocated to the student, and more attention is given to the subject matter.

Peer relationships gain greater importance during adolescence (Elaisa, Gara, & Urbriaco, 1985). Researchers have found declines in student self-perception and self-esteem associated with the transition from elementary school to middle school

(Deidman, Allen, Aber, Mitchell & Feinmena, 1994). Physical changes become more prominent as female development is evident about one year prior to male physical changes. Males become self-conscious about their bodies (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Adolescence can be described as a period of transition, changes occur that are physiological, biological, cognitive, moral and psychological (Kohlberg, 1976). This is a period of self-discovery, expanding horizons, emerging independence, and physical and emotional growth (Gutman & Midgley, 2000).

Cultural Mismatch

One main purpose for mass education in the early twentieth century was to bring the values and behaviors of immigrant children into conformity with Anglo cultural ideals (Tyack, 1974; Kaestle & Foner, 1983). Schools were not designed for the purpose of multiculturalism but as a system for assimilation. Culture has an important role in shaping children's learning opportunities and experiences at school and within the classroom (Boykin, 1983; Gallavan, 2005; Johnson, 2002). Children's pre-existing knowledge, values, and skills informed by their culture is brought with them to the classroom as a reference for interpreting new experiences (Ellison & Boykin, 2000). There is little thought in American classrooms for the cultural capital and integrity of children of diverse cultural groups (Ellison & Boykin, 2000). Researchers have found that children with cultural and linguistic capital differing from the capital that schools disseminate are likely to have fewer positive experiences. These experiences often enhance their opportunities for success in school than children entering school with cultural capital that is more compatible with that prescribed by the school system

(McLeod & Tanner, 2007). Students who attend classes that are geared only to the majority culture, where no recognition is given to the legitimacy of other cultures, are likely to feel isolated and inferior, and may disassociate themselves from the schooling experience or at least feel disconnected from classroom learning activities.

Irvine and Armento (2001) posit that studies have "led researchers to conclude that cultural differences, particularly differences among mainstream and diverse students' approaches to learning, are major contributors to the school failure of student of color" (p. 489). While the demographics in student populations continue to change, the teaching force remains that of predominately White, middleclass women (Garrison-Wade & Lewis, 2006). This cultural mismatch presents potential problems for diverse students such as: (a) limited role models, (b) restrictions in exposure to diversity for all students and (c) the possibility that teachers may not be able to connect with students of different cultures in meaningful ways or relate their experiences to those of their students (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Grant, 1990). Teachers may not be adequately prepared to teach students they do not relate to; they may lack the knowledge, attitudes and skills to meet the challenges of diversity (Henry, 2010).

This problem is increased in urban schools. Urban schools and districts often hire large numbers of people with no formal preparation to teach. Additionally, urban schools house a large percentage of students of color (Anyon, 2005). Schools become the training facility for teachers as opposed to institutions of higher learning serving that purpose (Weiner, 2003). To effectively teach African American learners, it is important for educators to understand the socialized culture strengths and cultural contexts

experienced by these youth. The cultural mis-match, and limited preparation for teaching diverse learners combined could result in the retention of long standing negative beliefs regarding African American children, their culture and their communities.

Cummins (1986) emphasized that "widespread school failure does not occur in minority groups that are positively oriented toward both their own and the dominant culture, that do not perceive themselves as inferior to the dominant group, and that are not alienated from their own failures" (p. 331). Students, empowered through their school experiences, evolve with confidence and have a desire to be successful academically. However, students, disabled through their school experiences, fail to develop cognitive /academic or social/emotional foundations (Cummins, 1986). Effectively teaching African American learners is a monumental challenge for teachers and educators who do not understand the socialized cultural strengths and cultural contexts experienced by these youth (Carter, Webb-Johnson & Knight, 2005).

African American Middle School Students

Compounded with the typical challenges of adolescence, African American students face additional challenges that can be tied to their race, culture and socio-economic status. These challenges include misunderstanding of their culture as well as stereotyping by general public. When *Brown vs. Board* mandated integration, many Whites were enraged. They relocated to regions not heavily populated with African Americans or imposed elite boundaries like private schools to keep Blacks out. When Whites left areas, their resources followed, resulting in inadequacies and inequalities in schools (Kozol, 2005). White flight did not end when the mandates of desegregation

settled into place, a different flight has emerged, Wealth Flight or Wealth Fight. Wealthy families relocate to avoid integrating their children with children of lower class or they impose barriers for allowing entry to those of the lower strata. One method for accomplishing this is to enforce zoning policies that prohibit access (Strack, 2009).

Poverty in low-income urban neighborhoods can be attributed to the lack of quality jobs in these areas. In cities families are impacted by poverty, parents lives are shaped by their economic status and their children's lives are as well (Anyon, 2005). In 2000, over one in four Black men (26.3%), and over one in three Black women (36.5%) earned poverty wages working full-time, year-round (Anyon, 2005; Mishel, Berstein, & Schmitt, 2003). In recent years, labor economists projected the country would have needed over 14 million jobs for all low-income people to work their way out of poverty (Anyon, 2005) . Urban areas are densely populated with Blacks and other minorities where these problems persist at greater degrees.

As parents of African American children face challenges with employment, the family unit is affected. Nurmi (1991) posited that parents are important influences on their adolescents' future by setting the normative standards affecting their children's values, interest and goals. Kunjufu, (2004) found that parental involvement decreases as age increases. While the benefits of parent involvement for academic achievement has been well documented, less is known about how schools are engaging parents as their children move from elementary to middle school and then into high school and from the early years of high school to graduation. Parental involvement may include anything

from fund raisers to parent teacher organizations and the effectiveness of each is largely undetermined.

The middle school transition can be difficult and challenging for African American students. Green and Griffore (1980) stated,

> When the experiences of one group of subjects have been marked by inferior school, inferior housing, inferior opportunities for employment, inferior incomes and inferior health care, it is difficult to imagine that their innate abilities would be sufficiently strong to overcome these deficiencies to the point that they would be able to compete on an equal basis with members of a group not similarly and deliberately discriminated against. (p. 240)

Middle school African American students face the typical adolescent challenges that include both physical and emotional transitions. They are also confronted with overt and covert forms of race based inequity that is deeply entrenched in the educational system through which they must learn to exist and navigate.

Methodology

This initial study began in 2005 when the selected urban district was cited because African American students were over-represented in special education. The administrators of the district sought to overcome this problem by seeking a better understanding of why their teachers referred African Americans to special education at alarming rates. My study was conducted using archival data collected in an urban district located in a large southwestern metropolitan area. The area includes 111 square miles of land and is the 11th largest school district in the state. At the time of the study, there were 58,831 students and over 7,800 employees. There are approximately 17,837 intermediate and middle school students. The diverse student population included 2,471

(4.2 percent) European American students, 36,694 (62.4 percent) Hispanic students, 18,461 (31.4 percent) African American students, 1,150 (2 percent) Asian American students, and 55 (0.1percent) Native American students attending schools in this district. In the district, 78.3% of the student population were considered economically disadvantaged and qualified for free or reduced lunch.

Participants

There were 672 teachers in nine middle schools assigned to teach seventh and eighth grade students; of the 672 teachers, 144 (21.4 %) of those teachers returned the Cultural Awareness Belief Inventory (CABI) given in the fall of 2005. The participants in the study were predominately female. There were 105 female participants and 39 male participants. There were 45 European American females, 37 African American females, 3 Hispanic American females, 2 Asian/Pacific Islanders female, 1 Native American female, 1 Bi-Racial female, 15 females who classified themselves as other, and 1 female who classified as None of the Above. The male participants included 19 European American males, 10 African American males, 4 Hispanic American males, 1 Native American male, 1 Arab American male, 1 Bi-Racial, 3 classifies as Other as shown in Table 1.1. These teachers were considered participants in my study. My study examined the qualitative responses of 144 middle school teachers on the Cultural Awareness Beliefs Inventory (CABI). Only middle school teachers who responded to the second open-ended question on the CABI were included in the analysis. The CABI measured the responses of elementary, middle and high school teachers; my study measures the responses of middle school teachers only.

The Cultural Awareness Beliefs Inventory (CABI)

This article examined the qualitative responses of 144 middle school teachers on the Cultural Awareness Beliefs Inventory (CABI). The CABI was designed to measure teacher's cultural awareness and beliefs about their African American students. The survey used in my study was designed to gain insight into the beliefs of teachers about their African American students. This information would be used for the purpose of designing professional development sessions that would meet the needs of the teachers in the district by offering them strategies and research based on best pedagological practices, to meet the needs of all children. The CABI, developed by Webb-Johnson and Carter (2005), measures the perceptions and attitudes of urban teachers' cultural awareness and beliefs.

Eight factors, based on previous research and literature, guided the development of the 36-item CABI. These included teacher beliefs, school climate, culturally responsive classroom management, home and community support, cultural awareness, curriculum and instruction, cultural sensitivity, and teacher efficacy. In addition to the thirty-six survey items, six items established demographic characteristics concerning: (a) gender; (b) level of educational degree attained; (c) years of teaching experience; (d) current grade level taught; (e) certification route; and (f) ethnicity. Additionally, three open-ended questions were included for qualitative purposes. The participants were asked to respond in writing to each question. For the purpose of my study, the middle school teacher's responses to one of the qualitative questions on the CABI served as the primary source of direct information received from the participants' perceptions of the

students they serve. Data for this article were drawn from responses to written responses by middle school teachers addressing the research question: How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic concerns as related to their role as a teacher of African American students?

The validity and reliability of the CABI was verified through statistical analysis for the quantitative component. The qualitative component of the CABI was validated through content validity and substantive validity. "The content aspect of construct validity includes evidence of content relevance, representativeness, and technical quality" (Messick, 1995, p. 745). After the internal structure of the CABI was determined, content validity was established by consulting with a jury of experts who concurred on the content validity of the inventory. The jury consisted of four urban and multicultural education scholars and a group of urban education doctoral candidates, who studied the literature surrounding the issues and concurred that the factors that measured the cultural awareness and beliefs of teachers encompassed all the major themes to be studied. Substantive validity was used in constructing the CABI, it is a measure of the importance of the substance. The quantitative data results for the same set of middle school teachers indicate that there was a slight difference in teacher beliefs and the cultural awareness of African American teachers compared to European American teachers. However, there was no statistically significant difference in teacher beliefs or cultural awareness based on years of experience, degree or method of certification. Those results led to the analysis of the qualitative responses for the same middle school teachers and builds from the results of the previous quantitative findings.

Research Design

A qualitative methodology was applied for this study. Qualitative research

includes the voices/responses of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a

complex description and interpretation of the problem. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offer

a generic definition of qualitative research, they assert that

> qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It
> consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible.
> These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of
> representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs,
> recordings, and memos to the self. (p. 3)

By employing this method of inquiry to the findings of the CABI, a call to action is

made (Creswell, 2009). Distinct characteristics of this methodology include: (a)

naturalistic setting, (b) context focused and, (c) emergent and evolving themes (Marshall

& Rossman, 2006). According to Marshall and Rossman, (2006) qualitative research is

pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people. This approach

was used as a follow up to the quantitative studies conducted using the CABI. This is the

first study to utilize the qualitative data. This study examines middle school teachers'

responses to the question: How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic

and/or socio-economic concerns related to their role as a teacher of African American

students?

Analysis of Data

Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data from which themes emerged.

Following Patton and Patton's (2002) description of inductive analysis, patterns in

responses were discovered, themes were established and finally, data were categorized.

A theme is a pattern found in the information that describes and organizes the possible observations or interprets aspects of the phenomenon. This analytical process involves encoding qualitative information and requires a systematic approach to analysis. For this study, themes were not pre-existing. It is important to note that themes may be initially generated inductively from the raw information or generated deductively from theory or prior research. For the purpose of my study, they were generated inductively. This method of analysis has several intersecting purposes. It allows the reader to make sense out of seemingly unrelated material. Thematic analysis was used in all stages of analysis. Using this approach, each response was analyzed separately, identifying and coding major themes. Although the initial questions were broad and opened ended, distinct patterns emerged in how participants responded regarding their concerns of race and socio economic status as it related to their role as teachers and the students they serve. Similar themes were identified, themes that were poorly supported were removed (Riessman, 2008).

Following Patton and Patton's (2002) recommendation for analysis, a manageable coding scheme was developed. This involved identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary patterns in the data. This method compensated for the challenges of convergence. The responses were read and memos were noted multiple times. Preliminary analysis of the data was reviewed. Individual school data were reviewed, notes were made and codes were established. Codes were then looked at across the eight schools included in the study to establish the final coding

system. The findings were compared based on the memos thus adding to the trustworthiness of the analysis.

In my study, critical race theory served as a framework that sought to identify, analyze, and transform structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the marginal position of students of color. Our school systems reflect our society and are permeated with racist conditions. Critical Race Theory is used to interpret the teacher's beliefs. As a theoretical lens, it provides a filter for explaining and analyzing the responses of the participants who responded to the survey. Scholars (Ladson-Billings 1998b; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001) have applied CRT to the files of education research with the goal of examining issues of race, class and gender in educational setting. Critical race theory has been used to address issues in teacher education, educational research paradigms and the historical and present effects of court ordered desegregation. It is particularly important in the context of my study because it connects the districts history of an over representation of African American males in special education to the responses of the CABI.

Findings

The findings in response to the question, "How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio economic concerns related to their roles as teachers of African American learners?" revealed important insights into concerns of middle school teachers in relation to their roles as teachers in one urban district. Although the question consisted of two different concerns, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic, the emergent themes intersected and were combined into themes that

represent concerns of race, ethnicity and socio-economic conditions. The responses gave rise to five themes discussed in this section. The emergent themes include: (a) teachers devalue students' home and family environment; (b) teachers' beliefs about their ability to teach all children; (c) teachers have negative perceptions of the school environment; (d) teachers and students have a cultural mismatch; and (e) teachers would rather not see color. In addition to the emergent themes, there were those who expressed great concern about the survey. One middle school did not return any of the surveys. Follow-up as to why the school did not respond was not made available. Throughout the findings, specific quotes from the teachers and are included. These quotes are representative of similar concerns shared by other teachers.

Survey Concerns

Teachers demonstrated resistance to taking the survey. This is not uncommon; researchers have found that preservice teachers find it difficult to discuss issues of discrimination, race, ethnicity and bilingualism (Carpenter, 2000). These topics uncomfortable to discuss and even considered taboo. Resistance was located by Finch and Rasch (1992) in the following forms: 1) discomfort with students that are not of the same ethnicity, 2) existence of racism, 3) lack of belief that all children can learn, 4) absence of desire to work in diverse schools, and 5) ignorance of civil rights movement and related historical information. Higgenbotham (1996) found that resistance was expressed by being vocal, silent, or absent during discussions of race, class and gender. It was evident that all teachers were not enthusiastic about taking the survey and responding openly to the questions about their beliefs regarding student's race, ethnicity

and socio-economic status. It should be noted that 5 respondents indicated that the

survey questions were insulting or racist, and the same individuals made comments

regarding the significance of survey. The following is a sample of the strong language,

worthy of noting, that was included in the response to the question: How do middle

school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic concerns as related to

their roles as a teachers of African American students?

Teacher Response: I don't have any and I feel that this survey is inappropriate and
                      does not include all the cultures we currently serve.

Teacher Response: This survey is an insult to the field of education. This is poorly
                      worded and a waste of our time.

Teacher Response: I am insulted by this survey – I feel like I've wasted my time and
                      the district's time.

Teacher Response: Many of the questions on this survey annoy me. I dislike lumping
                      people into "groups". I've taught many different races, and people
                      should be treated as individuals!

Teacher Response: Why is this survey so racist?

The above responses demonstrate confusion and anger about the rationale for the

questions. The teachers may have found responding to the questions both challenging

and complex. In addition, 15 of the surveys were returned with no response on the

written portion. An additional 38 of the participants indicated they had no concerns. Not

responding to a question can be interpreted in a variety of ways, including discomfort,

overlooked, or from outrage of the survey itself.

Teachers Devalue Students' Home and Family Environment

Home and the environment surrounding home and family life emerged as a major

concern for teachers. Attention must be given to perceptions teachers have of parents,

values towards education and their home environment. There is value in a strong school-family partnership. When minority parents are involved in their child's education, they develop a sense of efficacy that translates into positive academic experiences (Cummins, 1994). The teacher's statements regarding home life of their students were steeped in deficit language. Subscribers to the deficit model blame parents, and the children rather than schools or society for the underachievement of children of color. These teachers' concerns were related to their students' economic conditions, language barrier, and teachers' perceptions of their students' value for education. The following statements are direct quotes and illustrate examples of the types of narrative patterns that emerged as teachers considered the homes lives of their students.

Home

Teacher Response: My only concern is the socio-economic factor which I feel leaves children coming from deprived backgrounds seriously unprepared for the educational setting.

Teacher Response: Low socio-economic culture in itself faces a lot of challenges in school. The students are still in "survival" mode when they come to school and bring baggage which is difficult to put aside.

Teacher Response: My biggest concern is the home life of the students because I do not know what goes on at home all the time; it is difficult to understand a student's behavior. (Maybe they need a hug instead of a lecture sometimes).

Teacher Response: Students who do not come to school ready to learn. Many do not get a good night's rest as well as eat breakfast before their first class. I think more should be done to address those two issues: rest for a brain to learn, and a nourished body ready to learn.

Valuing the life experiences of the home is a major component of culturally responsive pedagogy. Understanding and appreciating the value of the experiences students bring to the classrooms and the stories they have is also a critical tenet of

culturally responsive pedagogy.   The teachers' responses strongly suggest that the environments cannot be overcome in order for the students to be successful in school. Students sense when their home life is not valued and respond in ways that are not often beneficial to their academic success.

Communication

Studies have been conducted to establish the importance of language congruency between home and school (Au & Jordan, 1981; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981). Researchers have also demonstrated the mismatch of language patterns between African American students and the school (Gay & Abrahamson, 1972; Labov, 1969; Piestrup, 1973). Language is a cross-cultural system of communication that connects sound, written and verbal symbols and serves as a medium for sharing knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes (Banks & Banks, 2004).

Difficulty in communication and barriers to communication was included in part with home and family environment concerns. These difficulties lay with the teachers' inability to communicate with students and parents and are reflected in their comments.

As parents experience teachers with whom they are unable to communicate, they may have less confidence in being able to speak to anyone in the academic setting. Language has power to open or close doors to academic achievement, therefore these concerns have been included as part of the family home environment.

The teacher comments were steeped in deficit paradigms regarding their students, their families and further demonstrate that teachers believe students and parents from low socio economic value education the least. Researchers have found this is not the

case; instead, parents may not demonstrate their educational interest in mainstream ways

(Overstreet, Devine, Bevans, & Efreom, 2005). Students may disengage because they

are unable to attach relevancy of the classroom activities to their lives. This does not

mean that parents and students do not value education as these teachers have concluded.

Teachers' perceptions that students of color and students from low income households

hold low value for education emerged as a concern related to family and home

environment. Teachers provided the following comments and are direct quotes regarding

value for education.

Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Low Value for Education

Teacher Response: Poorer parents are less involved in their children's education.
  If a student comes from a family that values education, 98%
  of the time the student will care about education and do well
  in school. That is the only concern I have.

Teacher Response: Some people from low socio-economic backgrounds don't
  care to better themselves. School is not a priority. They want
  to be just like everyone else in their community (hood).

Teacher Response: My greatest concern is that of socio-economic people living
  in poverty value education the least. They view it as a
  cumbersome chore.

Teacher Response: I think socio-economic level is a strong factor in education.
  The lower level, the less importation education seems to be
  across all racial & ethnic lines.

Teacher Response: Lack of many families education being a priority to them.

Teacher Response: Racial, ethnic, and socio-economic concerns I have is that of the
  students thinking they have to do what their parents have done.
  The students don't think they can venture out from what they
  know.

Although African Americans have endured educational struggles, there have been numerous studies that document their academic success (Anderson, 1988; Billingsley, 1992; Bond, 1969; Clark, 1983; Harris, 1992). This contradicts the ideology that African Americans do not value for education. Researchers have found that by creating a partnership between the school, the family, and the community academic success increases (Epstein, 2001).

Teachers' Beliefs About Their Ability to Teach All Children

Teacher efficacy served as a guide in determining teacher goals for achievement, the strategies used to pursue the goals. Teacher efficacy has been widely researched over the past three decades and has been determined to be a strong influence on the actual performance of students. Jussim (1996) demonstrated the correlations between teacher efficacy and students' achievement using ethnicity and socio-economic status as variables. It was found that teachers held low expectations of African American and economically challenged students which added to the factors associated with poor performance (Jussim, 1996). Issues related to teacher efficacy emerged as a theme for 15 of the teachers responding to the CABI. Teachers responded with comments demonstrating both high and low efficacy. These are direct quotes but are similar to other responses related to their concerns for students and their roles as teachers.

Conditions Limit My Ability To Teach

Teacher Response: The socio-economic concern I have as it relates to my role as a teacher is that my students aren't financially able to afford everything they need to be successful at school.

Teacher Response: I would say the fact that many teachers have the generalization that poverty level students can't & don't want to learn.

Teacher Response: The teacher is not in a position to change basic educational
                      shortcomings and turn them into positive action

Teacher Response: Not enough support/resources given to meet the needs of students
                      from various ethnicities, races & SES(s).

I Can Teach and Students Can Learn No Matter What

Teacher Response: The racial, ethnic and socio-economic concerns, is that all
                      students can learn, the following above may not play a part
                      in their learning if a student really want to be successful in
                      his/her education.

Teacher Response: I think it doesn't matter what race of a student.
                      Every child wants to be educated.

Teacher Response: I have no concerns where it relates to those characteristics
                      simply because "all" students can learn.

Teacher Response: I have no concerns as to the student's racial, ethnic,

                      and/or socio-economic status as to whether I expect and
                      believe he/she can learn.

Teacher Response: My greatest concern is meeting the needs of my students.
                      I continue to research and try new methods everyday in
                      order to effectively serve this community.

Teacher Response: None, the more I know about each student the better
                      I can help them learn, i.e. socio-economic level etc.

Teachers demonstrate one competency of a culturally responsive teacher or high

teacher efficacy. These comments indicate these teachers believe that all students can

learn and bring something unique to the learning environment (Gay, 2006).

Teachers Have Negative Perceptions of the School Environment

Many middle school students experience a decline in motivation to learn when

they transition from elementary school to middle school (Caskey & Micki, 2007).

Researchers have explored a number of reasons for the decline ranging from physiological and psychological changes associated with puberty to factors associated with the students' environment (Caskey & Micki, 2007). Eccles (1993) describes this change as "a stage-environment mismatch" (p. 91) Promoting a positive school environment is included in the essential elements of effective middle schools. The middle school environment should a positive setting that is warm and supportive. Middle schools should be sensitive and responsive to the child's growing sense of self and identity. The district's code of conduct prohibits students on school property or school related activities from using or exhibiting profanity, vulgar/inappropriate language or obscene gestures. Teachers expressed concerns related to the culture, climate and environment at their middle school campuses. Comments from these 14 are reflective of other responses given by teachers.

Teacher Response: Kids referring to each other racially inappropriately

Teacher Response: The use of street language as a social way of talking in hallways and class

Teacher Response: How do we address the situation of students calling each other by names that are generally considered racial slurs if used by someone of another ethnicity?

Teacher Response: Making sure students can get along or at least respect one another's differences.

Teacher Response: My concern is the growing rate of sexually active kids and the impact it has on the learning process. When kids can be sent to talk to someone because they are having a problem with their boyfriend it takes away learning. And when we constantly have to keep them separated so they won't do something they are not to be doing.

In addition to the more familiar components of language, mastery of the culture-related domains of language is critical for communicative competence. These comments suggest limited knowledge of cultural language. Pragmatics is the cultural language component related to the interaction of discourse, appropriateness, and paralinguistic (Banks & Banks, 2004). Although there is no right or wrong language, there can be language that is inappropriate for the context (Banks & Banks, 2004). These statements imply that these teachers have limited knowledge of their student's culture as well as a school climate that is permissive of offensive or unacceptable language. These limitations can greatly inhibit the major tenets of culturally responsive teaching. Teachers' cultural knowledge is essential to the development of caring relationships and the interpersonal skills needed to interact not only with students but their families also (Weinstein, 2003).

Teachers and Students Have A Cultural Mismatch

For nearly three decades, researchers have been examining the way classroom instruction can better match the home and community cultures for students of color (Au & Jordan, 1982; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981; Cazden & Leggett, 1981). The importance of this match has been well established and found important to the academic success of students of color. Teachers responding to the survey demonstrated significant cultural differences from their students. These differences manifest themselves in beliefs, perceptions and misunderstandings about their students. The difference in culture between teachers and students emerged as a concern for 12 of the teachers. The

following are comments are related to the cultural differences that exist between teachers

and students. These are direct quotes and similar to what other teachers noted.

Teacher Response: Since I am White I don't have any experiences with
                      other cultures.

Teacher Response: It's tough sometimes to relate to students whose background
                      & paradigms are so radically different from what I
                      experienced as a student.

Teacher Response: Sometimes students don't listen to you if you don't
                      have the same ethnic background. Not knowing the latest
                      meaning behind the newest slang terminology. 2.) not
                      knowing about students (on probations, been
                      incarcerated, hospitalization)

Teacher Response: My fear is not understanding different cultures fully,
                      and not being able to help those who really need help.

Teacher Response: My racial, ethnic concerns related to my concerns for
                      my nation. In my 20+ years as a teacher, I do not feel there
                      has been a great deal of improvement between some races.
                      While my colleagues are compatible regardless of race,
                      I don't see my students being as agreeable.

Teacher Response: None, well none that I can think of it. I am concerned
                      that educators are putting too much focus on multiculturalism
                      & should be focusing on the basics.

Teacher Response: Sometimes I feel as though the numeric minorities
                      (students who are minorities based on %'s within the district)
                      are not supported or encouraged as much as ethnic groups
                      commonly referred to as minorities.

A teacher's lack of cultural competence and inability to act in a culturally

responsive manner can create a climate of academic failure particularly for African

American students (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Talbert-Johnson, 2004).

When teachers and students come from differing backgrounds, and cultures, their

language may not be the same. Howard (1999) found that many teachers who have lived

insulated lives struggle with cultural literacy in the classroom. These teachers' responses were reflective of cultural discontinuity and mismatch. One teacher noted that her greatest concern was simply "diverse ethnic groups." These responses illustrate the disconnection between teachers and the students they serve. According to researchers, to become better equipped to serve students of color, teachers should be committed to (a) intellectual growth; (b) relational involvement; (c) interactional positioning; and (d) social activism (Landsman & Lewis, 2006). All students come to school with cultural capital, it is important for teachers to identify aspects of children's cultural backgrounds that have the greatest relevance for adjustment, motivation and learning within the classroom.

Teachers Would Rather Not See Color

When Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan called for a color-blind society in his dissenting opinion in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, it was with the intent that individuals would not be treated according to their race or ethnicity (163 U.S. 537, 559). It has been over a century since *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and we recognize that in a racist society, race does matter. This notion of colorblindness can discount and harm the very people it was meant to protect (Banks & Banks, 2004). In institutions of learning, colorblindness ignores or denies the possibility of cultural differences that influence how different students function in school. In the United States, race is a social construct used to treat people as property or denied basic rights of citizenship. Although the Civil Rights Bills were designed to eliminate discrimination based on race, America has deeply imbedded roots of racial division.

For those who have cultural collateral, power and privilege by means of their race or economic status, the value of their holdings may not be apparent and has little bearings on the shortcomings of our education system. In fact, for those who are middle class and White, privilege is not always obvious (McIntosh, 1992). The normalizing of whiteness, often silent and without consciousness situates what is not white as abnormal and deficit (Pearce, 2005).

Color blindness is the most common approach among White people when faced with a racially mixed learning and teaching environment (Pearce, 2005). Pearce then argues that a failure to see race leads to a refusal to see the inequalities that arise from it. Rains (1998), refers to color blindness and racial neutrality as a benign response to ignore the power, location, and role that white privilege plays in maintaining unequal relations. Color blindness emerged as a theme with 10 of the teachers. I selected these direct quotes as salient to the topic.

Teacher Response:	I want to always maintain a state of "color blindness" and I want my students to develop the same characteristic.
Teacher Response:	I think of myself as a teacher not as a member of a racial, ethnic, and/or socio-economic group and that is why it is not a concern to me.
Teacher Response:	"To me all "people" regardless of race etc are all the same as humans and everyone "should" be treated that way."

The notion that all people are the same again reinforces the idea that our society is very much race conscious. King (1991), has termed this limited and distorted understanding of equality "dysconsciousness," which she defines as "an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity

and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given" (p. 135). Researchers have shown that there were culture differences that are relevant to education, but are often ignored (Watson, Charner-Lard, Kirkpatrick, & Szczesiul, 2006).

Discussion

This study was prompted by my own personal experience as an African American student with one White teacher and the impact that experience had on my career and life decisions. Teachers' beliefs about students, their families and their culture impact academic outcomes. Five themes emerged as teachers responded in writing to their racial, ethnic and socio economic concerns related to their roles as teachers and their students. These themes were (a) teachers devalue students' home family environment; (b) teachers' belief about their ability to teach all children; (c) teachers have a negative perceptions of school environment; (d) teachers and students have a cultural mismatch; and (e) teachers would rather not see color. In addition, there were concerns worthy of noting about the integrity of the survey. These themes support the current literature on teacher beliefs about their African American students and other students of color. It adds to the literature in that teachers feel justified in speaking, believing and promoting the deficit model. This was not done by a single gender or ethnicity but it was common among all teachers.

Other researchers have found that teachers in racially diverse schools blame the students and their families for the problems they experience in school. My analysis reveals the importance of race and the beliefs, illustrated by response, that racial and

ethnic inequalities are often rooted in individual as opposed to institutions. These teachers' beliefs about the home life and the family were predicated on a deficit model, as they expressed the perceived lack existing in the families of their students. These views were built on stereotypes of urban students. While some teachers expressed their belief that all students were able to learn, others found language barriers and their own low efficacy a factor to teaching. The school environment as a place of learning was a concern for teachers as they expressed concerns of inappropriate language and actions in the school setting.

The district is an award winning urban district with aspirations of going for making advances with their students. The views of teachers about their students can hold them back from greater advances. African American students still remain behind academically in the district as teachers intellectualize and rationalize their deficit views. The teaching force is predominately White and middle class. Responses provided affirmation of the literature on cultural mismatch. Teachers may have good intentions when they determine that they do not see race or color however, this negates the ability to meet the diverse needs of students.

Recommendations, Implications for Further Research

Based on the findings from this study, one recommendation that appears to be warranted is professional development in the areas of cultural responsiveness, teacher efficacy and socio economic issues. Professional development that disrupts teachers' beliefs and teaching practices, enabling teachers to provide instruction that reflects high expectations. Teachers must also begin to understand how their own life experiences

shape their teaching. These teachers demonstrated through their comments the lack, of cultural awareness and the need for development in this area. This is significant for professional development as well as teacher preparation programs.

Insights gained by my study can assist in the development of strategies to help teachers better understand the students they serve by reflecting on their own beliefs. This reflection can be an asset to teachers better serving students of color and moving in a direction to eliminate the disparities in education for African American students. Based on the findings of this study, further study, analyzing elementary and intermediate teacher responses is warranted. What emerged from my findings that lend itself to further study is an examination of the responses of teachers from elementary and intermediate schools. This survey was aimed at teachers' beliefs about African American students; a study focusing on teacher beliefs of Hispanic and other minority group students is warranted. In addition, separating the question into two distinct questions with concerns regarding race and ethnicity and another with socio economic concerns would be beneficial and may lead to different findings.

Conclusion

It is apparent that we are challenged with educating African American students in this country. In today's society, where social mobility is tied to educational success, children must do well in school. The labor market of the future demands advanced training and a sound educational background. If we are to provide a sound future for this nation, African American students and other students of color must experience academic

success that adequately prepares them for the future. If they are not prepared, they can become trapped in permanent poverty.

Becoming an effective teacher of African American children and other children of color begins with ignoring the mantra of stereotyping and presuppositions that has traditionally affected the student of color. The instructional emphasis should be with the awareness of culture and context influencing life and learning. African American people and their culture continue to be depicted as inferior and deficit oriented, as demonstrated in my study, by the concerns expressed and the strong language used by many of the teachers. These long standing beliefs of intellectual and cultural inferiority continue to impact the academic progress of African American students by infecting teachers, curriculum development, administrators, and school policy (Ford, 1996; Gay, 2000; Milner, 2006; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001).

Teacher perceptions, teacher beliefs, and teacher efficacy are especially significant for African American students. These negative views of African Americans have not and will not be easily overcome. The teachers who serve African American students and other students of color are not immune to the negative perceptions so deeply woven into the fabric of this country.

Many of the responses were deficit laden and seemed to come from stereotypes rather than knowledge of individual students. Knowing your student is a main characteristic of effectively teaching urban students. Many of the teacher responses revealed that they had a normative reference group (Rist, 2000), in mind to when responding to most of the questions. In this case, they would compare their students to

themselves as students or even suburban students. This normative group can be themselves when they were in school or suburban students.

This is a call to teachers, educational leaders and teacher preparation programs to prepare teachers for diverse student populations. Teachers must be sensitive to the cultural, racial, ethnic, and socio-economic conditions of their students. They must move towards a better understanding in order to frame, form, and develop curriculum that meets the need of their student population. Educational leaders must continue to disseminate research based practices that will aid in effective teaching of diverse students. Teacher preparation programs disrupt resistance to issues of race and culture with preservice teachers. Curriculums should affirm diversity and give teachers the experience they will need to identify structures the hinder African American students in school.

Kunjufu (2001) a leading scholar and expert on African American children, describes the chain of events that can occur in the minds of student regarding expectations, "I don't become what I think I can; I don't become what you think I can; I become what I think you think I can." This emphasizes the importance of what teachers, think, and how students respond to those thoughts and perceptions. Two other leading scholars Rochon & Webb-Johnson (2004) detail in a poem the power of a teacher with the powerful stanza ending phrase, "I've been usurped by the power of a teacher." In the poem, a student repeatedly explains to his mother that the teacher has instructed him to do things a certain way. Although the actions are contradictory to the instructions of the

parent, the student complies with the instructions of the teacher, implying the influence teachers can have on students.

During the middle school transition, students find themselves in a difficult and awkward state, an early crossroad of life. Schools cannot continue to be places that parents feel the need to protect their children from the dangers of low expectations and low value of their culture. Every school, especially schools serving children of color must become places where parents feel comfortable leaving their children, knowing they are in the hands of caring teachers who value what each student brings to the classroom. Teachers must be better equipped in culturally responsive pedagogy and cultural awareness.

 Parents cannot afford to be "usurped" by teachers with low expectations, low efficacy and cultural illiteracy. There is no doubt there have been other students who experienced what I experienced as a student with teachers who have perhaps unknowingly deferred their educational aspirations. This cannot continue to happen; all students deserve teachers with high expectations and the desire to offer the best educational opportunity available.

It is imperative that we gain greater insight into what impedes African American students from experiencing academic success. If by getting to the core of what teachers really believe about urban students of color will make a difference then, no matter how pain staking it may be, we should dig deep, uncover and move toward a better understanding of teacher beliefs. This critical examination can aid in moving forward to better insight thereby providing teachers with the necessary tools and strategies to serve

all students. Just as students go through a difficult transition between elementary and middle school, some of the participating teachers appeared uncomfortable while responding to questions regarding race, ethnicity and socio economic concerns. The responses can however render educators better equipped to move in a new direction with greater expectations for middle school students of color. Our children, our nation, our world are depending on educators to be instrumental in effectively impacting the educational success of students of color.

CHAPTER III

POWER OF PERCEPTIONS

Prologue

I could tell it was going to be a long day. I woke up that August morning dreading the day before it even started. I was nervous and anxious at the same time. As I dressed for work, I knew my morning routine would never be the same. I pondered, reflected and did everything I could to hold back the tears that were building inside. It was at that moment that my five year old daughter ran into the room, excited about her first day of "big girl school." I knew I would have to pull myself together, she could not know the fear I was experiencing. I let her know that she looked beautiful, and that I knew she would do just fine at her new school. I suggested she ride with her dad that morning because I would be leaving her school and going to work. My husband was the one who made the decision to put her in public school. I was opposed to the idea. I wanted her to spend at least one more year in a daycare. He assured me that she would experience a nurturing, loving, and caring environment in this school; I was not so sure.

We left that house that morning all with varying expectations. My husband had high expectations and we wanted nothing but the best for our daughter. Our daughter was filled with enthusiasm. In her meager five years, she had already exhibited the personality of a leader. She was outgoing with a take charge spirit. She held no reservations about her new adventure. Me on the other hand, I felt nothing but reservations. My memories of school had been tainted by an advisor.

We arrived at my daughter's new school and quickly found her classroom. The room was crowded with anxious parents and about 20 frightened five year olds. The teacher was kind and made everyone feel welcomed. She gave her little speech and parents said good-bye to their children. Well, some parents said good-bye. There were those of us who just stood there not knowing whether to leave or to stay, smile or cry. The principal made her morning announcement. She welcomed the students back to school and asked that if there were any remaining parents in the building that we should leave so the students could begin their school day. My daughter looked at us with a confident smile, assuring us she was fine. She wondered why some of the students were crying and was even more curious about the gloominess shown on my face. As we left, I did not get to my car before the tears started to stream down my face.

What I experienced as an African American mother was far more complex than the typical anxiety felt by a mother as she leaves her child on the first day of school. I felt as if I had dropped her into a lion's den. She would be eaten alive as I had been. She was not equipped to handle the enemy of low expectations; after all, she was being taught to believe in herself and to accomplish whatever she set out to accomplish. I was overtaken by anxiety, would she ever be the same I wondered. Would she be stripped of her funny, outgoing personality or would she be nurtured and cared for by her teachers? Would her culture be valued or even understood? I left the school that day with these questions and many more.

 My greatest fears did not materialize, my daughter had a wonderful experience her first year of school. Her teacher was a caring person who took time to get to know

her students. I wondered if as time passed, when she was no longer small with missing front teeth, ponytails and bows in her hair, if teachers would find it difficult to demonstrate that same care she received on the first day of school. I wondered what would happen in middle school when schedules changed and she would no longer have the benefit of having the one teacher. Would she still have teachers who cared? My concern grew deeper because I knew that in only a few short years, my son would embark upon the same experience. I wondered if he would be received in the same manner. My awareness of the dismal statistics regarding African American males in the education system was unsettling. Like every other parent, I send my children to school hoping they would be in classrooms, with teachers who foster high expectations, value culture, and work to meet their individual learning needs.

Introduction

African American parents send their children to school with great hope of them receiving a worthy education. It has been found that African American students enter school more eager than their White counterparts; however, by third grade the tables begin to turn for these students (Kunjufu, 1983). These same eager students become the target of low expectations, referrals to special education and disproportionate disciplinary actions (Larke, Webb-Johnson, Carter, 1996; Webb-Johnson, 2002). For the African American males, the situation worsens for they are disciplined more than females and more than European American students (Sullivan, 2010). Researchers have identified several possibilities for the disproportionate number of African American males who experience school disciplinary actions. Fear of students due to stereotypes,

lack of cultural knowledge and teachers' expectations of normal classroom behavior are all critical factors involved in the classroom experiences of African American male students (Larke, Webb-Johnson, Carter, 1996). These factors greatly impact the ability of not only African American students but other students of color to experience success in their classrooms.

The problem of discipline and behavior management becomes more challenging for some teachers as students advance towards middle school and adolescence. During adolescence, students experience rapid physical and sexual development. Adolescence is also marked by social developmental changes. Students begin to seek support and advice from peers opposed to parents. Although the stages of adolescent development are complex, many teachers do not receive specific training on how to address these challenges. During this developmental stage, teachers are often confronted with student disengagement (Walsh, 2006). This disengagement may appear to a teacher as an uncaring attitude, defiance, or passive resignation. When teachers attempt to address this type of behavior with control, they are often confronted with resistance from the students. For schools nationwide, this becomes a problem because teachers report student behavior as being a primary reason for leaving the field of education (Obenchain & Taylor, 2005). Comprehensive behavior management planning is especially important for urban middle and high school teachers. Teachers should be knowledgeable of the complexity of the stages of adolescent development and cultural factors that influence behavior.

Socio-Cultural Theories Related to Classroom Management

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The concept of culturally responsive pedagogy was developed by a group of scholars concerned with the low academic performance of low income students and students of color. The theory aims to improve student academic success by capitalizing on their cultural strengths while bridging the home and school relationship. By encompassing cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of references and learning styles, culturally responsive pedagogy seeks to create learning that is both effective and relevant for diverse students (Gay, 2000). Teaching that is culturally responsive has been determined to be validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive pedagogy is maintained by these foundational supports: teacher attitudes and expectations, cultural communication in the classroom, culturally diverse content in curriculum, and culturally congruent instructional strategies (Gay, 2000). Adequate implementation of culturally responsive practices will require extensive educational reform as well as changes in teacher preparation, professional development, accountability and assessment of teachers.

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

Culturally responsive classroom management is a component of culturally responsive pedagogy. Also included in the tenets of Multicultural education, classroom management involves planning, facilitating, and monitoring experiences that are conducive to high levels of learning (Gay, 2006). Implementing culturally responsive

classroom management requires that teachers (a) recognize their ethnocentrism and understand the broader sociopolitical context to understand that definitions of appropriate classroom behavior are culturally defined, (b) develop knowledge of their student 's backgrounds, (c) use culturally appropriate classroom-management strategies, and (d) build caring classroom communities (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007).

This framework utilizes strategies aimed at elevating the overrepresentation of disciplinary actions taken toward students of color. It has been well documented that African American learners experience disproportionate academic failure, discipline, suspension and expulsion rates in comparison to their school representation (Webb-Johnson, 2002). Teachers often misinterpret the behaviors of African American students as inappropriate when that is not always the intention of the student (Monroe, 2005). Perceptions of behavior are important because the impact student learning as well as teacher retention. When compared to their enrollment, Black males across the nation are overrepresented in receiving disciplinary actions, in contrast to White and Asian students who are underrepresented (Gregory & Mosley, 2004).

Ethics of Care

In Noddings (2002) explanation of care theory, relationship and ethical principles are at the heart of the ethics of care. Teacher empathy, positive school climate, and trusting relationships have been identified as elements of care. These conditions are believed to establish environments for effective learning to ensue. Caring environments are believed to aid in the development of high self-esteem, confidence, and commitment

to personal growth. Scholars have presented caring as a fundamental human capacity that translates into a coherent pattern of interpersonal behaviors (Chaskin & Rauner 1995; Ianni, 1996; 1992; Pang, 2007). In the ethics of care framework, care represents an educational orientation that stresses the creation of trusting relationships as the foundation for building an effective academic and social climate for schooling (Chaskin & Rauner 1995; Eaker-Rich & Van Galen, 1999; Erickson 1993; Pang, 2007). By operating from this framework, teachers consciously make a moral commitment to care for and teach students as well as to develop reciprocal relationships with them creating centers of care. By modeling and community of kinship, students learn to work together, listen to and support one another. These caring classrooms are models of classrooms of cultural responsiveness.

My study examined the qualitative responses of 144 middle school teachers using the Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory (CABI). This instrument was developed to measure teachers' cultural awareness and beliefs about their African American students. The qualitative section of the survey was designed to gain further insight into the concerns teachers held about their students. This information would be used for the purpose of designing professional development geared towards specific teacher needs. Strategies based on research principles and best practices, would be given to the teachers during professional development. This work seeks to add further to the understanding of what teachers view as the greatest behavior management concerns in urban middle school classrooms. This information may offer insights on how behavior and academics can be improved for students of color. My study examined teachers' responses to the

question: How do middle school teachers describe their greatest behavioral management concerns as related to their professional responsibilities and their African American learners?

This study begins with a review of the literature with culturally responsive classroom management as the foundation. Next, a study on teacher behavior concerns is presented. The study reports particular behavior concerns teachers believed to be important regarding management of their classrooms. The study concludes with recommendations for mediating behavior challenges that inhibit learning for children of color. This study was developed utilizing the theoretical tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally responsive classroom management and the ethics of care.

Review of Literature

This review of literature will address culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally responsive classroom management and how they impact the classrooms of ethnically diverse students. The implications of the deficit model, teacher efficacy, and hegemonic behaviors as they relate to students of color and behavior management in urban classrooms are presented. The nine dimensions of African American culture are explored with application to behavior management and teacher beliefs. The aim of this review is to provide an understanding of previous research and lay a foundation for this study.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Over the past few decades, there has been much research on the importance of teaching to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Means of connecting school environments to home environments and the importance of making that connection for

culturally diverse students has been the essence of numerous studies on the topic (Au & Jordan, 1981; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981; Cazden & Leggett, 1981; Erikson & Mohatt, 1982). Several terms have been used to describe this connection however; Erickson and Mohatt (1981) believed the term culturally responsive was befitting for the dynamic relationship between home culture and school culture. Erickson and Mohatt (1982) believed that ethnically diverse students school experiences could be improved by looking at the ways these children engage in the content of the school curriculum.

Student engagement has been determined to be an important practice with regard to academic achievement for African American students. Engaging pedagogy is associated with caring teachers, where caring is associated with commitment and relationship development with students (Wiggins, 2007). These teachers also emphasized teamwork among students and have the ability to involve students in critical thinking.

Gay (2002) described culturally responsive pedagogy as being validating and affirming. This is accomplished by acknowledging students cultural heritage, bridging home and school communication, and using a variety of instructional strategies. These characteristics are all effective means for providing effective environments for children of color. Student engagement is enhanced when teachers utilize a variety of genres as well as the exploration of a wide range of sensory stimuli that appeals to a diverse group of learners.

Culture influences behavior, beliefs, and values as well as how an individual perceives knowledge. How a person looks at the world shapes what that person believes

to be knowledge worth learning. A person's worldview is foundational for what that person can accept as knowledge that is worth learning. One means of meeting the needs of diverse students is to be aware of how these students learn best. This is important because knowing how a student learns can benefit teachers as they engage in teaching new information. Learning styles are styles of inquiry, processes one uses to acquire information. Although learning styles cannot be generalized for all students they should be used as tools for improvement of diverse learners. Learning styles typically mirror the cultural values and behaviors of students (Gay, 2000). Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) identified two basic learning styles, field independent and field sensitive. Students from diverse cultures tend to have field sensitive learning styles. These learners are often highly sensitive, in tuned to the environment and usually prefer to work in groups (Carter, Webb-Johnson, Knight, 2005). A field sensitive student is open with expressions about the teacher and is greatly influenced by the teacher (Carter, Webb-Johnson, Knight, 2005). This information is beneficial to teachers as students filter information through their own cultural experiences.

In order for teachers to shape curricula to meet the needs of their students, they must first know their students. This may prove challenging for middle school teachers but imperative for a culturally responsive environment. Teachers must also be reflective, willing to examine their own strengths and weaknesses. This reflection enables teachers to adjust and adapt to various classroom situations. The importance of the connection between the teacher and student was further explored by Irvine (2003) and the term cultural synchronization was coined to describe the beneficial interpersonal context

needed between teacher and student to maximize learning for African American students.

Just as student success can be enhanced by maintaining engaging classrooms, students who are not engaged often find it difficult to remain on task (Gay, 2006). According to students (Wiggan, 2008) disengaging pedagogy was teacher-centered and did not encourage participation. Students of color may experience further disengagement when the curricula is Eurocentric and does not give attention to other cultures (Wiggan, 2008).

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

Student achievement, growing accountability, high stakes testing, the list continues when it comes to challenges faced by today's educators. Then consider the challenges are greater in urban schools. Urban schools across this country face situations of overcrowded classrooms, under qualified teachers, teachers leaving the profession after only a few years and difficulty in hiring new teachers into the profession. Misbehavior has been noted as an important factor in teachers leaving the profession. Teachers in schools with large numbers of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds often report student misbehavior as an obstruction to teaching (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009).

Classroom management is ranked one of the main challenges for prospective teachers as they leave education programs for jobs in urban classrooms (Weiner, 2003). A study conducted in Milwaukee determined that teacher attrition was largely due to problems with discipline, problems working with underachieving students, and

difficulties working with students of varying backgrounds (Haberman & Rickards, 1990). Teachers site student misbehavior as an important factor in retention. In high-poverty schools, teachers are likely to state that student misbehavior interferes with the job of teaching (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Novice teachers report that after leaving their education programs in colleges and universities for jobs in urban classrooms, they rank classroom management as one of the main challenges (Weiner, 2003). Perceptions of behavior are important because they impact student learning as well as teacher retention.

As the student population continues to become more diverse, there are increased needs for educators to employ classroom management skills that are conducive to their student population. There are definite connections between student engagement and classroom management. Teachers act in discriminatory ways when they implement behavior management plans that do not take into consideration the cultural influences students bring with them into the classroom. These teachers engage in practices that privilege some students and marginalize others (Weinstein, Curran & Tomlinson-Clark, 2003). Culturally responsive pedagogy calls for teachers to develop knowledge, skills and predispositions to teach children from diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social class backgrounds (Gay, 2000). An extension of culturally responsive pedagogy that takes classroom organization and management into consideration is culturally responsive classroom management.

In implementing a culturally responsive classroom management one must: (a) recognize that we are cultural beings and that we have our own individual beliefs, biases, and assumptions about human behavior; (b) acknowledge the cultural, racial, ethnic, and

class differences that exist among people; and (c) teachers must understand the ways

schools reflect and perpetuate discriminatory practices of the larger society and how

race, social class, gender, and language are linked to power (Weinstein, Curran &

Tomlinson-Clark, 2003). Designing classroom management that is culturally

responsive requires viewing management tasks from a diverse perspective.

Brown's (2003) study on culturally responsive classroom management identified

key strategies used by effective teachers. To understand that classroom management is

not about control or compliance but about providing students with opportunities for

learning means to provide environments that support academic and social success

(Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007). Classrooms should aesthetically

communicate respect for diverse cultures. A clustered seating arrangement can

encourage group work and social interaction which is often beneficial for diverse

students. Teachers must communicate what the expectation for appropriate behavior is in

the classroom without devaluing students' cultural norms. Modification of discourse

styles may be necessary for communication with students as well as parents.

Establishing relationships that include sincere caring demonstrated by making the effort

to get to know students and holding high expectations for those students is a component

of culturally responsive classroom management (Delpit, 1995). Teachers must

understand the importance of knowing in meaningful ways and have the ability to

communicate with learners and their families in culturally consistent ways. These

relationships can be difficult to maintain in urban schools because of the high student

mobility rate (Wiener, 2003). Because behavior problems will arise in the classroom,

teachers must be reflective as they determine the types of behaviors deemed problematic. An evaluation of whether these behaviors and disciplinary actions are based on race, ethnicity or gender must be considered.

Ethics of Care

Care symbolizes an educational orientation that emphasizes trusting relationships as the basis for building an effective academic and social climate for schooling. Noddings, a contributor to the care theory believes education is based on a moral purpose, producing students who are ethical. She believes that when teachers operate from an ethic of care, they make a moral commitment to teach students to develop reciprocal caring relationships and establishing centers of care (Noddings, 1992). The need for caring adult relationships is found throughout the middle school literature. Care has been identified as an important quality for successful middle school students and would appear to be especially significant for urban students. Caring relationships are subjective to the interpretations of students and teachers. Although care is described and defined differently among students, some qualities of caring teachers consistently arise when care is defined. For some students, teachers demonstrate care when they set limits, provide structure, and hold high expectations (Irvine, 2003). African American students often associate care with being in control, as well as being firm but fair.

During the primary grades, students often look for ways to please their teachers, affording opportunities for care to be demonstrated. However, middle school adolescence is a trying period with students often challenging the authority of their teachers. This puts both students and teachers in a unique position regarding caring

relationships. Relationships of trust and care are still important as these youth transition

from childhood to their teen years. Nodding's (1992) work provides four components of

care that when practiced by teachers, provides students with the experience of caring

relationships in community, both as being cared for and being the ones caring. These

four components are modeling, confirmation, dialogue, and practice.

Students indicate they work harder for teachers whom they perceive care about

them both personally and academically. This care can be attributed to relaxed classroom

atmospheres, the teacher's sense of humor, and high expectations (Alder, 2002).

Helpfulness, attitudes of respect and kindness are considered seminal characteristic of a

caring teacher by middle school students. These students also see caring teachers as

attentive to individual needs and appeared to enjoy helping students. Russel, Purkey,

and Siegel (1982) identified behaviors related to a caring teacher. These include eye

contact, active listening, and recognitions of ideas and activities which highlight the

uniqueness of each student. Noblit (1995) posits that caring teachers are committed,

work to improve their own skills, and demonstrate behaviors that motivate their students

to care themselves. In essences the ethic of care is important in urban middle school

classrooms.

Deficit Paradigm

Who is responsible when students are unsuccessful in school? The deficit

paradigm explains that lack of student success is a result of problems in students, their

families, their culture, or their communities (Weiner, 2003). The lack of school success

is viewed as a result of inferiority or deficiencies in the students to be corrected through

policies and practices. Teachers believe that if conditions are unfavorable, there is nothing they can do to facilitate learning or academic success.

Metz's (1987) study gives insight into how powerful the deficit paradigm is and the long term lingering effects it can have on schools and students. His study demonstrated that teachers maintained their low efficacy and continued their routine teaching patterns after the local urban school had been redesigned as a magnet school for high achieving students. This study demonstrated how teacher expectations impacted efficacy and more importantly, teacher behavior. Similar results were found in Winfield and Manning's (1992) study. They reported that urban teachers of a supplementary instructional program described their roles as referral agents with a custodial role for students. They did not view themselves as responsible for student learning.

The deficit paradigm is ingrained in teacher preparation programs since teachers are trained to look for areas that need improvement for instructional planning. These teachers believe that the social ills of a student's life cannot be overcome in the classroom and that academic success can only be accomplished when the surrounding conditions are optimal (Carter, Webb-Johnson, Knight, 2005). When teachers reject the deficit model as an explanation for student failure, they can then begin to look reflectively at their role and the role of schools to educate student effectively. Responsibility for student success can be placed on teachers and schools. Alternate models include the resiliency model which focuses on strengths, theories of development, models of success and achievement and the positive characteristics in each child.

Hegemonic Behaviors

Culturally responsive classroom management strategies include developing

caring relationships, effective communication, having high expectations and being

reflective in discipline decisions to avoid discriminatory practices. It can be viewed as a

state of mind rather than mere strategies or practices. Creating classrooms that are

culturally responsive in pedagogy and management can be difficult if teachers are not

informed of their biases and hegemonic behaviors. Apple (1996) referred to hegemony

as a process of discrimination where a dominant group maintains leadership or power

over a subordinate group with their permission. Carter (2003) adds that hegemony plays

a role in education by stating,

> A subtle yet powerful form of discriminations in which a person is
> Discriminated against, but he or she does not realize it. In addition,
> Persons that have been discriminated against will say they have been
> given fair treatment. In educational settings, hegemony puts student in a
> situation in which they have been devalued and or handed an injustice
> but they cannot identify the injustice because all rules have been followed
> and they appear to be in an environment of fairness and social justice.
> (p. 20)

This type of behavior may be seen in the classroom as teachers make decisions regarding

classroom management and discipline.

Teachers often encourage students who have the same culture which reinforces

the dominant culture. Students who do not have the same language or communication

styles as the teacher may not be validated or valued. Unfortunately when hegemony is

exercised, the subordinate group may be unaware of the practice. They believe they are

being treated fairly because it is subtle, yet powerful. These practices may lead to low

expectations and create self-fulfilling prophecies of failure for students. Another reason

students may be unable to identify hegemonic practices is because the teacher's efforts may appear to be fair and justified.

The teacher gives voice to all students but does not value all students, only the students which the teacher identifies with as having similarities (Carter, Webb-Johnson, Knight, 2005). The implications of hegemony are far reaching regarding classroom management. Teachers' discriminatory actions may become part of the daily practices that can impede learning for diverse learners. The end result could become disruptive classroom behavior.

Dimensions of African American Culture

Neither teachers nor students are capable of leaving their culture at home. Various cultural patterns are inherently brought to school by both teachers and students, classrooms are not culturally neutral (Boykin, Tyler, & Miller, 2005b). Boykin's (1983), dimensions of African American culture are included here to emphasize the cultural ways of knowing for African American learners which are often in opposition with traditional school culture. This does not infer that all African American learners demonstrate each of the dimensions. For purposes of this study, four of the dimensions were most relevant: verve, affect, expressive individualism, and oral tradition.

Verve is defined by Boykin (1983) as the propensity for high levels of stimulation, energetic and lively movement. It suggests that dull and bland instruction is not appreciated whether or not it serves a good purpose. Because of the high levels of movement and stimulation needed, vervistic students have the ability to give attention to multiple focuses at once and to switch between behaviors. Affect refers to the

integration of feelings with thoughts and actions, emotionally expressive. A student might find it difficult to engage in an activity that was not in line with their feelings. Expressive individualism emphasizes spontaneity rather than systematic planning. Distinct genuine personality is expressed. This may be displayed in the very individualized dress patterns for example; a student may put their own twist on a school uniform. Orality as a cultural ethos would explain the interest in the call and respond mode of communication for African American learners. Orality is the preference for oral/aural modes of speaking; speaking and listening are treated as performances.

The dimensions of culture addressed give further explanation to the behavior patterns demonstrated by some African American students. These patterns are divergent from mainstream patterns of behavior and are often misunderstood and viewed as disruptive and unacceptable. These dimensions when understood and considered in classroom environments, aid teachers in making behavior management plans as well as decisions that can limit discriminatory practices.

Methodology

The CABI was developed to measure the cultural awareness and beliefs of urban teachers. The instrument was first used with teachers in a school district located in the southern part of the United States in 2005 by the developers Webb-Johnson and Carter (2005). Similar to many districts around the country, the district had an over representation of African American males being referred to special education. The district is located in an urban metropolis. It is the 11th largest school district in its state. There are large airports, professional athletics teams with mega stadiums and an

economy based on oil and energy. The district encompasses over 100 square miles of land and is surrounded by other urban districts.

When the data was collected, there were over 7,800 employees and 58,831 students attending school in the district. District wide, there were 25,212 elementary students, 17,837 intermediate and middle school students, and 15,782 high school students. As illustrated in Table 2.1, the student population was diverse with 36,694 (62.4 %) Hispanic, 18,461 (32.4 %) African American, 2,471 (4.2 %) European American, 1,150 (2.0 %) Asian American and 55, (0.1 %) Native American students. The district identified 47,697 (81.1 %) of its students as being economically disadvantaged (TEA, 2006).

At the time the survey was given, the district had sixty six campuses. There were six high schools (grade 9-12), 1 ninth and tenth grade school, 4 ninth grade schools, 9 middle schools (grades 7 and 8) 10 intermediate schools (grades 5 and 6), 31 elementary schools (kindergarten-4th grade) 4 early childhood and pre-kindergarten schools and 2 alternative campuses. My study is specific to middle schools, where there were 315 seventh grade students and 357 eighth grade students. Archival data from the initial study has been used for my study.

Research Design

The methodological approach used for this study is qualitative. When utilizing a qualitative methodology, participants' voices, researcher reflexivity, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem are all included. Denzin and Lincoln (2005), describe this type of research as a situated activity that locates the observer in the

world. The interpretive materials generally used in practicing qualitative research includes field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos help transform the world and make it visible.

Typically qualitative research prompts action (Creswell, 2009). The method includes a naturalistic setting, respondents were in their home or school when the responding to the survey. There was a specific focus on African American students, making it context focused. Finally an analysis was conducted from which themes emerged. (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This analytical approach was used as a follow up to a quantitative study conducted using the CABI.

Participants

The district employed 7,800 people, 672 were middle school teachers. Of the 672 middle school teachers, 144 (21.4 %) returned the Cultural Awareness Belief Inventory given to all teachers in the fall 2005. The diverse middle school teacher population included, 64 European Americans, 47 African Americans, 7 Hispanic Americans, 2 Asian Pacific Islanders, 2 Native Americans, 1 Arab American, 2 who identified as Bi-racial, 18 as Other, and 1 as None of the above. Most of the participants were female 105 with 39 males who completed the questions. There were 45 European American females, 37 African American females, 3 Hispanic American females, 2 Asian/Pacific Islanders female, 1 Native American female, 1 Bi-Racial female, 15 females who classified themselves as Other, and 1 female who classified as None of the Above. The male

participants included 19 European American males, 10 African American males, 4

Hispanic American males, 1 Native American male, 1 Arab American male, 1 Bi-Racial,

3 classifies as Other. The CABI was given to all teachers in the district however; my

study will only include the responses of middle school teachers.

Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory (CABI)

The eight factors used in the development of the CABI were based on previous

research and literature. The instrument had 36-items and was based on the following

eight factors: teacher beliefs, school climate, culturally responsive classroom

management, home and community support, cultural awareness, curriculum and

instruction, cultural sensitivity, and teacher efficacy. Demographic characteristics were

captured as well including: (a) gender; (b) level of educational degree attained; (c) years

of teaching experience; (d) current grade level taught; (e) certification route; and (f)

ethnicity. For qualitative purposes, the final section of the CABI included three open-

ended questions requiring participants to give written responses. This study focuses

solely on responses submitted by middle school teachers to one of the qualitative

questions. These responses are considered the primary source of direct information

received from the participants as they answered the question: How do middle school

teachers describe their greatest behavioral management concerns as related to their

professional responsibilities and their African American learners?

Utilizing statistical analysis, validity and reliability were established for the

quantitative component of the CABI. Content and substantive validity for the

quantitative portion was established by applying Messick's (1995), description,

"evidence of content relevance, representativeness, and technical quality" (p. 745).

Additionally, content validity was established by consulting with a jury of experts who

concurred on the content validity of the inventory. These experts included 4 urban and

multicultural education scholars and a group of urban education doctoral candidates,

who studied the literature surrounding the issues and concurred that the factors that

measured the cultural awareness and beliefs of teachers encompassed all the major

themes to be studied (Natesan, *in press*). Substantive validity, a measure of the

importance of substance, was used in constructing the CABI. Quantitative studies have

been conducted utilizing the quantitative results for the middle school teachers. Those

results led to the analysis of the qualitative responses for the same middle school

teachers and builds from the results of the previous quantitative findings.

Analysis of Data

The coding process was the first step of the analysis, it continued until all of the

survey responses were coded. Memos were used to document ideas and reflections. As

the data was coded, major themes emerged and were identified. Themes that were

poorly supported were removed (Riessman, 2008). A manageable coding scheme was

developed by, categorizing, classifying and labeling as part of the coding process.

Trustworthiness was established by coding the data multiple times and checking for

consistency. Responses from all eight schools were reviewed to establish the final

coding system. The themes were compared to preliminary findings which helped to

triangulate the data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Themes were not pre-existing but

emerged inductively (Patton & Patton, 2002).

In my study, culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally responsive classroom management and ethics of care serve as frameworks for providing foundational support for teachers. Culturally responsive pedagogy is maintained by teacher attitudes and expectations, cultural communication in the classroom, culturally diverse content in curriculum, and culturally congruent instructional strategies (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive classroom management, a component of culturally responsive pedagogy, includes the tenets of Multicultural education. It involves planning, facilitating, and monitoring experiences that are conducive to high levels of learning (Gay, 2006). Teacher empathy, positive school climate, and trusting relationships have been identified as elements of care. These conditions are believed to establish environments for effective learning to take place.

The initial question was broad and opened ended, distinct patterns emerged in how participants responded regarding their greatest behavior management concerns and the respondents reflected on their responsibilities and the learners they serve. Of the 144 written responses, only middle school teachers who responded to the first open-ended question on the CABI will be included in the study. My study uses the archival data from the initial study.

Findings

My study focused on the responses of middle school teachers when asked to respond in writing to the question: How do middle school teachers describe their greatest behavioral management concerns as related to their professional responsibilities and their African American learners? Their responses give insight into the various types of

behavioral concerns these middle school teachers experience in their classrooms. Two major themes emerged from the data, they include: (a) Teachers find the behaviors of students to be challenging; and, (b) Teachers do not feel supported by administrators or parents. Challenging student behaviors were classified into three subthemes. These subthemes are disruptions, disrespect and disengagement. Support was as a major theme with administrative and parental support serving as sub-themes. The responses throughout the findings are direct quotes that represent similar sentiments of other teachers.

Teachers Find the Behaviors of Students to be Challenging

High levels of academic instruction in urban classrooms are sometimes neglected by the need to address behavioral issues. Classroom management is often more difficult in urban than rural or suburban schools because of the need for teachers to address diverse student learners cultural, ethnic, social, identity development, language, and safety as well as academic needs (Brown, 2003). Challenging student behaviors was a major theme with 79 of the responses from teachers indicating concerns regarding these challenging behaviors. Perceived problematic behavior is viewed as a greater challenged when it is demonstrated by African American students (Webb-Johnson, 2002). Unfortunately, many teachers are unfamiliar with behavioral tenets that are different from their own and are unsure as to how they should respond. This unfamiliarity of differing behavioral norms has resulted in African American males receiving high degrees of disciplinary actions, suspensions and referrals to special education (Webb-Johnson, 2002). There are often differences in the behavioral patterns between teachers

and students. Teachers' perceptions of behavioral, language, and communication skills

from various home setting has also been attributed to challenging academic and

management problems in urban classroom (Brown, 2003).

The teacher responses related to behavioral management concerns were

categorized into three subthemes that include; disruptions, disrespect and

disengagement. The data show that teachers clearly saw disruptive behavior, disrespect

and disengagement as challenging to classroom instruction.

Classroom Disruptions

Disruptions were determined to include distractions, disorder, or interferences

that impede instruction.

Teacher Response: As a teacher in the classroom we are expected to teach the
students and for them to learn the material to pass TAKS…No
matter what,…ex. No matter how disruptive, defiant, disrespectful
or rude. We expend a lot of time and energy focusing on that type
student, therefore it greatly distracts being able to reach the
"others",…no matter their cognitive ability.

Teacher Response: Behavior of some students versus that of others where as
inappropriate or offensive in some cultures and acceptable in
others. Many/or some students not willing to conform to the
classroom policies and procedures in order for effective teaching
and learning can take place. My basic concern is taking time from
instruction to address disciplinary issues.

Teacher Response: I want my children to learn. I do not want anyone, student or
otherwise to jeopardize that opportunity. Disruption of instruction
through talking w/o permission, out of seat or bothering others
causes students to lose the chance to learn.

Teacher Response: My greatest behavioral management concern as it reflect my
professional responsibilities and the learners I serve would be
student's disruption of everyday learning

Teacher Response: Student disruptions keep most students from learning or delaying learning.

Teacher Response: My greatest concern this current school year is with excessive talking during class discussion, mostly not allowing one person to speak at a time. There are times when it's appropriate for my students to discuss whatever issue is at hand and come up with a consensus which is reported to the class, but not always. It has been a problem to generate discussion ,at times, without many people talking at once and no one listening to other people's responses

Clearly, based on these responses, disruptive behavior patterns interrupt instruction. The literature on culturally responsive teaching supports teachers adopting an assertive stance with urban students. Weiner (2003) suggests that teachers in urban schools need to develop a moral authority to be successful. This moral authority is their primary source of control which rest on the perception that the teacher is knowledgeable about the subject matter, competent in pedagogy, and committed to helping students succeed.

Teachers Feel Disrespect by Students

Disrespect, in the context of my study, was determined to be any means of disregard for self, others and the learning environment.

Teacher Response: Behavioral management concerns I have deals with how disrespectful some students can be during students learning time.

Teacher Response: Lack of respect for authority, property (school), each other

Teacher Response: My biggest concern is that I would not see how disrespectful students were to each other

Teacher Response: My greatest behavioral concern is students are not respecting authority. Students should be taught to respect adults and that is students of all ethnic backgrounds.

Teacher Response: Getting students to respect one another.

Teacher Response: I can deal with many things. I do not tolerate blatant disrespect. My biggest concern is the parents calling and asking us to control or discipline their child. The students seem to manipulate the system in order to abuse the very people who are there to help them.

Differing communication styles may contribute to perceptions of disrespect by teachers. Students of color prefer a social interaction style referred to as a "call response" which students may speak out loud while the teacher is speaking as a response to the teachers' comments. These are meant to be acknowledgements of agreements rather than disrespect (Gay, 2000). It is important for urban teachers to develop instructional activities that employ verbal interactions rather than being annoyed by them.

Garnering from these teacher responses, the acquisition of respect by means of authority is not apparent. Delpit (1995) posits that the expectations of many African American students may be in direct contrast to middle class culture. Adding that many people of color expect authority to be earned by personal efforts and exhibited by personal characteristics. In other words, a teacher gets to be a teacher because of the authoritative stance taken. Some members of middle class culture, by contrast, expect one to achieve authority by the acquisition of an authoritative role. That is the authority is given because of the position.

When communicating verbally with their students, urban teachers must be authoritative and assertive. Urban students expect and respond better to more direct verbal commands and may ignore command that are phrased and expressed like a

question rather than a command (Delpit, 1995). Urban teachers should have clearly

stated expectations, accept no excuses and immediately deal with inappropriate

behaviors (Corbett & Wilson, 2001).

Teachers View Students as Disengaged

Disengagement, for purposes of this study, was determined to be inactivity or

detachment from the learning experience.

Teacher Response: I really don't have any major behavioral management concern. Maybe getting the students motivated since some of them don't value education.

Teacher Response: Students that exhibit "careless" attitude toward their educational program

Teacher Response: The biggest behavioral management concern that I have is the laziness in the classroom that results in of task behavior that leads to problems

Teacher Response: My greatest behavioral management concern is being able to entice and invite all of my students to engage in learning.

Teacher Response: Increasing number of students having parent(s) who have taught their children little or no respect or academic motivation

Teacher Response: Lack of interest in learning and grades

Teacher Response: Keeping the students interested

Teacher Response: Keeping the student upbeat and engaged and motivated to learn without "overdoing it" and creating my own management issues.

Teacher Response: Kids lack motivation to learn

The teachers' responses suggest that students are disengaged for several reasons;

no value for education, carelessness, laziness, apathetic and lack of motivation or

interest. However, there may be other contributing factors to student disengagement.

There are both social and cultural contexts of challenging student behaviors identified by

the responses of the teachers. Classroom management extends beyond controlling

misbehavior and administering discipline, it encompasses planning, facilitating, and

monitoring experiences that are conducive to high levels of learning for a wide variety of

students (Gay, 2006). Classroom management scholars add that it includes the

environment, relationship development, planning, engaging instructions that motivates

and keeps student on-task, provides order and appropriate discipline (Gay, 2006).

Communication patterns that are similar between teachers and students are

critical to academic success for urban students. It is important for urban teachers to

understand specific verbal and nonverbal communications styles that affect students'

ability and motivation to engage in learning activities (Brown, 2003). Teachers' ability

to demonstrate genuine care, a tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy is also important

for teacher student interaction and engagement. In culturally responsive classroom

pedagogy, teachers are called on to make connections between home and school life

(Ladson-Billings, 1995). When urban teachers are prepared to address the various

differences that exist between their students' cultural and ethnic beliefs and their own,

authentic learning transpires.

Effective urban teachers view themselves as coaches or conductors assuming

responsibility for their students' academic development rather than as custodians whose

primary purpose is to watch over students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers should

reject explanations of behavior that are not conducive to learning, that rely on the deficit

paradigm, and consider themselves responsible for correcting their behavior as part of a teacher's responsibility to help student achieve academically. Unfortunately, this was not the prevailing theme regarding behavioral concerns however, one teacher writes, "I don't have any behavioral management problems in my classroom. I have expectations that are high, I have procedures that are followed, & I am fair across the board." This response is distinct from the others because this teacher has clearly taken responsibility for an academic environment that fosters achievement.

Teachers Do Not Feel Supported

The institution of public schooling is complex, and requires the support of government, administrators, community organizations, parents and students. Many teachers cite lack of administrative support more than any other reason for leaving the profession (Robertson, 2006). Studies have demonstrated the definition for support varies between novice and veteran teachers. Novice teachers may view administrative support as help with managing the basic task of teaching including classroom management, paperwork, and personal time management. Veteran teachers my seek support from administration in enhancing their autonomy and professional development (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990) Teachers may view support as simple the degree of assistance offered by administrators (Ingersoll, 2001).

Forty teachers participating in this survey listed support from administration and parents as a major behavioral management concern. Support has been classified into two subthemes. The subthemes are administrative and parental. These direct quotes regarding support of administration are examples of other teacher responses. These

responses are similar responses to those of other teachers who participated in the survey

and are direct quotes.

Teachers Do Not Feel Supported by Administration

Teacher Response: There is little or no discipline support from the assistant principals. Many students would rather go to the office than take the punishment available to the teachers, because they know that there will be no repercussions in the office

Teacher Response: Lack of administrative support in dealing with student's behavior and discipline.

Teacher Response: We are not longer allowed to discipline. There are no consequences for bad behavior.

Teacher Response: Students refuse to cooperate… No administrative backup or follow through…Dress code is dealt with more harshly than obedience, disrespect of refusal to cooperate with an adult. Students have to be told more than 5x's to do something. Too many hallways—nothing done.

Teacher Response: I feel the "system" as it currently exist does not have responses necessary to address behavior issues that interfere with the learning process

Teacher Response: A. How do we manage a mixed ability classroom when 3 or more emotionally disturbed students who are disruptive influences are placed into the same classroom to the detriment of other students? I have tried traditional methods of contacting the parents—doesn't change anything. We tried to change their schedules to spread them out, more one to a smaller class but the counselors were NOT supportive at all.

Teacher Response: Large classrooms & large amounts of special needs student with no aide. One class has 7 special needs students (two are autistic)

Teacher Response: My greatest behavioral management concern is the size of classes.

Teachers Do Not Feel Supported by Parents

Teacher Response: Consistent parental involvement from students' guardians to reinforce positive behaviors at school.

Teacher Response: I don't feel like I always have the support of parents or administrators.

Teacher Response: My biggest behavioral management concern is parental support.

Teacher Response: My greatest behavioral management concern is not being able to reach parents of some of my students. Often, the phones have been disconnected or numbers have changed.

Teacher Response: My greatest behavioral management concern is times when little or nothing is done by administration to address a student that continually defies the system. Parents have been addressed, student know what's expected but continues to buck the system. The team has assessed the problem and still nothing changes for the student.

Teachers expressed their need for support from administrators and parents. Their responses regarding administrative support included concerns regarding disciplinary problems, problems with the "system" and classrooms that were too large. Although classroom size appeared to be an area of concern for several teachers, the district maintained state guidelines for student teacher ratio of 1:28.

Teachers continue to find support as a growing concern. They often cite lack of support as a means of job dissatisfaction (Robertson, 2006). Teachers indicated that support of administration and parents was an important concern regarding behavioral management. During adolescent years, family and the parent-adolescent relationship provide one of the most important social contexts for development. Peer relationships increase however, during adolescence; parents remain a source in assisting adolescents

with major decision making (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Teacher responses indicated their need for parents to be involved and supportive. Parental involvement has long been associated with academic achievement and student success (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Grolnick & Benjet, 1997). Research in the area has prompted both policies and formal programs to increase parental involvement aimed at children from low socio economic status and children of color (Hornby & Witte, 2010).

Parental involvement and support means different things to different people. For some, it could mean participation in school activities ranging from volunteering to decision making. Teachers may view parental support as ease of communication between parents and school or attendance at conferences. Parents may view participation in home activities as support, or inquiring about school or assignments. Because parents are not visible at school for conferences or able to volunteer, does not necessarily mean those parents are not supportive of their student's education and they are not concerned. Although the nature of involvement may be different, most parents despite their socio economic status are involved in their child's education through some type of home based learning (Englund, Luckner, Whaley , & Egeland, 2004). These methods of involvement may not be in line with school and teacher idea of support (Weininger & Lareau, 2003). This notion can easily be misinterpreted and translated into assumptions of a parental deficit which allows teachers to blame parents for student underachievement. These teachers' responses indicate their beliefs that greater parental support would have a positive effect on their classroom management challenges.

Summary

African American students regardless of socioeconomic status are vulnerable to substandard schooling, underachievement, inappropriate discipline and referrals to special education (Neal, McCray, Webb-Johnson, & Bridgest, 2003). This study illuminates the themes that emerged as teachers in one urban district responded to the question, how do middle school teachers describe their greatest behavioral management concern as related to their professional responsibilities and their African American learners? The district in which the study was conducted has a diverse population of learners and a diverse faculty of teachers. This study specifically looked at the responses of middle school teachers in an effort to determine teachers' behavioral concerns with urban students during the middle school transition. The middle school transition can be very difficult for all students but is particularly difficult for students of color and poor children (Obenchain & Taylor, 2005). Emerging from the data, were two major themes regarding teachers' greatest behavioral management concerns: challenging student behavior and support. Although these teachers reported behavior as challenging, they did not report on violent, threatening or aggressive behavior. The disruptions were associated with perceptions of body language, and images of disengagement.

A major finding was that teachers were not prepared to handle the complexities of an urban middle school classroom. These teachers' responses were primarily geared to the need for professional development with diverse students and the social context of student behaviors. This study contributes to the literature by exposing the importance of teachers not only being prepared in their content area but the importance of their cultural

awareness as well. Culturally responsive classroom management takes into account the socialization and culture of students. Although employing culturally responsive classroom management techniques is not a one shot fix, it requires a change of mind about students (McLeod & Tanner, 2007). What teachers believe about students' impacts how those students are taught (Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison-Wade, 2008).

Some teachers reported "students do not care", or displayed "apathy" towards their education. Understanding that "I don't care" is a complicated issue for adolescence. Teachers must begin to recognize this behavior not as defiance but as a pattern of Show how deficit model manifests itself…The Power of Perception (administration, parents) practiced defenses (Walsh, 2006). Misunderstandings and misinterpretations can occur when teachers do not understand and incorporate the cultural values, orientations and experiences of students of color into the curriculum. Culturally responsive classroom management takes into account students' cultural values and orientations (Gay, 2010). The teachers responded to the survey question by addressing the problems they perceived the students to have opposed to how their roles and responsibilities as teachers in meeting the needs of students. The deficit model manifests itself as these middle school teachers responded in ways that demonstrate the power of perceptions and how perceptions can contribute to behaviors of teachers.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, professional development for teachers in the area of culturally responsive classroom management and African American student

ethos is warranted. There is a need for personal and professional that disrupts teachers' beliefs and teaching practices. This would enable teachers to provide instruction that reflects depth of social and cultural contexts. Teachers must begin to understand how their own life experiences shape their perceptions which affect their teaching. This is significant and necessary for teacher professional development as well as teacher preparation programs. In addition, consideration should be given to the consistency of methods used for administering discipline policies by both staff and administration. Veteran and novice teachers require support in varying degrees from the administration, but there is an across the board need for consistency in action.

This study was an important first step in better understanding urban middle school teachers' behavior management concerns. The study could be expanded to study the difference in behavior concerns with elementary and middle school students. In addition, a study examining the categories of specific challenging behaviors that emerged from the analysis could be useful.

Conclusions

Adolescence is a difficult period between childhood and adulthood. Students experience physical and social changes. This is a period of self-discovery, expanding horizons, emerging independence, and physical and emotional growth (Gutman & Midgley, 2000). The educational environment becomes increasingly more complex while the interactions with teachers can change because of the shorten period of time in each class. Teachers may struggle with maintaining control while middle school students are seeking independence and personal choice (Eccles, Midgley & Wigfield, 1993).

Students are also adjusting to changes instructional method changes. In prior grades, students may have been accustomed to small groups while middle school instruction is often whole-class instruction.

Charles (2000) in a proposal for *Joyful Teaching and Gentle Discipline* recommends that classroom management and teaching become compatible with human behavior. He identifies ten reasons students misbehave in classroom. They include testing boundaries, imitating the behavior of others, curiosity, desire for attention, need for power in matters affecting them, boredom and disinterest, threats to dignity and self-respect, and personal disagreements. For ethnically diverse students, their cultural socialization may cause them to resist competiveness and rigid task orientations (Gay, 2006).

Culturally responsive pedagogy calls for teachers to be assertive and creative when developing educational plans. This reduces student disengagement and distractions occur less frequently. There are fewer opportunities for off-task behavior and misconduct when students are engaged (Gay, 2006). Teachers often fail to admit that students misbehave when they are bored. An understanding of the dimensions of culture is a tool teachers can use for effective classroom management. Dimensions of African American culture including, verve, affect, expressive individualism, and oral tradition are illustrated in the teachers' responses.

As the population continues to diversify, there will be an increased need to prepare more educators to teach in urban and culturally diverse classrooms. That preparation should include means of developing and implementing behavior

management plans that are effective for middle school students of color. Classroom management is comprehensive, and should be refocused from controlling unproductive student behavior to creating learning environments that encourage constructive behavior (Jones & Jones, 1986). Teachers must force themselves to check the expectations, assumptions and beliefs about the children they serve and their professional responsibility to those children. Classroom management approaches will be altered if teachers looked at each child and treated them the way they would want their own child treated. The curriculum must be approached with creativity, and consideration of diverse cultural socialization and learning styles, utilizing every opportunity to foster collaboration and understanding.

These teachers clearly recognize their need for help in meeting the behavioral challenges they face with middle school students. Teachers often site more planning time and professional development as tools for meeting their responsibility to teach students (Dagenhart, O'Connor, Petty & Day, 2005). New and veteran teachers recognize that although classroom management was covered in teacher preparation programs, they were not truly prepared for the realities of the classrooms (Pedota, 2007). Teachers may not feel well prepared to handle classroom management and discipline. Because teachers make the difference in student learning, they must have adequate preparation and ongoing professional development for student academic success (McLeod & Tanner, 2007). The complexities of teaching require teachers to have not only content knowledge but behavior management strategies that are effective (Weinstein, Curran & Tomlinson-Clark, 2003).

As teachers reflect on how they interact with student from kindergarten through twelfth grade, and how the teacher student relationship changes over the years, we can began to re-capture some of the methods, strategies and pedagological skills used by early educators in middle and upper grades. In a message delivered to teachers during a professional development session (Gwendolyn Webb-Johnson, personal communication, March 2005) adequately summarizes parents' expectations of teachers, and brings the message of teacher responsibility and accountability squarely into focus. She noted,

> Parents send their precious gifts to us, they are neatly packaged and
> beautifully wrapped. The question is, how do we treat those gifts?
> Do we sit them in a corner and ignore their beauty, do we rip right
> into them caring little about the contents. What will you do with the gifts
> you have been given? How will you care for them? How will you treat them?

CHAPTER IV

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF TEACHER PERCEPTIONS: THE CULTURAL

AWARENESS AND BELIEFS INVENTORY

Introduction

As our nation struggles to education its citizenry, African American children are still in a mode of crisis regarding their education. For over a century, equitable education has been advocated for by the likes of Carter G. Woodson and W.E.B. Du Bois. Woodson understood the importance of one's own history and the role it played in education. Du Bois realized the significance placed on race and color in every aspect of society. Against the odds, there have been major court cases that placed equitable education for Blacks in the headlines. In the Brown versus Board of Education (1954) Supreme Court case, separate but equal schooling for Black and White students was ruled unconstitutional.

Over fifty years later, our nation continues to grapple with educational equity for African American learners. The issues of unequal access and gaps in achievement go on without much attention from popular culture or mainstream media. The problem with educating Black children has not been resolved. During the past two decades, the responsibility of educating Black students, poor students, and other underrepresented students has shifted. Responsibility has been placed on the government, schools, parents, teacher education programs, and teachers for the lack of success with these students.

In spite of scholarly research, volumes of publications addressing this issue, and reforms efforts, the fact remains, African American learners are still not achieving at the

desired levels in public schools, particularly in urban areas (Webb-Johnson & Carter, 2007). There exists what is referred to as an achievement gap between African American students and their European counterparts. In addition to the achievement gap, African American students are over represented in special education and face disciplinary actions more frequently than other students (Webb-Johnson, 2002). One has to questions the reason for these conditions. Who is responsible?

The role of a teacher cannot be over emphasized. The complexity of how teacher perceptions and beliefs inform their actions and impact pedagological practices has been well studied (Webb-Johnson, Carter, 2007). Teachers list behavior problems, classroom management, and administrative support as areas of concern when teaching African American students and other students of in urban areas (Blanson, 2006). This becomes particularly important when their beliefs are informed by deficit views of African American students. Negative images of African Americans have become steeped into the public's consciousness, creating negative stereotypes that make their way into classrooms. Deficit laden racial and cultural perceptions become the premise for school policies, curricula, programs and pedagogies (Kincheloe & Hayes, 2007).

It is important that we garner a better understanding of teacher beliefs because of the impact on student academic achievement (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995;). The initial study began in 2005 when the selected urban district was cited because African American students were over-represented in special education programs. Based on the population of African American students in the district and the number of students in special education, the administrators of the district sought to overcome this problem by

seeking a better understanding of why their teachers referred African Americans to special education at alarming rates. The Cultural Awareness and Belief Inventory (CABI), developed by Webb-Johnson and Carter (2005), was designed to measure the perceptions and attitudes of urban teachers' cultural awareness and beliefs were used in the study. Eight factors, based on previous research and literature, guided the development of the 36-item CABI. These included teacher beliefs, school climate, culturally responsive classroom management, home and community support, cultural awareness, curriculum and instruction, cultural sensitivity, and teacher efficacy. In addition to the 36 survey items, six items established demographic characteristics concerning: (a) gender; (b) level of educational degree attained; (c) years of teaching experience; (d) current grade level taught,; (e) certification route; and (f) ethnicity.

Additionally, three open-ended questions were included for qualitative purposes. The participants were asked to respond in writing to each question. All teachers in the district were given the survey. For the purpose of my study, the middle school teachers' responses to two of the qualitative questions on the CABI served as data for my first and second studies.

For the first study, data was drawn from responses of middle school teachers addressing the research question: How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic concerns as related to their role as teachers of African American students? For the second study, data was drawn from responses of middle school teachers addressing the research question: How do middle school teachers

describe their greatest behavioral management concerns as related to their professional responsibilities and their African American learners?

Ten quantitative studies have been completed utilizing the data collected from the initial study. This is the third study in a series of studies utilizing the qualitative responses of middle school teachers. My current study utilized the archival data taken from the qualitative responses of middle school teachers who responded to the CABI. My current study utilized a constant comparative methodology to examine two reflective questions on the CABI. The examination was framed using two questions: (1) How do middle school teachers describe their greatest behavioral management concerns as related to their professional responsibilities and their African American learners?; and (2) How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic concerns as related to their roles as teachers of African American students? The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of middle school teachers' racial/ethnic and behavioral management concerns with a goal of improving the teaching and learning outcomes for African American students.

Social Cultural Theories Related to African American Students

The theoretical underpinnings for this study, Critical RaceTheory and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy are based on the social-cultural theories that support positive teacher beliefs and cultural awareness of a diverse student population (Gay, 2010). Critical social theories can be a powerful tools that are used to link education, past, present and future research designs and social meaning (Anyon, 2005). In education, critical race theory examines the influence of race to maintain oppressive conditions for

those who are not part of the dominant culture (Banks, 2004; Delgaddo & Stefancic, 2007). CRT provided the lens for filtering, explaining and analyzing the teacher responses. CRT has been used by educational scholars (Ladson-Billings 1998;) to examine race, class and gender. It is used in my study to connect the school district's history of over representing African American males with their responses to behavior, race, ethnicity and socio economic concerns.

Culturally responsive pedagogy calls for teachers to develop their knowledge, skills and predispositions to teach children from diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social backgrounds (Gay, 2000).

Review of Literature

This review of literature will address the importance of teacher beliefs and the deficit model as they relate to African American students as well as the cultural mismatch that exist between teachers and African American students. Although limited research has been conducted on gender and teacher beliefs, it has been included as a demographic to review, in addition to the tenets of culturally responsive classroom management. This review provides the foundation for the forthcoming study on teacher concerns regarding behavior, race/ethnicity and socio economic status regarding the learners in an urban district.

Teacher Beliefs/Expectations

The process of teaching involves both thought processes and actions with observable effects. The thought process is believed to occur inside the head while the action domain includes observable behaviors (Fang, 1996). Clark and Peterson (1986)

categorized teachers' thought processes into three types: planning, interactive thoughts and decisions, and theories and beliefs. These beliefs represent teachers' general knowledge and affect planning, thoughts, decisions and classroom behavior. In addition, beliefs guide teachers in making decisions about instruction and curriculum (Carter, 2005). Teacher beliefs are shaped by various influences including the subculture, pre-service experiences and reflection of those experiences. Teacher beliefs can be embodied in expectations of students' performance thereby impacting student behavior and academic performance (Fang, 1996). Over the last twenty-five years, researchers have studied the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices. The practices and behaviors of classroom teachers are closely linked to their beliefs (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004). Pajaras (1992) concluded that although difficult to study, it is critical that teacher beliefs be studied to provide an educational focus for teacher professional development.

Teacher expectations are a component of beliefs system. When principals were asked if they could predict what teachers would send the most students to the office for misconduct, many in the room raised their hands. Without knowing which students would be in those rooms, these administrators knew what to expect. How could this be? The answer; students are not the variables in classrooms, teachers are the variables (Whitaker, 2004).

The effects of teacher expectation was demonstrated in a study conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and presented in *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. In this study, teachers were told at the beginning of the school year that certain students would

experience great academic success. The study concluded with the predetermined students experiencing success. Teachers communicate their expectation through their behaviors and assignments (Good & Brophy, 1987). Teacher efficacy is the degree to which a teacher believes they can impact student learning regardless of external conditions (Bandura,1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Carter, 2003) Teacher efficacy impacts beliefs and expectations.

Research findings on teacher expectations indicate that race and ethnicity are used as a basis for teacher expectations (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). Studies have shown that teachers' expectations for their European American students are higher than for their African American students. A study conducted by Dusek and Joseph (1983) confirmed from a 20 article study that teachers held lower expectations for African American students. Researchers have reported similar results in their findings that teachers held higher expectations for their European American students than their African American students (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004). A more recent meta-analysis (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007) confirmed in three of four meta-analyses that teachers favor European American students more than African American and Latino students. There were statistically significant findings showing that teachers held lower expectations for African American and Latino children. This translation of expectations was demonstrated in speech patterns that were more positive or neutral for European American students than African American or Latino students (Tenebaum, 2007). Tenebaum concluded that these lower expectations could possible lead to different

academic performances for children, an unfair classroom climate and ultimately, limited educational opportunities for African students.

Jones (1990) demonstrated that expectations can be affected by information on race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, and other demographics. High expectation was identified by Haberman (2005), as one of the seven functions that discriminate between greatness and failure in teaching urban students. Kunjufu (2004) ascertains that teacher expectations are the most important factor in student success or failure. Student resistance has to been linked to students' perceptions of their teachers' academic expectations and everyday practice of racial stereotyping (Miron, 2004). Children treated with low regard come to believe it and often fulfill low expectations. African American students less that optimal performance may elicit teachers' lower expectations when they rely on generalizations and past performances to guide their beliefs (Miron, 2004). It is very important that teachers reflect and recognize how they feel about their students because children recognize when they are being treated differently and it impacts their motivation to learn (Landsman, 2006).

Teacher expectations have been categorized as self-fulfilling prophecy effect, or sustaining expectation effect. Self-fulfilling prophecy is demonstrated when an unfounded expectation leads to behavior that causes the expectation to come true. Sustaining expectation effect occurs when teachers based on founded information maintains expectations based on prior patterns (Good & Brophy, 1987).

Deficit Model

One explanation given to describe the differences in academic achievement between African American students and their European American peers is the deficit model. In the deficit model, assumptions are made based on genetic or cultural differences; these children are viewed as inferior or have a deficit to overcome (Carter, Webb-Johnson, & Knight, 2005). Valencia (1997) defined deficit thinking as a means of blaming students, their families and their communities for the academic failure of poor students and students of color. Valencia posits that in education, the blame is placed on the victims, genetics, culture, poor home life, poor parenting and environment. There is however, no blame placed on the system or the inequity that lies within the system. Deficit thinking restricts African American learners in many areas and is considered to contribute to the high degree of academic disparity. The deficit mindset has been attributed to the underrepresentation of African American students in gifted and talented programs (Michael-Chadwell, 2010). Teacher preparation programs train teachers to look for areas that students are not performing in for the purpose of increasing performance however teachers began to think of their students in terms of presumed weakness, lack of motivation and poor family support modeling the deficit model (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2008).

Race/Ethnicity

Race is a term typically used to describe human groups based solely on physical characteristics. It is a social construct with no scientific credibility.   Race and racial differences have been used by scientist to establish, justify and preserve hegemonic

practices and social domination   (Aguirre & Turner, 2004; Feagin & Feagin, 2003). Race is a prevailing force in a society that is emphasized by racist practices.

Ethnicity refers to the reference group to which a person most closely finds a sense of identity (Boutte, 1999). Ethnic identification is often based on common history, culture, values, behaviors and other characteristics (Banks & Banks, 2004). Although the terms race and ethnicity are not the same, they are often used interchangeably.

Culture may include religious practices, customs and beliefs and is often but not always tied to ethnicity. Similar to the cultural gap that would exist between a rural student and an urban student, there exist a cultural gap between teachers of urban students and the students themselves (Kunjufu, 1983). Researchers have determined that based on this gap, more quality teachers of color should be recruited to urban areas. The national population for students of color is 40%, while only 17% of the teaching force is of color (NCES, 2004). The population of students of color is projected to have a steady increase in years to come. The assumption has been that teachers of color can better relate to students of color by providing them with positive relationships, support, foster culturally responsive teaching and provide an easier transition to working with urban schools.

Cultural Mismatch

Cultural match cannot be over simplified and the socio-cultural differences between teachers and students should be considered. A study conducted by Gordon (2000) detailed how teachers of color described the complex teacher-student culture match and how the influence class, language, color, experiences, and culture capital

played in those relationships. Being and effective teacher for students of color is not predicated on the teacher being a person of color. The strengths of having the same color must be developed in the teaching practices of these teachers (Quiocho & Rios, 2000). Although diverse teacher populations is one solution to the cultural mismatch that exist between teachers and students, there is growing research that implies it is not necessary for students and teachers to share similar ethnic backgrounds for academic success to occur (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Regardless of race, ethnicity or gender, teachers who care about, mentor, and guide their students can dramatically impact their futures regardless of their social conditions.

Gender

There have been limited studies on the impact of gender and teacher beliefs. In reference to characteristics, some suggest that female teachers are more positive and more willing to help diverse students (Aloia, Knusten, Minner, & von Seggen, 1980). Other studies propose that students are inclined to perform better for male teachers. Pedagogy is different depending on race and gender (Page & Rosenthal, 1990). A study examining teacher efficacy between male and female special education teachers found gender to not be a factor in teacher tolerance (Tejeda-Delgado, 2009). Given the limited available research, additional research is warranted.

Years of Experience

Teacher experience is significant. Students exposed to experienced teachers are better served than those exposed to teachers with limited experience (Clotfelter, Ladd & Vidgor, 2005). Some consider new or novice teachers as getting on the job training the

first few years of teaching. The experience of teachers matters and is important in the education of students. Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor (2005) demonstrated that novice teachers are less effective, and students were not as academically successful with teachers who had less than five years experience. In addition, teachers with no prior experience were less effective with students, resulting in the students receiving an inferior education (Clotfelter, 2005) The benefits of experience appears to level off after the first five years, with minimal difference in teachers with five to ten years of experience with those teachers appear to be more effective than new teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

Classroom management is more than discipline; it involves planning, facilitating and monitoring experiences that are beneficial for learning to take place (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clark, 2003). There is a connection between effective classroom management and effective classroom instruction. Culturally responsive teaching and curricula is important in implementing culturally responsive classroom management strategies (Gay, 2006). Culturally responsive classroom management should help students to negotiate in and outside of the classrooms. Gay (2006) contend that comprehensive classroom management includes the teachers' beliefs, understanding the needs of students, creating positive relationships, increasing motivation, minimizing disruptions, organizing classroom space and delivering effective instructions. The five components included in the classroom management model developed by Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) are; becoming critically conscious of student

understanding the sociopolitical and economic context of schooling; develop culturally responsive classroom management strategies, and create caring learning environments. Classroom management for secondary schools must accommodate the setting of students transitioning between classes as well as the adolescent population found in secondary schools (Emmer & Gerwels, 2006). Teacher's ability to understand the developmental characteristics of this age is crucial for a sound classroom management plan.

Methodology

African American, more than any other ethnic groups have a long history of discrimination in the United States (Ogbu, 2004). This gives ample cause to further investigate teacher beliefs and perceptions regarding African American students. This study draws upon the findings from two previous studies, utilizing teacher responses to two qualitative questions included in the CABI. All teachers in the district were given the survey, however, for my study, only middle school teachers' responses were included.

For the first study, data were drawn from responses of middle school teachers addressing the research question: How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic concerns as related to their role as teachers of African American students? Five themes emerged, however, three were used for this study based on the occurrence of the themes from the study and were used for this study. The resulting themes from the first study were: a) what teachers believe about their ability to teach all children, b) teachers have negative perceptions of the school environment, and c) teachers devalue students' home and family environment.

For the second study, data was drawn from responses of middle school teachers addressing the research question: How do middle school teachers describe their greatest behavioral management concerns as related to their professional responsibilities and their African American learners? Two themes emerged from the study and were used for this study. The resulting themes from the second study were a) teachers find the behaviors of students to be challenging, and b) teachers don't feel supported.

A qualitative methodological approach was used for both of the previous studies. Typically qualitative research prompts action (Creswell, 2009). The method included a naturalistic setting; respondents were in their school when responding to the survey. There was a specific focus on African American students, making it context focused. The data were analyzed using open coding, refinement of coding, and axial coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Key themes emerged from each of the studies. The emergent themes from each of the studies serve as themes for this study.

Research Design

The study begins with demographic comparisons of responses to the two questions: How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic concerns as related to their roles as teachers of African American students? and How do middle school teachers describe their greatest behavioral management concerns as related to their professional responsibilities and their African American student? The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of middle school teachers' racial/ethnic and behavioral management concerns with a goal of improving the teaching and learning outcomes for African American students in the district.

For further exploration of middle school urban teacher beliefs about their African American students and their cultural awareness, this interpretive study examined their behavioral management, racial/ethnic and socio economic concerns. Interpretive designs are used in natural settings as researchers seek to make meaning and points of view of particular people in particular settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Interpretive research was used to examine the concerns of middle school teachers in an urban school district about their students. This approach was used as a follow up to quantitative studies conducted using the CABI. This study examined middle school teachers' responses to qualitative research questions included in the CABI.

Participants

The participants for this study were teachers in an urban district that employs 7,800 people. There were 4,663 teachers with 672 of them teaching in middle school. Of the 672 middle school teachers, 144 returned the CABI given to all teachers in the fall of 2005. The diverse middle school teacher population included, 64 European Americans, 47 African Americans, 7 Hispanic Americans, 2 Asian Pacifica Islanders, 2 Native Americans, 1 Arab American, 2 who identified as Bi-racial, 18 Other, and 1 None of the above. There were 105 female participants and 39 males participants who returned the surveys and are considered in the study. There were 45 European American females, 37 African American females, 3 Hispanic American females, 2 Asian/Pacific Islanders female, 1 Native American female, 1 Bi-Racial female, 15 females who classified themselves as Other, and 1 female who classified as None of the above. The male participants included 19 European American males, 10 African American males, 4

Hispanic American males, 1 Native American male, 1 Arab American male, 1 Bi-Racial, 3 classifies as Other. The CABI was given to all teachers in the district however; my study will only include the responses of middle school teachers.

Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory (CABI)

The instrument used for this study was the CABI. The instrument has 36-items CABI based on the following eight factors; teacher beliefs, school climate, culturally responsive classroom management, home and community support, cultural awareness, curriculum and instruction, cultural sensitivity, and teacher efficacy. The eight factors used in development of the CABI were based on previous research and literature. Demographic characteristics are captured as well including: (a) gender; (b) level of educational degree attained; (c) years of teaching experience; (d) current grade level taught; (e) certification route; and (f) ethnicity. For qualitative purposes, the final section of the CABI includes three open-ended questions requiring participants to give written responses.

The validity and reliability of the CABI was verified through statistical analysis for the quantitative component. The qualitative component of the CABI was validated through content validity and substantive validity. "The content aspect of construct validity includes evidence of content relevance, representativeness, and technical quality" (Messick, 1995, p. 745). After the internal structure of the CABI was determined, content validity was established by consulting with a jury of experts who concurred on the content validity of the inventory. Substantive validity was used in constructing the CABI, it is a measure of the importance of the substance.

Data Analysis

For the first two studies, the coding process was the first step of the analysis. A manageable coding scheme was developed by, categorizing, classifying and labeling as part of the process. This process continued until all of the survey responses were coded. Ideas and reflections were documented during the process. As the data was coded, major themes emerged and were identified. Responses from all eight schools were reviewed to establish the final coding system.

For the first study, responses to the research question: Three themes emerged and were used for this study. The resulting themes from the first study were a) what teachers believe about their ability to teach all children, b) teachers have negative perceptions of the school environment, and c) teachers devalue students' home and family environment.

For the second study, responses to the research question: What is your greatest behavioral management concern as you reflect on your professional responsibilities and the learners you serve? Two themes emerged and were used for this study. The resulting themes from the second study were a) teachers find the behaviors of students to be challenging, and b) teachers don't feel supported.

In my current study, a constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was used to analyze the teachers' written responses which constitute data for this study. Numerous aids are used to support the principle of comparison including memo writing, rereading, displays, data matrices and diagrams (Boeije, 2002). Special attention was given to the teachers' word choice in describing their concerns. The data was first open-

coded- into categories and then axially coded to make connections between categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In constant comparison, the researcher decides what data will be gathered based on theoretical ideas. This allows the researcher to answer questions that emerge from the analysis and reflection on previous data. The data were analyzed again and compared with the new data. The units were carefully chosen to enable new questions to be answered. The cycle of comparison and reflection was repeated several times (Boeije, 2002). There was no definitive method for comparison.

I followed procedures modeling three types of comparisons for analytical approach introduced by Boeije (2002). The types of comparisons included (a) a comparison within a single group, gender comparisons; (b) comparison between persons who share the similar experience, a comparison based on years of experience (veteran teachers with 7 or more years and novice teachers, less than 7 years); and (c) comparisons between different perspectives, comparisons based on ethnicity. For the purpose of this study, European American responses were included in a single group, because of the small number of ethnic groups represented, all teachers of color were combined to form one group for ethnic analysis.

In summary, themes used for analysis from two previous studies are utilized to compare responses across gender, years of experience and ethnicity for two separate research questions. The first constant comparative analysis draws from study one's findings while the second constant comparative analysis draws from study two's findings.

Findings Related to Study One

How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic concerns as it related to their roles as teachers of African American students? Teachers who participated in a previous study were asked to document their concerns according to racial, ethnic, or socio-economic issues as they related to their role as a teacher. As the teachers documented their specific concerns, three major themes emerged. Themes related to teachers beliefs in their ability to teach all students, teachers' negative perceptions of the school environment, and teachers perceptions of students' home/family environment. These themes were examined based on the survey demographics of gender, years of experience and ethnicity. The responses are direct quotes from teachers.

Gender

There were 39 males and 105 females who responded to the survey. There were five responses from male teachers highlighting concerns related to teacher efficacy, three to school climate, and four to home environment. There were 10 responses from female teachers highlighting concerns related to teacher efficacy, 11 to school climate, and eight to home environment.

What teachers believe about their ability to teach all children

Male	The teacher is not in a position to change basic educational shortcomings and turn them into positive action
Male	I wish we were not accountable for the racial subgroups that fall below 2% of the population. One kid can sink you. Other than that, socio-economically, I wish educators were better compensated.
Male	Needs to be less emphasis on viewing students as not responsible

for failing grades, test scores, and misbehavior. Teachers are commonly held responsible and students as "victims" because of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status.

Female   I have no concerns where it relates to those characteristics simply because "all" students can learn.

Female   The racial, ethnic and socio-economic concerns, is that all students can learn, the following above may not play a part in their learning if a student really want to be successful in his/her education.

Female   I don't necessarily have concerns because I seek out chances to learn about cultures and how to interact with them in society and classroom settings.

In reviewing the responses of both male and female respondents, male teacher responses were more focused on their roles as teachers. Male responses were less student- specific to individual student needs. Female responses included language characteristic of high degrees of efficacy. Teacher efficacy has been identified as one of the most important belief systems for teachers in terms of the effects on behavior (Collier, 2005). These teachers tend to view their work as important, set high expectations and take personal responsibility for student learning (Collier, 2005). Developing caring relationships is a tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy and can be demonstrated though high expectations (Pang, 2007).

Teachers Negative Perceptions of School Environment

Male   The use of street language as a social way of talking in hallways and classes

Male   I am concerned that certain racial/ethnic groups are not required to adopt certain culture. It is acceptable for some students of different cultures to react inappropriately because that is their culture.

Female   Making sure students can get along or at least respect one another's differences.

Female   How do we address the situation of students calling each other by names that are generally considered racial slurs if used by someone of another ethnicity?

There were similar perceptions of school climate by both male and female teachers. These teachers expressed sentiments of discomfort with the atmosphere in these urban middle schools. Positive school climate generates positive student outcomes and teacher satisfaction (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Culturally responsive pedagogy emphasizes the importance of a safe nurturing environment were learning can take place (Gay, 2010).

Teachers Devalue Students' Home and Family Environment

Male   Poorer parents are less involved in their children's education.

Male   That kids do not have vision beyond their circumstances.

Male   The socio-economic concern I have as it relates to my role as a teacher is that my students aren't financially able to afford everything they need to be successful at school.

Female   Low socio-economic culture in itself faces a lot of challenges in school. The students are still in "survival" mode when they come to school and bring baggage which is difficult to put aside.

Female   My biggest concern is the home life of the students. Because I do not know what goes on at home all the time, it is difficult to understand a student's behavior. (Maybe they need a hug instead of a lecture sometimes)

Female   1.) Not knowing the latest meaning behind the newest slang terminology 2.) not knowing about students (on probations, been incarcerated, hospitalization).

Female   I'm a Spanish teacher who is not Hispanic. Some parents who are Hispanic refuse to talk to me since I'm not Hispanic and that really chaps my hide.

In contrasting male and female perspectives, overall they held similar views related to the home environments of their urban students. Both male and female teachers focused on what they perceived as lacking in the homes of their students. Female teachers had more to say about language barriers between students and the school. Those barriers include the inability to communicate with parents who do not speak the same language. Male teachers did not respond to language as a barriers or a concern. Studies have linked the importance of language congruency between home and school for student achievement (Au & Jordan, 1981).

Years of Experience

Eighty-seven of the teachers who participated in the study indicated they had over 10 years teaching experience, while 57 had less than seven years of experience. These are direct quotes that exemplify pertinent concerns from veteran and novice teachers alike.

What Teachers Believe About Their Ability To Teach All Children

Veteran Teacher	All students should be given a chance to develop and grow in the reaching of ethnic customs and their traditions.
Veteran Teacher	All students need opportunities to be successful.
Novice Teacher	I have no concerns as to the student's racial, ethnic, and/or socio-economic status as to whether I expect and believe he/she can learn.
Novice Teacher	I don't necessarily have concerns because I seek out chances to learn about cultures and how to interact with them in society and classroom settings.

According to teacher responses based on years of experience, both veteran and novice teachers commented that they had no concerns and believed all students could

learn. The issue of language as a barrier was a concern for novice teachers more often than for veteran teachers.

Teachers Negative Perceptions of School Environment

Veteran Teacher	My racial, ethnic concerns related to my concerns for my nation. In my 20+ years as a teacher, I do not feel there has been a great deal of improvement between some races. While my colleagues are compatible regardless of race, I don't see my students being as agreeable.
Veteran Teacher	Student should not be allowed to use culture as an excuse for failure.
Veteran Teacher	I often have to make sure that if I have students who are influenced by gangs that they aren't seated by an offensive gang member from another culture.
Veteran Teacher	Students from other countries with lack of educational background knowledge and are placed in grades according to age instead of knowledge.
Novice Teacher	Sometimes I feel as though the numeric minorities (students who are minorities based on %'s within the district) are not supported or encouraged as much as ethnic groups commonly referred to as minorities.
Novice Teacher	Kids referring to each other racially inappropriately.

The comparison of teacher responses related to school climate did not appear to be influenced by years of experience. Both veteran and novice teachers exhibited similar aversion for the school climate attributed to the cultural context of urban students. Positive exchanges between teachers, students and other members of the school community enables all members of the school community to perform at optimum levels (Gay, 2006).

Teachers Devalue Students' Home and Family Environment

Veteran Teacher   My only concern is the socio-economic factor which I feel
                   leaves children coming from deprived backgrounds seriously
                   unprepared for the educational setting.

Veteran Teacher   My socio-economic, racial/ethnic concern is students who do not
                   come to school ready to learn. Many do not get a good night's rest
                   as well as eat breakfast before their first class. I think more should
                   be done to address those two issues: rest for a brain to learn, and a
                   nourished body ready to learn.

Novice Teacher   I'm a Spanish teacher who is not Hispanic. Some parents
                   who are Hispanic refuse to talk to me since I'm not Hispanic
                   and that really chaps my hide.

Novice Teacher   None, except I don't like that I can't speak Spanish to my Spanish
                   speaking parents.

Both veteran and novice teachers expressed their concerns related to the family

and the home. Valuing the life experiences of the home is a major component of

culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000). Students sense when their home life is not

valued and respond in ways that are not often beneficial to their academic success. There

was a general consensus that home environments were deficient. Language spoken in the

home was perceived as a barrier regardless of level of teaching experience.

Ethnicity

Of the 144 teachers participating in the study, 64 self identified as European

American. The remaining 80 identified as African American, Hispanic American, Native

American, Arab American, Asian Pacific Islander, Bi-Racial, and Other. Responses

below are presented in two categories, European American and Ethnic minority groups

combined.

What Teachers Believe About Their Ability To Teach All Children

European American   I wish we were not accountable for the racial subgroups that

	fall below 2% of the population. One kid can sink you. Other than that, socio-economically, I wish educators were better compensated.
European American	The teacher is not in a position to change basic educational shortcomings and turn them into positive action.
European American	All students need opportunities to be successful.
European American	None, the more I know about each student the better I can help them learn, i.e. socio-economic level etc.
European American	If a student comes from a family that values education, 98% of the time the student will care about education and do well in school. That is the only concern I have. (Why is this survey so racist?)
African American	The concerns I have are incorporating more diverse material in the curriculum and teaching students to be more respectful toward cultures that are different from theirs.
African American	The racial, ethnic and socio-economic concerns, is that all students can learn, the following above may not play a part in their learning if a student really want to be successful in his/her education.
African American	I have no concerns as to the student's racial, ethnic, and/or socio-economic status as to whether I expect and believe he/she can learn.
African American	I have no concerns where it relates to those characteristics simply because "all" students can learn.
African American	The racial, ethnic and socio-economic concerns, is that all students can learn, the following above may not play a part in their learning if a student really want to be successful in his/her education.

European American teachers, in particular male teachers, expressed concerns regarding their ability to teach students in "subgroups" or make a difference in education. Female European American teachers did not however express the same type

of concerns. Teachers of Color responded in terms of their ability to teach children

regardless of race/ethnicity or socio economic status. These challenges did not appear to

be a barrier for teaching. In addition, these teachers held high expectations for students

regardless of race/ethnic or socio economic concerns.

Teachers Negative Perceptions of School Environment

European American	Student should not be allowed to use culture as a excuse for failure.
European American	Students who display racial bias.
European American	Sometimes I feel as though the numeric minorities (students who are minorities based on %'s within the district) are not supported or encouraged as much as ethnic groups commonly referred to as minorities.
African American	I often have to make sure that if I have students who are influenced by gangs that they aren't seated by an offensive gang member from another culture.
African American	Making sure students can get along or at least respect one another's differences.
African American	The use of street language as a social way of talking in hallways and classes.
African American	Not enough support/ resources given to meet the needs of students from various ethnicities, races & SES.
African American	My concern along racial and ethnic lines is to encourage a spirit of cooperation and community among diverse groups of students.

Both European American and Teachers of Color responded in ways that painted

the school culture in a negative light. The tolerance of language that should not be used

in the context of school was a concern for both groups of teachers. In addition, one

European American teacher was concerned for students who were not minorities in large

but found themselves to be a minority in their school setting. African American teachers'
responses were directed toward issues that would create a more culturally respected
school climate. Positive school climate is important for teachers and students; students
have fewer behavior problems and less emotional problems in a supportive school
climate. Liu and Ramsey (2008) reported that stress from poor work conditions greatly
influence teacher job satisfaction. Teachers who are dissatisfied display lower
commitments and are more likely to leave the profession (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). These
issues can be especially harmful for urban students. The school climate within urban
middle schools participating in this study, according to the teacher responses, was
predominately negative.

Teachers Devalue Students' Home and Family Environment

European American   My biggest concern is the home life of the students. Because
                    I do not know what goes on at home all the time, it is difficult
                    to understand a student's behavior. (Maybe they need a hug
                    instead of a lecture sometimes).

European American   Poorer parents are less involved in their children's education.

European American   My only concern is the socio-economic fact which I feel
                    leaves children coming from deprived backgrounds
                    seriously unprepared for the educational setting.

European American   My only concern is the socio-economic facto which I feel
                    leaves children coming from deprived backgrounds seriously
                    unprepared for the educational setting.

Arab American   I am afraid that students with a lower socioeconomic class are
                    in general less formal and polite.

Asian American   Low socio-economic culture in itself faces a lot of challenges
                    in school. The students are still in "survival" mode when they
                    come to school and bring baggage which is difficult to put aside.

Largely, teacher responses were not affirming of their students' home environments. African American teachers responses were in line with a higher degree of efficacy, that is, they believed they could teach students regardless of the conditions. Culturally responsive pedagogy calls on teachers to be affirming of students' home life. Teacher should create relationships so decisions are not based on stereotypes and bias judgments.

Findings Related to Study Two

What is your greatest behavioral management concern as you reflect on your professional responsibilities and the learners you serve?

As teachers reflected and documented their behavioral management concerns, two major themes emerged. Themes related to challenging student behaviors and support. These themes were analyzed based on the survey demographics of gender, years of experience and ethnicity.

Gender

There were 39 males and 105 females who responded to the survey. There were 22 responses from male teachers highlighting concerns related to challenging student behavior, and 10 to support. There were 57 responses from females highlighting concerns related to challenging student behaviors and, 31 to support. These are direct quotes that illustrate salient concerns from male and female teachers.

Teachers Find the Behaviors of Students to be Challenging

Male Teacher   I want my children to learn. I do not want anyone, student
                      or otherwise to jeopardize that opportunity. Disruption of
                      instruction through talking w/o permission, out of seat or
                      bothering others causes students to lose the chance to learn.

Male Teacher	My greatest behavioral management concern that I have is mainly unwanted talking that cause distractions in my classroom.
Male Teacher	Getting students to want to learn.
Male Teacher	Talking—not engaged—class size.
Female Teacher	My greatest behavioral concern is students are not respecting authority. Students should be taught to respect adults and that is students of all ethnic backgrounds.
Female Teacher	Keeping the students interested.
Female Teacher	My greatest behavioral management concern is how to maintain consistency in discipline while maintaining an instructional focus.

Both male and female teachers' behavioral concerns were reflective of a need for strategies for student engagement and classroom management skills. Male teachers did not express concerns regarding altercations or bulling whereas female teachers did express this concern.

Teachers Do Not Feel Supported

Male Teacher	I don't feel like I always have the support of parents or administrators.
Male Teacher	I think the students should be held more accountable for their behavior and actions in the school. I feel like the teachers are being blamed for the way the students are acting.
Female Teacher	There is no little discipline support from the assistant principals. Many students would rather go to the office than take the punishments available to the teachers, because they know that there will be no repercussions in the office.
Female Teacher	My biggest behavioral management concern is parental support.
Female Teacher	Consistency across the board. If rules are established they should be followed with no one being exempt.

Female Teacher   Consistency between teachers is my greatest behavioral management plan. If one teacher has high expectations and another teacher doesn't, how do the students know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.

In the area of support, both male and female teachers responded expressing a need for consistent support from administrators and parents. Both male and female teachers' responses indicated the need for greater support in implementing discipline consistently.

Years of Experience

Teachers Find the Behaviors of Students to be Challenging

Veteran Teacher   My greatest behavioral management concern is the few kids in my classes that aren't considerate of others and don't seem to be concerned about their own educational success

Veteran Teacher   That kids don't care how they behave in class. It is more important for them to show out to their peers. To show disrespect and disrupt the learning process.

Novice Teacher   I really don't have any major behavioral management concern. Maybe getting the students motivated since some of them don't value education.

Novice Teacher   Off task due to poor attention spans

Interestingly, the findings were consistent, with no noticeable differences in how teachers responded regarding behavioral management concerns regardless of their years of experience. In other words, despite having more than ten years experience teachers with as little as 1 year experience had similar behavioral management concerns.

Teachers Do Not Feel Supported

Veteran Teacher   I feel the system as it currently exists does not have

	responses necessary to address behavior issues that interfere with the learning process.
Veteran Teacher	Consistent parental involvement from students' guardians to reinforce positive behaviors at school.
Novice Teacher	Parent involvement.
Novice Teacher	Many of the students that I teach do not have behavioral management at home. This causes a problem at school when they are corrected.

Support from parents and administration was a great concern for both novice and veteran teachers. Novice teachers mentioned the need smaller classes more than veteran teachers. Veteran teachers needed support from administration as they handled their own management challenges. The veteran teachers were more focused on discipline.

Ethnicity

Of the 144 teachers participating in the study, 64 self identified as European American. The remaining 80 identified as African American, Hispanic American, Native American, Arab American, Asian Pacific Islander, Bi-Racial, and Other.

Teachers Find the Behaviors of Students to be Challenging

European American	The short attention span and lack of focus of teenagers. They take excuse to talk and then usually miss instruction.
European American	Lack of interest in learning & grades.
European American	Kids lack motivation to learn.
African American	My biggest concern is that I would not see how disrespectful students were to each other.
Other	Insolence. How do we deal with the student who stubbornly disagrees with directives & "loudly" argues with you stating that, he/she does not have to comply.

Teachers Do Not Feel Supported

European American   We are not longer allowed to discipline. There are no
                       consequences for bad behavior.

European American   My greatest behavioral management concern is not being
                       able to reach parents of some of my students. Often, the phones
                       have been disconnected or numbers have changed.

African American   My greatest behavioral management concern is times
                       when little or nothing is done by administration to
                        address a student that continually defies the system.
                       Parents have been addressed, student know what's
                       expected but continues to buck the system. The team
                       has assessed the problem and still nothing changes
                       for the student.

African American   Consistent parental involvement from students'
                       guardians to reinforce positive behaviors at school.

Challenging student behavior and support were key concerns for both European

American teachers and Teachers of Color. Both groups expressed concerns regarding

respect, disruptions, and disengagement as behavioral management concerns. It should

be notes that European teachers used the word lack on numerous occasions to define

their students. Surprisingly, teachers of Color also used deficit terms. Because the

teachers of Color were grouped together, the Asian American concerns regarding value

for education was included as part of the responses from teachers of color.

Concerns

The initial studies reported a resistance to taking the survey. Teachers were not

enthusiastic, some chose to voice their opinion about the survey. They appeared to be

more resistant to the question regarding race/ethnicity and socio economic status than

the question regarding behavior management. These 5 teachers (3.4%) of the respondents

indicated that the survey questions were insulting or racist, and the same individuals

made comments regarding the significance of survey. Their strong language is worthy of

noting.

Teacher Response: I don't have any and I feel that this survey is inappropriate and
                     does not include all the cultures we currently serve.

Teacher Response: This survey is an insult to the field of education. This is poorly
                     worded and a waste of our time.

Teacher Response: I am insulted by this survey – I feel like I've wasted my time and
                     the district's time.

Teacher Response: Many of the questions on this survey annoy me. I dislike lumping
                     people into "groups". I've taught many different races, and people
                     should be treated as individuals!

Teacher Response: Why is this survey so racist?

The above responses demonstrate defensiveness, confusion and anger about the

rationale for the questions. The teachers may have found responding to the question both

challenging and complex. In addition, 15 (10.4 %) of the surveys were returned with no

response on the written portion. An additional 38 (26.3 %) of the participants indicated

they had no concerns. Not responding to a question can be interpreted in a variety of

ways, including discomfort, denial, overlooked, or from outrage of the survey itself.

Teachers would rather not see color

Although color blindness was not a major theme, teachers responded with ideas

of color blindness. This notion of color blindness is not supported by culturally

responsive pedagogy. In a racist society, to not see color can perhaps be an attempt to

not see the person and the unique qualities and characteristics of that person. These are

direct quotes from teachers.

Teacher Response   None, well none that I can think of it. I am concerned that educators are putting too much focus on multiculturalism & should be focusing on the basics.

Teacher Response   I am sick of the constant color discrimination being made in everything we do. We will <u>never</u> be rid of racism as long <u>as we</u> continually draw attention to differences, strengths, weaknesses, etc. of each race. I wish the word "race" or "ethnicity" could be stricken from the English language – then maybe we can all just live our lives as human beings.

Teacher Response   I want to always maintain a state of "color blindness" and I want my students to develop the same characteristic. I want to model equality of students and that each student is important to me.

Summary

A major finding of the study revealed that teachers were inadequately prepared to manage behavioral issues in urban classroom regardless of years of teaching experience, gender or ethnicity. This is a glaring shortcoming on the part of teachers and administrators. Teachers redirected their behavioral management, race, ethnic and socio economic concerns to the family and home environment.

Of general concern with the responses given by teachers, is the way they express how they perceive their students. The language teachers used in responding to the questions was steeped in the deficit model. Their responses indicated they have formulated stereotypical judgments against their students. In responding to the questions, the teachers did not take the opportunity to share their needs as teachers in helping the children, instead they focused more on blaming the children, the administrators and the parents. Again, the teachers' rationale have justified their theories of the deficit model and fit in with critical race theory and the implications in education. Many of the responses pointed to the students in terms of weakness, lack of motivation

and interest in learning. Their responses reflected tainted attitudes and beliefs about their urban middle school students, resulting in an over-arching deficit theme.

Another way in which the teachers highlighted their attitudes and beliefs towards their students is by the lack of responses to questions on the survey. This lack of response or resistance is significant and warrants mention. It suggests discomfort with responding to issues of race, ethnicity and socio economic status. Additionally, by not responding, teachers avoid difficult issues and conversation, seek to remain colorblind and perpetuate the status quo. In effect operating in a state of "dysconsciousness," (King, 1991). Furthermore, for the questions to which they offered responses, a greater number of teachers replied that they did not have any concerns related to race/ethnicity and socio economic status than did teachers with behavioral concerns. In addition, most teachers neglected to address the components of the questions directed at their individual roles and responsibilities. These selected responses speak directly to teacher efficacy.

There was evidence of varying degrees of teacher efficacy according to gender, years of service and ethnicity. For example female teachers with over 10 years teaching experience expressed higher levels of teacher efficacy. This is in severe contrast to their male counterparts whose responses to teacher efficacy were very negative. Fascinatingly, of the five European American male teachers with significant teaching experience, four of them held extremely negative views. On the other hand, ethnic minorities and females appeared to have higher teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy is a well documented topic in the research literature; the findings from this study support the current literature.

Recommendations, Implications for Further Research

Based on the findings from this study, a recommendation that appears to be warranted is professional development. The teachers would benefit from personal and professional development in the areas of teacher efficacy and socio economic issues. Further development in culturally responsive classroom management and culturally responsive pedagogy would be helpful for urban middle school teachers and their students. Because culturally responsive teaching is multidimensional, and holistic in its approach it entails curriculum, classroom climate, learning context, instructional techniques, assessments and student- teacher relationships.

In order for them to fully develop themselves as educators, these middle school urban teachers should take pause to critically reflect on their cultural beliefs, attitudes and assumptions. This reflective self discovery should include a heightened awareness of issues related to diversity and inclusion in their classrooms. In order to advance their proficiency in teaching, they should develop expertise in the Dimensions of African American Culture (Boykin, 1983). This practical knowledge will aid in engagement with their culturally diverse students. Furthermore, as teachers charged with the responsibility to teach urban students, it is essential for them to develop expertise in designing curricular which considers multiple learning styles and the specific learning environment (Kincheloe & Hayes, 2007).

Several significant themes emerged from this study that present an opportunity for further study. For instance, a more comprehensive examination of themes related to how teachers perceive the way in which urban students value education. The implication

of color blindness is another theme that warrants further study. Instead of looking at the children they teach from a deficit model, teachers must begin to operate from an empowerment model and look to ways they are able to teach their students.

Administrators should seek ways to support and empower teachers. This support can be in terms of professional development that provides strategies for culturally responsive classroom management techniques. It can also mean supporting teachers with consistent disciplinary measures that are established and understood by the student body at the onset of the school year. Administrators can seek ways to better support their teachers in terms of classroom size. Administrators can serve as critical conduits between the parent and teacher in terms of defining and seeking support from middle school student's parents. Teachers must share with administrators what support looks like for middle school.

Conclusion

Teacher perceptions of African American students in my current urban setting were predominately negative. These perceptions ran the gamut from social, personal and academic interactions with their students. There was compelling evidence to suggest that culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally responsive classroom management are critical to the success of urban students. To ensure success of urban students, teachers should dispel stereotypes, biases, and prejudices regarding their African American students. This would require enhanced knowledge of cultural responsiveness, the practice of practicing critical reflection and transformation of attitudes, beliefs and assumptions about African American students.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Purpose of Study

The overarching goal of the present work was to gain insight into the beliefs of teachers about their African American students. This initial study began in 2005 when the selected urban district was cited because African American students were over-represented in special education. The administrators of the district sought to overcome this problem by seeking a better understanding of why their teachers referred African Americans to special education at alarming rates. This information would be used for the purpose of designing professional development sessions that would meet the needs of the teachers in the district by offering them strategies and research based on best pedagological practices, to meet the needs of all children. The Cultural Awareness and Beliefs Inventory, (CABI) developed by Webb-Johnson and Carter (2005), was used to measure the perceptions and attitudes of urban teachers' cultural awareness and beliefs.

Summary

The present work is comprises of three qualitative studies. For the first study, data was drawn from responses of middle school teachers addressing the research question: How do middle school teachers describe their racial, ethnic and/or socio-economic concerns as related to their roles as teachers of African American students? For the second study, data was drawn from responses of middle school teachers addressing the research question: How do middle school teachers describe their greatest behavioral management concerns related to their professional responsibilities and their

African American learners? The third utilized a constant comparative methodology to examine two reflective questions on the CABI.

Discussion of Findings

This section presents the findings of each study accordingly.

Study One

The themes which emerged from the first study include: (a) teachers devalue students' home and family environment; (b) teachers' beliefs about their ability to teach all children; (c) teachers have negative perceptions of the school environment; (d) teachers and students have a cultural mismatch; and (e) teachers would rather not see color. In addition, there were concerns worthy of noting about the integrity of the survey. These themes support the current literature on teacher beliefs about their African American students and other students of color.

Study Two

The themes which emerged from the second study include: (a) teachers find the behaviors of students to be challenging; and, (b) teachers do not feel supported by administrators or parents. Challenging student behaviors were classified into three subthemes. These subthemes are disruptions, disrespect and disengagement. Support was as a major theme with administrative and parental support serving as sub-themes. A major finding was that teachers were not prepared to handle the complexities of an urban middle school classroom.

Study Three

In the third study, a constant comparative method (Strauss, 1987) was used to analyze the teachers' written responses which constitute data for this study. I followed procedures modeling three types of comparisons for analytical approach introduced by Boeije (2002). The types of comparisons included (a) a comparison within a single group, gender comparisons; (b) comparison between persons who share the similar experience, a comparison based on years of experience (veteran teachers with 7 or more years and novice teachers, less than 7 years); and (c) comparisons between different perspectives, comparisons based on ethnicity. In summary, themes used for analysis from two previous studies are utilized to compare responses across gender, years of experience and ethnicity for two separate research questions. The first constant comparative analysis draws from study one's findings while the second constant comparative analysis draws from study two's findings.

<div align="center">

Implications for Practice

</div>

The findings suggest a pervasive use and subscription to the deficit model by the urban middle school teachers. In the deficit model, assumptions are made based on genetic or cultural differences; these children are viewed as inferior or have a deficit to overcome (Carter, 2003). The resiliency model which focuses on strengths, theories of development, models of success and achievement and the positive characteristics in each child is a superior model for practitioners. Based on the findings from this study, one recommendation that appears to be warranted is professional development in the areas of cultural responsiveness, teacher efficacy and socio economic issues. Professional

development that disrupts teachers' beliefs and teaching practices, enabling teachers to provide instruction that reflects high expectations. There is also a critical need for professional development for administrators, coordinators and assistant principals to ensure support for teachers in culturally responsive pedagogies.

Implications for Policy

Indeed, the curricula of teacher preparation programs should be holistic encompassing cultural awareness, culturally responsive pedagogy, and ethics of care. To this end, teachers should be expected to fulfill continuing education requirements specifically geared towards culturally responsive pedagogy. Further, deliberate efforts to recruit teachers from diverse groups which better represent student populations should be endorsed.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several significant themes emerged from this study that present an opportunity for further study. For instance, a more comprehensive examination of themes related to how teachers perceive the way in which urban students value education. The implication of color blindness is another theme that warrants further study. The implications from this study's findings suggest that further research in additional areas would be beneficial. These include: (a) a study on the third qualitative question on the CABI. What leadership concerns do you have as it relates to your ISD? ; (b) replicate this study replacing African American with Hispanic in the CABI; (c) replicate this study for elementary and high school teachers' within the district.

In summary, the results of these studies are thought- provoking. They provide profound insight into the perceptions and beliefs of urban middle school teachers. These jarring insights expose a deeply entrenched deficit mindset that permeates society and the public school system.

REFERENCES

Aguirre, A., & Turner, J. H. (2004). *American ethnicity: The dynamics and consequences of discrimination*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Alder, N. (2002). Interpretations of the meaning of care: Creating caring relationships in urban middle school classrooms. *Urban Education, 37*(2), 241-266.

Aloia, G. F., Knuston, R., Minner, S. H., & Von Seggen, M. (1980). Physical perceptions of handicapped children. *Mental Retardation, 18,* 85-87.

Anderman, A. M., Maehr, M. L., & Midgley, C. (1999). Declining motivation after the transition to middle school: Schools can make a difference. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 32*, 131-147.

Anderson, J. D., (1988). *The education of blacks in the south, 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Anyon, J. (1980). Social class and the hidden curriculum of work. *Journal of Education, 162*(1), 67-92.

Anyon, J. (2005). *Radical possibilities : Public policy, urban education, and a new social movement*. New York: Routledge.

Apple, M. (1996). Power, meaning, and identity: Critical sociology of education in the united states. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 17*(2), 125-144.

Ashton, P. T., & Webb, R. B., (1986). *Making a difference : Teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement*. New York: Longman.

Au, K., & Jordan, C. (1981). Teaching reading to Hawaiian children: Finding a culturally appropriate solution. In H. Trueba, G. Guthrie & K. Au (Eds.), *Culture and the bilingual classroom. Studies in classroom ethnography* (pp. 139-152). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Banks, J. A. (2006). Improving race relations in schools: From theory and research to practice. *Journal of Social Issues, 62*(3), 607-614.

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (2004). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Benz, C. R., Bradley, L., Alderman, M. K., & Flowers, M. A. (1992). Personal teaching efficacy: Developmental relationships in education. *Journal of Educational Research, 85*(5), 274-286.

Blanson, A. L., (2006). *A case study of teacher retention at one urban school district.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/3820/etd-tamu-2005A-EDCI-Blanson.pdf?sequence=1

Boeije, H. (2002). A purposeful approach to the constant comparative method in the analysis of qualitative interviews. *Quality & Quantity, 36*, 391-409.

Bondy, E., Ross, D., Gallingane, C., & Hambacher, E. (2007). Creating environments of success and resilience. *Urban Education, 42*(4), 560-603.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture. Sage studies in social and educational change, volume 5.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Boutte, G. (1999). *Multicultural education : Raising consciousness*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Boykin, A. W. (1983). The academic performance of Afro-American children. In J. T. Spence (Ed.), *Achievement and achievement motives :Psychological and sociological approaches* (pp. 324-371). San Francisco: W.H. Freeman.

Boykin, A. W. (2000). The talent development model of schooling: Placing students at promise for academic success. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR), 5*(1-2), 3-25.

Boykin, A., Albury, A., Tyler, K., Hurley, E., Bailey, C., & Miller, O. (2005a). Culture-based perceptions of academic achievement among low-income elementary students. *Cultural Diversity Ethnic Minority Psychology, 11*(4), 339-350.

Boykin, A. W., Tyler, K. M., & Miller, O. (2005b). In search of cultural themes and their expressions in the dynamics of classroom life. *Urban Education, 40*(5), 521-549.

Brown, D. F. (2003). Urban teachers' use of culturally responsive management strategies. *Theory into Practice, 42*(4), 277-282.

Brown, G. (2004). Teachers' conceptions of assessment: Implications for policy and professional development. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 11*(3), 301-318.

Carter, N. (Ed.). (2003). *Convergence or divergence: Alignment of standards, assessment, and issues of diversity.* Washington, DC: AACTE Publications.

Carter, N., Webb-Johnson, G., & Knight, S. (2005). Teaching all children: Making it work. Unpublished workbook, Department of Education, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

Charles, C. M. (2000). *The synergetic classroom : Joyful teaching and gentle discipline*. New York: Longman.

Chaskin, R., & Rauner, D. (1995). Youth and caring. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76* (9), 667-676.

Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. (2005). Who teaches whom? Race and the distribution of novice teachers. *Economics of Education Review, 24*(4), 377-392.

Cochran-Smith, M., Davis, D., & Fries, K. (2004). Multicultural teacher education: Research, practice, and policy. In J. A. Banks, & C. A. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (931-967). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Coleman, J. S., United States. Office of Education., & Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. (1995). *Equality of educational opportunity (Coleman) study (EEOS), 1966*. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Collier, M. D. (2005). An ethic of caring: The fuel for high teacher efficacy. *Urban Review, 37*(4), 351-359.

Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. L.(2008). *Basics of qualitative research : Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Qualitative inquiry and research design : Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks,CA: Sage.

Dagenhart, D. B., O'Connor, K. A., Petty, T. M., & Day, B. D. (2005). Giving teachers a voice. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 41*(3), 108-111.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8*(1).

Delgaddo, R. (1995). *Critical race theory : The cutting edge*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Delgaddo, R., & Stefancic, J. (2007). Symposium - legal information and the development of American law: Further thinking about the thoughts of Robert C. Berring - Why do we ask the same questions? The triple helix dilemma revisited (2007-18). *Law Library Journal., 99*(2), 307--328.

Delpit, L. D. (1995). *Other people's children : Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: New Press: Distributed by W.W. Norton.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dewey, J., (1933). *How we think, a restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. Boston; D.C. Heath and Co.

Diamond, J. B., Randolph, A., & Spillane, J. P. (2004). Teachers' expectations and sense of responsibility for student learning: The importance of race, class, and organizational habitus. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 35*(1), 75-98.

Dixson, A. D., & Rousseau, C. K. (2005). And we are still not saved: Critical race theory in education ten years later. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 7-27.

Douglas, B., Lewis, C., Douglas, A., Scott, M., & Garrison-Wade, D. (2008) The impact of White teachers on the academic achievement of Black students: An exploratory qualitative analysis. *Educational Foundations, 122* (1-2), 47-62.

Eaker-Rich, D., & Van Galen, J. (1996). *Caring in an unjust world: Negotiating borders and barriers in schools.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Eccles, J., Midgley, C., & Wigfield, A. (1993). Development during adolescence: The impact of stage-environment fit on young adolescents' experiences in schools and in families. *The American Psychologist, 48*, 90.

Eccles, J. S., & Harold, R. (1996). *Family involvement in children's and adolescents' schooling.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Ellwood, C. A. (1901). The theory of imitation in social psychology. *American Journal of Sociology, 6*(6), 721-741.

Emmer, E., & Gerwels, M. C. (2006). Classroom management in middle and high school classrooms. In C. M. Evertson, & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management research, practice, and contemporary issues* (pp. 343-370)

Englund, M., Luckner, A., Whaley, G. & Egeland, B. (2004). Children's achievement in early elementary school: Longitudinal effects of parental involvement, expectations, and quality of assistance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *96*(4), 723-730.

Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships : Preparing educators, and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Fang, Z. (1996). A review of research on teacher beliefs and practices. *Educational Research, 38* (1), 47-66.

Feagin, J. R., & Feagin, C. B. (2003). *Racial and ethnic relations*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Feldlaufer, H., Midgley, C., & Eccles, J. S. (1988). Student, teacher, and observer perceptions of the classroom environment before and after transition to junior high school. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 8*, 133-136.

Ford, D. Y. (1996). *Reversing underachievement among gifted black students : Promising practices and programs*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Fultz, M. (1995). African American teachers in the south, 1890-1940: Powerlessness and the ironies of expectations and protest. *History of Education Quarterly., 35*(4), 401-422.

Garrison-Wade, D., & Lewis, C. (2006). Tips for school principals and teachers helping black students achieve. In J. Landsman, & C. W. Lewis (Eds.), *White teachers, diverse classrooms: A guide to building inclusive schools. promoting high expectations, and eliminating racism* (pp. 150-161). Sterling, VA: Stylus Pub.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching : Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2006). Connections between classroom management and culturally responsive teaching. In C. M. Evertson, & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice and contemporary issues* (pp. 1346)

Gay, G. (2010). Acting on beliefs in teacher education for cultural diversity. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(1-2), 143-152.

Gibson, S., & Dembo, M. H. (1984). Teacher efficacy: A construct validation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 76*(4), 569-82.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L., (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory; Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing

Good, T. L., & Brophy, J. E. (1987). *Looking in the classroom*. New York: Harper & Row.

Gordon, J. (2000). *The color of teaching*. New York: Routledge.

Green, R. L., & Griffore, R. J. (1980). The impact of standardized testing on minority students. *Journal of Negro Education, 49*(3), 238-252.

Grolnick, W., & Benjet, C. (1997). Predictors of parent involvement in children's schooling. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*(3), 538-548.

Gutman, L., & Midgley, C. (2000). The role of protective factors in supporting the academic achievement of poor African American students during the middle school transition. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 29*(2), 223-249.

Haberman, M. (2005). Personnel perparation and urban schools. In O (Ed.), *Urban education for the 21st century* (Obiakor,F.; Beachum F. ed.,). Springfield, Ill.: C.C. Thomas.

Haberman, M., & Rickards, W. (1990). Urban teachers who quit: Why they leave and what they do. *Urban Education, 25*(3), 297-303.

Henry, P. M. (2010). *Cultural socialization process of effective educators of students of color in an elementary school district.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/ETD-TAMU-2940/HENRY-DISSERTATION.pdf?sequence=1

Hornby, G. & Witte, C. (2010). Parental involvement in secondary schools in New Zealand: Implications for school psychologist. *School Psychology International, 31*(5), 495-508.

Howard, G. R. (1999). *We can't teach what we don't know : White teachers, multiracial schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Howard, T. C. (2003). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Ingredients for critical teacher reflection. *Theory into Practice, 42*(3), 195-202.

Hoy, A. W., & Spero, R. B. (2005). Changes in teacher efficacy during the early years of teaching: A comparison of four measures. *Teaching and Teacher Education., 21*(4), 343-356.

Ingersoll, R. (2001). Deprofessionalizing the teaching profession: The problem of out-of-field teaching. *Educational Horizons, 80*(1), 28-31.

Irvine, J. J. (2003). *Educating teachers for diversity : Seeing with a cultural eye*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Irvine, J. J., & Armento, B. J. (2001). *Culturally responsive teaching : Lesson planning for elementary and middle grades*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Jencks, C., & Phillips, M. (1998). *The black-white test score gap*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Jones, E. E. (1990). *Interpersonal perception*. New York: W.H. Freeman.

Jones, F, & Jones, L.S. (2004) *Comprehensive classroom management: Creating positive learning environments* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Kaestle, C. F., & Foner, E. (1983). *Pillars of the republic : Common schools and American society, 1780-1860*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Ketter, J., & Lewis, C. (2001). Already reading texts and contexts: Multicultural literature in a predominantly white rural community. *Theory into Practice, 40*(3), 175-183.

Kincheloe, J. L., & Hayes, K. (2007). *Teaching city kids : Understanding and appreciating them*. New York: Peter Lang.

King, J. (1991). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and the miseducation of teachers. *The Journal of Negro Education, 60*(2), 133-146.

Klassen, R., & Chiu, M. (2010). Effects on teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction: Teacher gender, years of experience, and job stress. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*(3), 741-756.

Kober, N., & Center on Education Policy (2001). *It takes more than testing : Closing the achievement gap : A report of the center on education policy*. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy.

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York: Crown Pub.

Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation : The restoration of apartheid schooling in America*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Kukla-Acevedo, S. (2009). Leavers, movers, and stayers: The role of workplace conditions in teacher mobility decisions. *The Journal of Educational Research., 102*(6), 443-452.

Kunjufu, J. (1983). *Countering the conspiracy to destroy black boys*. Chicago: Afro-Am Pub. Co.

Kunjufu, J. (2001). *State of emergency : We must save African American males*. Chicago: African American Images.

Kunjufu, J. (2004). *Solutions for black America*. Chicago: African American Images.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998a). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 7-24.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998b). Teaching in dangerous times: Culturally relevant approaches to teacher assessment. *The Journal of Negro Education, 67*(3), 255-267.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Racialized discourses and ethnic epistemologies. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 257-277). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Landsman, J., & Lewis, C. W. (2006). But good intentions are not enough: Theoretical and philosophical relevance in teaching students of color. In J. Landsman, & C. W. Lewis (Eds.), *White teachers, diverse classrooms: A guide to building inclusive schools. promoting high expectations, and eliminating racism* (pp. 79-90). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publications.

Larke, P., Webb-Johnson, G., & Carter, N. (1996). Effective classroom management in culturally diverse classrooms: Strategies for educators. *Teacher Educators Journal, 6*(1), 42-55.

Lee-Bayha, J. & Harrison,T. (2002). Racial and ethnic achievement gap trends: Reversing the progress toward equity? *Educational Researcher, 31*(1), 3-12.

Lewis, C., James, M., Hancock, S., & Hill-Jackson, V. (2008). Framing African American students' success and failure in urban settings. *Urban Education, 43*(2), 127-153.

Lim, J. H. (2008). Double jeopardy: The compounding effects of class and race in school mathematics. *Equity Excellence in Education, 41*(1), 81-97.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Lui, X., & Ramsey, J. (2008). Teachers' job satisfaction: Analyses of the teacher follow-up survey in the united states for 2000-2001. (*Teaching and Teacher Education, 24* (5), 1173-1184.

Lubienski, S. & Shelley, M.C. (2003). *A Closer Look at U.S.Mathematics Instruction and Achievement: Examinations of Race and SES in a Decade of NAEP Data.,* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. (Chicago, IL, April21-25, 2003).

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.

McKee, J. B., (1993). *Sociology and the race problem : The failure of a perspective*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

McKenzie, K. & Scheurich, J. (2008). Teacher resistance to improvement of schools with diverse students: A critical naiveté in the scholarship on school change. *The International Journal of Leadership in Education (11)*2, 117-133.

McLeod, K., & Tanner, T. (2007). Transitioning diverse classrooms towards education equality: A new model of teacher dependence and independence. *The National Journal of Urban Education and Practice, 1*(1), 99-110.

Messick, S. (1995). Validity of psychological assessment: Validation of inferences from persons' responses and performances as scientific inquiry into score meaning. *American Psychologist, 50*(9), 741-49.

Michael-Chadwell, S. (2010). Examining the underrepresentation of underserved students in gifted programs from a transformational leadership vantage point. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted,* 34 (1), 99-130.

Milner, H. R. (2006). Classroom management in urban classrooms. In C. M. Evertson, & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice and contemporary issues* (pp. 1346). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates,

Miron, L. (2004). How do we locate resistance in urban schools? In J. L. Kincheloe, & S. R. Steinberg (Eds.), *19 urban questions: Teaching in the city* (pp. 85-97). New York: P. Lang.

Mirón, L. F. (1996). *The social construction of urban schooling : Situating the crisis*. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.

Mohatt, G., & Erickson, F. (1981). Cultural differences in teaching styles in an Odawa school; A sociolinguistic approach. In H. Trueba, G. Guthrie & K. Au (Eds.), *Culture*

and the bilingual classroom. studies in classroom ethnography (pp. 105-119). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2009). *Digest of educational statistics, 2009*. Washington, DC: Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Neal, L., McCray, A. Webb-Johnson, G., & Bridgest, S. (2003). The effects of African American movement styles on teachers' perceptions and reactions. *The Journal of Special Education, 37*(1), 49-57.

Noddings, N. (2002). *Educating moral people: A caring alternative to character education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Obenchain, K. M., & Taylor, S. S. (2005). Behavior management: Making it work in middle and secondary schools. *The Clearing House., 79*(1), 7-11.

Obiakor, F. E., & Beachum, F. D. (2005). *Urban education for the 21st century : Research, issues, and perspectives*. Springfield, IL: C.C. Thomas.

Ogbu, J. (2004). Collective identity and the burden of "acting white" in black history, community, and education. *The Urban Review, 36*(1), 1-35.

Overstreet, S., Devine, J., Bevans, K., & Efreom, Y. (2005). Predicting parental involvement in children's schooling within an economically disadvantaged African American sample. *Psychology in the Schools., 42*(1), 101-111.

Page, S., & Rosenthal, R. (1990). Sex and expectations of teachers and sex and race of students as determinants of teaching behaviors and student performance. *Journal of School Psychology, 28*, 119-131.

Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(3), 307-332.

Pang, V. O., (2007). *Multicultural education, a caring-centered, reflective approach*. Princeton, N.J.: Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic.

Patton, M. Q., & Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Pearce, S. (2005). *You wouldn't understand: Whtie teachers in multiethnic classrooms*. Staffordshire, UK: Trentham Books.

Pedota, P. (2007). Strategies for effective classroom management in the secondary setting. *Clearing House, 80*(4), 163-168.

Quiocho, A., & Rios, F. (2000). The power of their presence: Minority group teachers and schooling. *Review of Educational Research, 70*(4), 485-528.

Rimm-Kaufman, S. & Sawyer, B. (2004). Primary-grade teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, attitudes toward teaching, and discipline and teaching practice priorities in relation to the responsive classroom approach. *The Elementary School Journal,* 104(4), 321-341.

Riessman, C. K., (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Robertson, M. (2006). Why novice teachers leave. *Principal Leadership, 6*(8), 33-36.

Rochon, R., & Webb-Johnson, G., (2004). The power of a teacher. *Association of Colleges of Teacher Education Brief, 25*(7), 4-5.

Rokeach, M. (1968). The role of values in public opinion research. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 32*(4), 547-559.

Rosenholtz, S., & Simpson, C. (1990). Workplace conditions and the rise and fall of teachers' commitment. *Sociology of Education*, *63*(4) 241-257.

Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L.,. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom: Teacher expectation and pupils' intellectual development*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Rousseau, C., & Tate, W. F. (2003). No time like the present: Reflecting on equity in school mathematics. *Theory into Practice, 42*(3), 210-216.

Skrla, L., & Scheurich, J. J. (2001). Displacing deficit thinking in school district leadership. *Education and Urban Society, 33*(3), 235-259.

Solorzano, D., & Yosso, T. (2001). From racial stereotyping and deficit discourse toward a critical race theory in teacher education. *Multicultural Education, 9*(1), 2-8.

Sullivan, E. L. (2010). *A critical policy analysis the impact of zero tolerance on out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of students of color in the state of Texas by gender and school level.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/ETD-TAMU-1484/SULLIVAN-DISSERTATION.pdf?sequence=1

Talbert-Johnson, C. (2004). Structural inequities and the achievement gap in urban schools. *Education and Urban Society, 37*(1), 22-36.

Tejeda-Delgado, M.J., (2009). Teacher efficacy, tolerance, gender, and years of experience and special education referrals. *International Journal of Special Education, 24*(1), 112-119

Tenenbaum, H., & Ruck, M. (2007). Are teachers' expectations different for racial minority than for European American students? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(2), 253-273.

Trentham, L. (1985). Teacher efficacy and teacher competency ratings. *Psychology in the Schools, 22*(3), 343-352.

Tyack, D. B. (1974). *The one best system : A history of American urban education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tyack, D. B. (2003). *Seeking common ground : Public schools in a diverse society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Usher, E. L., & Pajares, F. (2006). Sources of academic and self-regulatory efficacy beliefs of entering middle school students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 31*(2), 125-141.

Valencia, R. R. (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking : Educational thought and practice*. Washington, DC: Falmer Press.

Vincent, C., & Ball, S. (2007). `Making up' the middle-class child: Families, activities and class dispositions. *Sociology, 41*(6), 1061-1077.

Walsh, F. (2006). Middle school focus,a middle school dilemma: Dealing with "I don't care". *American Secondary Education., 35*(1), 5-15.

Watson, D., Charner-Laird, M., Kirkpatrick, C. L., Szczesiul, S. A., & Gordon, P. J. (2006). Effective Teaching/Effective urban teaching: Grappling with definitions, grappling with difference. *Journal of Teacher Education., 57*(4), 395-409.

Webb-Johnson, G. (2002). Are schools ready for Joshua? Dimensions of African-American culture among students identified as having behavioral/emotional disorders. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 15*(6), 653-671.

Webb-Johnson, G., & Carter, N. (2007). Culturally responsive urban school leadership: Partnering to improve outcomes for African American learners. *National Journal of Urban Education and Practice. 1*(1), 77-98.

Weiner, L. (2003). Why is classroom management so vexing to urban teachers? *Theory into Practice, 42*(4), 305-312.

Weininger, E., Lareau, A., (2003). Translating Bourdieu into American context: The questions of social class and family-school relations. Poetics, 31, 375-402.

Weinstein, C., Curran, M., & Tomlinson-Clark, S. (2003). Culturally responsive classroom management: Awareness into action. *Theory into Practice, 42*(4), 269-276.

Welsing, F. C., (1991). *The isis (yssis) papers*. Chicago: Third World Press.

Whitaker, T., (2004). *What great teachers do differently : Fourteen things that matter most*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Wiggan, G. (2008). From opposition to engagement: Lessons from high achieving African American students. *Urban Review, 40*(5), 317-349.

Wiggins, R. A. (2007). The impact of a field immersion program on pre-service teachers' attitudes toward teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(5), 653-663.

Worthy, J. (2005). 'It didn't have to be so hard': The first years of teaching in an urban school. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (QSE), 18*(3), 379-398 .

APPENDIX A

TEACHER PERCEPTION SURVEY

Please give responses to the following survey using your scantron sheet. _Write only the name of your school on this sheet._   After writing the name of your school on this sheet, begin with question # 1 on the scantron sheet. Questions 1 – 11 are basic questions about yourself. Question # 12 starts the actual survey about your perceptions.

This survey will assist us in understanding your perceptions of our current challenge in meeting the needs of "all" learners in your ISD. This is a voluntary survey and it is your choice to participate. Your responses will assist in constructing staff development that will meet the unique and immediate concerns of the district. It is important that your responses be truthful. **Do not write your name, all information from individuals will be kept confidential.**

When completed, return the Survey and your scantron sheet to the designated person.

Write the name of your school here:

_____

Basic information – write on scantron sheet:

1. Gender
  A. Female
  B. Male

2. Type of Degree
  A. Bachelor's
  B. Master's
  C. Doctorate

3. Years of Teaching
  A. 1-11 month
  B. 1-3 years
  C. 4-6 years
  D. 7-9 years
  E. 10 or more years

4. Current Grade Level
  A. Pre-K- 1st grade
  B. 2nd grade
  C. 3rd grade
  D. 4th grade
  E. None of the above

5. Current Grade
  A. 5th grade
  B. 6th grade
  C. 7th grade
  D. 8th grade
  E. None of the above

6. Current Grade
  A. 9th grade
  B. 10th grade
  C. 11th grade
  D. 12th grade
  E. Multiple secondary

7. Certification
  A. Early Childhood Education
  B. Elementary

8. Certification
  A. Social Studies
  B. Mathematics

9. Certification
  A. Bilingual
  B. The Arts

C. English/LA/Reading   C. Special Education   C. Physical/Health Ed.
D. Science   D. Gifted/Talented   D. Technology
E. None of the above   E. None of the above   E. Other – not listed

10. Ethnicity

A. African American
B. Arab American
C. Asian American
D. Bi-racial American
E. None of the above

11. Ethnicity

A. European American
B. Hispanic American
C. Native American
D. Pacific Islander
E. Other – not listed

Answer the questions on the scantron sheet using the following scale:

(A) = Strongly Agree   (B) = Agree   (C)= Disagree   (D) Strongly Disagree

12. I feel supported by my building principal.	A	B	C	D
13. I feel supported by the administrative staff.	A	B	C	D
14. I feel supported by my professional colleagues.	A	B	C	D
15. I believe I have opportunities to grow professionally as I fulfill duties at my ISD.	A	B	C	D
16. I believe we spend too much time focusing on standardized tests.	A	B	C	D
17. I believe my contributions are appreciated by my colleagues.	A	B	C	D
18. I need more support in meeting the needs of my most challenging students.	A	B	C	D
19. I believe "all" students in my ISD are treated equitably regardless of race, culture, disability, gender or social economic status.	A	B	C	D
20. I believe my ISD families are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.	A	B	C	D
21. I believe my ISD families of African American students are supportive of our mission to effectively teach all students.	A	B	C	D
22. I believe the district has strong support for academic excellence from our surrounding community (civic, church, business).	A	B	C	D
23. I believe some students do not want to learn.	A	B	C	D
24. I believe teachers should be held accountable for effectively teaching students who live in adverse circumstances.	A	B	C	D
25. I believe there are factors beyond the control of teachers that cause student failure.	A	B	C	D
26. I believe the in-service training this past year assisted me in improving my teaching strategies.	A	B	C	D
27. I believe I am culturally responsive in my teaching behaviors.	A	B	C	D

28. I believe cooperative learning is an integral part of my
ISD teaching and learning philosophy.   **A   B   C   D**

29. I develop my lessons based on Texas Essential Knowledge
and Skills (TEKS).   **A   B   C   D**

30. I believe African American students consider performing
well in school as "acting White."   **A   B   C   D**

31. I believe African American students have more behavior
problems than other students.   **A   B   C   D**

32. I believe African American students are not as eager to
excel in school as White students.   **A   B   C   D**

33. I believe teachers engage in bias behavior in
the classroom.   **A   B   C   D**

34. I believe students who live in poverty are more
difficult to teach.   **A   B   C   D**

35. I believe African American students do not bring as
many strengths to the classroom as their White peers.   **A   B   C   D**

36. I believe students that are referred to special education
usually qualify for special education services in our school.   **A   B   C   D**

37. I believe it is important to identify with the racial groups of
the students I serve.   **A   B   C   D**

38. I believe I would prefer to work with students and parents
whose cultures are similar to mine.   **A   B   C   D**

39. I believe I am comfortable with people who exhibit values
or beliefs different from my own.   **A   B   C   D**

40. I believe cultural views of a diverse community should be
included in the school's yearly program planning.   **A   B   C   D**

41. I believe it is necessary to include on-going family input
in program planning.   **A   B   C   D**

42. I believe I have experienced difficulty in getting families from
African American communities involved in the education of
their students.   **A   B   C   D**

43. I believe when correcting a child's spoken language, one should model appropriate classroom language without further explanation.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

44. I believe there are times when the use of "non-standard" English should be accepted in school.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

45. I believe in asking families of diverse cultures how they wish to be identified (e.g., African American, Bi-racial, Mexican).   **A** **B** **C** **D**

46. I believe that in a society with as many racial groups as the United States, I would accept the use of ethnic jokes or phrases by students.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

47. I believe there are times when "racial statements" should be ignored.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

48. I believe a child should be referred "for testing" if learning difficulties appear to be due to cultural differences.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

49. I believe the teaching of ethnic customs and traditions is not the responsibility of public school personnel.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

50. I believe Individualized Education Program meetings or planning should be scheduled for the convenience of the family.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

51. I believe frequently used material within my class represents at least three different ethnic groups.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

52. I believe students from certain ethnic groups appear lazy when it comes to academic engagement.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

53. I believe in-service training focuses too much on "multicultural" issues.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

54. I believe I address inappropriate classroom behavior even when it could be easily be ignored.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

55. I believe I am able to effectively manage students from all racial groups.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

56. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding classroom management.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

57. I believe I have a clear understanding of the issues surrounding discipline.   **A** **B** **C** **D**

Please answer the following questions with a written response
on the back of your scantron sheet.

Question A.   What is your greatest behavioral management concern as you reflect on your professional responsibilities and the learners you serve?

Question B.   What racial, ethnic, and/or socio-economic concerns do you have as it relates to your role as a teacher?

Question C.   What leadership concerns do you have as it relates to your ISD?

VITA

Kamala Vychel Williams
Texas A&M University, College of Education
Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture

Education:

Degree	Content	Institution	Date
Ph.D.	Curriculum and Instruction	Texas A&M University	2010
M.Ed.	Curriculum and Instruction	Texas A&M University	2006
B.A.	Biology	University of North Texas	1988

Professional Experience:

Graduate Research Assistant, Texas A&M University
Associate Teacher, Houston Independent School District
Director of Operations, Health Velocity, Inc.
Environmental Specialist, City of Houston, Texas

Research Interests:
Urban Education
Teacher Preparation
Professional Development
Adult Education (Administration)

Publications:

Moon-Merchant., **Williams, K**., & Carter, N. (2008). The integrated triad: A model for teacher induction. *The National Journal of Urban Education and Practice*, 2(2)71-81.

Saha, S., Carter, N., Sharkey, D. **Williams, K**., Dutton, V. Pearse, C. (2008). Effective urban teaching: Lessons learned from a graduate class. *The National Journal of Urban Education and Practice,* 2(2)94-106.

Taylor, G., **Williams, K.**, & Kamienski, D. (2010). Laissez les bon temps roulez! Recommended children's books on southern Louisiana and gulf coast regional cultures. *Multicultural Review*, 19(1) 21-32.