



Comment And Opinion

Community Health Centers in US Inner Cities: Additional Commentary

By Aneez Esmail, University of Manchester

Blacks and the 2008 Elections: A Preliminary Analysis

By David A. Bositis, The Joint Center for Political and Economic Activities

Miseducation and Racism

by Marika Sherwood, co-founder of the Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA)

Creating a Safe Learning Space for the Discussion of Multicultural Issues in the Classroom

by Katherine M. Helm, Lewis University

Comment and Opinion

Community Health Centers in US Inner Cities: From Cultural Competency to Community Competency Additional Commentary

Aneez Esmail, Professor of General Practice, University of Manchester

It would seem strange that the first issue of a journal devoted to the study of issues around ethnicity and race should give prominence to an article which challenges the idea of multiculturalism and cultural diversity in responding to the challenges of delivering healthcare. However, because of the relationship between race and inequality it is right that consideration is given to questioning the effectiveness of one of the main policy responses to health inequalities and the way that they impact on different racial and ethnic groups.

Multiculturalism as a policy response to racism has certainly been the dominant ideology used by the Government and its public institutions to tackle the significant racial and ethnic disparities that were highlighted in Britain in the early 1980s. and which have persisted to this day. The policy is based on a misguided assumption that targeting resources which focus on ethnicity and culture can mitigate the effects of racism which as Sivanandan has pointed out has been 'woven, over centuries of colonialism and slavery, into the structures of society and into the instruments and institutions of government, local and central'. It was only with the publication of the McPherson report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence that some public institutions began to acknowledge the role of institutional racism.

The corollary of multiculturalism for healthcare was the development of cultural competency as a policy response to health inequalities identified in racial and ethnic minorities. In the UK, its genesis can be traced back to the election of Margaret Thatcher and its attempt to suppress the findings of The Black Report on Inequalities in Health . Commissioned by a Labour Government in 1977 and published by a Conservative Government in 1980 on a Bank Holiday weekend, the Black report was a rare example of an attempt to explain trends in inequalities in health and relate these to policies intended to promote as well as restore health. The thrust of the recommendations in that seminal report were concerned with improving the material conditions of life of poorer groups, coupled with a re-orientation of health and personal social services towards public health. What became apparent through the nearly twenty years of Conservative government between 1979-97 was the disappearance of health inequalities from the lexicon of explanations for differing healthcare outcomes. Instead policy interventions were targeted at areas such as quality improvement within medicine and an emphasis on commercialisation and entrepreneurial medicine. Cultural competency as a policy response therefore found favour in many circles because it created the façade of tackling inequalities through measures of quality improvement, targeting under-represented groups and focusing on issues of culture and personal health rather than societal inequalities. The reason why such policies have failed are best exemplified by Bertolt Brecht's 1938 poem when he castigates the doctor for asking the worker to put on weight. In his commentary, Jennings is, if anything, being generous to the proponents of cultural competency when he says that the effect was 'limited and incomplete in responding to health challenges'. Total failure may be a better epitaph. Forty-six million uninsured

Americans, mainly African Americans, Hispanic and poor white working class and irrefutable evidence of increasing health inequalities in most Western countries is the reality of modern healthcare and its obsession with quality and culture.

Does community competency offer a solution? Only in so far as it shifts the focus for health improvement away from the individual and quality improvement towards community action and empowerment. The authors of the second self claimed alternative health report - Global Health Watch 2 - are more explicit as to what needs to be done when they talk about the politics of resistance and the levers of change being the active resistance of poor people and their organisations. This is perhaps not a solution for wealthier countries where Jennings' notion of community competency may find more traction and crucially may be more acceptable to sponsors and donors. However, in my view the greatest barrier lies in the training of health professions – something that Jennings only briefly alludes to. Community competency will only remain an idea unless curricula for training of healthcare professionals explicitly endorse the teaching of social justice and its role in tackling health inequalities.

References

1. <http://www.irr.org.uk/2005/october/ak000021.html>
2. <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm>
3. Black D, Morris J, Smith C, Townsend P. Inequalities in health: report of a Research Working Group. London: Department of Health and Social Security, 1980.
4. "A Worker's Speech to a Doctor" (1938), Brecht wrote: "The pain in our shoulder comes/You say, from the damp; and this is also the reason / For the stain on the wall of our flat. / So tell us: / Where does the damp come from? // Too much work and too little food / Make us feeble and thin; / Your prescription says: / Put on more weight. / You might as well tell a bulrush / Not to get wet."
5. <http://www.ghwatch.org/>

Blacks and the 2008 Elections: A Preliminary Analysis

David A. Bositis, Senior Research Associate, The Joint Center for Political and Economic Activities

What follows is a brief review of some of the available evidence on what happened during the US presidential election of November 4, 2008. In particular, this review will focus on the election of Barack Obama, the behavior and significance of African American voters in the 2008 elections, and the changing numbers and profile of black candidates for federal office, as well as their performance at the polls.

Introduction

There were several significant developments for black politics in November 2008, the most significant being the election of Barack Obama, the first African American President. A great deal of effort was made to bring black voters, especially young black voters, to the polls and black turnout in the 2008 election increased substantially from 2004 to a historic high. The total share of the national vote represented by black voters between 2004 and 2008 increased from 11 percent to 13 percent according to reports on the exit polls, and the black share of the vote in many individual states increased substantially. In addition to record setting turnout, President-Elect Obama received a record setting 95 percent of the black vote - bettering President Lyndon B. Johnson's 94 percent in 1964. The number of black major party federal candidates on the ballot in 2008 was similar to that in 2006.

Turnout: National

According to preliminary figures published by the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate (CSAE), overall turnout in the 2008 election was up from 2004. In 2004, 122 million people voted, while in 2008 (with ballots still being counted), CSAE estimated that when the count was completed between 16.5 and 128.5 million voters will have cast ballots. Using CSAE's mid-range figure (127.5 million), overall voter turnout was 61.2 percent in 2008, slightly better than 2004's 60.7 percent, which was the highest level since 1968.

In 2008, according to the Edison/Mitofsky exit polls, the principal exit polling organization, black voters cast 13 percent of all ballots cast, or (based on assumptions about the final vote turnout numbers from CSAE) approximately 16.6 million votes. In 2004, according to Edison/Mitofsky, black voters cast 11 percent of all ballots, or approximately 13.42 million votes; thus the increase from 2004 to 2008 was about 3.16 million voters, or 23.5 percent. The Census Bureau's November 2006 Current Population Survey reported that there were 24.81 million voting-age eligible African American Adults, and with 16.6 million black votes cast, 2008 black turnout would be 66.8 percent - smashing the previous record of 58.5 percent in 1964; the post-Voting Rights Act turnout high was 57.6 percent in 1968. While the final vote for the 2008 Presidential election was yet to be determined at the time of writing, it is likely that black turnout - for the first time in history - will surpass white turnout in a US presidential election. Of the total black vote cast in 2008, black women represented 58 percent, while black men represented 42 percent of the total vote.

According to the exit polls, Hispanics voters increased their share of the total vote from six percent (2004) to eight percent (2008). The share of the total 2008 Presidential vote cast by non-hispanic white voters declined since 2004 from 79 to 74 percent; the 74 percent represents the lowest share of the Presidential vote cast by nonhispanic whites in history.

TABLE 1. The Black National Electorate By Demographic Group, 2000 v. 2004

SHARE OF TOTAL ELECTORATE			GROUP	PRESIDENTIAL VOTE 2000		PRESIDENTIAL VOTE 2004		PRESIDENTIAL VOTE 2008	
2000 %	2004 %	2008 %		Gore %	Bush %	Kerry %	Bush %	Obama %	McCain %
82	79	74	Whites	42	54	41	58	43	55
10	11	13	Blacks	90	8	88	11	95	4
7	6	8	Hispanics	67	31	56	43	66	32
			African American Voters						
2	3	3	18-29	91	8	86	13	95	4
4	4	4	30-44	91	7	89	11	96	4
3	3	4	45-59	89	9	88	11	96	3
2	2	1	60+	87	11	90	9	94	6
4	5	5	Men	85	12	86	13	95	5
6	7	7	Women	94	6	90	10	96	3

SOURCES: (2000/Voter News Service) N.Y. Times, 11/12/00; (2004/Edison/Mitofsky) www.nytimes.com/2004/11/07/weekinreview/07conn.html?ex=1108098000&en=fag1695cdadb2f1e&ei=5070&ex=1102568400&en=bbf8f44,820e65ea7&ei=5070&oref=login; (2008/Edison/Mitofsky) www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls/#USPoop1

Turnout by State

While the black share of the national vote increased from 11 to 13 percent from 2004 and 2008, the changes in individual states varied considerably. There were six states that witnessed very large increases in the black share of the statewide vote between 2004 and 2008. In the two states with the numerically largest black voting-age populations, New York and California, the black share of the vote increased sharply - from 13 to 17 percent in New York and from 6 to 10 percent in California. In Alabama (from 25 to 29 percent) and Georgia (25 to 30 percent) the share of black voters rose strongly. In the swing-state of Missouri, the black share rose from 8 to 13 percent of the total, and in President-elect Obama’s home state of Illinois, the black share of the state vote increased from 10 to 17 percent of the total. In two important battleground states, the black share of the vote declined slightly, although the number of black voters increased. In Virginia, the black share of the state vote declined from 21 to 20 percent, but overall turnout was up. In North Carolina, which had the largest increase in turnout of any state in the country, the black share of the vote declined from 26 to 23 percent. In both states, black voters over-voted their share of the Black Voting-age Population (BVAP). In Ohio, the black share of the total state vote increased by 10 percent.

Partisan Voting

The Democratic share of the black vote in 2004 increased to its all time high in 2008 with 95 percent of African Americans voting for the Democratic ticket; conversely Senator John McCain received a smaller percentage of black votes than any GOP nominee in history - only 4 percent. President-Elect Obama broke President Lyndon B. Johnson’s record established in the fateful year 1964, when the Civil Rights Act was passed.

There was no variation outside the margin of error among black subgroups (see Table 1) in

Table 2. The Black Vote by State, Presidential Elections, 2000-2008, Selected States

State	Black Share of State Vote			Total Voter Turnout		Black Partisan Vote, 2004			Black Partisan Vote, 2008	
	BVAP (%)	2000 (%)	2004 (%)	2008 (%)	2004 (%)	2008 (%)	Kerry (%)	Bush (%)	Obama (%)	McCain (%)
AL	25.0	25	25	29	56.3	61.6	91	6	98	2
AR	15.1	11	15	12	52.4	52.1	94	6	94	4
CA	7.9	7	6	10	61.2	n/a	81	18	95	5
FL	14.0	15	12	13	62.8	62.5	86	13	96	4
GA	26.4	25	25	30	54.7	61.3	88	12	98	2
IL	15.1	14	10	17	62.3	62.5	89	10	96	3
LA	29.3	29	27	29	59.3	58.7	90	9	94	4
MD	29.6	22	24	25	65.5	61.1	89	11	94	6
MI	13.6	11	13	12	66.1	66.7	89	10	97	3
MO	10.8	12	8	13	64.6	67.4	90	10	93	7
NY	15.9	11	13	17	58.8	55.4	90	9	100	0
NC	21.4	19	26	23	56.8	66.3	85	14	95	5
OH	11.3	9	10	11	66.5	61.1	84	16	97	2
PA	9.5	7	13	13	61.9	61.7	83	16	95	5
SC	27.3	22	30	25	52.2	58.2	85	15	96	4
TN	15.8	18	13	12	55.7	57.9	89	10	94	6
TX	12.5	15	12	13	52.2	54.1	83	17	98	2
VA	19.7	16	21	20	59.9	62.2	87	12	92	8

SOURCES: Information on the black voting-age population is from the November 2006 U.S. Census Current Population Survey. The actual share numbers from 1992-2000 are from Voter News Service, and for 2004-2008 from the Edison/Mitofsky consortium. Total turnout numbers are from the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate.

2008. There was no black gender gap, nor any generational differences among black voters as President-Elect Obama was the overwhelming choice of all African Americans.

In the states where most African Americans live, Barack Obama generally received a considerably higher percentage of the black vote in 2008 than did Senator Kerry in 2004 - despite Kerry's strong black support in that election. President-elect Obama received a larger share of the black vote than Senator Kerry in all states. A few states are illustrative of the shift in black voting between 2004 and 2008. In the key state of Ohio, Obama received 97 percent of the black vote in 2008, while Kerry received 84 percent in 2004; in Pennsylvania the shift was from 83 to 95 percent; in North Carolina the shift was from 85 to 95 percent.

The states where black voters represented important contributions to President-elect Obama's victory were Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia; black voters were key to his wins in these states. In other election contests, black voters were critical to the election of Senator-elect Hagen - North Carolina (NC), Senator Landrieu - Louisiana (LA), and Governor Purdue (NC). Black voters in Georgia were also critical to Jim Martin in the US Senate race there, where he advanced to a runoff with Senator Chambliss in early December.

The influence of black voters on competitive US House elections was especially strong. In Joint Center Guide's to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions published this summer, 15 highly competitive US House elections were highlighted because the districts had black voting-age populations of at least 10 percent. These 15 districts included 6 Democratic seats (five incumbents and one open seat) and nine Republican seats (six incumbents and three open seats). The Democratic candidates won in five (Alabama [AL] - 5, Georgia [GA] - 8, GA - 12, Kentucky [KY] - 3, Mississippi [MS] - 1) of the six seats currently held by a Democrat, including the open seat (AL-5); the one Democratic loss was incurred in an contest with a third-party black candidate (LA-6). The Democratic candidates also won in six of the nine districts presently held by the Republicans (AL-2, Connecticut [CT] - 4, Maryland [MD] - 1, NC - 8, Ohio [OH] - 1, Virginia [VA] - 2); in a seventh seat held by Republicans (VA - 5), the Democratic candidate leads by about 750 votes pending a recount, and in the eighth seat (LA-4) the election will have been decided in a run-off on December 2, 2008.

White Voters For and Against Obama

Nationally, President-elect Obama received 43 percent of the white vote - up only marginally from Senator Kerry's 41 percent in 2004. However, the national numbers are deceiving because in all states outside of the South, Obama received significantly more of the white vote - more than any Democratic nominee since Lyndon Johnson. President-elect Obama received an absolute majority of the white vote in 16 states and the District of Columbia. In the rest of the states in the US outside of the South, (with the exception of the Republican candidates' home states of Alaska and Arizona [where Obama ran one point worse than Kerry], in Kerry's home state of Massachusetts, and its neighbors Connecticut and Rhode Island; where Obama won all three with 60+ percent of the vote), Obama ran ahead of Senator Kerry among white voters. This includes reliably Republican states as Utah (nine points better among whites) and Idaho (seven points better than Kerry).

In two southern states, Obama received an increased share of the white vote - North Carolina and Virginia - both of which he won. However, in four southern states, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, he received a smaller share than John Kerry received in 2004. Given the political environment of 2008, those declines can only be attributed to race.

There are three factors that reliably predict election results in US Presidential elections: the state of the economy, the approval/disapproval ratings of the incumbent party, and the proportion of voters who think the country is going in the right direction or is off on the wrong track. It was these factors that explain why in 2008, all voters, including white voters, moved in Obama's direction in most of the country. In the remaining five southern states, Obama matched Kerry's white vote. Obama did not improve on Kerry's white vote in Florida, but in 2004, Florida was above the national average for white support for Kerry (43 percent). Obama won Florida by flipping the Hispanic vote there; in 2004, Bush won Florida's Hispanic vote by 15 percentage points, but in 2008, Obama won Florida's Hispanic vote by 12 percentage points.

The Black Contribution to Obama's Vote

The black contribution to President-elect Obama's total popular vote in 2008 was approximately 23.5 percent. In 2004, the black share of Senator Kerry's vote was 22.1 percent. Since black women were a larger share of the electorate (almost 7.5 percent) than black men (almost 5.5 percent) their contribution to Barack Obama's total vote (13.6 percent

Table 3. Statistical Profile of Black Major Party Nominees for Federal Office, 2008

	Democrats		Republicans		Total	
	Won N (%)	Lost N (%)	Won N (%)	Lost N (%)	Won N (%)	Lost N (%)
Total	42 89	5 11	0 0	9 100	42 75	14 25
Incumbents	41 100	0 0	0 0	0 0	41 100	0 0
Challengers/Open Seats	1 17	5 83	0 0	9 100	1 7	14 93
Women	14 87	2 13	0 0	2 100	14 78	4 22
Men	28 90	3 10	0 0	7 100	28 74	10 26
Majority-Minority district	30 100	0 0	0 0	4 100	30 90	4 10
Majority White District	12 71	5 29	0 0	5 100	12 55	10 45
White Opposition	20 80	5 20	0 0	2 100	21 75	7 25
Black Opposition	7 100	0 0	0 0	7 100	7 50	7 50
Unopposed^h	15 100	0 0	0 0	0 0	15 100	0 0
House Candidates	42 93	3 7	0 0	9 100	42 78	12 22
Senate Candidates	0 0	2 100	0 0	0 100	0 0	2 100
Average Vote	N=42 80	N=5 39	N=0 N/A	N=19 190	N=42 80	N=14 26

H Unopposed or no major party opposition in general election Average vote is for candidates with opposition

Table 4. Statistical Profile of Black Major Party Nominees for Federal Office, 1990-2008

	Democrats												Republicans												Total											
	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08	90	92	94	96	98	00	02	04	06	08						
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N						
Total	30	40	42	42	39	46	45	47	48	47	11	15	24	16	18	24	10	15	9	9	41	55	66	58	57	70	55	62	57	56						
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100						
Incumbents	21	22	35	35	38	37	34	38	39	41	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	21	23	36	37	39	38	34	38	39	41						
	70	55	83	83	97	80	76	81	81	87	0	7	4	13	6	4	0	0	0	0	51	42	54	64	68	54	62	61	68	73						
Challengers/ Open Seats	9	18	7	7	1	9	11	9	9	6	11	14	23	14	17	23	10	15	9	9	20	32	30	21	18	35	21	24	18	15						
	30	45	17	17	3	20	24	19	19	13	0	93	96	87	95	96	0	0	0	0	49	58	46	36	32	46	38	39	32	27						
Women	6	10	11	14	15	15	13	16	17	16	2	4	7	7	7	8	3	5	4	4	8	14	18	21	22	22	16	21	21	18						
	20	25	26	33	39	33	29	34	35	34	18	27	29	44	39	33	30	33	44	22	20	26	36	39	33	29	34	37	32	32						
Men	24	30	31	28	24	31	32	31	31	31	9	11	17	9	11	16	7	10	5	7	33	41	48	37	35	47	39	41	36	38						
	80	75	74	67	62	67	71	66	65	66	82	73	71	56	61	67	70	67	56	78	80	74	64	61	67	71	66	66	63	68						
Majority- Minority district	24	37	37	34	31	29	30	31	37	30	7	13	14	11	11	12	4	5	3	4	30	50	51	45	42	41	34	36	40	34						
	80	92	88	81	80	67	67	66	77	64	64	87	58	69	61	46	40	33	33	44	73	91	77	78	74	60	58	70	61	61						
Majority White District	6	3	5	8	8	17	15	16	11	17	4	2	10	5	7	12	6	10	6	5	11	5	13	15	15	29	26	26	17	22						
	20	8	12	19	21	33	33	34	23	36	36	13	42	31	39	27	60	67	67	56	27	9	23	22	26	40	42	30	39	39						
White Opposition	18	17	22	27	17	22	30	22	23	25	5	3	11	5	6	8	5	6	3	2	23	20	33	32	23	30	35	28	26	27						
	60	42	52	64	44	48	64	47	48	53	46	20	46	31	33	33	50	40	33	22	56	36	50	40	43	64	45	46	48	48						
Black Opposition	8	16	13	11	14	16	5	9	8	7	6	12	13	11	12	16	5	9	6	7	14	28	26	26	26	32	10	18	14	14						
	27	40	31	26	36	35	11	19	17	15	54	80	54	69	67	67	50	60	67	78	34	51	39	46	46	18	29	26	25	25						
Unopposed^h	4	7	7	4	8	8	10	16	17	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	7	4	8	8	10	16	17	15						
	13	18	17	10	21	17	22	34	35	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	13	11	7	14	11	18	26	28	27						
House Candidates	29	39	40	41	38	45	44	45	46	45	11	14	24	16	17	23	10	13	8	9	40	53	64	57	55	68	54	58	54	54						
	97	97	95	97	97	98	98	96	96	96	10	10	10	10	95	96	10	87	89	10	98	96	97	98	97	97	98	94	95	96						
Senate Candidates	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	4	3	2						
	3	3	5	3	3	2	2	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	6	4	0	11	0	2	2	4	3	2	3	3	2	6	5	4						

H Unopposed or no major party opposition in general election. Average vote is for candidates with opposition.

Table 5. Black Major Party Nominees for Federal Office, November 2008

US House of Major Representatives

District	BVAP %	Democrat	Dem Vote %	Rep Vote %	Republican
AL 7	57.8	/Artur Davis I	-	-	Unopposed
CA 9	24.5	/Barbara Lee I	86	10	<u>Charles Hargrave</u>
CA 33	29.6	/Diane Watson I	88	12	David Crowley
CA 35	35.0	/Maxine Waters I	83	13	Ted Hayes
CA 37	24.7	/Laura Richardson I	76	-	Unopposed
D.C.	55.7	/Eleanor Holmes Norton I	93	7	<u>Adrian Salsgiver</u>
FL 3	45.1	/Corrine Brown I	-	-	Unopposed
FL 17	51.3	/Kendrick Meek I	-	-	Unopposed
FL 22	24.6	<u>/Ron Klein I</u>	55	45	Allen West
FL 23	46.2	/Alcee Hastings I	82	18	Marion Thorpe, Jr.
GA 2	40.9	/Sanford Bishop I	69	31	<u>Lee Ferrell</u>
GA 4	48.8	/Hank Johnson I	-	-	Unopposed
GA 5	51.0	/John Lewis I	-	-	Unopposed
GA 13	37.3	/David Scott I	69	31	Deborah Honeycutt
IL 1	63.2	/Bobby Rush I	86	14	Antoine Members
IL 2	59.4	/Jesse Jackson, Jr. I	89	11	Anthony Williams
IL 7	55.9	/Danny K. Davis I	85	15	<u>Steve Miller</u>
IL 10	6.7	Dan Seals	44	56	<u>/Mark Kirk I</u>
IN 7	26.7	/Andre Carson I	65	35	Unopposed
LA 2 ¹	59.3	William Jefferson I	Runoff 12/2/08		<u>Anh "Joseph" Cao</u>
LA 7	22.7	Don Gravins, Jr.	34	62	<u>/Charles Boustany, Jr. I</u>
MD 4	55.3	/Donna Edwards I	85	14	<u>Peter James</u>
MD 7	57.0	/Elijah Cummings I	79	19	<u>Mike Hargadon</u>
MI 13	57.9	/Carolyn Kilpatrick I	74	19	<u>Edward Gubics</u>
MI 14	58.9	/John Conyers I	92	-	Unopposed
MN 5	10.2	/Keith Ellison I (DFL)	71	22	Barb Davis White
MS 2	58.9	/Bennie Thompson I	69	31	<u>Richard Cook</u>
MO 1	45.8	/William Clay, Jr. I	87	-	Unopposed
MO 5	21.8	/Emanuel Cleaver I	64	36	<u>Jacob Turk</u>
NJ 10	54.3	/Donald Payne I	99	-	Unopposed
NY 6	51.1	/Gregory Meeks I			Unopposed
NY 10	60.0	Edolphus Towns I	94	6	<u>Salvatore Grupico</u>
NY 11	56.8	/Yvette Clarke I	93	7	<u>Hugh Carr</u>
NY 15	30.5	/Charles Range I	87	9	Ed Daniels
NC 1	47.6	George K. Butterfield	70	30	<u>Dean Stephens</u>
NC 12	41.9	/Mel Watt I	72	28	<u>Ty Cobb, Jr.</u>
OH 11	51.6	/Marcia Fudge	85	15	<u>Thomas Pekarek</u>
PA 1	42.2	<u>/Robert Brady I</u>	91	9	Mike Muhammad
PA 2	56.5	/Chaka Fattah I	89	11	<u>Adam Lang</u>

Table 5. Black Major Party Nominees for Federal Office

US Major Representatives					
District	BVAP %	Democrat	Dem Vote %	Rep Vote %	Republican
SC 6	53.5	/James Clyburn I	68	32	<u>Nancy Harrelson</u>
TX 9	36.5	/Al Green I	94	-	Unopposed
TX 18	40.3	/Sheila J. Lee I	77	20	<u>John Faulk</u>
TX 30	41.0	Eddie B. Johnson I	83	16	<u>Fred Wood</u>
VA 3	52.7	/Robert Scott I	-	-	Unopposed
VA 4	33.3	Andrea Miller	40	60	/Randy Forbes I
V.I.	61.4	/Donna Christian-Cristensen I	-	-	Unopposed
WI-4	27.8	/Gwen Moore I	89	-	Unopposed

US Senate

State	Black VAP %	Democratic	Dem Vote %	Rep Vote %	Republican
Alabama	24.0	Vivian D. Figures	37	63	<u>/Jeff Sessions I</u>
Mississippi	33.1	Erik Fleming	38	62	<u>/Thad Cochran I</u>

KEY:

Non-African American Candidates' names are underlined; I incumbent /Winner

of the national total for Obama) was higher than the contribution of black men (almost 10 percent).

Black Candidates for Federal Office

There were 56 black major party nominees for federal office in 2008 down one from 2006 [Tables 3 and 4]. There were 47 black Democratic nominees (one off from the all-time high), and nine black Republican nominees (tied for the lowest number since 1990); there were 24 black Republican nominees in 1994 and 2000. There were also two black nominees for the US Senate in Alabama and Mississippi, who needless to say were not elected.

The number of black members in the 111th Congress will decline by one from the present congress as Obama departs the legislative branch to assume control of the executive; if an African American were appointed to fill either of the Democratic ticket's vacant US Senate seats, the number of black members would remain the same. There were 47 Democratic nominees, and 42 or 89 percent won with an average vote of 80 percent; 15 US House incumbents were unopposed. All of the nine black Republican nominees lost while averaging 19 percent of the vote in the districts where they ran. Among the black Democratic nominees, 64 percent ran in majority-minority districts, and 36 percent in majority white districts. There will be forty black Democratic U. Representatives in the new Congress, one black US Senator, Senator Roland Burris (D-IL), and two black Democratic delegates. Of course, Barack Obama will have become the 44th President on January 20, 2009. There is only one new black member of the US House, Marcia Fudge (OH), who was elected to the seat held by the late Stephanie Tubbs Jones. Information on all black major party nominees for federal

office in 2008 is provided in Table 5.

Miseducation and Racism

Marika Sherwood, based on the Inaugural Marika Sherwood Lecture, 2007

The Black & Asian Studies Association, (BASA), was formed in 1991, with the aim of encouraging research and disseminating information on the history of Black peoples in Britain; and by 'Black' we mean people of African origins and descent. We also knew that an organisation such as BASA might, just might, have some influence on government and its quangos. So we set up a committee to work with archives, attempting to convince archivists that their holdings would, without a doubt, include material on Black peoples and thus need re-cataloguing. We also emphasised the need to collect material from local Black organisations and peoples and to revise the training of archivists to incorporate these points. We did similar work with the Museums Association. As I am sure you are all aware, there has been considerable progress during 2007 in many museums and archives; but this momentum must be maintained. Whether the actual university training courses have improved, I doubt.

To attempt to influence education issues, we met many times with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the regularly renamed Department of Education (now known as the Department for Children, Schools and Families, (DCFS) and with one Secretary of State. These were almost a total waste of time, though this year BASA member Martin Spafford was part of a QCA panel re-working the history curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 14 years (Key Stage 3). This latest version actually suggests that Blacks in Elizabethan England as well as the Black Chartist leader William Cuffay could be incorporated in the 'mainstream' curriculum, and uses the innovatory work of another BASA member, Dan Lyndon, in his school as an example. However, unless I am much mistaken, the reading list, which is very short indeed, lists three books which are out-of-print.

Our meetings with the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) have not resulted in the acceptance of our suggestion for compulsory training in the history of Black peoples in the UK for all their inspectors and we made this same suggestion to the DCFS, (as well as suggesting courses training archivists and museum curators). A certain level of ignorance at Ofsted was clearly demonstrated when one head of Ofsted replied to my questions about the absence of Black Britons in any section of the syllabus by pointing out that one of Maya Angelou's novels was on the literature reading list.

It was explained to us that much of OFSTED's inspection is contracted out, so they have no influence on the training of inspectors. This seems to me to be a wonderful way to avoid responsibility. Why would inspectors, the products of the same (mis-)educational institutions as classroom teachers, be any more knowledgeable? Our attempt to influence the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has been equally unsuccessful. And, of course, the government says it has no influence on what is taught at the teacher training institutions.

So Where Are We Today In These Areas?

Britishness

One government reaction is well worth citing: the definition of Britishness. In January 2006 Gordon Brown defined this as 'liberty, fairness and responsibility'; some thirteen months later this had metamorphosed into 'British tolerance, the British belief in liberty and the

British sense of fair play’.

Let us examine how Britain lives up to these definitions of its core values. Historically, there is nothing much to substantiate Mr Brown’s claims. When children were taken from the workhouses and marched up to the Lancashire factories in the mid-nineteenth century, was that ‘liberty’? Or when children on the streets were picked up and shipped out to the colonies as cheap labour? Or when political activists in Britain were exiled and those in the colonies jailed? When the ‘surplus population’ in Britain was, one way or another, encouraged to emigrate to the colonies of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa? Last, because it is anything but the least, just how many millions of enslaved Africans did Britain transport across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans? And would the 40 year period of ‘apprenticeship’ for ‘freed’ slaves in the West Indian colonies have been reduced had Britain been able to deal with the many costly revolts there? Was it ‘fair’ to use ‘contract’, i.e. forced labour, in the colonies up to the late 1940s?

As for ‘fairness’ or ‘fair play’? Maybe on the playing fields of Eton! What is there in the history of Britain that substantiates such a claim? Just look at the class and gender divisions! The use and abuse of workers! Look at attitudes to women, who even today often earn only a proportion of the salary of a man doing the same work. Look at how long it took for Ireland to regain its independence. I am sure you do not need me to give more examples, in Britain or within the Empire which was, of course, a great example of exactly the opposite of ‘fairness’.

As for ‘tolerance’! I, as a Hungarian, as a woman, as someone with a list of writings on somewhat unorthodox subjects - I do not want, thank you, to be ‘tolerated’. I am every bit as good as you, Oh Englishman - or Scotsman! How about a little equality?

‘Responsibility’? Historically, What On Earth Would That Mean?

I have to ask: as Gordon Brown is by no means the only minister speaking about it, why is the government so concerned with defining ‘Britishness’ suddenly? Is it because of the move by Scotland, and slowly by Wales, to return to independence? And is that why it is ‘Britishness’ and not ‘Englishness’ that the government tries to define? Is it also because of the many immigrants from Europe, who, according to many accounts, in fact bring not only wealth but ‘attitudes to work’ long forgotten by the English? And because, as they are Europeans, and the UK is part of the EU, Britain can no longer denigrate continental Europeans as it used to? Certainly when I came to live here in 1966, the ‘English’ never saw themselves as ‘European’ (and many didn’t know where Hungary was!). Now that they have to, do they feel inadequate? Or just not know where they fit in?

But let me look at Britain today, and look at it from the perspective of BASA’s - and my - concerns.

Should I begin by saying that it is very ‘interesting’ that we no longer have a government department for education. Equally ‘interesting’ is the reduction in the amount of history taught in schools. Given the realities of the history of the UK, this is hardly surprising: it might just contradict the much-lauded virtues of ‘Britishness’. And if world history would be taught, can you conceive of schools actually teaching that both Iraq and Israel were created by Britain? And examining what responsibilities Britain thus ought to accept?

As Sir Keith Ajegbo, a Home Office Advisor, previously gave his own definition of ‘Britishness’

for school use: that 'pupils should study free speech, the rule of law, mutual tolerance and respect for equal rights', let us take a glimpse at our schools. By applying under the Freedom of Information Act, a researcher discovered that in 90 education authorities nearly 100,000 racist incidents had been recorded between 2002 and 2006. It should be noted that some authorities only began recording such incidents after 2002, and, as Professor Heidi Mirza argued, 'there are a lot of young people who don't want to report this because they are too embarrassed or frightened to do so'. And, in my experience, in the county in which I now live, some children just give up reporting because the teachers dismiss their complaints. Whether all complaints made by children actually appear in the schools' official reports is also, to my mind, questionable.

Racism In Schools

That racism in schools is alive and well was recognised by the Focus Institute on Rights in their report *Right From The Start* which states that the 'Government has not paid sufficient attention to the implications of racial disadvantage, discrimination and, in particular, institutional racism in the way the early years services operate in practice'⁽¹⁾. A report by Peter Wanless, *Getting It. Getting It Right* for the now defunct Department for Education and Skills (DfES) found that staff in many schools are unwittingly racist, with black youngsters three times more likely than white to be expelled permanently. Furthermore, 'black pupils are routinely punished more harshly, praised less and told off more often than other pupils'⁽²⁾, and are 'disproportionately put in bottom sets - due to behaviour rather than ability'. How does the research explain this? It is the 'largely unwitting but systematic racial discrimination in the application of disciplinary and exclusions policies'⁽³⁾. This 'unintentional racism stems from long-standing conditioning involving negative images of black peoples, particularly black men'⁽⁴⁾.

Data for permanent exclusions by the DfES shows that in the years 2003-04 and 2005-06:

26 out of every 10,000 pupils of Mixed ethnic origin were permanently excluded from school. This was the same rate as the exclusion rate for Black pupils which was around twice that for White pupils..... Almost 8 in every 100 pupils of Black or Mixed ethnic heritage were excluded for a fixed period in 2004-05. This compares with almost 6 in every 100 pupils of White ethnic origin and around 2 in every 100 Asian pupils.

Are schools in breach of their duties under the Race Relations Act of 2000, which requires public bodies to eliminate racial discrimination? That that is precisely what schools are doing is further evidenced by research findings in *Minority Ethnic Teachers' Professional Experiences*. The *Research Brief* issued by the DfES (RB853, June 2007) concludes by stating that:

.....minority ethnic teachers, particularly African Caribbean teachers, have argued that their communities have, for the past few decades, been consigned to the outskirts of the education system by a profession which has consistently formed preconceived and stereotypical notions of their communities based on unfair assessments and the mis-education of their children.⁽⁵⁾

It is thus hardly surprising that in 2005 only '21% of African-Caribbean boys in England obtained five GCSE passes at grades A*- C..... The percentage for all pupils was double that.'⁽⁶⁾ All teachers must know that pupils generally live up to their expectation. Expect nothing and you'll get nothing. It is basically as simple as that.

The National Curriculum

But it is even worse than this. Racial discrimination is rife in the National Curriculum, which generally lauds the achievements of the English (no, not the British) and then Europeans, with barely a glance at the non-White world except for the US. All inventors, painters, scientists, explorers, designers, poets, writers, mathematicians, astronomers, chemists, sculptors - everything that is worth anything comes from the genius of Whites. Thus, by omission, the public bodies known as 'schools' reinforce the racism that has been promulgated in this country for at least the past 150 years. If this were not intentional, why is 'Black Peoples of the Americas' still on the curriculum, while, despite BASA's protests, there is no course on 'Black Peoples of Britain'?

In April 2007 the QCA published online *Mutli-ethnic histories: a bibliography for teaching and learning at key stages 2 and 3* which is supposed to 'support the teaching of the multi-ethnic dimension of British history in the national curriculum' ⁽⁷⁾.

For the section on 'The African and African-Caribbean communities', they offered two websites (only one of which is concerned with history), two publications on Mary Seacole, a novel by Stella Osammor, and Hakim Adi's *The History of the African and Caribbean Communities in Britain*; but nothing for the teachers' own education. 'The Transatlantic Slave Trade' section listed a book on anti-slavery, histories of Mary Prince and Robert Wedderburn, Equiano's *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*, the *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho*, two novels on Abraham Hannibal and one website.

Section 12, 'The First World War', offered my article on the BBC website, while Section 13, 'The Second World War and after', lists the Channel 4 *Black and Asian History Map*, a book on the Windrush, and the book I produced with Martin Spafford *Whose Freedom?*, which is now long out of print. Should I suggest - yet again - some in-service training for QCA staff? Aren't they also in breach of the Race Relations Act, or if not, then doing the least possible to avoid this?

So what does the QCA say about history in its lavish *National Curriculum: statutory requirements for key stages 3 and 4*, published jointly with the new DCFS in 2007? Pupils are expected to 'investigate Britain's relationship with the wider world and relate past events to the present day' and 'explore cultural, ethnic and religious diversity and racial equality'. Thus 'British history' is to include 'the impact through time of the movement and settlement of diverse peoples to, from and within the British Isles', which has helped to shape Britain's identity'. How teachers are supposed to do this from the bibliography provided is completely beyond my comprehension ⁽⁸⁾.

The great advance in this curriculum is that it includes:

'the development of trade, colonisation, industrialisation and technology, the British Empire and its impact on different people in Britain and overseas, pre-colonial civilisations, the nature and effects of the slave trade, and resistance and decolonisation' ⁽⁹⁾.

But again, we have to ask: given their own mis-education, how are teachers supposed to teach these topics? In their outline, the QCA only notes the work of Olaudah Equiano and William Wilberforce - and recommends that teachers should link with 'emancipation, segregation and the twentieth century Civil Rights Movement in the USA' ⁽¹⁰⁾

So now we know. Just return to teaching what was in the curriculum from day one, the

US. From where are teachers supposed to get reliable, well-researched information on the rest of these excellent suggestions? Undoubtedly sooner or later a new bibliography will be issued for the slave trade and slavery, which will ignore my ample demonstration of the inefficacy of the Acts of 1807 and 1833.

It is further recommended that pupils should study 'the ways in which the past has helped to shape identities'⁽¹¹⁾. Can you imagine teachers approaching this topic with confidence? Will they, for example, look at the multi-fold legacies of slavery, which of course includes racist ideologies and practices, as well as the obverse, the engendering of White superiority?

The 'programme of study' for the KS3 course Citizenship in this publication goes on for twentyfour pages, whereas History deserved only nine. What conclusions can we draw from this? Perhaps that 'history' is too political, too threatening? Or that 'Britishness' i.e., 'citizenship' has to be reinforced while we live in a state of 'War on Terror'? The curriculum is supposed to encourage 'respect for different national, religious and ethnic identities and..... encourage pupils to challenge injustice, inequalities and discrimination'⁽¹²⁾. Furthermore, one focus should be on the 'fairness and the rule of law as part of justice'⁽¹³⁾. I wonder just how many 'BEM' pupils there are who have not had experiences demonstrating the unfairness of many aspects of the worlds they inhabit in the UK.

While I could make the judgements I made above about the impossibility of the task being placed on untrained teachers, I shall only note two extraordinary statements made by the QCA. One advises that when teaching 'Identities and Diversity: Living Together in the UK', 'the historical context.....should be considered where appropriate.' Could the QCA explain when this context is not 'appropriate'? The second statement explains - at least to me - the rationale behind teaching 'Citizenship': 'All pupils, regardless of their legal or residential status, should explore and develop their understanding of what it means to be a citizen in the UK today'. That definition might sound very different coming from a Zimbabwean asylum seeker about to be returned home, or someone rotting in our 'detention centres' and hugely overcrowded prisons; or those dealing with daily discrimination ⁽¹⁴⁾.

The chances are that teachers will avoid teaching anything considered a 'delicate subject'. The report recommends that 'Initial teacher training should include more attention on how to teach these subjects and a better research base should be made available to teachers'. Is anyone in government listening, I wonder? Anyone with sufficient courage to follow up on this? After all, even Ofsted, in its report *History in the Balance* admitted that in primary schools 'few teachers are specialists and so find it difficult to develop the subject'⁽¹⁵⁾.

Have we moved very much from our first Black head teacher, Beryl Gilroy's assessment of the 1960s: 'so much ignorance, so much prejudice, seemed to be built into the school curriculum'. But before I discourage us all completely, my colleague Dan Lyndon assures me he has:

"been working with teachers on these issues for nearly five years now and more and more are taking steps to increase the amount of Black and Asian British history taught in their classrooms - you only need to see the success of www.blackhistory4schools to see that this is the case - over the last 3 months over 13,000 people have visited the website with over 200,000 hits. The internet is a powerful tool that we can use to change habits and attitudes."

I just hope that those 'hits' result in action! Martin Spafford is also more hopeful, arguing that

the 'wording of the new curriculum allows a way for community groups.....to knock on their school doors and influence or even train teachers'. He is 'more interested in how teachers network on line and in the flesh from their own felt needs to learn in or to teach'. This reminds me, I'm afraid, of the conclusions I drew many years ago after running in-service sessions for teachers: those who attend are fine, but what about the other 90 percent? A different perspective is offered by another colleague, an advisor in Kent. He wrote me that because of the lack of 'training days.....most of the training I have delivered has been.....after school staff meetings..... It's debatable whether these sessions influence practice unless they have some sort of hook built in, such as a resource pack, DVD, etc.'

Conclusion

It is not surprising to me that MI5 believes that 'Al-Qaida [is] recruiting teenagers to attack targets in Britain ⁽¹⁶⁾'. It does not take a master-mind to conclude that when the 'education' issues outlined above are coupled with the prevalent racism, some young people will be turned against this country. Others are turned against each other: 15 teenagers were murdered by other teenagers between January and June 2007 in London alone. What has surprised me is that these young people, who barely exist in out school curricula, who with their families suffer many forms of discrimination, haven't yet burned down the schools where they are so mis-educated.

So what should we in BASA do? I think it is essential to return to discussions with the (non-existent) DfES, regarding teacher training, both in-service and initial; to take up the issue of the training of Ofsted inspectors and the QCA. We need somehow to encourage universities to offer courses on the history of Black and Asian peoples in Britain and set up research projects. Is the Equiano Centre going to lead the way? If printed books are still being used in schools, then we need, yet again, to hold discussions with the Text-book Publishers Association. We also need to keep an eye on museums, archives and the heritage sector, as I am fearful that the current momentum might well vanish once the 1807/2007 commemorative funding and extravaganza is over. And libraries need to be approached, as I am sure that my county cannot be the only one whose book-display for Black History Month was somewhat worse than abysmal. Should we also consider trying to find ways of working with parents and community groups, perhaps to encourage them to serve on schools' governing bodies and to protest about ethnocentric curricula? Or the lack of Black teachers? (That is, of course, another issue. Some years ago I spoke at a Black teachers' conference and learned about the problems regarding non-promotion. At a Black librarians' conference the same issue was raised.)

References

1. Jane Lane, *Right From The Start* (Trowbridge, 2006), p. 13.
2. Peter Wanless, *Getting It, Getting It Right*, (<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/resources/PriorityReviewSept06.pdf>, (2006), p. 22.
3. Peter Wanless, *Getting It, Getting It Right*, (<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/resources/PriorityReviewSept06.pdf>, (2006), p. 19.
4. Peter Wanless, *Getting It, Getting It Right*, (<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/resources/PriorityReviewSept06.pdf>, (2006), p. 11.
5. Mark Cunningham and Linda Hargreaves, *Minority Ethnic Teachers' Professional Experiences:*

Evidence From the Teacher Status Project (Cambridge, 2007)(www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/rr853.pdf), p. 6.

6. Robin Richards, 'There is a Way to Help Black Boys', *The Independent*, 10th December (2007).
7. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, *Multi-ethnic Histories: A Bibliography for Teaching and Learning at Key Stages 2 and 3* (2008), http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/QCA-07-2299_Multi-ethnic_histories_bibliography.pdf.
8. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, *The National Curriculum Statutory Requirements for Key Stages 3 and 4*. (London, 2007), <https://orderline.qca.org.uk/gempdf/184721553X.pdf>.
9. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, *The National Curriculum Statutory Requirements for Key Stages 3 and 4*. (London, 2007), <https://orderline.qca.org.uk/gempdf/184721553X.pdf>.
10. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, *The National Curriculum Statutory Requirements for Key Stages 3 and 4*. (London, 2007), <https://orderline.qca.org.uk/gempdf/184721553X.pdf>.
11. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, *The National Curriculum Statutory Requirements for Key Stages 3 and 4*. (London, 2007), <https://orderline.qca.org.uk/gempdf/184721553X.pdf>.
12. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, *The National Curriculum Statutory Requirements for Key Stages 3 and 4*. (London, 2007), <https://orderline.qca.org.uk/gempdf/184721553X.pdf>.
13. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, *The National Curriculum Statutory Requirements for Key Stages 3 and 4*. (London, 2007), <https://orderline.qca.org.uk/gempdf/184721553X.pdf>.
14. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, *The National Curriculum Statutory Requirements for Key Stages 3 and 4*. (London, 2007), <https://orderline.qca.org.uk/gempdf/184721553X.pdf>.
15. Ofsted, *History in the balance: History in English schools 2003–07*, London, Ofsted, 2007
16. Richard Norton Taylor, 'Al-Qaida recruiting teenagers to attack targets in Britain, warns MI5 chief', *The Guardian*, (2007).

Creating a Safe Learning Space for the Discussion of Multicultural Issues in the Classroom

Katherine M. Helm, Lewis University

This paper reviews best pedagogic practices for creating a safe environment in which to hold courses on race, racism, and multicultural issues. Inherent in these courses are student feelings of angst, vulnerability, guilt, trepidation, and sometimes anger and hostility. The sensitive educator must manage and acknowledge these feelings so that learning can occur without diminishing the power and impact issues of race have on our collective and individual psyches and experiences. Strategies for managing and incorporating students' strong emotions into the dialogue on multiculturalism will be reviewed.

Many scholars have reviewed and evaluated best practices for and challenges in teaching college courses on race, racism, and multiculturalism (Peters-Davis & Schultz, 2005; Cote, Mann, Mukombe, Nielsen, Wahl, 2005; Cohen, Hayes, Inozil, Mendell, Srivastava, 2005). Depending on the demographics of the course, students come expecting different things. Those who are of color, gay, or disabled often want to use these courses as a platform to be heard and understood given their past experiences of being invalidated and misunderstood. White students, however, sometimes come to these courses with a great deal of anxiety, guilt, defensiveness, or confusion. The educator has a significant role in managing these feelings. Little learning and few honest discussions can occur without the instructor's ready acknowledgement that talking about multicultural issues often provokes powerful feelings that can sometimes get in the way of the learning process. Students have often been socialized into the culture of 'political correctness' where they do not want to offend other students. Although this may result in a respectful attitude in the classroom, 'political correctness' tends to inhibit students because it prevents them from asking questions and getting the answers they need to broaden their perspectives given that 'America's classrooms are increasingly diverse and multicultural frameworks are being utilized to address diversity issues in the classroom' (Ravitch, 2005). Issues of race are painful; however, a sensitive and skilled educator can set the tone for safety and empowerment. Arguably, this is a critical component for courses on race, racism, and multiculturalism.

What is a Safe Space?

When students attend multicultural courses, the goal should be that they understand how their knowledge of multicultural issues will shape their professional work and personal worldview. Safe spaces for learning allow students to feel comfortable throughout their process of inquiry and in expressing their opinions, sharing their experiences, and asking questions of their classmates and instructor. Having an environment of emotional safety in a multicultural classroom sets the tone for self-discovery and transformative learning experiences for students. It also allows for the important goal of increased self-awareness and an openness to learning more about multiculturalism.

Pedagogical Framework

Previous models for multicultural courses frequently emphasized a fact-based approach, where instructors teach students about socioeconomic, historic, and geographic facts about specific ethnic groups (Ravitch, 2005). The underlying assumption of these models was that students would automatically apply their multicultural fact-based knowledge to the outside

world. We cannot assume that students automatically do this which is why it is critical that courses on multiculturalism include a multi-pronged approach that engages students intellectually, emotionally, and personally. Courses that engage students on these multiple levels enable the transfer of learning from the classroom environment to the outside world far more easily than fact-based approaches. Personalized learning is transformative. The process of learning about multicultural issues is arguably even more important than the content. The assumption underlying this truism is that courses where students explore multicultural issues are in themselves societal microcosms.

The opinions, values, and experiences of students are representative of many different members of society. Instructors who engage students in the processing of their classmates' different values and experiences, expose students to various opinions in society about "isms" and other sensitive topics. Exploring the classroom process helps students deal with very sensitive issues and differing points of view in the open. It also models the important concept that we can disagree with one another without being disrespectful. Additionally, these discussions model how who we are shapes our worldview and values. For example, an instructor attuned to process issues will regularly monitor the tone of the classroom and the emotional reactions of students. "How did you feel when I said that Affirmative Action is good (or bad)?" and "What do other people in the class think of that example? How does it impact you personally?" Instructors who encourage active processing in their courses need to be comfortable with managing students' reactions and sensitive to how the discussion impacts the group as a whole.

Best Practices for Creating Safe Environments

Instructors who use a balanced approach which involves appropriate emotional monitoring of students and emphasizes important course content, need to explain this approach to students on the first day of the class. The first day of a course is crucial to setting the tone of safety in the classroom. A suggestion for setting the tone might be to ask students "Why do you think racial issues are so difficult to talk about?" After processing students' responses instructors might tell students:

"This course is going to be taught differently than some of the other courses you have had previously. Because talking about multicultural issues can be difficult, I want to check in with you regularly to see how you feel about what we are talking about. I want you to be able to apply this knowledge to your everyday life by helping you understand why issues of culture, sexual orientation, and "isms" can greatly impact who we are and how we perceive our worlds. Everyone's perspective is valuable even though we may not always agree with one another. It is through your sharing that we will learn from one another."

Educators should remember that setting a safe classroom environment begins with building good relationships with students. If the instructor does not have a supportive relationship with his or her students, effective learning will be compromised in a multicultural course. Nichols (2005) discusses the Relationship Teaching (RT) Model. His premise is that students learn more effectively from teachers with whom they have a personal relationship. This is most especially true in a classroom where multicultural issues are discussed. Students will not discuss sensitive issues in a classroom that feels unsafe to them or with a teacher whom they do not trust.

Using Yourself as a Teaching Tool

Creating a safe classroom environment involves being a known entity to your students.

Sharing appropriate personal information with students helps them feel like they know their instructors and helps build important connections with them. This is especially important for multicultural courses where instructors have the expectation that students will share their personal experiences. Teaching through real-world narratives can have a powerful impact on students. For example, I have shared some of my own experiences of discrimination with my students to illustrate that “isms” are alive and well. I have asked other students in the room to share their experiences about being the “only lonely” where they were the only member of their group (gender, race, age, etc.) present in the room and their feelings about it. These approaches allow students to not only understand why the material has real world implications but how learning about different multicultural groups in society has a direct impact on the relationships they will have with other people.

As teachers we have the ability to model important experiences for our students. Teachers can share how they are working to overcome their own biases model: the idea that we all have biases and we are all works in progress. In addition those who share their experiences of discrimination or other personal experiences relevant to multicultural issues help their students to see their teachers as human beings. Such self-disclosures enhance feelings of safety in the classroom environment with both teaching and learning enhanced with these important interpersonal connections.

Curriculum Suggestions

To be effective in teaching courses about multicultural issues, educators should use a multidimensional approach which is respectful of the many ways in which students learn course material. In my courses on multicultural issues, I use a combination of: textbooks, films; assignments within which students interview someone of a different culture or present to the class on their own culture; role-plays about how to talk about multicultural issues with friends; family members and in professional contexts; and reaction papers within which students are asked to react to different topics, films, or classroom discussions. These assignments augment class discussions and help students to process course content on multiple levels. These assignments also facilitate students applying course information to their daily lives. Students’ final papers include self-evaluations of their experience and contributions to the course and, more specifically, how the different activities impacted upon them. Further, students are also asked to consider how they intend to apply the knowledge they have learned from the course to their lives; and its impact on their world views.

Real World Applications

Courses covering multicultural content should be dynamic. If taught well, students bring in examples each week of how the issues they are learning about in class are reflected in the real world (e.g. how they see bias operating where they had not previously; how they have confronted friends, family members or others about usage of discriminatory language and/or behaviors; how they have been personally impacted by a topic we discussed in class). I often begin a class by asking students to respond to the content of a television show, a story on the news, or a recently released film. We talk about how these media relate to the issues we are discussing in class. Students often share a narrative of how they applied our discussion of gender or age discrimination to something they are dealing with currently. Effective teachers build bridges for their students between their studies and potential applications in the real world; and such work fosters intellectual, emotional, and personal learning. Once students are finished with a course, they do not retain many of the details. Instead what they retain are overarching concepts, and so making these concepts relevant to students and their personal experiences significantly impacts their retention of the material.

Desired Results

Multicultural courses that balance process and content approaches are difficult to teach. They cover content that often encourages students to explore their biases and face opinions and values that differ from their own. When taught well, students have found these courses to be transformative. If students have felt safe, respected, and heard by their instructor and classmates, they often leave the course feeling motivated to make a difference in social justice issues. Throughout the course, instructors should capitalize on increasing self awareness for students by suggesting ways to help their students confront their personal stereotypes about particular groups and make other important personal changes, therefore addressing the question of how attending students can serve as agents of change in their families, among friends, in professional contexts, and in their communities.

References

- Cote, B., Mann, K., Mukombe, H., Nielsen, C., Wahl, A.M. (2005). From silence and resistance to tongues united: Talking about race in the college classroom. In N. Peters-Davis & J. Shultz (Eds.) *Challenges of multicultural education: Teaching and taking diversity courses*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers
- Cohen, J., Hayes, E., Inozil, N., Mendell, S., & Srivastava, P. (2005). Identity matters in class: Conversations in mixed company. In N. Peters-Davis & J. Shultz (Eds.) *Challenges of multicultural education: Teaching and taking diversity courses*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers
- Daniels, B. (1997). *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?: And other conversations about race*. New York, NY: Basic Books
- Nichols, J.B. (2005). Improving academic performance through the enhancement of teacher/student relationships: the Relationship Teaching (RT) model. Power point presentation at the Association of Teacher Educators National Field Directors Forum, Chicago, IL.
- Peters-Davis, N. & Shultz, J. (2005). Where do we go from here? In N. Peters-Davis & J. Shultz (Eds.) *Challenges of multicultural education: Teaching and taking diversity courses*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers
- Ravitch, S. (2005). Introduction: Pluralism, power, and politics – discourses of diverse pedagogies and pedagogies of diversity. In N. Peters-Davis & J. Shultz (Eds.) *Challenges of multicultural education: Teaching and taking diversity courses*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers