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The Audacity of Hope for a Hopeless Generation

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Where there is no vision, the people perish...Proverbs 29:18¹

Overview

An inner city high school sits in a far-east corner of the city. Its current enrollment is less than 250 students for the incoming year. All of its students are of African American heritage. This school, at its fullest capacity, can hold over 1,800 students. The school now offers small class size in cosmetology, culinary arts, and an exemplary science and math program, yet is struggling to stay open. Upon entering the school one gazes at the inner wall at over 100 people who have graduated from this school within the last century. Who are these people? Why are they significant to the school? These are the people who took a vision and made it a reality. Here they are recognized for their achievements. Many of these achievements are one of a kind for any race. The alumni represent hope. This unit will address the notion that African American boys are failing school and their ability to become a viable part of society.

Rationale

Generationally, American children of African descendants have been told that the best way to obtain achievement is to have a goal, a vision of some type that they could use as a blueprint for their working years. These may have been the chosen words for yesterday's generation, but it appears that today's generation in America's inner cities does not possess the drive and stamina to maintain the status quo. One needs to determine what happened to cause students, any student, to be without a vision. Without educational goals, students cannot expect to survive the current economic turmoil.

After the Civil War, many people envisioned educating African American students. This vision was widely received by many, yet discouraged by just as many. The thought of people of color being able to read was difficult and raised challenges that included the lack of available teachers, the ideology of preserving White superiority, and a general atmosphere of White on Black crime. Although the government had decreed that

people of color had the same legal rights as Whites, Blacks were often without adequate resources to enforce these rights. Therefore, many African Americans were still without formal educational resources. No matter what, they did not lack vision.

After Emancipation, the development of churches for persons of color grew immensely. Black people created congregations and facilities that were designed to meet their own needs spiritually and academically. It was in the Black church that many meetings were held to discuss the education of the now freed population. Many could not read, and now the possibility of being educated was at hand. The Black church was also the schoolhouse. The Black church kept hope alive during slavery, often secretly, and was the foundation of the fight for freedom during the 1960s as the church held leadership roles. Black churches have played an important role of getting the word out with regard to what was happening in the Black community. The Black church could be viewed as the greatest relationship with children in neighborhoods overwhelmed by poverty, hostility and school collapse.

From a historical perspective, the church has been central to the organizing and inspiration of the Black community. People continue to work all week and have that one special day set aside coming together as collective to pray, sing and enjoy fellowship. It is a family gathering not only by blood, but connected by God. Many former slaves may have learned to read by reading the Bible. The Black church contained schools, social and political events. Black ministers played (and continue to play) a key position in politics and have a profound effect on the education of its members both spiritually and educationally.

Northern education was somewhat permissible and provided greater access to success. However, in the South, Black education was forbidden and guarded. As a result, in the North, African-Americans had greater contact to recognized schooling and were possibly more likely to have fundamental reading and writing skills than their Southern counterparts. Moreover, both sides faced continued educational segregation and the thoughts of integration continued to look bleak and pitiful.

*Plessy versus Ferguson*² (transportation) gave the United States a legal decision of supporting racial segregation which was not overturned until the Supreme Court handed down *Brown v Board of Education*³ in 1954. Educational segregation continued in the South, although the Court had indicated that it wanted integration with all deliberate speed. Resistance to *Brown* was so powerful in some places that government officials who were against the decision stood in school doorways with their militia and angry White people continued to terrorize and demean Blacks who sought equality.

W. E. B. DuBois said, "... (T)he Negro needs neither segregated schools nor mixed schools. What he needs is Education."⁴ If DuBois was then correct, the educational system would have encouraged equality between the races in school. Instead, there continued to be harassment and deliberate attacks against those who sought education on an equal basis. Today's educational system seeks to provide equality in "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB). While the basis for NCLB continues to be unclear for some, it appears that its premise is to provide equality for all students regardless of race, creed and disability. "Any workable proposal must be clear to practitioners; fair in the sense of not holding educators accountable for things they can't control; technically sound; and supported and enforced. It also should not squelch promising approaches that the states are developing."⁵ (Noll) Perhaps those who thought that either segregation or integration would be the ultimate answer, did not understand this quote.

When one thinks of leaders, with vision, one must realize that leaders can influence others to do what they need you to do. Leaders who have vision create lasting accomplishments as their legacies. Thomas Jefferson,

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Abraham Lincoln, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Barack Obama are just a few leaders who were visionary. They offered methods of inspiration and encouragement to people. Their visions set the meaning or purpose for the public. Leadership vision helps to create dedication to a cause. If Obama had not had a vision of change during his run for President, his campaign would have echoed that of the former administration and the voters could have turned deaf to his words. But because he wanted change, and stood by that message, he was able to inspire a whole nation to see his point of view. While he may not have garnished votes from every citizen, he was able to succeed with those who felt his vision was a requirement for the success of the nation.

Creating a vision means having the knowledge that a vision is required. Students cannot create what they do not know can be produced. Having a vision creates a method to inspire change. Students lacking in basic skills may find that creating something with the mind will not take shape and therefore is discarded before it is even begun.

Today's students, without a vision, can lack motivation and aspiration. Perhaps standing on the proverbial corner selling drugs has more financial attainment to it than getting good grades and having a tax-paying work experience. Perhaps the parents were not interested in education and therefore passed this "quality" to their child. Society has given labels to those who fail to maintain a certain quality of life and families may have succumbed to these labels. Such labels include, but are not limited to, single-parent homes, male students with learning disabilities, middle class teachers, teenage pregnancy, violence, inner city living, etc. Many of these diagnoses are not really disabilities, but a result of the lack of resources necessary to educate the whole child. Students may accept these labels as gospel rather than trying to dispel the negative connotations.

Of particular concern is the African American male population. These young men can become "at risk" as early as birth. Questions abound as to why this phenomenon is taking place and why it continues without a possible end in sight. Answers are also as plentiful as the questions. Being considered at risk indicates that there is the possibility of school failure, criminal involvement/incarceration, mental illness, substance abuse, vocational instability, failed health. The degradation of family life, a willingness to live a life of poverty, lack of faith in teachers and the educational system, etc. are also some of the questions where researchers have tried to find appropriate responses.

African American males also encounter racism, classism, and possible exploitation (music, fashion, sports). As they try to emulate what might be seen as negative to the dominate culture, failures in education continue. Students come to school regularly, but often to be social, i.e. dating, game playing. They may also see the schoolhouse as a safe house, available meals, and their outlet away from family life that offers negative perspectives on life. As a result of their lack of attention to the educational material, they may receive a disproportionate amount of punishment when compared to other ethnic groups and to females.

Research studies are plentiful on information that leads to the downfall of the Black boy and his plight as he becomes a Black man. When circumstances surround the education of the Black youth, there only seem to be accusations and no solutions. Everything always comes back to money. Without money, Black youth are seen as deterrents to societal growth and thus the incarceration rates for Black men increase. Without money, Black men do not qualify as appropriate providers for their families. Without money, well...you get the point.

Cultural and structural factors must be included in the methodology that enhance African American male success. Because the negative is always put into play, the positive has little chance for survival when it comes to the Black youth. Negatives like lack of quality jobs, low economic status, unwed fatherhood, and of course, schools that put children at risk of failing themselves and their community.

There is the presence of perpetual failure for these young men. When a prominent and successful young man like Michael Jackson is not satisfied with his own skin color, it leaves little to wonder that youth who are less affluent could also feel that they are failures because of the color of their skin. Every negative undertone out in America suggests that any connection to being black is a bad thing - black cats, black witches, black as the night, a black president, etc. Barack Obama has also said that he struggled with his identity. On television, identity for the Black community can be a stereotypical view that truly is not a representation of the full picture. The only television show that may have come close to what some middle -class African Americans have considered a true depiction of a successful life is *The Cosby Show*.

But Heathcliff and Claire are in syndication now, and the youth of today may not hold true the concepts that were present with the show. There no longer exists a community of caring that will help to enable Black youth find self-identity and self-fulfillment. The NAACP no longer recruits publically; the African American newspapers and magazines are losing support and are also facing budgetary issues. That now leaves the responsibility of encouraging African American youth to become successful men to the schools.

Our schools need to be fixed. Schools should be fixed in a way that guarantees that students do more than just pass and graduate, but that they become active citizens because they have obtained the necessary skills for life. Moreover, schools should be responsible for making sure that students, all students, make the most of their young lives. Adulthood is forever, and students should be encouraged to participate in activities and events that make their teen years enjoyable. The audacity to hope should be the given right of every child. The ability to hope and to dream are the foundations of the American culture. It is hope that permits these youth to destroy obstructions that stand in the way of their prospective success. This is America: anything is possible for everyone.

Perhaps young Black men find that giving into the social culture of education is too difficult to maintain. Perhaps it is easier to fall into the "wanna-be" life style as presented through the media. Young people often want to emulate sports figures and rap stars who earn more money than most people can count. What students do not know is that everyone is not going to make it as a ball player or rapper, especially if there is no skill involved. In order to do this, the enticement of illegal activities produces a culture which could be considered acceptable socially and financially. The drug dealer, whose actions lead to genocide, probably does make more in a day than the educated Black man, but the truer answer lies in knowing there is dignity in a job well done. However, the success of the Black man is still in jeopardy. Education works, but it requires a cooperative with the community to ensure its continued success.

Does the saying "we hold these truths to be self-evident...that every man is created equal" include the African American male youth? Probably not, and that includes any youth of color who needs to examine these text to determine their right to the freedoms that are supposed to be presented to all. Somewhere the system has failed these young men. They are part of a culture that has a right to an ideal life, however, the odds appear to be stacked against so many. What can a new government do to ensure that their "unalienable rights" are being met? Probably not very much except to ensure that they have quality teachers, adequate health care, equitable housing, etc.

William Julius Wilson⁶ says, "the attitudes and behaviors valorizing a kind of "footloose fatherhood" have been passed down to younger generations". This is a profound statement as it serves the notion that Black fatherhood is an acceptable notion in the Black community. The absenteeism of fathers in urban setting is becoming a continued pattern of despair and conflict. The analogy of producing children and the inability to care for them continues in a cycle of poverty and failure. Failure that could stem from the fact that the Black

man has experienced so many failures (education, economics) that he becomes complacent in his attempts to conquer his own inabilities. How sad the notion that children are growing up fatherless (from abandonment, incarceration, or death) and that the cycle fails to have an end. In the event that a father is present, some African American males may still decide that the presence of a nuclear family does not hold merit and desire to be like their single-parent friends who may defer to an alternative lifestyle without male guidance and bonding. Wilson also indicates, "children from low-income households without fathers present are more likely to be school dropouts, become teenage parents, receive lower earnings in young adulthood, be welfare recipients, and experience cognitive, emotional, and social problems."⁷ The continued absence of positive role models can leave any student without vision.

The realization that a lack of vision exists needs to be examined. How did this happen in the African American community? Why does it continue to exist and how do students go from a hopeless generation to a generation that is willing to become successful again? When one lives with the stigmas long enough, it is possible to believe that change is unavailable. Life continues daily for the visionless and they often never know that the possibility of achieving the lifestyle of the rich and famous is available through hard work. Previous generations of African American values placed hard work at the center of achievement. Parents who do not see quality in education can be a detriment to the educational development of the whole child. Students could find self-realization in knowing that success is possible.

Another obstacle in the urban environment is middle class teachers. Never mind that the teacher is Black or White, middle class values can offer hindrances to the inner city student. Jawanza Kunjufu⁸ writes, in his book, *Black Students Middle Class Teachers*, "middle class African American teachers are lowering their expectations of low-income African American students". African American teachers who forget that students of color need to give more than 100 percent of their time and talents, as opposed to their White peers, is unforgiving. A formidable reason could be that African American teachers may have grown tired of attempting to educate students who lack vision and demonstrate a spirit of "entitlement".

In the same chapter, Kunjufu discusses racism versus classism. Do Black teachers respond negatively to White teachers who indicate that Black students are "different" than their non-Black peers? Possibly. With regards to classism, any African American teacher who lives in suburban America may have different points of view on how students should function when in school. Teachers new to the profession may not have experienced any form of racism, direct or indirect, and may not be able to relate to racism. Therefore, teachers develop unacceptable stereotypes about the inner city and its schools. In addition, students may not see teachers that look like them. Especially absent from the educational arena is the Black male teacher. Moreover, teachers do not often live in the same neighborhoods as their students. Teachers who are stuck on class or race continue to fail the student by having low expectations of the student.

Teachers are at the center of the child's universe. In many cases, the child spends more time with the teacher than anyone else. Therefore, the teacher should develop self-control and strategies that escape stereotyping the African American students - especially the male. Teachers who dismiss student academic abilities will not put forth the effort it takes to ensure their success.

There remains a disproportionate amount of African American male students in special education. Eight percent of the children in America's public schools are Black boys yet their representation in the nation's special education classes is nearly twice that. (www.terry.uga.edu)⁹ It appears that more boys than girls are being referred for special education services, especially if there are behavior issues that the teachers fail to control. Parents, too, may refer their children for special education services to get monetary gain. When

teachers fail to act, students fail to learn.

Novice teachers should be required to take classes or professional development in urban perceptions so that they have concrete ideas on how urban education may differ from suburban education. Teachers who fail to maintain good rapport with the students and the administration may leave a school that is failing. These may be good teachers who do not want to be connected to a school that is in danger of not meeting the standards. Way too much pressure is put on teachers with No Child Left Behind. In a continually failing school, teachers may want assurance that their efforts are being appreciated, if not applauded.

The prevailing drug culture that persists in the inner city is another major obstacle that faces today's youth. Students, at young ages, are exposed to drug use, drug sales, and the results of such actions. On any major corner in any urban neighborhood, a young child can witness illegal actions that are manifestations of the community. Causes of these breakdowns include lack of education, lack of jobs, and a general lack of vision. Parents who cannot afford to live in neighborhoods outside of the "ghetto" are possibly exposing their children to negative life images. Drug use can be seen as a major cause of the infestations of a poverty life. That does not mean that suburban children are less exposed to cultural deficiencies, it just means that perhaps it is more covert than overt.

Coupled with drug acceptance is the increase in urban violence. Once upon a time people fought for their right to be different. It did not matter that the fight might have been over something trivial. A fight was a fight. It was physical, and required both parties to defend themselves with their fists. It appears that this characteristic of problem solving has given itself over to more violent and devastating means. Guns are now being used to settle petty differences. Perhaps it is the influence of the media that guides people to solve their disputes with guns. Perhaps people think that the person will "get up" as they do in the movies. Whatever the situation, this type of violence is not acceptable. Young, innocent children are being destroyed by the continual effects of gun violence in the inner city. Whether it is defending one's property, possibly drugs, or determining territorial rights, the effects are becoming evident in the lives of school children. They are losing parents, aunts, uncles and friends to this type of unnecessary violence. The streets are becoming an ever increasing place of danger and insidiousness.

I don't think of myself as a poor deprived ghetto girl who made good. I think of myself as someone who from an early age knew I was responsible for myself, and I had to make good. Oprah Winfrey¹⁰

Oprah's statement is relevant to anyone who needs inspiration to create a positive image for themselves. Oprah, herself, tells abstractly about her struggles, her vision and her ability to overcome. Barack Obama probably echoed those words.

One point in Obama's educational platform is to restructure teacher value, capability, and training. While teachers are not an immediate issue on the Obama administration radar, teacher reform is coming. Teachers, who do not want to "change", should begin to seek retirement or another profession. No longer should students be subjected to teachers who are merely coming to work for paychecks. The success of students, regardless of race, affects the entire community and nation. The students, too, will have their work cut out for them. Without a vision, the people (African Americans) will cease to be at the forefront in educational and economical successes.

But does Obama have the ability to help African American males become productive? Obama indicates that change is at the forefront of what America is in need of to create a cultural and structural positive environment for change. If so, then the public persona of African American males will indeed change - in

time. How much time is required has not yet been established, but the Black youth will someday have to stand up and remember that his ancestors died an often bitter death to ensure that youth, every youth, would have the right to free education.

However, Obama's ascent to presidency cannot make a Black boy a man. Each person must decide for himself why/why not he needs to be successful. Obama can only give hope to the notion of success for those who never thought to encounter success. Obama cannot make a boy a man; however, he can be a representation for such success. When Black youth previously decided to reject the dominant culture, they now have an example to use to frame their success.

Obama has often said that family is the nucleus of American life. Parents must return to the "old school" notion of realizing that not only is success necessary for their family, but for all families of color. Educational reform is a necessary part of African American cultural success. High performing schools must rise out of urban chaos. Educational reform means repairing "No Child Left Behind" to make it effective and rational.

Public school reform should also take into account methods of improving teacher attitudes towards students of color, especially boys. Teachers may require more assistance with developing higher expectations, improving parental relationships, and obtaining better resources, such as equipment, materials, supplies, and the necessary field trips. Adequate professional development is also at the top of the list.

Reform is not just for schools. Urban student reform will require students to have a better understanding of their past, know why they exist here and now, and have a formidable plan for the future. Students should recognize that having a minimal education is insufficient for today's economy. Excuses for failing in education should no longer be an option. Students need to put their academic work into priority and develop strategies to enhance internal control over their explicit actions.

Urban students should realize that high crime, poor city services and other external factors are really not theirs to change - not yet anyway. There is the adage that says, "worry about the things you can change". African American students can change the way they think about certain things, they can control their number of yearly suspensions, their acts of violence against other students, their absenteeism and their high dropout rates.

This unit will serve to assist young students (especially those with disabilities) with developing their identity and their heritage. They will need to know why African American education is important and how it affects the nation and beyond. Students will be able to grasp at facts instead of ideas. Students also need to develop ideologies that will enhance their abilities to read and write more efficiently. By doing so, they put themselves at a more level playing field with the majority race. Students should not be willing to hide behind racial issues that are negative and provide stereotypical insight into Black culture.

Building self-esteem is essential to any cause. By beginning with this issue, students will be able to overcome the obstacles that they face with relation to education. Education is empowerment, and African American students may have decided that the easiest way to face the majority is by lying down and taking "it". Encouraging students to stand up for what they believe in and a way in which to get this completed.

Strategies

Essential Question - Can teachers become change agents and provide Black male students with the opportunity for success and growth?

How does one get out of this precarious situation? Developing an individual, educational vision is not going to be without difficulty for a hopeless generation. It requires positive action on the parts of both teacher and student. It also requires a commitment from the family. Bridging the racial and cultural divide is everyone's responsibility. It is a collaboration that must meet the needs of the afflicted. The first step would be to require a more composite understanding of African American heritage. To do this, teachers need to inform students on the causes and effects of being uneducated. Slavery was not just about economics and physical labor. Slavery also included keeping people ignorant of what was available to them for economic wealth. Many people, Black and White, prior to 1863, saw reading as a method of emergence to a new age without the restrictions of slavery. If bondage meant slavery, then the inability to read could mean destruction and annihilation. Students would learn that many African Americans lost their lives to guarantee that today's generation had these basic privileges and rights. Students would also know that Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks are only examples of African American suffrage and that many have fought for equality.

If the Black church is essential to the development of the individual spiritually, then the Black church needs to also adopt a similar position on education. Black churches could and should provide quality afterschool programs that give children safe havens in which to study and possibly provide the evening meal. As with anything else, funding is always a problem, but churches should know that "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)¹ In other words, practice what you preach.

School should develop mentors to ensure that the youth are exposed to men in academic settings. This could be achieved with by a collaboration of community and church. These do not necessarily have to be Black men, but men who can help to instill in the youth what a man should or should not be. These should be mentors who are not afraid to speak up and have influence on the youth. Kids as young as early elementary school are losing interest in the educational system and teachers and administrators must find new and concrete concepts to get away from the learning environment that is too structured and rigid.

There needs to be collaboration between advanced education and the public schools. In order to break the cycle of unemployment, incarceration, poor housing and negative media, the entire community must come together to erase the stereotypical images that prevail. Mentors and tutors could be assigned to assist young Black boys with teaching them to read beyond the third grade. They would also be positive role models for these youth and provide a strong spiritual base. There would be the creation of self-discipline and high expectations. The implementation of respect for females would also be a strong component. The adage, "reach one, teach one", would come into play. This would also help to expose students to cultural events and activities they might not otherwise have exposure or experience.

Teachers, however, would be responsible for building positive peer culture by ensuring that all students are aware of their own diverse culture through history and language arts classes. Curriculum would focus on the positive aspects of the culture, leaving the stereotypes as items for discussion, not absorption. Students would be taught to embrace themselves with positive images.

Teachers, administrators and parents would need to embrace each other to build a separate relationship of strong family and community. Schools would create positive atmospheres where parents are welcome not only to the school, but to enrichment activities for themselves as well. Schools should have day or evening classes where adults can come in and learn simple parenting skills, get knowledge for GED testing, or just to continue their own education.

School districts and school administrators need to figure out how to attract more Black male teachers to education. By doing so, there is the creation of seeing positive role models who have a stake in the learning of Black males. Children will possess enthusiasm and eagerness when entering the primary years. Imagine that willingness magnified throughout all of their schooling years if they can see positive male role models in the educational setting.

Jail and early death should never be an option. Jails are being built to house men and women who are prisoners not only in the legal sense, but prisoners to themselves as well. The Black male population in jail continues to rise, while the number of black male college graduates seems to be a disappearing entity. Too many young men, of all ethnicities, are being incarcerated or killed while in their prime. Excuses for this problem must come to an end. Jealousies and hatred are vile aspects of our society, and coveting what someone else has and forcibly taking it is not optional. Students need to have insight as to why "saggin" is commonplace and how to withstand peer pressure. By having a stronger sense of who they are, young men will be able to determine who "the man in the mirror" really is.

Everyone must teach tolerance and campaign for as much multiculturalism as possible within school faculty and school boards. The undercurrent of fear that some teachers may face from students simply because of their ethnic background must stop. In addition, teachers should recognize Black students for achievement. Yes, Blacks do excel at sports, but also in math and science. Raising the bar for African American male attendance in organizations such as the chess club and the school newspaper should also be encouraged. Students should be able to contribute to these organizations without compromising their own self identity.

To reach such a climax requires the partnership of not only individual teachers, but the school and community as a complete unit. The old adage that says that it takes an entire village to raise a child is true, especially when the success of the African American male is at stake. Teachers cannot stand alone in this endeavor, and there must be others who are willing to deposit concrete concepts into the lives of needy students. America cannot continue to sit by and allow her young men to remain victimized by ignorance and the draw of street life. However, when the community is in disrepair, it may become increasingly difficult to solicit and receive additional support.

With regards to this unit, its primary basis is to build life skills and identify self-esteem issues in students, using any text that amplifies U. S. History and civil rights. Although the focus is on low achieving boys, in many special education classrooms girls, too, face similar challenges. Therefore, the lessons apply to both sexes. Once their skill deficits are identified, students will be able to focus on rebuilding their needs and trust. Students will begin with several questions. 1) What do you see your life like in ten years? 2) What do you want your life to be like in ten years? 3) What is getting in the way? The need to explore concrete steps to turn their wishes into reality is the focal point of the lesson.

The next lesson would begin with a pictorial of the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968. With such, students will become familiar to Jim Crow laws and why equality amongst the races is essential to everyone's survival. Also to be included is why the Supreme Court is necessary for the survival of the United States. Students will then proceed to another famous court case, Brown v. Board of Education, that sets the tone for

today's outlook on equal education. Students would compare and contrast Brown in 1954 with Brown fifty years later. The film, *Separate but Equal* could be shown.

Students would then continue with how Blacks are perceived in America and how they fit into the visible world as invisible individuals. Here, students will be given lessons on how to be successful individuals. The implementation of a life skills curriculum would be necessary. In order to sustain hope, students must be able to survive the everyday components of life like rent, food, and shelter.

The final section to the lesson is the use of Barack Obama as focal point to the courage of hope and change. Students would decide if hope is possible for their community and if change will be effective for them as adults. Students will then listen to parts of Obama and King speeches as they decide for themselves if hope is real. In addition, students will utilize the great Internet to help them with several of their projects.

Activities

All activities in the unit are designed for high school students with learning disabilities. All lessons are for a 42 minute class period unless otherwise indicated.

Unit One

Whole group/individual activity five to six day activity.

Day 1

Objective

Students will be able to answer and determine basic self-esteem issues that surround the outlook on their life in ten years.

Using a pre-formatted goal setting worksheet, students will determine their life's objectives for the next ten years. The teacher should allow ten minutes for students to complete the worksheet. Meanwhile, the teacher has put the three questions on poster paper. After the ten minutes, students will go to the board and write their responses in the appropriate places. Open dialogue begins with the discussion of the first question, etc. Students orally detail why they made the decisions they did regarding their outlook on life. After all dialogue has been exhausted, students then select and prioritize their obstacles and formulate a plan on how they are going to overcome their obstacles. Students then give a synopsis of the day's activity and how it will impact their life.

Days 2 - 5

Teacher and students rehash yesterday's assignment. Today's assignment is to re-examine the obstacles and determine what social services are required to aid in the development of positive life skills for the individual

student. Using the Internet, students will, in their notebooks, list the agencies they need to utilize to become successful. Students should have at least ten resources, including phone numbers, contact names and addresses and the services they provide. This would also involve finding colleges, universities and trade schools that meet the individual student's needs. Furthermore, students would focus on a life and career skills component that includes budgeting, completing job, utility and credit applications, opening checking and savings accounts, g resume and cover letter writing and interviewing techniques.

Students will use the gathered information to determine which services are relevant to them. Again using chart paper to list the services, students will then group according to the services they require (or want more information about) and will discuss strategies for seeking out those agencies. Each group will compose at least four letters to agencies requesting them to come in and speak with the class. Students will need to determine a series of questions to ask and will also need to determine when the visits should be made. In addition, students will need to secure all permits from the administration to demonstrate a clear understanding of how the chain of command works in their school.

*Note: The teacher will be required to ensure that appropriate follow up is given for presenters to attend a classroom workshop.

Days 5 - 6

Students will practice interviewing techniques, after previously completing resume and cover letter. Resume and cover letter will become entries into student's portfolio. After modeling from teacher, students will rotate being the interviewer and the interviewee to ensure knowledge of both processes.

Unit 2

This is a whole group/individual activity that will require one week to complete.

Objective

A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words. TSWBAT to utilize pictures from the Civil Rights Movement to identify primary and secondary resources. Students will utilize the Internet to locate and label pictures from the Civil Rights Movement. Students will further be able to write three paragraphs depicting their reactions to the pictures. Assessment will be on slide viewing, writing, and Internet usage. Final product for evaluation will be their own Civil Rights scrapbook, that depicts pictures that is most related to their lives.

Day 1

Teacher will utilize students' prior knowledge on Civil Rights Movement by having the students write one-half page of what they think the purpose of the Movement was using who, what, when, where, why, and how. Discussion also take place around *hope* as it related to the Movement. Students will be informed that several of the pictures contain information that that may be sensitive to them. This includes hanging and viewing deformed bodies in caskets. Students will be given a list of websites that they will use to investigate and choose photos from. Students will develop their own vocabulary lists as they complete their researching.

A teacher-created PowerPoint is shown. It encompasses pictures from the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968. Hard copies of the presentation will be given to the students after the presentation. The last slide of the presentation is Barack Obama, depicting hope. The slideshow is shown, but not the last two slides. The students are asked to write down which slide has the most effect on them and which slide has the least effect. The slideshow is given again, this time showing Barack as the last slide. Students are asked to give their feedback on the presentation. Hard copies are distributed and students now have a closer look at the slides they chose as having the greatest impact and the slide with the least amount of impact. Students will write their feelings about the slide they have chosen as the least/greatest impact. Students are also asked to react to how the photos go from Black and White to color.

Day 2

Students utilize the Internet to find their own Civil Rights pictures. They are required to find two photos of the Movement. 1) that has the most profound effect on them and 2) one that signifies hope. Students would again indicate why these particular photos hold significance for them. These photos would be printed out for entry into their scrapbooks.

Days 3-5

Students will spend the next three days putting together their own scrapbook of the Civil Rights Movement. Note: Teacher must model. Students may use any pictures that are significant to them, using text to add captions to each photo. Students are also required to use personal photos. Teacher will create a rubric that includes details, embellishments, and originality. Scrapbook must have at least ten pictures and captions. Students will present their scrapbooks, giving details as to why they chose those particular pictures, both from the Internet and personal pictures.

Unit 3

This is a whole group/individual activity that will require at least one week to complete.

Objective

Students will be able to identify how Barack Obama's *Inauguration Speech* and Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream Speech* relate to their personal lives. Students will use each speech to write an informative essay giving details of the relationship.

Day 1 and 2

Students have their prior knowledge assessed with the teacher asking what they remember about Obama's Inauguration speech. After two minutes of conversation, the teacher distributes copies of the speech obtained from www.huffingtonpost.com. Students read the speech as the audio of the speech is played. Once read and video has played, students go back and highlight unfamiliar vocabulary. Students also pose questions about the speech in their notebooks.

Students now break into teacher directed groups where they will discuss their vocabulary choices. Students

share their word choices with the group, with students assisting each other on the definitions. For those definitions that all of the group cannot discern from their word experience, the students will use the dictionary.

Students who are having difficulty with the group work would work with the teacher and use the website, www.wordsift.com to aid them in their understanding of the vocabulary.

Day 3

For their warm up exercise, students would list two words from their vocabulary list on the board, with definitions to share with the class. Using the Obama speech, and still in groups, students would identify key concepts, paragraph by paragraph, but as pairs. Teachers and students would utilize the teacher-created handout. (See Appendix). Once completed, students share with the class their responses. In their journals, students write a one page reflection on the speech.

Days 4 - 6

Repeat Days 1-3, using Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech found at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm>. Teacher will be required to change the Key Concepts form to Martin Luther King's information.

Day 7

Students will compare/contrast the two speeches using a t-chart. Students will identify similarities and differences and chart them. Students will write the information in their notebooks.

Day 8

Students write a three to five paragraph essay (depending on their ability) indicating why/why not the two speeches offer them an opportunity for adult success and achievement. Students must include at least three unfamiliar vocabulary words that they extracted from the speeches.

Student's Bibliography

Brown, M. Christopher. *Broken Cisterns: African American Education Fifty Years After Brown (Research on African American Education)*. `: Information Age Pub Inc, 2008.

Kasher, Steven. *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954-68*. New York, NY: Abbeville Press 1996-09, 1996.

Obama, Barack. *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream (Vintage)*. New York: Vintage, 2008.

Williams, Heather Andrea.. *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom. The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture*. Chapel Hill: Unc Press,, 2006.

Wilson, William Julius. *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City (Issues of Our Time)*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2009.

Barack Obama in His Own Words. Philadelphia: Running Press Miniature Editions, 2009.

Change We Can Believe In: Barack Obama's Plan to Renew America's Promise. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008.

Annotated Bibliography

Books

Kasher, Steven. *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954-68*. New York, NY: Abbeville Press 1996-09, 1996.

Although this book details events from 1954 through 1968, many of the images are as vivid today as they were then. This is an excellent resource for any history instructor.

Kluger, Richard. *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality*. New York: Vintage, 2004.

Simple Justice defines the struggle for racial justice in America. Kluger details Brown v. Board of Education with the greatest detail of human power.

Kunjufu, Jawanza. *Black Students / Middle Class Teachers*. Chicago: African American Images, 2002.

Jawanza Kunjufu continues to deliver quality information that provides insight into topics affecting African American youth that others refuse to investigate. This entry into his library gives the reader information on how middle class teachers, Black or white, affect the outcome of the lives of African American males.

Noll, James. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Educational Issues, Expanded 14th edition*. Iowa: McGraw-Hill Contemporary Learning Series, 2008.

Noll uses this entry to encourage student interest and aid students in the development of critical thinking abilities.

Obama, Barack. *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream (Vintage)*. New York: Vintage, 2008.

Written before he became president of the United States, Barack Obama is a man of many words that show him to be the powerhouse that he is. He uses this book to give his own views on devotion and principles while offering images of America's future.

Society, International Bible, and Zondervan. *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Ebook, 2002.

Teacher's Reading List

Brown, M. Christopher. *Broken Cisterns: African American Education Fifty Years After Brown (Research on African American Education)*. `: Information Age Pub Inc, 2008.

Byfield, Cheron. *Black Boys Can Make It: How They Overcome the Obstacles to University in the UK and USA*. Staffordshire: Trentham

Books, 2008.

Noguera, Pedro A.(Author). *The Trouble with Black Boys: And Other Reflections on Race, Equity, and the Future of Public Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008.

Pittman, Anthony A.. *Whited Out: Unique Perspectives on Black Identity and Honors Achievement (Counterpoints: Studies in the Postmodern Theory of Education)*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009.

Sampson, William A.. *Black Student Achievement: How Much Do Family and School Really Matter? (Scarecrow Education Book)*. Manchester: Scarecroweducation, 2002.

Thompson, Gail L.. *What African American Parents Want Educators to Know*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008.

Wilson, William Julius. *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City (Issues of Our Time)*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2009.

Williams, Heather Andrea. *Self-taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom. The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture*. Chapel Hill: Unc Press, 2006.

Barack Obama in His Own Words. Philadelphia: Running Press Miniature Editions, 2009.

Change We Can Believe In: Barack Obama's Plan to Renew America's Promise. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008.

Websites

American, fourth grade many African. "Are schools failing Black boys." Georgia's flagship business school, founded in 1912 | Terry College of Business | University of Georgia.
<http://www.terry.uga.edu/~dawndba/4500FailingBlkBoys.html> (accessed July 13, 2009).

www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihadream.htm

www.huffingtonpost.com

www.wordsift.com

Standards

This curriculum unit will use the academic standards for History that illustrate what students should know and be able to do in U. S. History. History standards are built upon sequential events past and present and how people perceive those events. The use of time and place is also essential to apply critical thinking.

The Student will be able to (TSWBAT) discover and evaluate the impact groups of people had on United States history from late 18th century to present day. This includes documents, artifacts, and historical sites that are

important to the era. Continuity and change has an impact on the United States and TSWBAT determine how this influence has had on the United States and its citizens. Utilizing specific writing methods, TSWBAT give details and facts pertaining to all aspects of U. S. History.

Appendices

Goal Setting Worksheet

Where do you see your life in 10 years? Why?

What do you want your life to be like in 10 years? How will you accomplish this?

What is stopping you from accomplishing your goals?

The Purpose of the Civil Rights Movement

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

PICTURE NUMBER	IMPACT	NO IMPACT
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Barack Obama Inauguration Speech
January 20, 2009

Key Concepts

Paragraph Begins With (first 3 words of paragraph) What is Obama saying? What do you think?

Notes

1. NIV Bible
2. <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=163&invol=537>
3. IBID
4. <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/16/books/review/16FREEDMAN.html?8br>
5. Noll, *Taking Sides, Views on Educational Issues*, 48.
6. Wilson, *More Than Just Race*, 81.
7. IBID., 102
8. Kunjufu, *Black Students. Middle Class Teachers.*, 35.
9. www.terry.uga.edu
10. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/o/oprahwinfr133623.html>

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

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