



Heshima To Hotep:

*Afrocentric Steps To
Educational Excellence*

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Dedication

I wish to dedicate this book to the excellent educational facilitators in my life: my father, Dupuy H. Anderson and mother, Inez Smith Anderson; my husband, Griffin H. Rivers; my grandmothers, Agnes Metoyer Smith and Lillie Dupuy Anderson. I also wish to dedicate this book to my educational mentors, Mrs. T. Lois Tacneau, Mrs. Lilburne Thompson, Mrs. Hilda Wooten and Sister Bruce. For my cultural, historical and spiritual teachers, mentors and leaders Molefi Asante, Asa Hilliard, Linda James-Meyers, Maulana Karenga, Harriette McAdoo and Wade Nobles, whose philosophies I attempt to emulate in my endeavors, I hope I have captured your spirits of connected like minds for the success of our children.

Libation Statement

I ask for the blessings of my ancestors in this endeavor. I pray that their spirits will be with me for guidance. Their names will be remembered and revered: Marie Therese Coincoin, Augustin and Marie Metoyer, Francois and Perine Metoyer, Theodore Metoyer, Frank and Emma Metoyer; Lester Smith, Lillie Dupuy Anderson, Henry Anderson, Cliff Anderson, Bob E. Anderson, Phrozine, Wilma and Waldo Bernard and my father, Dupuy H. Anderson, Sr. The knowledge, heritage, traditions and culture instilled in each generation will be passed on to the children of the future for our continued survival.

Introduction

Hotep! This is the greeting of peace from KMT (ancient Egypt). For the ancestors, peace was the ultimate goal in life. A person who had attained peace possessed "self-control, moderation, kindness, generosity, justice, and truthfulness tempered by discretion. These virtues are to be practiced alike toward all people.... The ideal man was a man of peace (Lichtheim, 1975)." Peace is achieved with knowledge and respect, Heshima. Heshima (respect) to Hotep (peace) therefore, proposes ten steps for educational excellence to reach the ultimate goal, peace.

These steps will change reality (what we perceive it to be) by using the Afrocentric paradigm. It is grounded in the principles of Khepera and MAAT from KMT, the Nguzo Saba of Kwanzaa, and Sankofa from Ghana, West Africa. The first principle, Khepera, is always in a state of "Becoming." It represents striving to become through excellence in learning and creating. This principle is used to teach striving for full potential by maximizing dreams. Maat, the second principle, represents right and wrong. Her seven ethical principles of Truth, Justice, Righteousness, Order, Balance, Harmony and Reciprocity guide responsibility and accountability. Third, are the principles of the Nguzo Saba from Kwanzaa created by Dr. Maulana Karenga: Umoja-Unity, Kujichagulia-Self Determination, Ujima-Collective Work and Responsibility, Ujamaa-Cooperative Economics, Nia-Purpose, Kuumba-Creativity and Imani-Faith. These principles teach the how of becoming. The last is Sankofa which means to go back and fetch it. It teaches the "who," the "what," the "when," and the "where." Sankofa is the past, present and future of knowing the history and culture of "self." Thus, the Afrocentric paradigm can change reality by transforming knowledge and character to respect the interconnectedness and good in all creations for peace.

Afrocentric education should not be measured by IQ tests, achievement tests, or any other quantitative measure of achievement. Rather, the assessment is a commitment of like minds and spirits to build a new world that reflects a foundation for peace. An Afrocentric education nurtures "The Way." The "way" that was lost when Africa was colonized and its people enslaved (Armah in 2000 Seasons). Once we begin to rebuild on a strong Afrocentric foundation, people will truly "know themselves" and find their way back to excellence.

RESPECT



Step I Heshima - Respect

...the American educational system, as it is, is not designed for the benefit of Black people, who are oppressed by that system; it is not designed to facilitate the re-generation of a people it has calculatedly debased; it is not designed to liberate the spirit of the sons and daughters of Africa nor to enhance that spirit nor to thrill at its soaring; the American educational system is not designed to encourage the destruction of the American political and economic system, no matter how cruel and debilitating embattled minorities may find that system.

That the American educational system, as it is, is designed to benefit and to maintain the status and well-being of the white middle class majority; it is designed to train the personnel and to maintain the ideology which will ensure the perpetuation and endurance of the American political and economic system, which is now, and always has been, hostile to the ultimate aims of the Black minority which serves it (Hilliard et. al., 1989).

Therefore, an Afrocentric perspective is essential for educational excellence to reach the ultimate goal of peace by infusing non-biased, culturally relevant and historically accurate perspectives into curricula. This will not be easy, but it is vital for the future of all children, the country and the world. "The opening of the American mind must be a high priority topic (Hilliard, Stewart & Williams, 1989)."

The first goal is to change the way people perceive themselves. Lerone Bennett, Jr. states, "if you want to change a situation, you have to change the image men have of themselves and of their situation (Madhubuti, 1978)." The second goal is to provide truth. Finally, the third goal is to suggest teaching strategies and techniques that recognize traditions and cultures in a multicultural perspective. These are the goals incorporated throughout the ten steps to educational excellence.

An Afrocentric world view is grounded in the historical and cultural experience of "people" and not "goods" as the focus for being. Culture is speech, walk, dress, dance and behavior. It is a people's history. It is the spiritual, emotional and intellectual being. It is everything that a person "be." Afrocentric education imbues civilizations, cultures and contributions of people since time immemorial. It is a tool to help rediscover truth, esteem, self determination, pride and a sense of self. An Afrocentric perspective observes the world differently by putting oneself in the center, as the agent in learning, and not on the periphery. An Afrocentric/Multicultural perspective offers a global view that is inclusive of the contributions of all peoples. It promotes the retention of cultural differences. It promotes diversity. It promotes individuality with connectedness and pride that makes everyone special.

The truth is that all people of the world are of African heritage (See Leakey; Diop; Hilliard; Van Sertima; Rogers; Houston; Ben Jochannan). Therefore, superiority or inferiority of humans should not exist. All living things have a purpose and need to coexist in harmony

with themselves and nature. Ancient cultures viewed the earth as paramount. What is taken from the earth must be given back to it. This is reciprocity based on the belief of respect for all living things and a unity of oneness with nature. Life, people and living things are the value determinants in Afrocentricity and not materialism. Thus, an ancient African philosophy as a universal concept is **Respect**, exemplified in the proverb, "I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am" (Myers, 1988).

So, educational excellence begins with respect, but respect will require deprogramming to accomplish the first goal of changing the way people perceive themselves. Deprogramming is the hardest task to accomplish because it means changing the way one thinks and views reality. It requires re-defining, re-thinking, un-learning and acknowledging the fact that some of the things learned may be biased. Carter G. Woodson said,

when you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his proper place and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit (Woodson, 1933).

There are five categories of bias used by media to effectively control minds. The first category is Eurocentric **superiority**. It is perceived as the universal way to see, act, do or think. In a European society, capitalistic material wealth is valued above human life and one's worth is determined by what one owns. The environment is destroyed to accumulate wealth. Other life forms are considered inferior to man and are to be conquered by man. In electronic and print media beauty is defined as white, blond and blue-eyed. History is European, white, male. The ideal family is father, mother and two and one half children. Leaders and heroes are white males. People are valuable if they can provide a needed service. Individual pleasure and comfort are the ultimate goals of life. These are some of the Eurocentric superiority ideas that are subtly institutionalized through education. Children are brain-washed to believe in the superiority of Eurocentric ideals. They are trained in what to think, rather than how to think. For educational excellence, teachers are facilitators to assist in finding the answers and providing the resources for current and ever evolving research.

The second category is **inferiority**. Inferiority is demonstrated in communication. One of the ways is negative imagery. African American children learn very early in life that they are ugly with "bad" hair. Dr. Kenneth Clark in the 1954 Supreme Court Decision demonstrated that African American girls do not select Black dolls. The same pattern exists in 2004. Showing pictures in the book *Colors Around Me* (Church 1971), three and four year old African American children do not like the children that are black in skin color like ebony wood or licorice candy. They have learned through negative symbolism that Black children

are ugly or scary or bad. European culture represents the color black as death, bad guys, devils, evil, ignorance, fear, etc. Yet, white represents good, baptism, angels, enlightenment, salvation, god, etc. “White” lies are even considered good and acceptable. So, without knowing why or how, African children grow up not liking themselves, but the saddest part of the dilemma is that the dislike is so embedded that they do not recognize this dysfunction even as adults.

Native Americans suffer from the same dysfunction for the same reasons of superiority and inferiority. They are portrayed as the villains who killed the Europeans; as alcoholics living on reservations; as people who have not made any positive historical contributions; and, as ignorant, savages without civilization or a god. In 2002, a leading national school magazine awarded a student poem that described Native Americans as wild savages. The poem was printed and distributed nationally. It was recognized as a runner-up in competition which means the judges did not see anything wrong. Schools and athletic teams have “Indians” as their logos and mascots. When describing Africans and Native Americans, words such as ‘tribes’ for nations, ‘huts’ for homes, ‘jungle’ for forests, ‘savages’ for people, ‘pagan’ for different beliefs, ‘garb’ for clothing and many other derogatory terms are often used. When words are not sufficient, studies are then conducted to describe people that not Eurocentric as pathological or socio-paths. These communicative processes are the worst forms of dehumanization using inferiority. Educational excellence demands that every word be examined critically for the implied meaning; comparisons must be similar in context and given relevant weight; correlations must be significant; and, the data and testing reliable. These are reasons why students need to learn how to conduct research independently and not be taught what to think!

The third category of bias is ***distortion*** which is a misrepresentation of fact/s. Some examples include Pluto is a planet; Europe is a continent; Egypt is in the Middle East and not part of Africa. Some school maps now show the middle east as if it is a separate continent. Further examples include world maps that show North America larger than Africa; African people north of the Sahara are defined as whites and called brown-skinned Mediterraneans; Palestinians are murderers and Israelis are the victims; poor people are unable to be academically challenged; homosexuals molest children; African Americans have no history except enslavement; enslavement was enjoyed by African Americans; Europeans were good to the enslaved; African Americans have pathological families who are on welfare, commit crimes and deal drugs, etc.; Native Americans had to have their children taken from them because they had no god or civilization; Europeans have the right to manifest destiny. These distorted images are rarely considered biased. They are accepted as truths and dastardly

proven by European males, females and now even people of color who have been trained to think Eurocentric. This distorted research is funded by some of the most prestigious corporations in the United States to maintain the status quo for Eurocentric supremacy.

The fourth category of bias is **omission** which simply means that information is deleted. It is the easiest, most common and least recognized form of bias. People of color are omitted in mass media unless the images are negative. Afrocentric perspectives are not considered; African American leaders who are centered are unknown; the great literature, music, dance and visual art contributions of non-European cultures are not required in schools. The bias of omission pretends that people who are not Eurocentric or have not adopted Eurocentrism do not exist. Most students think the genocide of Native Americans is complete and therefore, they are not still living. African Americans are not shown making any contributions to this country or the world. People and things who are no longer seen or heard become irrelevant and cease to remain among the living.

The final category of bias is **Stereotyping**. Television projects images of African Americans as entertainers, athletes, criminals, clowns and drug dealers. The media allows AT&T to run an advertisement showing people populating all continents except Africa. Africa is populated with a monkey. It allows Palmolive-Colgate to sell "Darkie" toothpaste in Japan with a big black face smiling with large white teeth. It allows Taco Bell to promote Wild Burritos with Africans who are so illiterate that they do not know about fire. It allows Goodyear to run advertisements in South America making fun of Black lips as tires. As Chris Rock says, it allows everyday people, to make the statement "He is so articulate," when speaking of Colin Powell, to think it's a compliment and not an insult. Even worse was Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman saying, ***"What the hell would I want to go to a place like Mombassa for? I just see myself in a pot of boiling water with all these natives dancing around me."*** He later apologized but these are the stereotypes that are being taught and propagated in educational institutions and mass media. These are subtle stereotypes that few people question or think insulting. "Sambo" and "Ten Little Indians" are too obvious for contemporary tolerance but stereotypes still exist. The modern stereotypes taught are not self-evident nor do they espouse equality of all. They do not guarantee the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but they do control, manipulate and oppress.

Once deprogrammed, reprogramming can begin. Reprogramming begins with self. Teachers must develop self-respect and feel comfortable with their own culture and history. Then, teach truth. Sometimes, history and truth are painful, but students appreciate honesty. Knowledge is the key and truth is the way to knowledge.

Knowledge and appreciation of differences in others follows respecting self. A teacher

must respect others. Excellence in education cannot be achieved if the teacher is unable to value and appreciate every child that walks in the class. Children realize when they are just tolerated and not respected and loved. Students do not need someone that feels sorry for the underprivileged, who is patronizing, or is doing something “good” for the community by helping those “less fortunate.” Non-European children must be affirmed in their beauty, taught that their culture is vital, and their history is relevant. These teachings show respect for others. Students need and want to be loved, appreciated and challenged to find the genius within.

For teachers who have read this first step in educational excellence and did not get angry but rather began to question, then keep reading. If you discount the honesty and feelings of human beings that suffer from these traumas daily, then quit teaching now. Don't read another page and don't harm another child. Recognizing bias is the hardest part of the ten steps to excellence. This first step of respect that requires deprogramming means change; and, that is not easy. Respect by recognizing bias is not meant to blame or condemn. It is the first lesson in being able to walk in someone else's shoes and feel their joy and pain. Respect is being able to give, but the greatest gift is the one received from students who will respect you in return.

"We must question everything. Survey the unknown, discuss the untouchable, and begin to talk about freedom. First we have to unlock the fears and secrets in our own lives before we can truly create the new and beautiful" (Madhubuti, 1978).

Last but not least is to teach respect for the environment. People should not pollute. They should protect, conserve, recycle and replenish. Without respect for the environment, all life on Earth is in jeopardy. The Afrocentric paradigm requires respect for self, others and the environment. Thus, respect is the first step to peace. It acknowledges MAAT: truth, justice, righteousness, order, balance, harmony and reciprocity. Once achieved, respect for self, others and the environment will take educational excellence to the next step.

Expect



***We are Africans
not because we are born in Africa,
but because Africa is born in us.
Look around you
and behold us in our greatness.
Greatness is an African possibility;
you can make it yours.***
--Chester Higgins, Jr.

STEP II – EXPECT

Expect the best from every student in spite of color, ethnicity, gender, income or religious preference. Expect the best even if there is not a traditional family, or acceptable socioeconomic status. Expect the best of every student in spite of the parents, the homelessness, the drugs, the handicap and the prior school year evaluation. Expect the best when all odds are against success. Education is only excellent when there is a belief that every child can and will learn. Expectation, love, self-esteem, and self-confidence, help students to succeed, but sometimes, labels are used to prejudge and stigmatize students before they enter the classroom. Then the maximum ability and potential of the child is thwarted. The student is doomed before s/he ever opens a book. This self-fulfilling prophecy has been verified by research repeatedly, yet society and teachers refuse to acknowledge it. If a facilitator does not know that a child is a genius and thinks s/he is disabled, the child will function at a diminished capacity. Every teacher should act as if there is a potential genius in all children and strive for excellence by having them reach their maximum potential.

Current research assumes that children of color (except Japanese), disadvantaged, inner-city, at-risk (whatever label is en vogue) youth will have learning disabilities. These youth are described as socially immature, hyperactive, and culturally and environmentally deprived. It is also assumed that they lack parental commitment, adequate male role models, nuclear family and economic stability. They are perceived to suffer from their inherent violent nature, susceptibility to drugs, poverty, inadequate housing, and lack of safety. From these often quoted statistics, programs are designed to "meet the needs" based on the above "assessments." Special education classes are filled with children of color. There are *special* "over-identification" conferences to address the growing *special* education population of children of color. Fifty years after Brown vs. the Board of Education, educational programs across the country continue to fail to educate children of color. They are tracked into programs of low expectations using substandard "developmentally appropriate practices." One student interviewed in The Peabody Reflection stated:

The only thing that matters in my life is school and there they think I'm dumb and always will be. I'm starting to think they're right. Hell, I know they put all black kids together in one group if they can.... Even if I look around and know that I'm the smartest in my group, all that means is that I'm, the smartest of the dumbest (Moore, 1992)."

Educational excellence demands that teachers, parents and society must believe in children - all children. When teachers believe that students cannot learn, they teach them in ways that reflect their belief. Labels are merely excuses for not teaching. Children do have problems! Children are different! Yet, problems and differences do not mean that children cannot learn. They can, will and do learn if given the opportunity, resources and equity. If the conditions of class, gender or ethnicity were a deterrent to education, not one African American, Native American, homosexual or poor child would have ever succeeded.

Teachers must look to Afrocentric/multiculturalism and provide the love, care, and respect that all children need to succeed. Begin by seeing each child as the world's next greatest scientist or musician or technician and try to help that child reach his/her maximum potential. Remember the African legacies of Imhotep, Ptahhotep, Shaka, Nzinga, George Washington Carver, Mary McCleod Bethune, Garrett Morgan, Charles Drew, and the thousands more. From these giants the lesson learned is that children are not the ones who fail in the educational system; rather, the system fails them. The blame rests with the adults for not meeting their needs. In Afrocentric values the child belongs to the community, and it is the duty of that community to insure the success of its children.

African Americans lived that philosophy prior to integration. Extended families took care of each other before they were labeled pathological and were expected to mimic European family culture. The extended families took care of kin and friends. Children were reared by the neighborhood. When a child was disrespectful, a neighbor would discipline a child, then call the parent who would in turn discipline the child again. Teachers took a personal interest in educating the children because each child was a reflection of the teacher. The community knew the teachers because they lived in the same community. The community watched children in the neighborhood when parents were working and fed them when there was no food. There was less hunger and homelessness in days of depression than in these times of excess. Those were the days that the community expected every child to do their best. This was African tradition to protect the children who were viewed as the future of society. Mbiti states,

"In African societies, the birth of a child is a process which begins long before the child's arrival in this world and continues long thereafter. It is not just a single event which can be recorded on a particular date. Nature brings the child into the world,

but society creates the child into a social being, a corporate person. For it is the community which must protect the child, feed it, bring it up, educate it and in many ways incorporate it into the wider community...Kinship plays an important role here, so that a child cannot be exclusively "my child" but only "our child (Mbiti, 1969)."

There were no excuses. Community was just expected. Without the expectation that all children can succeed, they are like The Eagle, a West African folktale. In this story the eagle was reared by chickens. Even though he was an eagle, he could not fly. He was timid and afraid because he had been brainwashed from birth to believe that he was a chicken. The Philadelphia zoo tried this experiment and found the tale to be true. When chickens are in the classrooms teaching children, students never develop into the eagles that they were intended to be. Don't be afraid to give students their wings to soar. **Expect** excellence, and allow them to **Become**.

Anecdote - The Wall

Every day a four year old tried to merge his body to become one with the wall as he stared blankly at the floor or the miniature car he held tightly in his hand. He did not speak to us or join us in any way. At intervals during the day, I'd go and join him on the wall and read and talk and sing and ask questions and try to penetrate his world because I expected him to join us. He did not let me in. So, everyday I would hold him in my arms and drag him to the group for morning affirmation. While kneeling next to him and holding him tightly, I'd sing, pledge, read and talk to him about what we were doing. At intervals during the day, I'd go and join him on the wall or on the floor while he rolled his car around and around in a very small circle saying nothing. I'd read, talk, sing, ask questions and try to penetrate his world. He did not let me in. After many weeks, I extended my hand and he held on to it and walked with me to the circle. He did not participate, but he stayed there without running away to the wall when I no longer held him tightly. It was months before he smiled once when I was reading to him; and months before he talked to me; and months before he took a nap on a cot; and months and years before you could not tell that he was different. I did not isolate him in a special class. I put him in a "regular" class and told the students that we are all different, just in different ways; and therefore, we respect everyone that has life. I love my babies because they understand. Sure, they might talk about him just like they will talk about everybody every now and then; but they never mistreated him. They took him in even when he couldn't let them in; but, he grew and learned. If you see him now, you will not know he is different. He is working a grade and one-half below level but he sits and plays and interacts just like everyone else. I expected him to succeed and he did. Sometimes, he may need a touch on the shoulder to bring him back into focus; but at last, he left the wall.

Success



STEP III - SUCCESS

Expect and respect beget success. Success is necessary for esteem, confidence and empowerment. Children must experience success to realize that they have the power to **Become**. Success brings joy, hope, and the courage to keep trying. Failure causes despair, rejection, pain, and fear of trying. Students need to succeed as they climb each step to Hotep, and educators must assist in the climb. As students begin to stumble, the educator is there to provide alternatives necessary that enable the student to achieve. To stand and watch children fail because they face difficulties or because they may not climb as fast as others, is an act of overt negligence of responsibility.

Individualization by the educator is paramount for success. Individualization is a one to one contract of expectations. The contract monitors individual progress and plans strategies and techniques for success in accomplishing the expectations. The student knows the expectations/goals and the hurdles/objectives to cross to reach the finish line. Each student has personal time with the instructor for designing, implementing, coordinating and evaluating. The plan is designed based on the student's needs, implemented on the student's interest, coordinated on the student's ability and evaluated on the educational purpose. Plans are made student by student to meet the needs, the interests, and ability of each one. Students are provided opportunities for success.

Teachers need to develop a philosophy that all children can and will learn. They need to understand differences and appreciate that all students do not fit in prescribed Procrustean molds by cutting off their heads and feet to fit the mold of the only bed provided. When children are educated excellently, they will emerge as distinct individuals with the ability to think and skills to learn. They will become more culturally and academically diverse.

Designing success is one of the hardest tasks of education. First, respect differences and appreciate that each one will get to the goal uniquely. Second, expect everyone to reach the goal. Third, success needs to be successive. Then, the job of the educational facilitator is to provide the foundation that enables the students to find that special way of reaching the goal. Some will jump. Some will slide. Others will skip. Some might need a nudge and still others will crawl while some will run. There are more..... and they may need a hand, but the way is guided by the educator.

Scheduling may seem difficult but not impossible. An example is to begin working with a whole group or experiential activity and follow up giving students assigned individual or small group tasks to accomplish. This is an excellent time for repetition and drill work. While students are working on their assigned tasks, the facilitator can begin to work with one student at a time for short periods. Another method that allows for individualized instruction

is to use a contract method that allows students to plan their own programs. While the students are working on their contracts, the teacher can work one-on-one. Finding a style that works best for educator and student takes time, but is well worth the trouble. Quality one-on-one time gives every child the chance to succeed. It teaches students to become independent learners and leaders as well as cooperative and collective workers.

Now that the hard parts are over, implementation can begin. The class probably will not flow exactly as planned. The fish may be floating on the top of the bowl; the contract may be glued to a book; the paint may be on the carpet; and, the hamster may be lost; but, hang in there! Success is possible for the educator, too. Keep trying. Experiment! Try again. Eventually the class will begin to flow. As students become more independent, they will take over and begin the planning. Then the facilitator will **Become**. Dr. Asa Hilliard often tells the story of a man trying to train a parrot to talk. The first word of the parrot came after 1,500 attempts by the trainer; the second word after 1,000 attempts; the third after 500 attempts. Each word took fewer and fewer tries until at last, all the trainer had to do was say the word one time and the parrot repeated it. Patience is the key. Time is important.

Success also means commitment. Draw up a contract that defines ethical expectations for students, parents, teachers and administrators which hold all accountable for self and others. In an Afrocentric environment, affirm on a daily basis the principles of MAAT and the Nguzo Saba for ethical standards. Say an African pledge and declare Africa as the homeland. Say you are African and will become a world leader. Pour libation to the ancestors; give respect to the elders; and, ask blessings from both for the future. These are ceremonies that should be done jointly by students and faculty on a daily basis. In a multicultural setting, there should be an affirming time for diverse students to declare their heritage and to make a cultural contribution to the whole group. Affirming activities enable a student to acknowledge who s/he is and be proud.

Success means planning for special holidays and events. The school calendar should reflect the student population. African American holidays that can be celebrated are: Heroes Day (September, 1st Monday), Jomo Kenyatta Day (October 31st), MAAFA Remembrance (November, 3rd Thursday), Kwanzaa (December 26-January 1st), Martin L. King's birthday (January 15), Malcolm X assassination remembrance (February, 3rd Monday), African Independence Day (May 31st), Juneteenth (June 19th). Success means planning for extracurricular and auxiliary activities—sports, visual and performing arts, technology, field trips, foreign languages, etc. Success is also planning scheduling time for students and teachers to maximize potential. An Indaba (Zulu for serious discussion) should be held on a daily basis for faculty planning.

Success needs communication. Keeping parents and students informed of progress reminds teachers of the individual needs of each student. The wonderful part of individualization is that an educator gets to know, understand and respect each child as a unique individual. The learning is from all sides encompassing teachers, family and students. The teacher can then view every year and each child as a new and exciting experience and a new world to explore.

Remember, students are human. They are not animals grouped together and herded into troughs, fed the same diet whether it agrees with them or not and then led to slaughter. Educators can give the helping hand out of the trough; feed them the knowledge of success which will lead them to their maximum potential; and, one day that hand may be offered back because it was given the chance to succeed, reciprocity. Winners succeed and only success produces winners.

Anecdote - Globally Dysfunctional

She was different. When the mother asked, "Is she dyslexic?" I had to respond, "Yes." I knew the child had a learning impairment, but we did everything that anyone could do - individualization, multisensory, etc. The child did not know she was different because she did the same things the other children were doing or so she thought. She was successful working two years below her peers. She was a happy child and worked hard. However, mother kept insisting that the child should be tested. So, we did. The diagnosis was "Globally Dysfunctional." I had never heard of such a thing. The recommendation was a special class and that she would probably never function above a first or second grade level. I never told the child. I kept her in her regular class. I asked the mother to please not burst the child's bubble and just keep working with her as usual. I knew there was untapped potential, but she just needed time. We didn't quit and she didn't either. Today, the young lady is in high school as a regular student. She is still a little behind but manages to keep up with the rest of her peers. No, she is not in AP courses, but she is not separate in special education at a first grade level. We gave her models of success that were attainable. With each step, we continued to challenge her to a higher level. She excelled in dance and was always volunteering for school leadership positions. She went on every field trip and her mother usually went with her. The exposure to field trips, foreign languages, computers and the arts has developed this beautiful young lady into a citizen that will make a contribution to society. Wouldn't we have committed a crime if we had used the label as an excuse not to teach and challenge her to her maximum potential? Take students where they are and mold them with models of success.

R.I.P. (REWARD, INVEST, PRAISE)



STEP IV - R I P

Praise, praise, praise. Find something good to say to every student. Too many children never hear words of praise. Even those that are excelling often fail to realize their accomplishments because no one ever took the time to say, "That was wonderful!" Everyone enjoys praise. It is a recognition of appreciation and caring. It is a measure of progress. It is an evaluation of success. Praise brings smiles when there were tears; hope when there is despair; and, pride when there is shame.

Some children come to class with negative feelings of self-hatred without knowing what is happening to them. These negative feelings are demonstrated in discipline problems. Reading the book Colors Around Me in kindergarten and first grade classes, creates laughter from children while viewing pictures of children that are black complexioned. African American children will identify with all of the different colors of children in the book except the children that are black. How do they learn so early not to like themselves? Only after the teacher identifies black as a favorite color by making statements as, "I've always wanted to be black like the picture," or, "These children are so beautiful," will appreciation for beautiful black things change the negative concept for the students. Weeks of intensive training are necessary to get children to identify with the black complexioned children in the book. Months and years are necessary to undo the negativity that has been learned. Thus, praise for hair, skin, smiles, eyes, and beautiful black things of color turn shame, self-hatred, and embarrassment to pride.

These are examples of a few of the ways to praise used at Hunt Primary School in Fort Valley, Georgia. The teacher Ms. Lisa Hatchett calls it the "Wall of Praise." Each time a student does anything worthy of recognition, she has at least 20-30 ways to praise that include:

- "Fantastic" - Fanning your face saying "faaaann -tas- tic" (3 times)
- "Hip, hip hooray" - Put hands on hip and shake hip left, then hip right and hands up for Hooray
- "Round of applause" - clap hands in a big circle
- Elvis - "Thank you, thank you, thank you very much" (pulling your collar like Elvis)
- Mirror - "Ooooh, Aaaah, Looking Good" (First, draw a mirror in air)
- Truck Driver - (Driving the truck; pull the horn), "Honk! Honk! Good Job, Good Buddy" (like you're talking on a CB)
- "Who did a good job?" - To the rhythm of who let the dogs out - "Who did a good job? You, you..you, you, you!"
- "Bow Wow" - (Bow down and then come up with fingers making a W)
- Firecracker - "Pyeune" (Repeat 3 times)
- Awesome - "Awesome, awesome, awesome!" (3 times bowing down)
- Hamburger - (Hand on the grill sizzling, then turn over to check each time) - "Not don't, Not done, then Well done!"

Try to think of more! These are just a few ways to praise that work. Seeing the class participating with smiles on all faces, not just the one receiving the praise is...."Awesome, awe-

some, awesome!” (3 times bowing down)

Praise and reward almost go hand in hand. Taking the time to reward does not necessarily mean spending money. Rewards are not bribes. Rewards can be special times for group recreation periods or field trips or something as simple as feeding the animals or watering the plants. Rewards to students just need to be creative. A hand drawn star can be a reward or even a special time for students to do something creative. The hardest part of rewarding is being creative. A reward is a special thank you for a job well done. When an adult works everyday, they expect to get paid. A child’s job is to go to school and do his/her best. For this effort, they deserve to be paid with a special thanks. It helps them to become responsible and accountable.

Rewards and praise are built into a discipline plan. The plan should encompass expectations, consequences and rewards based upon ethical principles. In an Afrocentric environment, a discipline system is grounded on the Kemetic principles of Maat - truth, justice, righteousness, order, balance, harmony and reciprocity and the African centered principles of the Nguzo Saba developed by Dr. Maulana Karenga for the African-American holiday Kwanzaa. One successful discipline program used for pre-school through early elementary is the Garrett Morgan red light. This is a modification of Ms. Hatchett’s classroom program. On the wall there is a large red light with a black star on top. Each child has his/her name on a black star paper clip or a clothespin. Everyday the clip starts at the top clipped to the black star. The star represents the Black Star line of Marcus Garvey and the star on the flag of Ghana adopted by Kwame Nkrumah in honor of Garvey. In a multicultural class, the black star is the beginning for the creation of a bright shining star. Using the black star a teacher can remind students each day that they are great, beautiful, shining blacks stars. When a student’s clip stays on the star all day, s/he gets a pull from the prize box at the end of the day. If a child breaks the rules during the day, their clip moves down the light. The first move from the black star is down to the red circle on the light. The name clip on the red light means to “STOP.” At the beginning of the year when the teacher moves the clip to the red, the student is asked what principle they broke and what can s/he do to improve. However, after a few weeks, the teacher does not have to interrupt the class. The students will know the rules and principles. However, frequent reminding and reinforcing rules and principles is always appropriate. Just walking to the light draws everyone’s attention to the move. Students quietly watch as a clip is moved. The red circle is just a warning to stop the disruptive behavior. It also means a loss of a reward at the end of the day. If a student continues to act out or breaks more rules, the clip is moved to the yellow circle. The yellow means slow down, caution, “You’re headed toward trouble.” If the clip moves to the yellow circle, the student

misses the reward and recess for the day. If the yellow circle does not help, then the clip is moved to the green which means, "GO." The student must go to the parent box at the bottom of the light and get a letter to send home to his/her parents or guardian to notify them about the behavior. Most students work very hard to keep their clip on the black star to get a prize but they also do not want the consequences that make them accountable for their behavior. Positive behavior is reinforced with praise and rewards. Students learn ethics, responsibility and accountability early in life which provide them with a strong foundation as they mature.

A discipline system for older students is the pyramid sheet or book. Each child is given a Khepera (striving for excellence) booklet. This book contains the principles of MAAT, the Nguzo Saba, the Zulu Affirmation, goals for the month, star sheets with homework assignments and monthly progress reports. A weekly page contains a pyramid with one-hundred blocks on it for teachers to draw stars, a tekhen (obelisk) with blocks on it for each subject and a parent signature line. The notebook is taken to every class for the student to keep track of assignments and for teachers to reward students with stars. The objective is for every student to fill all 100 blocks for a week with stars. They earn stars in various ways: good behavior, high test scores, class work, homework, helping another student, etc. Stars can be given by any staff member. At the end of the week the stars are counted, and those who have earned 100 or more stars are rewarded. This particular system was school-wide. It offered Friday evening rewards or consequences with four different room assignments. The "Imhotep Room," named after the great Egyptian architect who designed the Step Pyramid in Egypt and was also the first physician thousands of years ago, was the highest reward. In the Imhotep Room, students received prizes, a treat, watched a pre-approved movie (G-Rated) and/or played video games. Students who did not receive 100 stars (50-99) were rewarded with the Anansi Room, similar to Imhotep, but not as great. Below 50 stars students went to one of two other rooms. The first room was the Jehuti room or room for thought which offered individual academic assistance. Students who did not do homework or class work or failed a test were assigned this room to complete work or study for a test. The students were sent with work from the teacher that placed them in that room. The other room was the Ptahhotep room or room of wisdom for students who had behavioral problems. Students assigned to this room must write a paper. First, they identified the problem/s that caused them to be in Ptahhotep. Second, they read from "The Teachings of Ptahhotep" and wrote what they thought Ptahhotep would have recommended for their actions. Third, a plan of action was written for the following week to improve behavior. Finally, the student wrote letters of apology to every elder and student that their behavior offended and their parents. Again, most students preferred the rewards of Imhotep and Anansi and tried to avoid Jehuti and Ptahhotep.

If a student accumulated more than three Ptahhoteps in one grading period of nine weeks, the student received a parental suspension. This meant that a parent spent an entire day at school with his/her child attending class and assisting with the behavior problem. Spending a day with their child allowed parents to actively participate in a plan for better behavior. It also keeps the child in school and parents involved.

Families participated in the discipline plan. Each family had to accumulate 3 stars a month. They earned stars by attending Harambe (PTA), investment club, volunteering at school, completing rites of passage tasks, serving on school committees and/or donating supplies. In an Afrocentric environment, the school is part of the family community and each family shares in the work and the play of the school.

Another area of discipline that is often overlooked is the principle of Ujima – Collective Work and Responsibility. As African-Americans, one of our greatest obstacles is unity and group operation. Students must not only learn to be accountable for their individual behavior but also be accountable for the group or class. A plan for rewarding the class that best demonstrates standards of excellence is three-fold. This program starts with the grading system. Each student must earn 500 points a nine week period for their grades. These points are defined by each teacher in the class syllabus with homework, class work, projects, tests, etc. The class with the most points achieves the first part for the prize. Students help each other to complete projects and homework. They learn the meaning of, “I am because, we are.”

Each week teachers record the number of assignments missed on the tekhen. The class strives to achieve the fewest points in the grading period. These points are subtracted from the syllabus points. When students do not complete assignments, recess is cancelled and students **cannot participate in scheduled field trips.**

Finally, the “Class of the Term” is the class with the greatest amount of points and those include parental stars. The goal is to develop cohesiveness with group interaction working toward a common goal. Students and parents push and motivate each other to strive for excellence. The Ujima prize is awarded to the class with the most points. The class could select from a group of educational field trips as a prize. Of course, parents are invited to participate.

DRILL

Another component of the discipline program could be drill inspired by the principles of Umoja (unity) and Nia (purpose). Each morning during affirmation students can practice 5-10 minutes of drill. The drill can be military style, movement to poetry and/or cadences, stepping/boot dance or songs with movement. Any type of synchronized movement can be used to demonstrate the beauty and power of unity while helping students to develop the con-

centration necessary to achieve one's goals. Students may help to create some of the African-Centered cadences using the principle of Kuumba (creativity). These discipline plans reward students and parents while holding both accountable for their behavior. Discipline and self control are imperative in developing our future leaders. An African proverb says, "Knowledge in the hands of a fool is dangerous."

The other part of the RIP step is investing. Invest the time to praise, reward, thank and show concern. Investing means that instructors can share themselves with students. Investing means that teachers take time to evaluate themselves using the same ethical foundation used to evaluate students. Students want and need to identify with the teacher. Investing time to talk about yourself, your goals, your expectations, and your life experiences help to make teachers real people to the students. Invest the time to share your feelings about the things that you dislike and like, that frighten and surprise, that make you happy and sad. Teachers can broaden the experiences of students by just a small investment of self. Investing also means listening to the students. Take time to hear their stories, worries, or fears. Share in their dreams and success. Investing means that facilitators take the time to be human. Haim Ginott states,

I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.

Anecdote - The Clarinet

A cable repairman was at my house when he asked upon seeing me, "Are you Ms. Hawkins?" I replied, "I was, but now I am Rivers." He then told me who he was and that I had taught him in fourth grade. He then grinned and hugged me tightly. He reminded me that I had given him a clarinet and began his interest in music and playing an instrument. He said he played through middle and high school and received a band scholarship to college. That instrument, that reward, investment and praise, sparked the genius within. It became the vehicle to maximize his dreams. He received his BS from Southern University in Engineering and now works for the cable company. He told me that he was so happy to see me again to formally thank me for all I had done. I told him that the pleasure was mine because the reward of teaching is seeing successful men like him.

T.A.P (TAKE AWAY PRIVILEGES)



STEP V - T A P

A quality future for life will depend on humaneness measured by kindness, ethics, etiquette and respect. These values above all others must be taught with academics to insure Hotep. The educator must care enough to teach life skills. Care enough to **Take Away Privileges!**

Rules, discipline and codes of behavior should be established along with rewards and consequences. There are three simple and easy to learn rules but they encompass all behaviors:

1. Respect Self - Stop, look and listen to learn to strive for excellence
2. Respect Others – Treat others as you wish to be treated
3. Respect the Environment – Protect, Conserve, Recycle and Replenish

Every behavior fits in one of the above categories. These three rules enable students to become responsible adults. Allowing children to do as they please without discipline or consequences is not teaching nor loving them. Children need discipline to become responsible, accountable, humane adults.

Rewards and consequences can be established by students. Children are able to specify awards by defining the things they enjoy doing, or places that they would like to go, or special treats. Students can establish consequences as well. Teachers may assist, alter, or delete ideas, but always insure that there is a class discussion and that students understand the reasons for each item. Students must have ownership. They need to feel that they were part of the process. Everyone responds better if they have a part in the plan rather than a plan forced upon them from above.

For example some Kindergarten and first grade students have defined their rewards as:

1. Assisting the teacher
2. Feeding the animals
3. Cooking on Fridays
4. Field Trips
5. Pennies for shopping
6. Imhotep (Time out on Fridays for fun)
7. Student of the week
8. Pizza Party
9. Stickers
10. Awards (Certificates)

These are just some of the things that various classes have asked for as rewards. All of these things were possible. A discipline plan and standards were established by the classes to at-

tain the rewards. Some things required the whole class acting responsibly for the entire week (Ujima) like cooking, while others may require a month of collective work like a pizza party. However, most rewards only required each student to be responsible for self on a daily basis.

Surprisingly student penalties are often more harsh than a teacher's penalties. This is usually the area when teacher modification is needed. Generally, teachers need to give a warning or two before a consequence unless the behavior is severe. A teacher can give a verbal warning specifying the rule that was broken. A second verbal warning can be given before the third one which requires the loss of a privilege or privileges. Even the students with the worst behavior do not like losing special privileges. Non-violent conflict resolution strategies need to be taught and lived to enhance the behavior modification process. Some non-violent strategies are collaborative problem solving or working together, compromising or sharing, avoiding or withdrawing, accommodating or smoothing. A strategy begins with trying to diffuse a situation. A teacher may ask, "May we talk later?" "Do you need time out?" "May we talk now away from the class?" Students in conflict begin with, "We need to talk." Talking and discussing the actions that are offensive by both parties is the best way to resolve conflict. When talking:

- Control emotions...be respectful, set rules, establish guidelines
- Discuss the behavior and not the person
- Listen.....be attentive and understanding
- Try to establish a plan to help to diminish disruptive behavior
- Allow the person to save face (a panther backed into a corner has no way out except to attack what is directly in front)
- Show respect (If this is a teacher in conflict with a student, be firm and let that student know that disrupting the learning of others will not be tolerated)

Sometimes, emotions are too high at the moment to discuss the issue and the persons involved may need to wait until they are calm and/or have an intermediary to help them resolve the problem. When emotions are high, both parties need to walk away. Calling names, fighting and other forms of violence are unacceptable. When all else fails, a teacher is left with the last non-violent strategy. **Take away privileges!** Students lose the privileges of Imhotep, Anansi, field trips, and other special activities.

DISRUPTIVE CLASSES

Disruptive classes happen when a teacher:

- Does not love or have a passion for what s/he is teaching
- Does not really know the subject that s/he is teaching
- Has not planned adequately for the class
- Has not individualized for success to meet student's needs
- Has not incorporated multisensory, multimodal, multidimensional or multicultural strategies
- Has not made the class fun or interesting

Does not like children
Does not respect the students
Does not have high expectations
Is not fair and just
Does not have class rules and procedures
Is not clear and consistent
Is not serious
Is not genuine and truthful
Is not a role model

A student is disruptive when s/he:

Needs nurturing - love, care, respect, kindness, consideration
 Demonstrated by seeking attention
Needs healing from being hurt
 Demonstrated by trying to hurt another
 Demonstrated by seeking power over another
 Demonstrated by violence
 Demonstrated by acting out
Needs success to become empowered
 Demonstrated by not doing work
 Demonstrated by avoiding class participation and homework
 Demonstrated by acting out to avoid participating

STRATEGIES FOR NOISY CLASS

Change voice - whisper
Give commands in a whisper - "If you hear me clap three times.. If you hear me stomp two times...etc.
Have students participate in activity..."If you're finished, put your hands on your head, if you're finished put your hands on your ears....etc,
Sing a song....."John, Jacob, Jingle Heimer Smith, that's my name too.....
Start a rhythm with clapping, tapping, etc.
Start writing names on the board....
Start giving assignment and adding to it....
Change activity...do something unexpected
Give points to those who are acting positive....
Praise those who are acting positive....
Move around the room
Stand next to the disruptor and ask a question, move to the next disruptor

STRATEGIES FOR DISRUPTIVE STUDENT

Ignore - refuse to respond
Use eye language to show disapproval
Stand close to student and bring discussion to that student
Call the name of the student as part of the discussion
Ask student to assist or help make a decision
Don't back student into a corner....leave him/her an option to save face...talk in private
Encourage positive behavior with "I believe you can...." (provide model for success)

Recognize achievement, compliment the positive....

Some helpful policies are:

UNETHICAL REPORT - Policy for Students: The Unethical Report is designed to create a line of communication between the teacher and the parent. If a child has involved him/herself in excessively deviant behavior, a discipline note that outlines the offense is sent home to be signed by the parent and returned the next school day. Offenses that require an Unethical Report are outlined under the guidelines of a discipline policy. Policy for Parents: Parents receive a Parental Unethical Report if the child has excessive absences, tardies, delinquent homework, improper dress, or if the parent disrespects students, staff, environment, or fails to provide lunch, attend harambe or fails to complete parental suspension.

PARENTAL SUSPENSION - Policy for Students: Parental suspension requires at least one parent to spend the entire day with his/her child as they move from class-to-class to enable the parent to witness his/her child's behavior. Parental suspensions are necessary when the student has (1) been judged by the staff to be too dangerous to be around other students e.g., physical or verbal abuse or violence, (2) had three unethical reports sent home during a 9-week period; (3) been caught destroying school property. The student is not allowed to attend field trips during the current nine-week period in which parental suspension is received. Instead of suspending or expelling the students, Imani (faith), provides the belief in family and school working together as a village to raise the child.

HOMEWORK POLICY – Homework is included with behavior and discipline. Students are required to be responsible for self and their academic achievement. Homework is practice. It is the repetition needed to learn. The curve of forgetting demonstrates that people forget 50% of what they hear after the first day if they do nothing and 80% after a month. If students do not practice, they will not remember. Michael Jordan and other great athletes would have not succeeded if they had not practiced. Academics is the same. Children must practice and homework is that repetition. Students should learn as early as pre-school and kindergarten to take their notebooks and books home, to do their homework at home and bring both back to school. Teachers demonstrate the ritual of taking books out and placing them on the right side. As they complete their work in that subject, move the completed work and books to the left side. Upon completion of all work, put all books and work back into the school bag. When teachers establish routines, students learn to organize their lives. This especially helps with students that have been labeled as “attention deficit.” However, it works for all children to have routines in their lives. Students learn that homework is not for Mommy or Daddy. They learn that homework is their job as part of the family.

Many teachers make excuses for students. They do not hold children accountable.

Some of the excuses are that children do not have time for homework, or they may be hungry or cold or their parents may not be home, etc. However, the children that have these types of problems are the very ones that need the discipline, self-control and responsibility. If the parents and teachers do not help children to become responsible for their lives, who will? If students are not able to grow and learn and become independent, where will they go? Where or when will the cycle of mediocrity end? When students fail to turn in homework or fail to strive for excellence, their privileges are terminated. Stop feeling sorry and do something to help! This does not mean that teachers stop listening to children. This does not mean that natural life disasters are not considered. Be wise and humane, but assist children to become responsible, caring, intelligent adults. Help them to grow by teaching them the discipline that they will need to survive in the world. Kwame Nkrumah, president of the Republic of Ghana stated in 1962 that "Humanity is perched on the edge of a dangerous precipice from which one fatal miscalculation may bring mankind to the brink of annihilation." Take away privileges to help develop future world leaders that are responsible and accountable. Don't become the miscalculation that dooms humanity.

Anecdote - Midget Crew

All rules are meant to be broken including mine. Every code of discipline must be weighed by the circumstances. We had a group of boys who would have been labeled ADHD to the max if they were in a regular public school setting. That is why their parents wanted them in our school. They didn't want them labeled and they wanted them challenged. Most of our African American males labeled ADHD are very brilliant young men, but they need to be challenged and kept busy. Boys grow later than girls so this group was called the midget crew by the girls. They bothered the girls and teachers and everybody and everything. They would have been in the Ptahhotep Room every week if I had not intervened most of the time. They couldn't help themselves. It was just them. They did their work and projects even when they were cutting up in class like rolling in their chairs under the tables or standing on their heads while trying to read. If it could be imagined, they did it. I talked to them, spent time with them, praised them, gave them additional responsibilities. I did everything I knew but they were just boys being boys. Everybody loved them even though most of the time, they drove us mad. We had to make a special discipline plan for them. It just wasn't their fault. One day as I was walking to my office, they ran out of a class and tackled me. They thought it was funny to see the principle on the floor with three of them at my ankles. All I could do was laugh with them. I just kept hoping that my discipline for them was not a miscalculation that was going to doom humanity. They will begin to graduate from high school in 2006 and are all doing well in school. We must have done something right.



**“A man without the knowledge
of where he has been
knows not where he is,
or where he is going.”**

Sankofa - African Proverb

STEP VI MULTICULTURAL

Being and becoming require the knowledge of self which comes from knowing the truth. Learning truth is the second goal in educational excellence for Hotep. In 1979, Dr. Barbara Sizemore proposed a four M curriculum for total development that consisted of multimodal, multi-lingualism, multidimensional and multicultural. Multiculturalism became the new focus for education. The term sounded good and the concept is relevant, but it has never been fully implemented. The core public school curriculum remains Eurocentric with a few additions of heroes and heroines from people of color. Eurocentrism as the foundation requires the suppression of minority cultures and history to maintain superiority. (Mac an Ghail, 1988, p.5). Suppression is institutionalized as a hidden curriculum which transmits the values and social skills of European culture (Mac an Ghail, 1988, p.58). Linda Myers adds, "The depletion of our natural resources, pollution of our environment, increased incidence of catastrophic illness (e.g., cancer, AIDS, etc.), exorbitant health-care costs, high rates of drug and alcohol abuse, divorce, family violence, teenage pregnancy, and suicide, to say nothing of global conflict and the threat of nuclear holocaust, all make imperative the close examination and careful analysis of the dominant world view of socialization in a U. S. society" (Myers, 1988, p.5). Therefore, multiculturalism as one of the four M's of Dr. Sizemore is used in its true meaning as a step towards educational excellence.

A brief history of institutionalized suppression in education is necessary to understand a need for infusion of multiculturalism. European domination and history begins approximately 500 bce (before the common era) with the conquering of Egypt by the Greeks, Romans and later Arabs. All wanted power and control and thus had to destroy the African culture to render the African people powerless. The temples (institutions of learning) were burned and people who continued to practice the indigenous religions of Egypt were killed. The books were burned, destroyed or confiscated from Egypt.

The next major phase was the industrial revolution and the printing press which gave Europeans control over all printed matter. Communication through print was presented from a biased European perspective. This information became adopted as history and fact. Acceptance of the information became a critical part of the European socialization process. When the word was printed, it was fact. Distortions and omissions of history became univer-

sal with the colonization of Africa and the Americas. Oppression, by Europeans and their dominant media image, was the standard for success. Quoting Dr. John Henrik Clarke, "Europeans did not only colonize Africa, they would also colonize information about Africa" (Hilliard, et. al. 1988, p. xii).

The third phase was religious conversion. The untruths were carried to every continent by missionaries under the pretense of saving the "savages." The Europeans changed Jesus to white, called non-Christians savages and uncivilized. They brought the Bible, enslaved African people and stole the African land with the permission of the church. This worldwide religious/educational base was established employing oppressive and Eurocentric views that laid the foundation for contemporary racism. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o stated that:

Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1991, p. 16).

The European socialization process demands that they (*the Europeans*) protect their learning for the sake of tradition and viability. Babbie says, "Because of this linkage, any disproof of these understandings tends to make us (*Europeans*) look stupid, gullible, and generally not okay. So we commit ourselves all the more unshakably to our understanding of how things are and create a formidable barrier to further inquiry and more accurate understanding" (Babbie, 1989, p. 13 italics added). Sitting Bull recognized the threat of the Eurocentric world view as early as 1877 in his statement at the Powder Run Council.

Yet hear me my people. We have now to deal with another race. Small and feeble when our fathers first met them, but now great and overbearing. Strangely enough, they have a mind to till the soil. And the love of possession is a disease with them. These people have many rules that the rich may break, but the poor may not. They claim this mother of ours the earth as their own, and fence their neighbors away; they deface her with their buildings and their refuse. That nation is like a spring freshet that overruns its banks and destroys all who are in its path (Myers, 1988, p. 15).

Multiculturalism is in the path trying to stop the ethnocentric view that Eurocentrism is universal. Other cultures are relevant and viable. One of many that needs to be addressed is the Afrocentric perspective that recognizes the traditions and cultures of the African people. This story begins in Africa where some 2.5 million years ago the human lineage began with a being known as *Homo habilis*. This implies that all humans are of African stock and "that the various races today reflect only superficial differences" (U.S. News, Sept.16, 1991 p, 54). One

of the oldest finds is that of an African woman called "Lucy" by the Europeans who was found in the Ethiopian desert in 1974 with an approximate age of three and one-half million years. Another find is one and one-half million years old - Zinjanthropus Boise, all documenting human origins in Africa. Approximately 200,000 years ago there was a woman that scientists describe as dark-haired and black skinned of African origin whose genes "seem to be in all humans living today: 5 billion blood relatives" (Newsweek: Jan. 11, 1988. p, 46). Atlantic Monthly (1991) asserts that recently linguists have found that African language is the parent language of all languages. Diop confirms all of these discoveries stating that, "Humankind born around the Great Lakes region, almost on the Equator, is necessarily pigmented and Black" (Diop, 1991, p. 11). He further explains that Blacks populated the rest of the world by exiting through the Strait of Gibraltar to Europe.

About 30,000 years ago in Swaziland, South Africa there was an iron mine for the extraction of red ocher which had to be homo sapiens sapiens (Diop, 1991, p. 39). With this knowledge a path can be traced from South Africa to middle Africa in what is known as Nubia and in particular Ta-Seti which preceded Egyptian civilization by twelve dynasties and may have given birth to Egyptian civilization. Ta-Seti is presumed to be the oldest monarchy in the history of humanity (Diop, 1991; and U. S. News,1991). The bodies were described as tall and Negroid and they also found the script of the Medu Ntr (Hieroglyphs). Dr. Diop confirmed his hypothesis of a Black civilization of the ancient Egyptians with over thirteen different tests which include physical anthropology, human images, melanin dosage test, osteological measurements, blood groups, written works of classical authors, words and pictures of how Egyptians saw themselves, divine Epithets or their gods, the Bible, cultural data and linguistic affinity. Therefore, the Nile Valley (Egypt) was necessarily populated by "Blacks from the origin of humanity up to the appearance of other races (20,000 to 15,000 years ago). Prior to some infiltrations at the end of the fourth millennium, Whites were absent from Egypt, and it practically remained that way until 1300 B.C., the period of the great invasions from the people of the sea under the XIXth Dynasty, not taking into account the Hyksos' invasions (Diop, 1991, p. 17)." Diop's work was presented at the Cairo Symposium from January 28 to February 3, 1974 which gave rise to the printing of a seven volume General History of Africa by UNESCO. (Van Sertima, 1989; see also Diop, Hilliard, Mokhtar). Diop made a definitive statement with the thirteen proofs. He was working under the old Black proverb that "a Black man always has to be twice as good as the white man in every endeavor" and Diop was thirteen times better.

The importance of defining original man and the Egyptians as being Black is to give all people of African descent their rightful place in history, but more importantly is the recogni-

tion that all people of the world are one descended from Africans.

Just as Greece has been placed at the forefront of European civilizations, Africans can claim the true history of themselves and the foundation of Western civilization from the greatest civilization of all times, KMT (Egypt) (Van Sertima, 1989, p. 3). Far too long has this heritage been denied.

This civilization, called Egyptian in our period, developed for a long time in its early cradle at the mouth of the Nile; then it slowly ascended the Nile Valley to spread out around the Mediterranean basin. This cycle of civilization, the longest in history, presumably lasted 10,000 years. This is a reasonable compromise between the long chronology (based on data provided by Egyptian priests, Herodotus and Manetho place the beginning at 17,000 B.C.) and the short chronology of the moderns - for the latter are obliged to admit that by 4245 B.C. the Egyptians had already invented the calendar (which necessarily requires the passage of thousands of years)" (Diop, 1974, p. 22).

The greatness of Egypt was African. The first documentation of this fact is with Aha or Menes as he was called by the Greeks. He was the first pharaoh to unite upper and lower Egypt. He established Memphis as the capital of Egypt. Aha was from the deep south and considered a southern ruler - meaning Black. The next dynasties of importance were during the Pyramid Age of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th dynasties. This was the time of the building of the great pyramids. The first pyramid was the step pyramid built for Pharaoh Zoser (Black) and designed by the genius Imhotep (Black). Imhotep was an author, physician, philosopher, architect, priest and administrator. He is called the god of medicine by the Greeks and they refer to him as Aesculapius in the Hippocratic oath. The great pyramids of Giza were constructed by Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure. Two million two hundred thousand stones weighing two and one-half tons each were used in the great pyramid of Khufu. His father, Sneferu, had forty ships which was a maritime navy.

King Sahure of the 5th dynasty went to war with the Libyans but also sent an expedition to Punt. During this period, the first writings appear - those of Ptahhotep (the oldest complete book in the world) and the pyramid texts of King Unas, The Book of the Coming Forth By Day. The sphinx is generally assumed to have been built during the pyramid age but John Jackson's book Introduction to African Civilization refers to an inscription made by Khufu that he made repairs to the sphinx which supports the theory that the sphinx is really about 10,000 years old or greater.

The 6th to the 10th dynasties were the Intermediate Age which had little significance since there was no major building or writing at that time. This period was the 8th dynasty when Asiatics settled in Northern KMT. The next significant era is that of the Literary Age of

the 11th and 12th dynasties. This was the reign of Mentuhotep I, II and III. During this time, the Asiatics were driven from KMT and a strong central monarchy was re-established. The capital was moved to Waset (Thebes) and became the center of the nation of KMT until the 25th dynasty. Temples were the equivalent of what is known today as universities. Ipet Isut, the grand temple of Luxor, which means the most select of places was the greatest university of the world during the time. In the 12th dynasty it had over 80,000 students in attendance.

The Hyksos invasion occurred during the 13th through the 17th dynasties which began the Second Intermediate Age. These were the people called the shepherd kings who came in from Asia. However, they were never able to gain control and destroy Waset. At the end of the 17th dynasty King Kamose escalated the war of liberation against the Hyksos.

The advent of the 18th and 19th dynasties began the Imperial Age. King Ahmose I drove the Hyksos out of Egypt. Amenhotep I reigned for twenty years. The important Kings during these periods were Tutmose I, Tutmose II, Pharaoh-Queen Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Amenhotep II, Tutmose IV, Amenhotep III and his wife, Queen Tiye, Amenhotep IV or Akhenaten, Tutankhamen, Ramses I, Seti I, and Ramses II.

This Imperial Age was again one of the finest moments in Egyptian history. Queen Hatshepsut reigned as the only female Pharaoh. She built great obelisks in the temple at Waset and also had a very famous expedition to Punt which is depicted on the walls of her temple at Deir el-Bahri. KMT achieved enormous power and prosperity. When Akhenaten became Pharaoh, he encouraged the arts and literature. He wrote poetry to Aten. Some of the Psalms of the Bible mimic the poems written by Akhenaten and some are almost exact duplications. Tutankhamen followed Akhenaten. Seti I and Ramses II were the major pharaohs in the 19th dynasties.

The 20th to the 24th dynasties comprised the Third Intermediate Age which was distinguished by invasions and wars and infrastructure turbulence. Not until the 25th dynasty was upper and lower Egypt conquered and reunited. This was accomplished by King Piankhi from Kush. King Shabaka followed him to totally reunify KMT and ruled again from Waset. Prince Taharqa invaded Spain and Palestine. He became Pharaoh and was called the Emperor of the World. At the end of the 25th dynasty the Assyrian armies and the Babylonians invaded KMT. Finally the Persians under Cambyses II invaded KMT and incorporated it into the Persian empire. This is the first time that Black Africans lose control of KMT.

The Greeks came with Alexander of Macedon in 322 BC sacking the temples and stealing the books of the libraries. Every great age of Egyptian history was dominated by Black African pharaohs until the Greeks. Blacks were the founders and leaders of the greatest empire of all time. (History from lectures by Asa Hilliard, Study tour to Egypt, Summer 1991;

Van Sertima, 1989, pp. 105-116; Diop, 1974, pp. 204-226; Ben Jochannan, 1989, pp. 139-271; Jackson, 1972; Rogers, 1972; Houston, 1985; Williams, 1991; Hutchins, 1952, on Herodotus).

With the collapse of the African Egyptian culture, the great African high cultures moved to West Africa and began the empires of Ghana, Songhay and Mali.

The Empire of Ghana flourished in what is now West Africa during the dark ages of Western Europe. By the fifteenth century there was a university at Timbuktu. The Ashantis of the Gold Coast and the Yoruba of Nigeria possessed highly organized and complex civilizations long before their territories were brought under British political control" (Ben Jochannan, 1989, p. 19).

Diop, Van Sertima, Rogers, Clark, Hilliard, Martin, and Herodotus confirm that the Black man was the inventor of mathematics, astronomy, the calendar, sciences in general, arts, religion, agriculture, social organization, medicine, writing, drama, and architecture while the white races were steeped in barbarism. Africans also established great kingdoms in Zimbabwe and brought renaissance into Europe with the invasion of the Moors. Count Volney wrote after a trip to Egypt between 1783 and 1785,

Just think that this race of black men, today our slave and the object of our scorn, is the very race to which we owe our arts, sciences and even the use of speech! Just imagine, finally, that it is in the midst of people who call themselves the greatest friends of liberty and humanity that one has approved the most barbarous slavery and questioned whether black men have the same kind of intelligence as Whites!" (Diop, 1974, p. 28).

Enslavement and colonization of African people greatly destroyed African history and culture especially for African Americans. Yet, cultural retentions that are still present include classical elements of African art in sculptures, paintings, African verbal arts of tales, singing, dance and music. A martial art form of Capoeira still exists in Brazil today. Obenga found evidence that in the pharaonic period, the Egyptians had worked out the speed of light which we only learned about in the 20th century (Hilliard et. al., 1990, p. 95); the calendar of 365 days divided into 30 days of twelve months with 5 festival days at the end was created; (Hilliard et. al., 1990, p. 97; see also Herodotus in Hutchins, 1952); steel smelting machines 2,000 years old have been found in Tanzania (Hilliard et. al., 1990, p. 99; U.S. News); and medicines were used in inner Africa fourteen centuries ago which were only recently discovered in the U.S. in the 1950's (Hilliard et. al., 1990, p. 103; see also Rogers, Ben Jochannan). This is the foundation upon which a new curriculum of truth and multiculturalism is to be built. These are some of the truths that children should be taught.

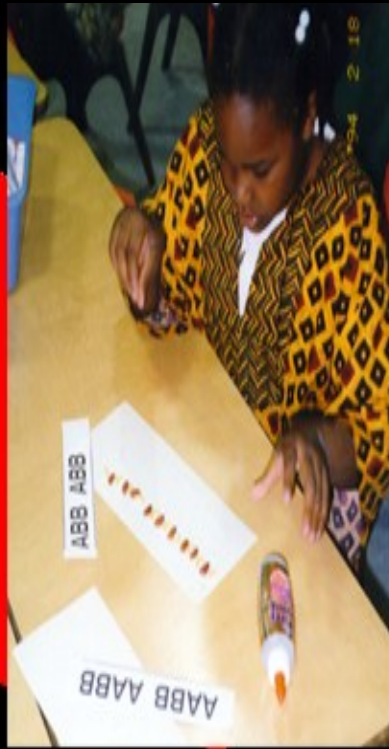
The Afrocentric perspective is only one culture and history of the people of the world that should be represented in classrooms. Most public schools in the United States consist of a multicultural student population and the curricula should reflect that population with truth in history and culture. Even in schools that are of one ethnicity, all children deserve to be taught truth and universal respect for others. Resources are not easy to find but the search is imperative. Pictures on the walls that welcome students must be representative of all cultures. A class should have familiar cultural items from the child's environment that immediately make the students feel respected. The books, audio visual material and community resource people must be representative of a multicultural perspective. These resources must reflect the cultural makeup of the world; they must be truthful and not distort or omit facts and contributions; they must not humiliate or degrade; they must not signify better or superior; heroes and heroines must be representative of all; and, whenever there is any question about the resource or its implication, discuss it. Allow children to question. Talk about the pros and cons, facts and fiction. Teach that books do not always tell the truth, but rather an author's perspective or bias. Let students know that an instructor does not know everything and is not perfect, but is striving for knowledge and excellence. Inspire questions and research and develop in the students higher order thinking and reasoning skills.

Dr. Nobles states that the story of African and African American people in the curricula is "the inalienable right of African people to (1) exist as a people; (2) contribute to the forward flowing process of human civilization (as contributors and not debtors) and (3) share with as well as shape the world (reality) in response to our own energy and spirit (Hilliard et. al. p.11). This criteria is essential for all people of the world. Educational excellence cannot be achieved without recognizing and respecting all people of the world through multiculturalism.

Anecdote - MSU Museum

We were on a field trip at the MSU Kresge Museum with a group of Kindergarten through third grade students. After viewing the artifacts in every room of the museum, a Kindergarten student turned to me and asked, "Mama Freya, where are the Black people?" I smiled and gave him a big hug because I knew I was doing my job well. When a baby recognizes that we African people are not present everywhere he goes, he is putting himself (at the center of his learning).

Multisensory



STEP VII MULTISENSORY

Dr. Wade Nobles has named excellent education as “Nsaka Sunsum” or “Touching the Spirit.” The practices of Nsaka Sunsum are: the four M’s of Intent - majesty, mastery, memory, and meaning; the five R’s of Method - ritual, rhythm, recitation, repetition and relationship; Six supportive practices - expectations of excellence, continual search for patterns and significance, modeling of skills and practices, intensified direct instruction and meaning, quest for deep thought and meaning, and constant study and application of culture; Seven cardinal virtues - Maat and Nguzo Saba; Eight cultural precepts - consubstantiation, interdependence, egalitarianism, collectivism, transformation, cooperation, humanness, synergy; and, Themes of cultural light - spirituality, resilience, humanism, communalism, orality and expressiveness, personal style and uniqueness, realness, emotional vitality and musicality/rhythm.

Multisensory methods use the five R’s of method, the four M’s of Intent and the six supportive practices. Allowing children to exist, contribute, shape and share requires a response to their own energy and spirit. Some children will hear the way and others will not. Some will feel the way and some may smell it. Others may see it, but still some may have to taste it. Some may sing, and some may dance, but many may write and more may read the way. Others may draw the way and several may use all the ways while less may do only a few ways but the way must be facilitated by a multi-sensory approach. A student taught in only one way which is not his/her way, has been failed. Watching a baby helps one understand how learning takes place. A baby sees, hears, touches, smells and tastes. A baby uses all senses. Special classes for children with "learning disorders" are usually designed to use a multisensory approach with more experiential learning. Consequently, since people remember 90% of what they say and do through experiences and only 10% of what they read, then reasoning suggests that the same approach will be more beneficial to those students without labels.

Thus, designing a curriculum for educational excellence is difficult. To use majesty, teachers will utilize call and response. For mastery they become through transcendence what they are teaching. In meaning they use all the synergy of Ujima and meaning makes the lesson real and relevant. Teachers must design programs for left and right brain characteristics when one area may be more dominant than the other. People with a dominant left hemisphere are more verbal, analytical, symbolic, temporal, rational, logical, linear and singular while those with right brain dominance are nonverbal, synthetic, concrete, nontemporal, non-rational, intuitive, holistic, and simultaneous. Each hemisphere uses different sensory approaches for learning. The bottom line is that “emotion and attention are the principal pre-

liminary processes that the brain uses for survival” (Caine and Caine, 1994; Sylvester, 1995). This reinforces the need to incorporate all senses in strategies for learning and to make learning fun. If a child likes what is going on in a class, s/he then will pay attention. If there is attention, then there will be learning. If that learning is reinforced through repetition and homework, the chances of forgetting decrease. Put all this together, a child will learn and retain what was learned.

The new educational jargon is not multisensory or brain dominance. It is multiple intelligences. These areas are:

Linguistic – reading and words

Logical-mathematical – reasoning and patterns

Musical – melody and rhythm

Bodily Kinesthetic – physical agility

Spatial – recreate and transform

Naturalist – nature oriented

Interpersonal – people person

Intrapersonal stoic

Using multiple intelligences or left/right brain dominance, the objective is the same, multi-sensory.

Any and all learning is more effective when it is enjoyable. Learning can be and should be fun. Then, children will learn more. Watch the response on field trips and give a verbal examination when students return to class. In kindergarten and first grades, students sing, dance, draw, color, paint, read, write, cook, taste, smell, feel and experience most lessons. The way to learn is by doing. For example, an observation of an effective eighth grade class was a student directed lesson with teacher supervision. Students designed the class seating arrangement, implemented the plans on how various subjects would be taught, and created innovative programs for new areas of learning. Some of their creations were plays and quiz shows, murals and exhibits, sewing and cooking, designing and creating scientific projects. This class was an empowering experience that produced students who were eager to learn and wanted to take responsibility for their own growth. This strategy involved reciprocal learning, decision making and collective work. It involved peer teaching and tutoring and cooperative groups. The students were in full control. They were able to walk in a teacher’s shoes and understand the preparation required, the respect needed, and the responsibility essential for everyone to learn. A teacher must be at the Hotep level to facilitate this process. One must be self-confident, successful and at peace to share responsibility and allow others to grow. One must be able to empower others without feeling threatened. One must be se-

cure in self to permit others to become.

Cooking is another multisensory experiential activity that is successful at all grade levels. Students creating and cooking allows them to become a part of the learning process in an enjoyable adventure. In Language Arts cooking may be used to reinforcement phonetic sounds by providing a tasty experiential activity. The cooking lesson is put to music or beats for movement. Sounds are learned and remembered using developmentally appropriate activities. Parts of speech become goals in naming (noun), describing how it looks, tastes, sounds, smells and feels (adjectives) and describing how it moves (adverbs). Vocabulary is extended by learning types of food. Literary terms are added like alliteration (repeating the beginning sound), onomatopoeia (making sounds for the food), etc. Games and activities can also be used for alphabetical order, plurals, homophones, antonyms, synonyms and compound words. A class experiential story writing about the cooking adventure is used for developing fluency in reading and learning sight words. Comprehension is extended by asking questions, sequencing and predicting.

In Mathematics cooking is used for same/different, more/less, patterns, shapes, geometry lines and angles, adding/subtracting, multiplication/division, fractions, graphing and much more. Math becomes fun as it is created and eaten. Extension activities include computer technology and group projects. In Science cooking is used to demonstrate hard to understand concepts for younger children. One instance is the Periodic Table of Elements. Students learn the elements by matching the letters of the alphabet to the chart after finding the element on a box of cereal and learning the element's letter/s. Another concept is the water cycle or making it rain by boiling water which is also great in showing states of matter. Cooking goes across the curriculum. It is an experience that children love. It makes learning fun. Teachers enjoy it, too. These are just a few of the multisensory experiential strategies that can be used in classrooms. Use creativity (Kuumba) to engage students in meaningful activities.

Finally, take time to stop, look and listen. Teachers need to use their energy and senses wisely. Look at the interactions and activities of pleasure and displeasure. Listen to the words and sounds of happiness and despair. Smell the atmosphere for smoke or freshness. Taste the bile of uneasiness, restlessness, and disgust, but enjoy the sweetness of creative, constructive, enjoyable learning. Use intuitive touch for feeling the mood and predicting the next step. Students are the best resources to find out what is wrong or right in a classroom. When they are disappointed, or when they disagree, or dislike the way the class is operating, the educator will feel, hear or see it. The reverse is true. When students like or agree with the things they are doing, you can tell by listening and watching. Students reciprocate their treatment with praise or by taking away the educator's job satisfaction. Never be complacent. Always stop, look and listen.

Teaching is not easy. A good teacher facilitates the learning process of others. A teacher demonstrates how one learns. A teacher introduces resources to learn. A teacher creates an environment for learning, but the most important thing that a teacher can do is to create the desire to learn. Teachers should not teach the "what" to learn, but rather the "how." Students learn what they wish to learn. The teachers' role is to facilitate that wish. The children will do the rest. The quality of education will never rise above the quality of the educator.

Anecdote - The List

At the annual Challenging the Genius Conference we asked participants to describe what qualities a student would possess if s/he had received an excellent education from one of our institutions. The audience brainstormed and came up with this list:

African centered	creative
do good	unique
entrepreneur	knowledge
purpose	commitment
balanced	Maat
smart	respectful
disciplined	confident
spiritual	African culture
reclaim history	understand racism
Nguzo Saba	respect ancestors
respect environment	

Upon completion, we dismissed for lunch. I gave the list to one of our student workers and asked her to type it for me and pass it out to the participants upon their return from lunch. She was a seventh grader at the time. When she gave it back to me, I looked at it and said, "Alex, all you had to do was copy the list." She told me that the words inspired her to do more. This is what she created. Alexandra J. Cabule, wrote this poem entitled, I Am African, June 2, 2001, Lansing, MI, Sankofa Shule. She exemplifies a student whose spirit was touched by excellent education.

I am African

I am African, for I am unique

Respectful,
Smart and confident

I have a purpose,
I am discipline
I love my community and
I am committed

I am African, for I respect my nation and nationhood

I respect my ancestors and the environment

I am spiritual and I stay out of trouble

I communicate
And know my heritage
I am well rounded and balanced

I am African for I practice Maat
Appreciate my culture and that of others
I respect my elders and future generations
I reclaim and preserve my history

I understand the concepts of racism and superiority

I have stores of knowledge to pass on

I am African for I practice
The Nguzo Saba and
I am an entrepreneur

I am African for I will create
And bring forth good wherever I go.

Multimodal



STEP VIII MULTIMODAL

An educator must be eclectic: whole group, small group, individual, basal/directed learning, language experience, whole language, units, thematic units, contracts, hands-on, experiential and more. There is class work, independent work, homework, centers to explore, creative development, cross-peer tutoring, cooperative learning and more. The lists become inexhaustible. The jargon changes exponentially.

Every few years something becomes the way to teach and the new way is the new buzz word for the day. The old ways are thrown out and the new way is in. Over the years education has changed the lingo, strategies, methodology, techniques, etc. and children appear to learn less and drop out of school more. All of the ways to teach may and probably do have some worth, but not any one of them is the one and only answer. One method may teach some but not all. Just as students are different, so must the strategies to facilitate learning be different. Some children will work best one on one while others learn better in a group of their peers. Some children need a holistic concept to see the big picture of things and how the parts make the whole while other children need to see the individual parts separately in order to understand the whole. Some children may need to read and think through an issue while others need to experience it. These are the reasons for an eclectic approach.

The experiential approach is one of the better ways but it is not always available. Experiences allow children to make an event meaningful using their own sensory resources. Students remember the parts that are relevant to their reality. Experiences allow them to grow, develop and build references for contrasts and comparisons of knowledge. Myers quotes Hilliard from the Book of Ptahhotep,

As to the man without experiences, he does not listen, he does nothing at all. He will see knowledge where there is ignorance, he will see profit where there is loss, he makes all kinds of errors, taking always the side opposite to what is praiseworthy. In that way, he lives on what is perishable. His food is evil speech, as to what he marvels. He lives everyday on what the wise know to be mortal, flying from what is best for him, because of the multitude of efforts which present themselves to him each day (Myers, 1900. pp. 294-5).

When experiential learning is not possible, then using a combination of styles for teaching is beneficial. Creative drama can be used to recreate another form of experiential learning. Student and teacher created plays are great tools for student involvement. They put students at the center of the experience and reinforce what students are learning for better retention. A play about the 50 states, their capitals and resources helped children in that

class to learn the information by remembering, not only their parts, but the parts of others. Reenacting periods of history helps students to remember time lines, discoveries, events and names of relevant people. Older students can create their own shows. Technology and video cameras enhance the learning experience. Do not be afraid to allow students to have fun.

Other methodologies include mixing individualization with whole group and small group; using basal readers and directed learning with phonics and whole language, music and dance; and, putting thematic units together for the whole but break segments down for the separate parts. Using the eclectic process, a teacher takes a little of this and a little of that to make a potion for each child. An eclectic method for individualization is to begin class with a repetition drill of a major goal while teacher calls role and prepares for the new class. Students know this is a routine and they immediately begin working when they arrive in class. The drill should only take a few minutes. Upon completion the teacher begins with a whole group explanation / discussion of the goal or topic for the day followed with a list of tasks to be completed using the “workshop way.” The tasks pertain to the goal or topic which may include math problems, writing, spelling, reading, research, computer research, group projects, etc. There are usually several tasks that must be completed. If a student completes the tasks before the end of class, there are several options that can be explored in class such as activity centers, computers, projects, contracts, etc. While students are working independently, the teacher is then able to work one on one for individualized teaching. Individualization is the only way to insure each child is striving for excellence to maximize his/her potential. Individualization is essential to keep children from falling between the cracks. This is the potion to success and excellence.

Understanding how people learn facilitates the potion. The Afrocentric perspective uses the philosophy from the Dogon people of Mali. There are four phases to learning. It begins with the **GIRI SO** or the front word. This first phase is concrete operations, repetition and drill, hands-on, rote memory brain development. The second phase is **BENNE SO** or the side word. It is comparative learning where the child begins to make associations, discriminations and recognition of patterns and relationships. The third phase is the **BOLO SO** or the back word for analytical and abstract thinking and transference of knowledge to application. The last phase is **SODAYI** or the clear word when there is understanding and the knowledge is intrinsic. Application of knowledge is used without thinking. There is growth and insight.

Using this philosophy teaching/learning stages are:

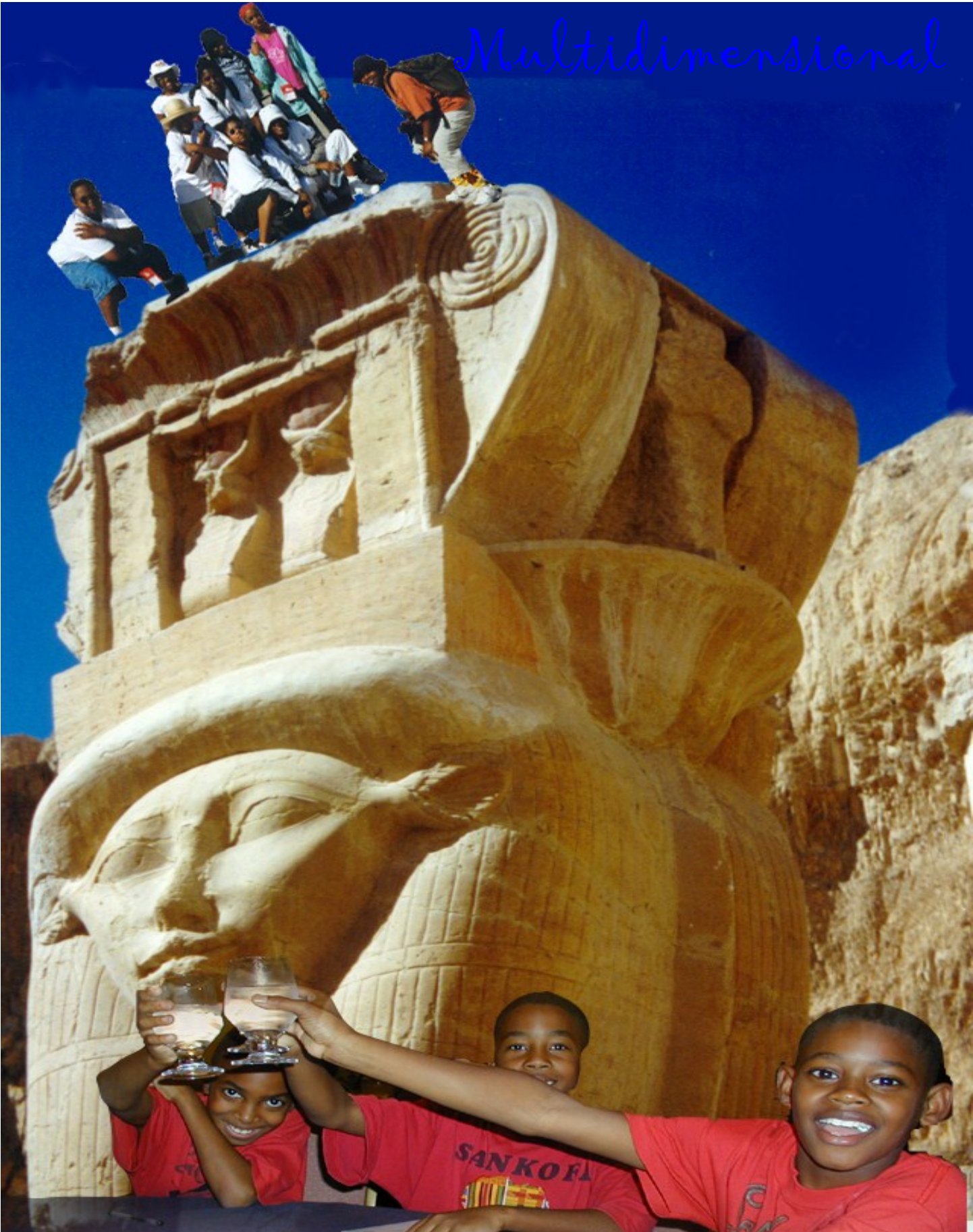
1. Concrete experiences and rote memory (Consciousness/GIRI-SO)
2. Recognition of patterns (Actualization/BENNE-SO)
3. Transference of knowledge to reality (Transformation/BOLO-SO)

4. Use of knowledge for life (Empowerment/SODAYI)

This is the learning process and the stages of empowerment utilized together. Excellence in education requires the eclectic approach, multimodal. Every possibility must be explored and exhausted. Teachers cannot take a chance of throwing away a technique that may save a child. Use all resource available and then find more. Respect differences in everything that is done. Children are different. Teachers are different. Styles of learning are different. Therefore, teaching strategies and methods must be different. The teacher must try a multitude of methods and be familiar with the strategies and techniques in these methods to facilitate success in education. An excellent teacher knows more than one way to teach a child. An excellent teacher teaches every child. The potion is not universal for wellness. It is different for each child's health.

Anecdote - Trains

The second semester of a school year, I took a sabbatical to complete my dissertation. I left explicit instructions with the long term sub for each child in the class. I stopped in one afternoon after school to see how everything was going. She was about to quit. She said, "Curtis won't do anything. Ronald doesn't take a nap and you must be mistaken about him doing math. He can't even count." I asked her if she read my notes about each student. She said she did, but she just didn't have time to give individual time to each student. I told her that I'd stop in the next day and show her how I did it. Once I peeled all the students from my kneecaps giving me hugs, we began the day. We started with our morning affirmations of songs, pledges, activities with records of sounds, vocabulary, etc. While we were engaged in the activities, Curtis was at his desk reading a book and writing a book report. He has refused to participate in the activities from the first day of school because he thinks it's "baby stuff." So, I gave him advanced work to do and that's what he does while we play "baby stuff." After the group time, we had tasks to complete like sentences, alphabetical order, projects on the solar system, etc. While the students were working (self-directed) to complete their tasks, I pulled one on one at the desk for reading and math. When I called Ronald, he was so happy. I told him that I heard he wasn't doing his work in math. He looked at me and grinned, "Ms Wibbers, she won't read my train books to me." I hugged him and told the sub that Ronald does not take naps, but he sits by my desk and we read or look at books on trains. Then I asked Ronald to work some math problems for me and he did, counting by each finger touching his chin. He was adding and subtracting effortlessly. All the sub could do was laugh. She promised to read the train books to him and he promised to do his work. I continued to stop in frequently to make sure they were progressing; and they were. The sub learned to individualize and she didn't forget the trains.



STEP IX - MULTIDIMENSIONAL

Excellent education is a holistic concept for wellness to reach Hotep. It includes the body, the mind and the soul. It is a multidimensional process. The mind (cognitive) is usually the only part of the body that is given considerable attention in school but African Ancestors did not divide and separate the body. It was studied as a whole because the parts cannot operate in isolation. Before the mind can be maximized, the body must be healthy. Health requires food, exercise, safety and freedom from disease. Students must learn to take care of their bodies. They should be taught how to grow food in order to respect the food they consume and the environment it needs to grow. They learn to respect all of life's supportive environments that produce the food, water, and air for survival. Students need to learn to appreciate, eat and plan healthy foods and diets to maintain health and stamina. Exercise needs to be incorporated in a daily life regimen along with safety and disease prevention.

A healthy body requires simultaneous mind training. Academic mind-training includes reading, writing, English, math, science, social science, and the arts. However, Mind training means much more. Students should learn the old basics of "mother wit" and "hard knocks" that are the doctrines of how to take care of one's self using critical thinking and reasoning. At one time children learned vocational and technical training at home, on the farm and in the community. They had responsibilities of growing food, building homes, raising children and animals, and learning by examples of role models. They learned to become independent and to take care of themselves and their family. This mind training was much more than the 3 R's. Children had to learn the knowledge that would be required to make them responsible adults. Today, however, teachers have been trained to teach a curriculum and not humaneness or sustainability of community. Only a few adults receive this kind of training and it is usually through community leadership courses, but why should the information be limited to so few when the majority of citizens are asked to make informed community decisions by voting. Citizens vote on the environment, energy, health education and more. These decisions affect their lives, but they do not have the wisdom to make informed responses. They become dependent on the advice of others and not empowered leaders of the future. Leaders can predict, explain and plan for the future. They understand and provide for food and energy resources, land and housing, vehicles and transportation, jobs and training, community resources and goods and government and safety. Without knowledge of the world and the community in which one lives, people are not empowered to control their future.

The final dimension is the unexplained, the breath of life, the soul, the life-force, the atom of existence, the spirit. The ancestors believed that there is a divine order to everything

in the universe and that humans are divine-like and able to use those divine powers. Spiritual awareness contributes to the ideal of Hotep as one believes in a force greater than self and that one is constantly trying to identify that force. This is not teaching religion. Whether one believes in a transcendental being or the happenstance of minute particles, there is still the fact that all of the answers to the universe are not known. This lack of information gives rise to questions of existence that each individual must find his/her own foundation for solace. Yet, teachers cannot judge or decide what is best. A teacher should only facilitate the students quest for answers. In that quest of "Who am I?" students must learn ethics and discipline. They become responsible and accountable citizens of the world.

Grounded in wisdom, they can begin to follow their beliefs, aspirations and dreams. Yes, dreams! One's dream should be the guiding beacon for life. Sadly, many children do not have dreams because their boundaries are limited by the block on which they live. Those limited blocks prescribe a Procrustean mold of existence. The essence of the child, the spirit, cannot reach for dreams. Therefore, education cannot be just academics. The difference in middle and upper socio-economic children and poor children is not that poor children cannot learn. It is that poor children have not had the same experiences and opportunities, but they are required to answer the same questions. Remember, students do not fail; teachers do. The teacher should provide field trips and resources to expand a child's horizon. Travel is one of the best experiential activities for children from limited environments. It expands their reality and provides them with possibility, hopes and dreams. Watch children grow as they travel. The light goes off so brilliantly that their eyes literally light up as they see the world unfold in front of them. Pictures in books become real and their future becomes a possibility. Education must be holistic. It must encompass self-understanding and actualization, responsibility and reciprocity, creativity and commitment, citizenship and consciousness, and adaptability, initiative, stability and foresight. The light is the essence or spirit of a child. That is why Afrocentricity does not separate the spirit from the body. Should we do any less?

A model Afrocentric holistic school is open 24/7. Students participate in cultural dance, drumming, music, visual arts and crafts, textile arts, etc. They also have physical activities that represent various cultures. Students may also have designated time and place for help with homework. All meals are provided to those in need including their families. From 8 AM to 4 PM the academic day begins which includes a morning affirmation and an afternoon re-affirmation. Morning affirmations includes greetings in an African language and other foreign languages, the purpose of the day by the Nguzo Saba, pledge to the Red, Black and Green Flag, liberation anthem, libation to ancestors, call and response rules of MAAT, the Zulu Declaration and a thought for the day. The afternoon re-affirmation is a call and re-

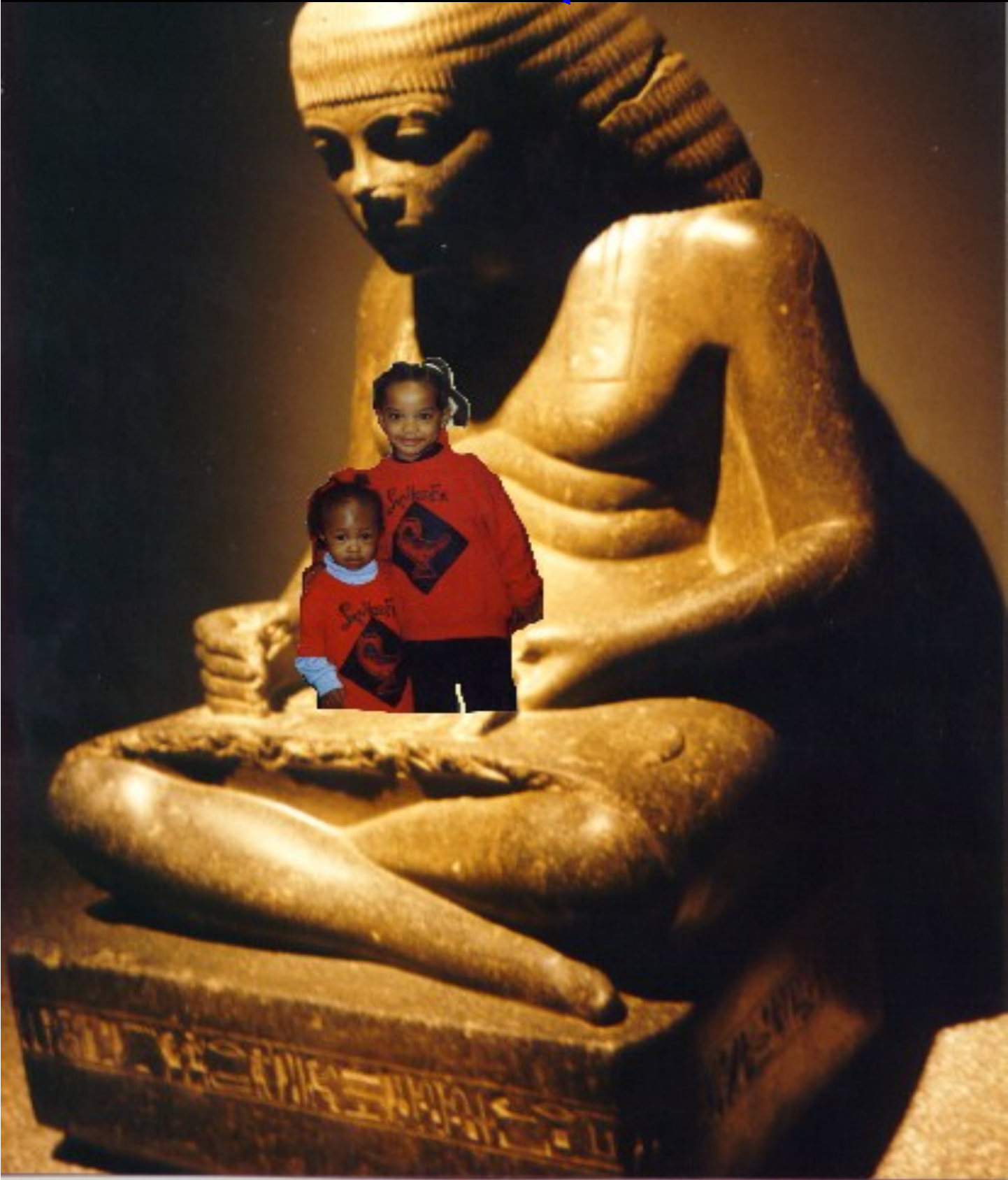
sponse of the Nguzo Saba. There should be an after school program for families that need the service. Monthly Harambe (pulling together)/PTA where parents, students, faculty, staff and community come together in a Rites of Passage Program based on the Nguzo Saba to launch projects for family and community development. Some of these projects may be a parent investment club, a voter registration campaign, a leadership class, homeownership training, sexuality and health, etc. The school is also open in the evenings for adult classes, tutoring or programs of interests expressed by the parents. Finally, the 24 hours is shared with those families who have no home. A school then becomes part of the family and community to provide stability for families to learn, build and love together. This is an ideal, but not impossible. The mortgage and utilities are paid whether anyone is there or not. So, why not use it and not waste the time and money?

Unity, self-determination, cooperation, collectivity, purpose, creativity and faith, pervade the essence of humaneness. These qualities become the meaning of existence for sharing the space of the earth. The sharing of these qualities is expressed in arts and culture, leisure life and travel, and the order of society. Students do not obtain these skills by osmosis; they must be taught. Yet, the cry from teachers is that there is not enough time to teach the regular curriculum without adding more. As crime becomes rampant, children killing children, children left alone and both parents working to survive, society must begin to consider the total child. An old belief and saying in the African American community was "an idle mind is the devil's workshop." When a child is busy and engaged in enjoyable activities, there is less time for trouble. These principles are taught through modeling. "You be as you do."

Anecdote - Middle School

I hate middle school I think it is a waste of time for students since all we require them to do is review what they learned in elementary or just preview what they will do in high school The rationale is that the years of puberty are stressful and students cannot concentrate. I disagree and believe that they should be challenged even more. So, we had our students take AP English Composition and AP Physics to help us with our curriculum mapping. I didn't think any would pass but many of them did. Wow! We were really good! I had a psychologist come in weekly to talk to them just to make sure they weren't under too much pressure with the courses as they also traveled the world to Egypt and beyond. They were all doing well in their courses, travels, extracurricular activities, working and more. They managed to suggest even more activities like sleepovers at my house. They literally lived at the school. We had to send them home at six in the evenings. The psychologist told me that the program was doing them no harm. In fact, it kept them focused and helped them to escape the problems in their lives and homes. She said, "Without this school, many of them would be lost and some dead."

Hotep



STEP X – HOTEPE

I offer an Afrocentric perspective for my hotep (peace). Molefi Asante says “Afrocentricity is the centerpiece of human regeneration. To the degree that it is incorporated into the lives of the millions of Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora, it will become revolutionary” (Asante, 1988). An Afrocentric philosophy focuses the African child at the center of learning. Sense of self worth of one’s internal essence and not external possessions is stressed. The philosophy emphasizes the ethical principles of Maat and the Nguzo Saba. It does not emphasize "Democratic sanity" which is, if most people sanction it, it must be sane (Myers, 1988, p. 45). In Afrocentricity one can choose to be free by controlling one's mind. When this level is achieved a person can demonstrate affection, courage, wisdom, sharing, mutual respect, humor and, at last, peace/Hotep. Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, former president of Spellman College, succinctly summarizes the necessity of infusing an Afrocentric perspective: "We call for an enlightened world view because ignorance of the truth is the enemy of every human being who wants to live free" (Hilliard et. al., 1990, p. 29).

The infusion can be accomplished using A Classical African Model, as defined by Dr. Wade Nobles, governed with the Virtues of Maat. The feather of Maat was balanced with one’s heart on the afterlife scale of judgment. One had to prove that life had been lived truthfully, justly, righteously, in order, harmony, balance and with propriety. A measure of excellence had to be attained. This excellence was achieved by attitude of character, commitment and consciousness and methods of reading, writing and arithmetic. Astronomy, astrology, geography, geology, philosophy, theology, law and communication were all studied. The goal of understanding and enlightenment was to develop a child who is competent, confident and conscious. The process was not just the acquisition of knowledge but also the transformation from re-birth to excellence or Hotep. The training methodology was one of accentuation, association and attribution (Hilliard et. al., 1990. pp. 12-16). The achievement was recognized in the form of conduct, social responsibility and moral character.

Thus, the climb to Hotep is not easy for anyone - teacher nor student. Sometimes the step may be a little high and that is when support needs to be there for a lift. Sometimes, too many are on the same step and there is conflict and that is when conflict resolution strategies are needed. Sometimes, someone may fall but that is when the helping hand of caring and strength is there to help hold on and not give up. Some may push to get to the top and some may just seem stagnant but all must climb at their own rate. The teacher’s job is to be there to assist along the way. Teachers provide the support up the ladder to help all children make a successful journey. Educational excellence helps all reach Hotep.

Conclusion



Conclusion

Why the need for Hotep? As a depressed young woman questioning the whys of the misfortunes of life, my grandmother once asked me, "What do you want from life?" My response was happiness. She looked at me and smiled and slowly said that I was looking for the wrong thing. She told me to pray for **PEACE**. Grandmother Lillie Anderson told me that happiness is fleeting. She said there may be moments of happiness but then there can be immediate unhappiness, despair, hurt, pain, tragedy or any of the many misfortunes of life. She then told me that I should be in search of peace. Knowledge begets wisdom and wisdom begets peace. Wisdom is necessary to understand life and accept the bad with the good--**balance**. She said peace offers happiness and control and gives one the strength to accept the responsibilities of life--**order**. She talked of peace with self by knowing self and reaching my maximum potential--**harmony**. Then she said that the blessing of peace comes with the sharing of that self with others--**reciprocity**. In peace one is honest for there is no need of fear--**truth**. In peace one is generous for there is no need of greed--**justice**. In peace there is caring and kindness for there is a respect for life--**righteousness**. In peace there is a love for life and an appreciation of the order that exists in the world--**MAAT**. Grandmother did not know what I was talking about with all that "Afrocentric" stuff, but she lived MAAT. Maat is the core of what I espoused, but had not found. I finally asked her how does one achieve peace. Her response was to live, learn, watch, ask, read, grow, learn and keep an open mind.



I pass this advice on to my readers, the teachers, the students, the parents and the children. We can make things better with educational excellence. Educational excellence provides the tools necessary for respect/Heshima which can lead to knowledge for peace/Hotep. Make the world a better place by helping the children. Help them achieve their dreams.

Educational Excellence is our dream. It is a dream of Hotep/peace, born with our ancestors surviving the nightmare of injustice. It is the struggle for freedom. Ngugi says, " Struggle. Struggle makes history. Struggle makes us. In struggle is our history, our language, and our being. That struggle begins wherever we are; in whatever we do: then we become part of those millions whom Martin Carter once saw sleeping not to dream but dreaming to change the world" (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1991, p. 108). This is the hope we hold for our children. Let us begin to make this dream come true. A Brazilian proverb says, "When we dream alone it is only a dream, but when we dream together it is the beginning of reality." Make our dream **HOTEP!**

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