AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE PRE-SERVICE

TEACHERS'PERCEPTIONS OF

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION:

A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

By

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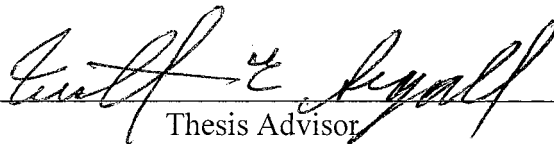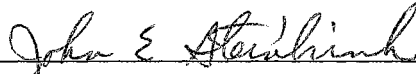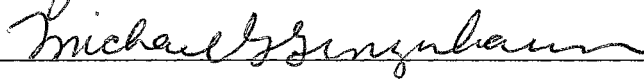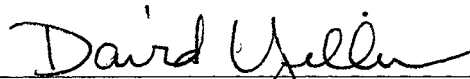the Degree of
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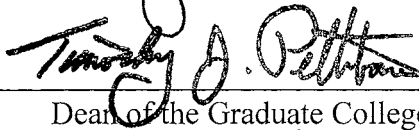Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is one fundamental truth...American life is inconceivable without its black

presence. The sheer intelligence and imagination of African-Americans have

disproportionately shaped American culture, produced wealth in the American

economy, and refined notions of freedom and equality in American politics. And,

on a deeper level, black reflections on the human condition in this land of

sentimental aims and romantic dreams injected tragicomic sensibilities into the

American experience. (p.xv)

> *Henry Louis Gates, Jr.*
>
> *Cornel West*
>
> *2000*

American education is at an important crossroad in its attempt to educate all of its

citizens in the most effective and efficient manner. Currently, many obstacles exist in

education reform. These obstacles range from debates over school vouchers to the

constant bickering over the distribution and amount of local and federal tax dollars

allotted to public school districts. Perhaps, the most difficult roadblock in the quest for

the "total" educational opportunity afforded to African-American male students is the

lack of qualified African-American male teachers. This holds true especially in

elementary grade levels. African-American male teachers provide positive role models for underprivileged African-American children who are desperately in need of positive outlooks on life.

A question frequently asked by many educational researchers is why single out one particular type of student or teacher to give special preference? The answer to this question is simple and can be found in an article entitled "The Endangered Black Male Child." In this article Wright (1992) compares the African-American male child to the manatee, crocodile, bald eagle, the Everglades, Grand Canyon, alligators, whales, the petrified forest, and the Sequoia trees in that each of these entities are in danger of becoming extinct. Therefore, each should have a group concerned with fighting for its preservation. Furthermore, Wright (1992) provides chilling facts to substantiate his claim that African-American males are an "endangered species." First, Wright suggests that the leading cause of death among African-American males between the ages of 15 and 24 is homicide. Secondly, Wright states that African-American men represent six percent of the country's population but more than forty percent of the prison population. Wright then maintains that a black man is more than twice as likely to be unemployed as a Caucasian man. Finally, Wright quotes an *Ebony* magazine statistic and states that eighteen percent of black males drop out of high school. In 1998, that number increased to twenty-five percent (NCES, 2000).

With the African-American male viewed as an endangered species (Hopkins, 1997; Wright, 1992; Kunjufu, 1984), many programs have sprouted up around the country with the intention of creating a prescription for the ills that plague African-American males. These programs include but are not confined to: all male schools, Afro-

centric curriculum, multicultural education curriculums, and programs with the sole purpose of recruiting African-American male teachers.

Programs catering to African-American male students vary in many different aspects. For instance, some of the programs are school based, while others are school-linked or are simply related to school in some minimal fashion. Thus, some programs are strictly for African-American children, while others are offered to the general school population. Moreover, some programs seek to change entire school curriculums in order to refocus them by using an Afro-centric perspective; while conversely, other programs simply seek to add one course in African-American history to the already existing curriculum. This measure in itself is problematic because the meaning of an Afro-centric or African-American curriculum varies enormously among the African-American community (West, 1994). The teacher of choice for each program targeted at increasing the self-worth of African-American male students would be an African-American male (Kunjufu, 1994), although this group is in an extremely limited supply in every school system across the United States. According to a 1998 article in the *Detroit News* entitled "Minority Men Underrepresented," only 346,000 of the 2.6 million public school teachers in the United States are minorities. The percentage of African-American teachers is 7.4 or 188,371 teachers, while 16.5 percent of public school children are African-American. The percentage of men (this includes all men) planning a career in teaching is down to 4 percent; and fewer than 2 percent or 37,233 of the nation's nearly 4.6 million K-12 school teachers are African-American males. Of the 37,233 African-American male teachers, only 5,559 or 0.6 percent of these teachers teach in general elementary classrooms nationwide (NCES, 2000).

Numerous measures aimed at preserving African-American males have been challenged on their constitutionality upon implementation. An all male academy was advanced as an experiment designed to provide a demonstration setting in which Detroit Public Schools might evaluate strategies for educating African-American males (Hopkins, 1997). Ideally, the male academy was to focus primarily on the critical needs of African-American males by immersing these students in a school environment that afforded them an opportunity to learn about their own ethnic heritage while receiving instruction that emphasized reflecting and respecting cultural differences. The program was to serve as an intervention strategy promoting self-esteem and a motivation to learn. The paramount objective of the experiment was to prevent another generation of young African-American males from becoming yet another inner city African-American male statistic—high school dropout, unemployed, absentee father, drug dealer, murderer, and/or victim of a violent crime. While the mission of this program was a noble one, on July 22, 1991, a federal U.S. District Court Judge, George Woods, deemed all male academies, pertaining to public school districts, unconstitutional (Hopkins, 1997). Yet, Judge Woods vigorously urged educators, community leaders, and laypersons alike to continue designing programs that would benefit jeopardized African-American male youth. In the essence of his decision, he reminded the school district that the school system also fails to educate women as well. Furthermore, the very principle of the all male academies runs counter to some of the most fundamental anti-discrimination laws in the country (Hopkins, 1997). Therefore, the remedy to this problem must be one that all of society's citizens can feel comfortable with. In addition to this, the remedy must not

only help African-American males, but it must help all children regardless of race, class, or gender.

Conversely, on the university level there is at least one program that attempts to recruit African-American males into elementary education. The program is referred to as "Call Me Mister" and offers full college tuition, room and board, and small stipends in exchange for teaching for a minimum of four years in South Carolina's public schools. According to a *USA Today* article written by Tamara Henry (2001) entitled "Call Them Mister," there is a partnership between a South Carolina university and three historically black South Carolina colleges. The goal of this partnership is to recruit, train, certify, and place two hundred and forty African-American males as elementary school teachers for the state. This is a step in the right direction especially because, as Henry (2001) states, "statistics portray a rapidly worsening teacher crisis that already has the nation reeling." In addition to this, the Institute for Higher Education Policy maintains that minorities are more difficult to recruit not only because of low salaries and lack of respect and prestige associated with teaching, but also because of lingering racial discrimination within the field.

According to the National Education Association (NEA, 2000), America has perhaps no more important mission than to train more teachers of color. We live in a time when our nation is becoming more multicultural and multilingual, and our teaching force is not reflecting that diversity. In 1999, about thirty seven percent of the nation's schoolchildren were either African-American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or Native American, yet only about fifteen percent of the teachers were people of color (NCES, 2000).

It is important that more teachers of color are recruited for several reasons. First, studies (Holland, 1991; Hopkins, 1997) show that students of color often perform better with teachers of the same race. This is attributed to the students and teachers having similar backgrounds and experiences. Secondly, all students need teachers of color to serve as role models. Many students of color rarely see positive role models of the same ethnicity (Holland, 1991), creating a devastating void of positive self-images among these students. Hence, teachers are examples of positive role models that bring their experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives to the classroom in order to prepare the students to live and function in a multicultural society. Finally, teachers from diverse social and cultural backgrounds help all students learn about different ways of life.

There is an increasing need to study African-American male teachers. This would increase understanding so that other teachers, university faculties, and community members will be able to relate to their experiences. According to the NEA (2000), in the next few years almost twenty percent of the students in American public schools will be African-American, but only six percent of the teachers will be African-American. The result will be that fewer African-American children will have an African-American teacher to model themselves after which means that there will ultimately be fewer African-American community leaders—which most teachers certainly are.

Statement of Problem

The percentage of men and women is becoming more balanced in most professions, but there is one occupation where men are noticeably absent and greatly

needed—elementary education. This especially holds true in African-American communities nationwide. Of the approximately ten percent of the elementary teachers who are male, including special education, less than one percent is African-American (AAEDB, 1997). With the sudden influx of single female-headed households within urban African-American communities, many African-American children are "fatherless" (no father living at home) with only few positive male role models, if any. Therefore, efforts must be made to recruit positive male role models to be put into an arena in which they can be of benefit to the greatest mass of African-American children. I can think of no better place to start than in the public school system—especially in a place where African-American males are for the most part absent—elementary schools around the nation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the perceptions of African-American male pre-service teachers. These pre-service teachers were enrolled in a Historically Black College (HBC) elementary teacher education program that was predominantly female. This study's main focus was to capture the perceptions of African-American male elementary pre-service teachers' experiences. Therefore, it was the goal of this study to work toward a model in which to view future concepts pertaining to diversity that will guide reorganization processes of elementary teacher education programs around the nation. Hopefully, through the findings of this study, these

reorganization processes will encourage males, especially African-American males, to seek career opportunities in elementary education.

Guiding Questions

- What do African-American male pre-service teachers perceive as their experiences in elementary education?

- What are the motivations that keep African-American male pre-service teachers interested in elementary education?

- What gender identity issues do African-American males go through when choosing a career in elementary education (a female dominated field)?

Significance of the Study

This study was an opportunity for African-American men, an underrepresented population in education in general, but more specifically in elementary education, to describe their experiences. This study has importance to colleges and universities that are attempting to reorganize their teacher education programs, to encompass a more diverse population, by incorporating a model of an often unintentionally overlooked leader—the African-American male elementary teacher. With the concentration of African-American male teachers within the Southern part of the United States, this study addressed the concerns of those teachers and provided recommendations for how to attract African-American male teachers throughout the United States. Moreover, this study was

important because it will provide universities with recommendations for attracting African American male pre-service teachers, which in turn will lead to an increase in diversity. As universities and colleges are introduced to African-American male pre-service teachers' perspectives, recommendations can be made by faculty and staff members to encourage more minorities, African-American males in particular, to pursue degrees in the field of elementary education at their universities or colleges. Finally, this study was significant because it was an opportunity for African-American male pre-service teachers to share their experiences with each other while inspiring them to reflect upon the field.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Delimitations focus on how the study is narrowed in scope, whereas limitations reveal weaknesses that may be inherent in the study. As a researcher I do not view these two concepts as separate entities, but rather as interrelated and interdependent subject matters that exist together to form a symbiotic relationship. Therefore, I choose to address delimitations as well as limitations in the same section as follows:

- Consistent with the purpose of this study, it confined itself to investigating African-American male elementary pre-service teachers at a historically black college.

- Due to the qualitative approach used in this study, the results may not be generalizable to the larger population.

- The findings in this study could be subject to other interpretations.

- Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the researcher's lived experiences influenced the findings of this study.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into the following chapters: Chapter One provides a brief introduction to the study. It explains the importance of synthesizing the experiences of African-American male pre-service teachers into a narrative form. Chapter II provides a review of the literature on the feminization of American schools as well as a brief summary of early childhood education. Chapter III, the methods section, contains explanations of the instruments and methods that were used in gathering the data from African-American male pre-service teachers. It also provided the reasons that the case study method was used. Chapter IV presents the findings and an analysis of data. Finally, Chapter V provides a summary of the study, explains why the findings are important, offers conclusions, and suggests recommendations for further investigations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

After years of America pushing for gender equity—and an equal amount of time encouraging men to get in touch with their nurturing sides—elementary schools remain dominated by women. According to the National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest teacher union, currently, only 9.1 percent of the nation's elementary school teachers are males. This percentage is down from the highs of 17.1 percent in 1981 and 12.2 percent in 1961. Ironically, members of the baby boomers generation had a better chance of having a male teacher forty years ago than their own children or grandchildren have today.

The decreasing amount of male elementary teachers is unfortunate for boys and girls alike. Researchers such as King (1998), Allen (1993), Robinson (1981), and Richardson and Hatcher (1983), suggest that having good male role models can turn boys on to learning, helping them to achieve at higher levels at a time when girls outperform them. Kurt Fischer (1999) believes that girls' academic performance and their professional aspirations benefit from their fathers' encouragement even more than their mothers'. With the number of single-parent, female-headed households on the rise in the

United States, male elementary teachers can become the positive masculine role models that so many children lack: males who care for them and who are there everyday. King (1998) writes eloquently about this point:

> ...teachers are intentionally viewed by society as filling in for missing family members or functions. And in these times when prototypes for traditional families may no longer be representative of schoolchildren's home lives there is a resuscitation of the call for men to participate in teaching at the primary grade level. Presumably male teachers are thought to provide some missing family structure by virtue of their gender. (p.3)

According to Spencer Holland (1991), most inner-city males mimic the only male "role" models that they see—gang members and athletes. Gangs and athletics constitute two arenas where inner city black males can be and are very successful. Both provide the boy with structure that is so often missing in his life, for both have clear hierarchies, clear duties and responsibilities, clear leadership (authority), and very clear, consistently enforced sanctions in male domains (Holland, 1991). Holland (1991) argues that young elementary-aged males need some type of contact with positive male role models. Furthermore, King (1998) emphasizes that it is important for all children, not just boys or just girls, to see in "real life" that men are just as good with small children as women.

Numerous researchers have examined the phenomenon of the lack of male teachers in elementary schools (Apple, 1988; Lee & Wolinsky, 1973). Thus, there are many researchers that have studied the lack of male teachers; yet the number of male elementary teachers in the United States remains at an all time low.

This chapter provides the reader with a historic account of the feminization of the teaching profession. Next, it provides a summary of hypotheses supporting increasing the amount of male elementary teachers. Then it examines the trends associated with early childhood teaching, followed by a brief review of primary teaching. Finally, it focuses on an in-depth look at the contradictions of male primary teachers.

Feminization of American Schools

During the closing decades of the nineteenth century, public school teaching was transformed from an occupation historically dominated by males into one identified as a female occupation (Richardson & Hatcher, 1983). This transformation occurred as a result of two social forces that acted as primary determinants of the feminization of teaching. The first determinant began with the formation of the state school system, which raised the demands to provide economical as well as efficient public education. The second determinant was the persistence of cultural constraints on women's work participation (Richardson & Hatcher, 1983). Strober and Tyack (1980) argue that the concept of segmented labor markets is an important concept to understand and that it is central to the conceptualization of the feminization of teaching debate. Moreover, the nineteenth century labor market was divided into two opposite types: urban and rural. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the urban market functioned mainly by the use of industry, whereas the rural labor market relied on agrarian products.

Both economic and ideological factors are important to consider as they were the preconditions for the influx of women into elementary school teaching. On the demand

side, the feminization of teaching was facilitated by an increase in the demand for teachers (Strober & Tyack, 1980) because of population growth and an increasing shift by state, beginning with the northern states later shifting to the southern states, in favor of compulsory education. The enactment of compulsory school attendance legislation signified the decline of voluntary attendance and the assumption by states of the financial costs of popular education (Richardson & Hatcher, 1983). Although the specific dates of compulsory school attendance vary, beginning with Massachusetts in 1852 and ending with Mississippi in 1918, this trend had a profound effect on the increased number of women hired by local school systems.

On the supply side, two underlying influences helped to motivate women in the teaching profession. First, women's entry into teaching naturally progressed because more women were becoming educated (Strober & Lanford, 1986). Secondly, production of goods moved out of the household, so many of women's domestic duties decreased. Richardson and Hatcher (1983) explained that one necessary precondition for the enactment of compulsory attendance was that a sufficient proportion of the male work force be engaged in nonagricultural work. Thus, children were no longer needed to help with the duties of an agrarian society. Grumet (1988) characterizes this as the most significant shift of capital and labor—shifting from agriculture to industry.

As mentioned earlier, elementary school teaching became a women's occupation in part because men left (Apple, 1988) in order to move into industrial types of work. Between 1820 and 1840 the number of people engaged in manufacturing increased 127 percent, whereas those in agriculture increased only 79 percent. By 1840, two thirds of the 1200 cotton factories in the United States were operating in the Northeast, and

women were buying homespun instead of making it (Douglas, 1977). This occupation

shift for men as gatekeepers in commerce and other industrialized professions almost

always excluded women. Women were socialized to abjure these "male" occupations

(Brownlee & Brownlee, 1976). As a result of men in urbanized cities being gainfully

employed, the supply of women available to enter the teaching profession increased. The

increased selection of perspective female teachers reduced the demand for all teachers

resulting in a reduction of wages. Not only did school districts have a large supply of

willing and able teachers, but they also had to deal with the increased cost that happened

once compulsory attendance laws took effect. Apple (1988) suggests:

> Local political economies played a large part here. The shift to non-agricultural
>
> employment in male patterns of work is part of the story as well. Just as
>
> important was the relationship between the growth of compulsory schooling and
>
> women's labor. The cost associated with compulsory schooling to local school
>
> districts was often quite high. One way to control such rising costs was to change
>
> accepted hiring practices (Richardson & Hatcher, 1983). One simply hired
>
> cheaper teachers—women. (p. 348)

Proponents of the feminization of teaching such as Catherine Beecher, Mary

Lyon, Zilpah Gant, Horace Mann, and Henry Barnard, worked hard to create private and

public normal schools in order to train young women for their divinely designated

profession (Strober & Tyack, 1980). These advocates argued that the teaching profession

(especially elementary grades) was ideal preparation for motherhood. Furthermore, it

was believed that the very characteristics that made women good mothers—their

nurturance, patience, and understanding of children—made them better teachers than

men. Publicizing women's virtues as well as their cost effectiveness, these advocates of women teachers did not intend for them to remain in the teaching profession for life, but rather as a precursor to marriage (Woody, 1974). In fact, for decades married women were prohibited from teaching (Apple, 1988).

The ideology of the feminization of teaching was probably weaker in rural areas than in urban cities, in part because one of the counterarguments to feminization, that men were better disciplinarians than women, remained a significant issue for some time in most rural schools (Strober & Tyack, 1980). Rural schools were usually characterized as one-room schoolhouses that allowed for a great deal of teacher autonomy when dealing with curriculum decisions. For instance, rural teachers had total control over what they taught and the methods that they used to teach. Autonomy favored men's personas, because they were thought to be capable of coping with the pressures of curriculum decisions as well as discipline in the classroom. In rural areas both women and men were willing to teach for low wages—women because they had few alternative jobs and viewed teaching as an ideal way station on the road to marriage and motherhood, men because they used their teaching salaries merely to supplement their earnings from other endeavors or because they saw teaching as a stepping stone to other occupations including school administration (Strober & Lanford, 1986). Typically, women teachers taught in rural classrooms during the summer session when men were needed to help with the responsibilities of living in an agrarian society. Men typically taught during the winter months as a way to supplement their earnings in an effort to support or help support their families.

Gradual formalization of rural schools, characterized by age grading, more professional staff, greater differentiation of priorities, more stringent certification requirements, longer school terms, and greater standardization of the curriculum (Strober & Landford, 1986) restricted the easy entry into teaching for short periods without substantially increasing pay or status rewards (Strober & Tyack, 1980). Cubberly (1914) describes the formalization process in practical terms by stating:

> When teaching became a primary job rather than a brief second job, the low
>
> wages in comparison with opportunities elsewhere made teaching less attractive
>
> to men than to women in rural areas. Unmarried women were usually expected to
>
> remain with their families, whereas men could migrate to cities where new
>
> opportunities were opening in commerce, the professions, and manufacturing.
>
> The necessity of a commitment to teach for a long school term coupled with the
>
> fact that teachers had to attend summer institutes also cut into short-term winter
>
> employment opportunities in rural communities and made it more difficult for
>
> male college students to teach while on leave from school. (p.28)

Apple (1988) furthers this point by emphasizing that "opportunity cost" for males were just too great to stay in teaching, especially when they could make more money in other professions.

Gender, Sexuality, Observational Learning, and Sex Roles

Gender and sexuality have been neglected aspects of elementary schools. The tradition in America is to desexualize schools including staff, students and the content

taught by teachers (Klein, 1992). This happened both in the past as well as in the present era of time. For instance, Sadker, Sadker, and Shakeshaft (1989) stated that:

> In the 1920's, the lack of sexual knowledge was a criterion for hiring and
> retention. Contracts often specified that teachers (read only women apply) "were
> not to keep company with men" and that their employment would be terminated if
> they should marry....Recently court cases have surrounded efforts to remove
> homosexual teachers from the classroom. Prior to 1972 and the passage of Title
> IX, pregnant students were barred from attending school. Depending on the
> culture and clients of the times, different manifestations of sexuality have been
> seen as educationally taboo. (p.213)

Most people in our society have been taught to be too shy and embarrassed to discuss sexuality in public. Therefore, it stands to reason that teachers, especially elementary teachers, are afraid to address sexuality because of controversies over issues such as sexual orientation, sexual intercourse, and abortion. Each of these issues differs from conservative family religious values and beliefs. In some cases, teachers are forbidden to discuss these issues, exhibit, or share certain views about sexuality because of the fear of being fired (Klein, 1992). Thus, it is likely that the desexualization of schools led to ignoring gender equity issues in most circumstances. Klein (1992) furthers this thought by stating:

> Gender and sexuality separately and together are important factors in the
> educational process and outcomes of both formal and informal education.
> Educational researchers and curriculum developers have a continuing
> responsibility to increase their understanding of how these factors influence all

aspects of education, no matter how overt or subtle they may appear. They also have a responsibility to communicate what they have learned to empower other educators, students, and the general public to assume responsibility to ensure that sexuality education will promote sex-equitable attitudes and behaviors. Similarly, all with education responsibilities should learn how to recognize and counteract the factors of gender and sexuality that limit equitable treatment of educators and students, and how to capitalize on those factors that may increase motivation to perform well. (p.178)

In many instances it is taken for granted that school educators understand the meaning of sexuality. It is also widely recognized that as children age into early adolescence, they become increasingly active in the formation of their sexual identities (Sapon-Shevin & Goodman, 1992). Thorne and Luria (1986) suggest that these learned meanings are "sexual scripts" that are used to a large extent as a method of explaining sexual identity. According to Sapon-Shevin and Goodman (1992), these scripts define who does what with whom, what activities are appropriate when, and what sexual feelings, attitudes and behaviors all means. One of the most disturbing messages that the process of sexual scripting implies is that human sexuality is specialized by gender, meaning that boys need not be knowledgeable nor too concerned about girls' sexuality and vice versa. Best (1983) found that although boys and girls exist in close physical proximity in elementary schools, they operate in culturally separate worlds. This leads researchers such as Schofield (1989) to believe that gender segregation is stronger than racial segregation in the elementary grades. As a result, there is often mistrust, fear, and

vulnerability associated with interactions between male and female elementary students as well as teachers.

The importance of observational learning is well documented in anthropological literature (Bandura, 1965a). In a study performed on a Guatemalan subculture, Bandura (1965a) discovered that Guatemalan girls learn one of their society's cornerstones, weaving, almost exclusively by watching models. The teacher (mother) demonstrates the operations of the textile machine while the girl simply watches. Surprisingly, when the girl feels that she is ready she takes over and usually operates the textile machine skillfully on the very first attempt. According to Bandura (1965a), the girl is exhibiting "no-trial learning," which means that the behavior is acquired all at once entirely through observation. Thus, it can be inferred that observation teaches the probable consequences of new behavior.

In 1971, Bandura provided society with a model of observational learning that included four elements. These parts include several factors. The first element is attentional processes that state that people cannot imitate a model unless they pay attention to the model. The second element consists of retention processes which state that because we frequently imitate models sometimes after we have observed them, we must have some symbolic way of remembering their actions. The third element includes motor reproduction that states that in order to reproduce behavior accurately, the person must have the necessary motor skills. And the fourth and final key to observational learning is reinforcement and motivational processes, which state that a person can observe a model, acquire the new knowledge, and may or may not perform the responses. Therefore, whether or not the task is performed depends on the kind of reinforcement

used. Moreover, observational learning varies based on whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors are involved.

Bandura's social learning model provides the groundwork for understanding socialization. Socialization is an inclusive process that influences almost every kind of behavior. Understanding socialization is especially relevant when exploring how children are taught to behave in sex-appropriate manners. Most societies encourage boys to develop "masculine" traits and girls "feminine" traits (sex roles). Mischel (1970) asserts that children frequently learn, mostly through observation, the behavior of both sexes; however, they usually perform only the behavior appropriate to their own sex because this is what they have been reinforced to do. Hence, social reinforcements restrict the range of skills that boys and girls practice, but not what they observe.

Support for Increasing the Amount of Male Early Childhood Education Teachers

Compared to their scarcity in early childhood education, males are involved with young children as parents. According to Seifert (1988), there are 100,000 practicing male teachers dedicating considerable effort to children, whereas male parents number in the millions. These numbers appear to be disproportionate in that male elementary teachers do not adequately correspond to the number of male parents. Viewed through another scope, this statistic suggests that male parents provide between one-sixth and one-third of all home child care, while male teachers only provide about one-tenth of all early education (Seifert, 1988). Parenting tends to include males attending to young children far more often than participating in early childhood teaching. From time to time, early

childhood educators have advocated greater male involvement as professional teachers and child-care workers (Robinson, 1981). Reasons for supporting male primary teachers are twofold. The first reason is for the sake of elementary students. The second reason is for the sake of early childhood education as a profession.

Two groups of major hypotheses suggest ideologies for increasing the number of male teachers in early childhood education. These hypotheses consist of: compensation hypotheses and social equity hypotheses. Both compensation hypotheses and social equity hypotheses provide compelling arguments for increasing the presence of males in early childhood education.

Compensation hypotheses focus on the needs of children. This set of ideas suggests that male teachers can somehow compensate for the lack of male involvement in some children's lives, especially in communities with large numbers of single, usually female, parents (Seifert, 1988). The most compelling argument for compensation hypotheses is that men are missing during a large amount of time within most children's lives—the formative years. This occurs because for at least eight hours per day for the first four to six years of their educational lives, most children see few if any male teachers. In the most common version of this viewpoint, it is believed that male teachers help young children develop proper sex-role attributes. The help (compensation) can occur by building boys' self confidence and "sex-appropriate" behavior (Biller, 1974; Pleck, 1985); or by offering children of both sexes a model of a caring, nurturing male (Seifert, 1988). According to this model, male teachers influence children through the use of modeling in order to display particular sex role attributes or to display none at all…leading to androgyny.

Conversely, social equity hypotheses focus on the needs of early childhood education as a profession (Greenberg, 1985). According to this viewpoint, increasing the number of male teachers helps eliminate the label of "women's work" from early childhood education. Seifert (1988) suggests that this viewpoint takes no explicit position about the qualities of male teachers in the classrooms or about special male attributes that can be offered to the children. This viewpoint benefits prospective male teachers in that it provides them with yet another career option. Simultaneously, this viewpoint is advantageous to early childhood teaching as a profession for several reasons. First, it would increase the number of males working with young children. Secondly, it would reduce the current tendency of early childhood educators to think of their job as "women's work" (Feinman-Nemser & Flooden, 1986), because the more men entering the profession, the less it will be viewed as a woman's profession. Finally, it would encourage a positive professional atmosphere, because men entering the profession would provide validity to the work that elementary educators do.

Although social equity hypotheses have many positive aspects, there are also problems that exist within their framework. In society as a whole, beliefs in social equity must compete with certain cultural values, such as traditional gender roles (Seifert, 1988). Moreover, some members of society feel that an influx of males into any female dominated profession or vice versa would threaten the stability of that profession causing negative repercussions (Schreiber, 1979). In contrast, these hypotheses believe that the introduction of males into early childhood education can only have positive effects, if given the opportunity.

Trends in Early Childhood Teaching

Trends in early childhood education can be traced by examining two contrasting viewpoints: traditionalist view and nontraditionalist view. Traditionalists, as well as nontraditionalists, believe that early childhood education should undergo the radical change of introducing more males into the environment, but for different reasons. The traditionalist believe that early childhood education should be used to reinforce traditional sex-role norms. Conversely, nontraditionalists want to loosen and change traditional sex-role norms (Pleck, 1975) in favor of androgyny. Decade by decade, the changing views on the role and status of male early childhood education teachers can be traced (Robinson, 1981).

The Forties and Fifties (1940-1960): Male prohibition

During the forties and fifties, males had very limited, if any, access to early childhood education as teachers. Tubbs (1946) recommends that male teachers have an expressed preference for the children and the subjects they wish to teach. Furthermore, Tubbs (1946) contends that no man should be assigned to teach children below the fifth grade. Around the same time, other educators warned about the stigma associated with being a man in a woman's work world (Robinson, 1981). A 1954 poll of school administrators indicated that male teachers should teach in the upper grades (grade 5 through grade 12). A teachers' group that participated in the same poll urged that jobs in early childhood education be closed to men (Robinson, 1981). Hence the belief of this

period was that women should teach in early childhood education, whereas men were encouraged to teach primarily from upper elementary grades throughout high school.

The Sixties and Early Seventies (1960's-1970's): The Macho-Man Image

During this time period, the controversy shifted from whether or not males should teach young children to what males could contribute to, and a rationale for hiring men in, early childhood education. This shift in philosophy occurred because of the newfound ideology that having more males teaching elementary grades would provide male students with positive role models. In the late sixties and early seventies, traditionalists began to fear that the overwhelming amount of female teachers at the early childhood level would feminize boys (Sexton, 1973). The traditionalists viewed the introduction of male teachers as a panacea for the feminized world of early childhood education. Numerous articles supporting increasing the amounts of male elementary teachers to provide a balance to the profession began surfacing. According to Robinson (1981), the articles claimed that the presence of males in early education provides a professional foundation that includes certain attributes: it prevents children from viewing the school as a feminine environment (Johnston 1970; Sciarra 1971; Smith 1973; Vairo 1969), improves school performance and classroom atmosphere for boys (Lee and Wolinsky 1973), counteracts urbanization and family disintegration problems (Johnston 1970; Vairo 1969), provides masculine role modes for boys (Sciarra 1972; Topp 1954), prevents juvenile delinquency (Vairo 1969), and changes the image of the profession of early childhood education (Bagford 1966; Topp 1954).

According to Lee and Wolinsky (1973), these claims were supported by scant empirical evidence. Smith (1973) argued that the feminized early school environment causes boys harm. Brophy and Good (1973b), on the other hand, insisted that the blame for the feminized early school should not be placed on women, but rather on culturally determined sex and student roles.

The Late Seventies, Eighties, and Ninety's (1975-present): Androgyny

During this time period, significant research advances in sex roles and the blending of other conventional masculine and feminine traits into one personality (androgyny) became prevalent. The nontraditionalists insisted that male early childhood teachers had more to offer children than just their masculine presence (Robinson, 1981). Nontraditionalists based their view on empirical research concerning androgyny that indicated that the perpetuation of traditional sex-role behaviors for males and females seriously restricts behavior, especially for men (Bem & Lenney, 1976). According to nontraditionalists, a view of androgyny in elementary education would benefit male as well as female teachers. If practiced or focused on by males, it would provide male teachers with the patience needed to soothe the hurt feelings of a distressed child. It would also allow female teacher the self-confidence it takes in playing ball or conducting other activities that involves gross motor behaviors. Nontraditonalists deem it necessary for children to witness that the care of children is not strictly a female function (Seifert, 1988).

During the 1990's in early childhood education, males were accepted into the profession but continued to shy away. King (1998) discloses two reasons for this occurrence. First, dominant groups maintain their economic advantages by differentiating work, and they support that advantage through physical segregation and behavioral differentiation. Men will let women control early childhood education if they just "stay out of the way." The second reason King believes that men avoid teaching young children is because some parents will view the teacher as "soft" or possibly homosexual. King (1998) supplements these arguments by mentioning the lack of adequate pay, even when compared to teaching secondary grades.

Another issue occurring during this time period is that men received preference over women in hiring practices. This occurred because of a concern that male students did not have proper role models. In his study of male elementary teachers, Allen (1993) found three sets of reasons to explain why men were given preference for elementary school teaching. Those reasons consisted of elementary education's commitment to affirmative action, the desire of male principals for male companionships and support, and the public's demand for male role models in the classroom.

Primary Teaching

Primary teaching consists of those teachers who teach in the first four years of schooling (King, 1998). Hence, teaching in these grades include kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade, which are the most important and formative years of a student's educational life. Teaching the primary grades requires a selflessness that

gives over one's personal agenda to the concerns of "others" (King, 1998). Teaching in the primary grades has been thought of as an act of caring. This appears to correlate with Noddings' (1992) notion of "teaching as caring." Teaching the young pupil requires educators that can address affective emotional processes as well as cognitive ones. Acts of teaching are special instances of moral and ethical relationships (Noddings, 1992). These acts consist of the teacher providing care and the student receiving care. Thus, entering the teaching profession is a very special and specialized caring relationship (Noddings, 1992). Some researchers view this relationship as the kind of relationship that occurs between a mother and her child. Gilligan (1982) articulated that women uniquely process information and make moral decisions. Her work has transformed thinking about cognition, morality, and career development from a male perspective of competition and judgment to one of interpersonal and caring aspects of development. This view tends to dominate the way that primary education is looked upon.

Contradictions of Male Primary Teachers

It is well established that teaching is a largely female pursuit (Sugg, 1978; Williams 1992). Researchers suggest that the under representation of men at the lower levels of education should be investigated (Kimmel & Messner, 1995; McCormick, 1994). Many reasons exist in favor of conducting this research. For example, Bem (1993) cite the psychological considerations of conflict between career and family as a reason for women's limited career opportunities. Men, who may have direct, aggressive,

and money-driven career goals (Kimmel & Messner, 1995), tend to shy away from professions that are perceived as female dominated. Characterizing the classroom teacher as female, subservient, and second-rate makes it unlikely that males will choose teaching, even when predisposed to do so (King, 1998). Coupled with the image of teaching as a nine-to-three job, and the adage that, 'those who can, do; and those who can't, teach' (Campbell, 1994), teaching as a profession has a negative image that is difficult to erase. Therefore, males often resist initial inclinations to work with children until they have explored other occupations (Williams, 1992).

Because of the view that primary teaching has a great deal to do with caring, males that enter primary teaching as a profession are judged by a double standard. While educational institutions overtly entice men to consider elementary teaching, males that enter the profession are covertly monitored in order to make sure that they are not pedophiles. Furthermore, King (1998) asserts that such insecurities about men entering primary education assists in keeping "real men out," or society's traditional view of men and making it "easy" to view the few men that make it into the profession as "suspect."

Wood and Hoag (1992) examined the stereotypes and misconceptions that stigmatized men that worked in nontraditional occupations. Their conclusions suggest that merely hiring more men into elementary teaching oversimplifies complex social and psychological issues. Furthermore, they insinuate that if more males enter the profession, certain occupational phenomena may follow. For example, when the gender ratio shifts toward women, wages often decrease, and men move to other jobs or create new jobs with higher status than the previous ones. Hence, when men leave their previous jobs,

women flock to those male-identified occupations once opportunities become available (Epstein, 1988) in order to receive higher pay and a more professional status.

An enormous public policy problem in elementary teaching is representation—the presence of individuals teaching elementary grades being more representative of the gender of the students being taught. According to McCormick (1994), students note a significant percentage of their elementary teachers are female, while secondary teachers maybe mixed. They also note their university professors are predominately male. As a consequence, they may rationalize this as systematic compartmentalization and discrimination. Therefore, a balance of both male and female teachers throughout a student's educational process (where at all possible) could lead to curricular activities and classroom atmospheres that enrich the lives of both girls and boys. So, the induction of more males into elementary education may not necessarily transform the educational process, but it will provide a much more balanced education for all students.

Summary

In conclusion, this review of the literature has addressed relevant issues that deal with the state of elementary education as it currently is today. It has examined how society affects elementary education and how elementary education view males that enter the field. However, there is a gap in the literature, in that there is minimal research that specifically addresses African-American male pre-service teacher's perspectives concerning these very issues. Statistical data (such as the Census) talks about African-American males, but this type of research does not talk to them in order to examine their

perspectives of how they view the field of elementary education. Few, if any, researchers tell their stories from this perspective. This gap in the literature provides an opportunity to study an extraordinary group of individuals—African-American male pre-service elementary teachers. Therefore, it is my goal to talk with African-American pre-service male elementary education majors in order to get their perspectives of this field in an attempt to bridge the gap in the literature.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was inspired by the lack of relevant research pertaining to African-American male primary teachers. After an extensive review of the literature, I discovered that African-American male pre-service and in-service elementary teachers are almost always excluded from the discussion concerning increasing the male population within the field of elementary education. This study will use qualitative case study methods in order to explain this phenomenon. The case study method was selected in order to provide in-depth perspectives of the following participants: African-American male elementary teachers and African-American male elementary education students.

The following sections of Chapter Three will provide the reader with the assumptions and rationale for a qualitative research design; a definition, characteristics of, and rationale for a multiple case study design; an explanation of data collection methods and procedures; data analysis; a summary of the role and background of the researcher; and finally, a discussion of the procedures of verification.

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Research Design

This study defined itself through the lens of qualitative research methods. Leading qualitative research experts Denzin and Lincoln (1994) offer this definition of qualitative research: "qualitative research is multi-method in focus involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter" (p.2). This means that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret these phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Greene (1988) furthers this point by stating that qualitative research is concerned with meanings that appear to persons in lived social situations. Therefore, qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual text—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). For the purpose of this research, the case study approach was my guiding design. Hence, this study relied heavily on formal and informal interviews and analysis of documents in the form of journals, autobiographies, and student/teacher portfolios.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggest that qualitative research contain five essential elements. The first characteristic is that "qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data" (p.29) with the researcher being the key instrument. Because it is a context-bound system, the qualitative researcher assumes that human behavior is influenced by the setting (Creswell, 1994). Data collection for this study took place in a natural setting therefore, bounding this study by its context. This occurred in two forms.

First, the Historical Black College's elementary teacher education program itself bounded the participants because of the fact that the study's participants were similarly situated. Secondly, the use of interviews, focus groups, and the analysis of documents enabled me to understand and contextualize participants' experiences as they related to their views concerning the elementary teacher education program.

The second characteristic of qualitative research is that it is descriptive. Qualitative researchers "try to analyze the data with all of their richness as closely as possible to the form in which they were recorded or transcribed" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p.30). This study intended to describe the experiences of African-American pre-service teachers currently enrolled in the HBC's elementary education program. Therefore, narrative writing, including direct participant quotes, were used in order to provide a thick and rich description for the purpose of interpreting the findings.

The third characteristic of qualitative research is that researchers engaging in this type of study are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products. By focusing on the experiences of pre-service African-American male students that aspire to be elementary school teachers, themes gradually emerged. The varying amount of actual "teaching experience" among the participants was used to emphasize the importance of process. Moreover, I hope that this view of the participants captured their perspectives of what it means to be an African-American male participating in the pre-service facet of elementary education.

The fourth characteristic of qualitative research is that it uses inductive data analysis. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), theory developed in this "way emerges from the bottom up, rather than from the top down, from many disparate pieces

of collected evidence that are interconnected" (p.31). Consistent with this approach, I generated themes from the collected data, rather than beginning with *a priori* theory to test and verify.

The fifth and final characteristic of qualitative research is that "meaning" is of essential concern to this approach. Researchers who use this approach are interested in the ways different people make sense of their lives (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). According to Erickson (1986), qualitative researchers are concerned with participant perspectives. Furthermore, qualitative research attempts to illuminate the inner dynamics of situations—dynamics that are often invisible to the outsider simply by learning the perspectives of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). According to Psathas (1973), qualitative researchers in education can continually be found asking questions of the participants that they are learning from in order to discover what they are experiencing, how they interpret their experiences, and how they structure the social world in which they live (as cited in Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Through the use of interviews, focus groups, and the analysis of documents, I became aware of the participants' perspectives regarding their experiences in elementary education. Ultimately, the pertinent goal of this study was to investigate what it means to be an African American male pre-service teacher in the field of elementary education.

Rationale for a Multiple Case Study

As Anderson (1998) states, a case study is a holistic research method that uses multiple sources of evidence to analyze or evaluate a specific phenomenon. Likewise,

Stake (1996) emphasizes "case study as a form of research that is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the method of inquiry used" (p.236). Hence, a case study is the study of a contemporary phenomenon in its natural context with the goal of comprehending a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. The goal of this particular case was to understand the unique experiences of African-American men who have selected elementary education, a feminized occupation, as a career. Additionally, this case was viewed within the context of an elementary teacher education program as well as through the elementary education profession itself by the use of actual teaching experiences.

A multiple case study design was used in this research to investigate African-American men's pre-service teachers' experiences throughout an elementary education program. The purpose of using the multiple case study method was to understand behavior, issues, and contexts with regard to a particular case (Stake, 1995). Within this study, several separate cases pertaining to African-American male pre-service teachers were investigated. Each participating African-American male pre-service teacher was treated as a separate case in this study. Merriam (1998) stated that a case study is a description and analysis of a particular entity, such as an event, object, person, group, institution, program, condition or process. Therefore, this study focused on the perspectives of African-American males in a predominately female profession. For these reasons, a multiple case study methodology presented itself as the most effective method of investigation.

Data Collection

In conducting case studies, one typically uses seven sources of evidence: "documentation, file data, interviews, site visits, direct observation, participant observations, and physical artifacts....The interview is a prime source of case study data" (Anderson, 1998, p155). Moreover, Anderson (1998) suggests that interviews have essentially two purposes: to add greater depth of understanding to issues that relate to the case and to identify key informants who are part of the case.

The main data collection methods used in this study as fore mentioned consisted primarily of interviews, document analysis, participant observations, and a focus group meeting. Merriam (1998) supports this type of data collection by stating that case studies build upon qualitative data such as excerpt from documents, records, case histories, and direct quotations from the participants.

Interviews

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), interviews provide thick, rich qualitative data in which participants attach meanings to their surroundings. This method of data collection was useful for this study because the interviews were conducted at the convenience of both the participants and the researcher. To provide the participants with time to think about the questions prior to the interview, they were given the actual interview questions a week before the interview takes place. Permission to audio tape and transcribe the interviews was obtained in order to assure the conciseness of the final

report. For the purpose of this study, five formal interviews were conducted with the participants. Three formal interviews were conducted with Casper and two formal interviews were conducted with Homa. In addition to the formal interviews, numerous informal interviews took place during the course of this study.

Participant Observations

Participant observation is defined by Merriam (1998) as "a schizophrenic activity that the researcher usually participates but not to the extent of becoming totally absorbed in the activity"(p.103). Creswell (1998) adds that participant observation is an activity in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people or through one-on-one interviews with members of the group. While participating in this activity, the researcher attempted to stay detached in order to observe and analyze. According to Merriam (1998), participant observation is a marginal position that is extremely difficult to sustain. While being a participant observer, the researcher was careful as to what effect he had on the subject being studied. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I participated only if I was asked to by the professor, or by the participant being studied, otherwise I attempted to strictly observe what was going on in the classroom. During my observations, I observed the participants' interactions with their professors and female counterparts both inside and outside the classroom.

Documents

Merriam (1998) defines documents as "a wide range of written, visual, and physical material"(p.112) including the broad sense of any communication—such as novels, newspapers, love songs, diaries, psychiatric interviews, etc. Therefore, documents (i.e. participant autobiographies) were collected from the participants and analyzed with their permission in order to add another dimension to this study. For the purpose of this study I collected various artifacts including: participant autobiographies, participant journals, college handbooks, course syllabi, and student status sheets.

The Narrative

This study relied heavily on teacher narratives in order to present the data. Narratives or teacher stories are excellent methods of communicating data, because they allow pre-service teachers to correlate real life experiences with topics that are being reviewed. Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) defined narratives "as educational incidents that were personally experienced and are used for reflection…they are event-structured material, told or written, that documents lived classroom experience" (p.4). Using narratives in this study created opportunities for additional learning. These opportunities occurred in cohesion with the characteristics of a "good" pre-service teacher story. Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) listed four characteristics of a good and useful teacher story. It is genuine and rings true. It invites reflection and discourse, which leads to reflective practice. It is interpreted and reinterpreted (many thoughts arise to be discussed). And, it

is powerful and provocative. For all of the reasons above, narratives were used throughout the findings in order to add an extra element of depth. Finally, narratives were used because they provided an excellent vehicle in which to describe the participant's perceptions.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, I abided by Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) ten suggestions for analyzing data as they are being collected. The first suggestion was for the researcher to force himself to make decisions that narrowed the study. The second suggestion was for the researcher to force yourself to make decisions concerning the type of study you want to conduct. The third suggestion was to develop analytic questions. To plan data collection sessions according to what you find in previous observations was the fourth suggestion given by Bogdan and Bilken. The fifth suggestion was to write many "observer's comments" as you go. The sixth suggestion was to write memos to myself about what I was learning. The seventh suggestion was for me to try out ideas and themes on my subjects. The eighth suggestion was to begin exploring literature while I was in the field. The ninth was to play with metaphors, analogies, and concepts. And finally, the tenth suggestion was for me to use "visual devices" (p.155-164). Thus, these became the guidelines that I adhered to during the collection and analysis of data for this study.

The Researcher: Role and Background

The researcher functions as the primary instrument of data collection in qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 1998). If this is correct, then it was assumed that there would be a relationship in which the researcher and participants influence each other. Therefore, the role of human instrument of data collection demanded identification of the researcher's personal biases at the onset of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative research consists of the construction of interpretations influenced by the researcher's background—education, experience, philosophical orientation, personality, and personal bias toward the issue and/or context. Consistent with this stance, the experiences that have shaped my life thus far have influenced this study. Hence, three issues shaped my understanding of my role as a researcher: racial issues, insider/outsider theory, and my personal upbringing. Therefore, as the primary instrument in this multiple case study, an in-depth description of my biases, as they relate to this study, was warranted.

Whereas I am able to decipher multiple perspectives, I tended to view everyday occurrences through the lens of race. Viewing racial issues through my conceptualization was often an oversimplification of a very complex issue. Until recently, I tended to view race as either black or white without contemplating relevant issues such as structure, form, or function of race. Dyson (1996) helped me deepen my understanding of racial issues. According to Dyson, there are three forms in which race can be dissected or cast: by context, by subtext, or by pretext. He argues that these categories are not concrete,

allowing some room for them to blend, merge, and overlap. This characteristic of Dyson's view of race causes people to view racial issues in a simplistic manner without really understanding the dynamics of the issue. To clarify race as a context, subtext, and pretext, Dyson (1996) suggests that a person should look at each concept individually. "Race as context helps us to understand the facts of race and racism in our society. Race as subtext helps us to understand the forms of race and racism in our culture. And race as a pretext helps us to understand the function of race and racism in American"(p.33). Hence, race as context produces racial clarification or the facts about race; race as a subtext explores racial understanding, which leads to an examination of the different forms, disguises, and subtle shapes it assumes (i.e. shifting from overt to covert); and race as a pretext highlights arguments used to justify racial beliefs in order to defend racial interests (i.e. the book "The Bell Curve").

The second issue that shaped my understanding of my role as a researcher is the conflict of insider/outsider theory. Insider/outsider theory was relevant to this study for two reasons, and both parts of this theory commanded a role in this study. According to Bartunek and Louis (1996), people who are insiders to a setting being studied often have a quite different view of the setting and findings from that of outside researchers conducting the same study. These differences had significant implications for the quality of knowledge that will be gained from the research (p.1). In part, these dissimilarities stemmed from differences in their interests in gaining knowledge about the setting. Insiders need to understand their setting in order to be effective as actors and action takers (Bartunek & Louis, 1996), while outside researchers experience the setting being studied as a visitor would—they are there only for a temporary period of time. So, this

theory was appropriate for my research, because the study included participants that are currently attending the same Historically Black College that I graduated from, as well as the fact, that they are African-American males and so am I (insider theory). The theory was also applicable to this study on the opposite end, because I investigated elementary education, a field that I knew very little about (outsider theory). Thus, I was both an insider and outsider in this study. It was as if I was wearing a pair of glasses—I have two lenses through which I viewed this study.

Finally, the third issue that affected my role as a researcher is my personal upbringing. I was born in 1975 and am a native of East Orange, New Jersey. I was the second child born into my family consisting of my father, mother, and two sisters. Because of financial difficulties and a lack of trust, my mother and father decided to file for divorce. I was eight years old at the time. My father packed some of our clothes drove us to the bus station, and we were on our way to the great state of Mississippi.

Coming from a poor family (financially), I found myself blessed to have come this far through the educational system and so quickly! During the earlier years of my education, I was labeled as a "discipline problem." I never was interested in my classes, at least during my first six years of schooling. During these years I can remember having only two male teachers, one in the fifth grade and one in the sixth grade. For this reason I am on a quest to change the stigma associated with males and elementary education.

I attended Tougaloo College, a historically black college, where I received my Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and a certificate in gerontology. From Tougaloo College, I attended Oklahoma State University where I received my Master's of Science degree in Curriculum and Supervision. During my master's studies, I realized that the

path to becoming an effective educator revolves around the educator being willing to continuously learn new techniques, different curriculum trends, various instructional methods, as well as being capable of communicating with a diverse student population. It involves the willingness to integrate valuable lessons learned from old theories and practices while integrating them into new innovations and ideas. This provided a sound basis for new theories and practices.

My long-range educational goal is to work with educators in order to advance the teaching profession. Advancing the teaching profession encompasses working to make sure each student receives a quality education, improving standards associated with education, and working on the construction of educational research. Finally, I believe that the process of learning is continuous.

Procedures of Verification

Multiple perspectives exist regarding the importance of verification in qualitative research (Creswell, 1998). Some researchers, such as LeCompte and Goetz (1992) argue that qualitative research has been criticized in the scientific ranks for its failure to "adhere to canons of reliability and validity"(p.31). However, for the purpose of this study, I adhered to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) use of alternative terms that are more naturalistic than the terms associated with quantitative research. To establish the "trustworthiness" of this study, I used the notions of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as the qualitative equivalents of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. To operationalize these terms, Lincoln and

Guba (1985) propose techniques such as prolonged engagement in the field and the triangulation of data sources and methods to establish credibility. In this study, I used multiple data sources—documents, interviews, and participant observations as one form of triangulation. In addition to this, I also implemented multiple data analysis techniques—member checks, the use of analytic memos, and the constant comparative method of data analysis as a second form of triangulation. A pilot study using a third grade male elementary teacher was performed in order to test the trustworthiness of the interview questions. To make certain that the findings were transferable, thick rich description (Creswell, 1998) was used. This type of description allows the reader to make decisions regarding transferability (Merriam, 1998), because the writer describes in detail the participants and/or the setting under study. With such a description, the researcher allows the reader to transfer information to other settings by determining whether the findings are in fact transferable because of shared characteristics.

Rather than reliability, which refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated, the qualitative researcher seeks dependability that the results will not be subject to change and instability (Creswell, 1998). Furthermore, the qualitative researcher looks to confirmability rather than objectivity in establishing the value of data. I relied on member checking as a form of external audit in the process of confirmability in this study.

The term credibility, rather than validity, was used in this study. Eisner (1991) states, "we seek a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility, that allows us to feel confident about our observations, interpretations, and conclusions"(p.110). Hence, credibility refers to the multiple types of data used to support or contradict the

interpretation given by the qualitative researcher. Moreover, Eisner (1991) contends that to demonstrate credibility, the weight of evidence should become very persuasive. For example, establishing credibility is like detective work; the researcher compiles bits and pieces of evidence to formulate a compelling whole (Creswell, 1998). Creswell (1998) furthers this point by stating that it is at this stage that the qualitative researcher looks for recurring behaviors or actions and considers disconfirming evidence and contrary interpretations.

In sum, there are many steps that as qualitative researcher, I took in order to promote the verification of the findings. The question that I asked myself throughout the study is "Do I have it right?" which magnified the importance of credibility in this qualitative study. In order to ensure the credibility of this study several techniques were administered. First, in light of Merriam's (1998) suggestion, I clarified my research bias at the outset of the study. Secondly, member checks were consistently used so that participants could play a major role directing as well as acting (Stake, 1995) in this study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checks are "the most critical technique for establishing credibility"(p.314) in a qualitative study. Thirdly, I attempted to use thick rich descriptions (Merriam, 1998) in order to allow the reader to make decisions about the transferability of the findings. The fourth step that I took in order to ensure credibility is that I triangulated the collected data. According to Stake (1995) using multiple sources is important to gaining the needed confirmation, increasing the credence of the interpretation, and demonstrating commonality of an assertion. So, multiple data sources assisted the researcher in viewing the data meanings more accurately. Finally, I

applied Stake's (1995) standards from a "criteria checklist" for assessing a good case study:

"Is the report easy to read? Does it fit together, each sentence contributing to the whole? Does this report have a conceptual structure? Are its issues developed in a serious and scholarly way? Is the case adequately defined? Is there a sense of story to the presentation? Has the reader been provided some vicarious experiences? Have quotations been used effectively? Are headings, figures, artifacts, appendixes, and indexes effectively used? Was it edited well, then again with a last minute polish? Has the writer made sound assertions, neither over nor under interpreting? Has attention been paid to various contexts? Were sufficient raw date presented? Were data sources well chosen and in sufficient number? Is the role and point of view of the researcher nicely apparent? Is the nature of the intended audience apparent? Is empathy shown for all sides? Are personal intentions examined? Does it appear individuals were put at risk?" (p.31).

Ethical Considerations

During this study, I implemented several strategies to deal with ethical considerations. First and foremost, I did not engage in any type of deception about the nature of this study. I provided all participants with an abstract of the study in which I informed the participants of the following: purpose of the study, significance of the study, data collection procedures, and a list of possible interview questions. Then, I asked the potential participants to read, and if they agree to participate in this study, to sign and

date an implied informed consent form. This form fully explained the benefits and risks to the participants in this study, their compensation for participating (if any), and the methods exercised in order to maintain confidentiality.

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twenty acres of land, but the complete campus consists of more than of five hundred acres. Previously, Tupelo College's campus was an old slave plantation. Ironically, this very plantation is now used to educate the very people that were originally there as a form of cheap ignorant labor.

Tupelo College enrolls roughly 1500 students. Female students outnumber male students thirteen to one. It admits to its educational program students with diverse backgrounds and preparations in order to enable them to understand and appreciate scientific, cultural, and spiritual advancements so that they can function as effective citizens. Tupelo College intends for its students to become self-directed learners as well as self-reliant scholars who are capable of dealing, both now and in the future, with challenges, issues, and people in an effective manner.

The curriculum is designed to encourage students to apply critical thought to all areas of life. If the curriculum is understood, students should be able to apply a basic knowledge of the humanities, the natural sciences, and social science. They should also be able to develop entry-level skills required in their selected professions. Furthermore, they should be able to live and provide leadership in a democratic society.

This study primarily took place in Holmes Hall, which is the building that houses the elementary education program. Its exterior is made up of red bricks with reddish shingles covering the roof. The steps that lead to the entrance of this impressive building are made of white concrete and lead to two enormous glass doors. There are three glass windows that allow a peak into the building as people move back and forth down the corridor into the hallway. Holmes Hall was built in the shape of the letter H and houses

classrooms, an auditorium, and the offices of every full-time education professor, including elementary education, at the college.

A second structure that played an enormous role in this study was the library. This facility is a three-and-one-half story, gray concrete structure. It has a unique design in that concrete cylindrical columns (stilts) support the entire building. It is built at the bottom of a ten foot hill, but the structure explodes out of the ground upwards about one hundred feet into the air. There are two very interesting aspects about the exterior of the library. First, there are stairs that lead down the hill, and if a person proceeds down the hill and makes a right or left turn depending on which stairwell he takes, he can walk directly underneath the library in order to enter one of the two computer labs. The second fact to remember about the exterior of the library is that the concrete walkway, all around the library, is separated into three by three blocks and if, a person is not careful, he could accidentally lose his balance and fall. All in all, Tupelo College encompasses a wonderful and beautiful campus that is very accessible to the students that it services.

The Elementary Education Program

As previously mentioned, Tupelo College is a liberal arts institution. Students experience a variety of courses in an attempt to make a graduate of Tupelo College a well-rounded individual. This directly affects the way in which the elementary education curriculum is constructed. For example, in order for a student to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education, he/she must pass 56-58 semester hours in core courses as well as 78-87 semester hours of major courses.

The core courses are courses that every graduate of Tupelo College must take and pass with a grade not lower than a D. The core courses include: four hours of mission involvement (freshman orientation); between nine and eleven hours of effective writing or effective communication, which includes three mandatory hours of effective speaking; eight hours of math/computer science; five hours of physical activity (tennis, aerobics, basketball, softball) and comprehensive health; eighteen hours of humanities, in which twelve hours must be a modern language (French or Spanish); three elective hours for music or art; six hours of natural science (biology or chemistry); and six hours of social science (history, psychology). These classes are based on Dewey's (1916) idea that a student learns more by participating in different activities and experiences. For a Tupelo College graduate, class equates to a collection of or variety of experiences that are joined together in hopes of producing a well-versed student.

The major courses, in this case elementary education, consist of various classes as well as practica, field experiences, and student teaching. Major courses consist of nine hours of pre-professional courses (professional development seminar, educational psychology, foundations of education); twenty one hours of professional education (methods and materials, curriculum research, and fifteen hours of student teaching); twenty one hours of specialty courses (reading instruction, integrative approach to literature and language arts, math for children, science for children, social studies for children); and nine hours of electives (field experiences, education seminar). Students must pass major courses with grade point averages not lower than the grade of C. In addition to these requirements, each graduate of Tupelo College must write a senior

research paper as well as pass the English proficiency examination conducted by the college.

At Tupelo College, the demographic information of its elementary education program can be described with three words—African American female. This is the largest sub-group pursuing an elementary education degree at this college. It also makes sense because ninety-nine percent of the students that attend Tupelo College are African American meaning that other racial groups would probably not be represented. The elementary education program is one of the smallest programs at Tupelo College. Of the twenty-four students enrolled in the elementary education program, at the beginning of this study, only three were African American males. It is important for me to note that by the conclusion of this study, one African American male decided to change his major to a closely related field, child development, leaving the elementary education program at Tupelo College with only two African American male students. This did not affect the results of my study, because the subject that changed his major had been immersed in the elementary program so long that I viewed him as knowledgeable about Tupelo's elementary education program. Therefore I viewed him as native (Bartunek & Louis, 1996) to the environment.

Advisors to the students in Tupelo College's elementary education program play an integral role in the students' progression throughout the program. Each full time elementary education professor serves as an advisor to several students. It is, the responsibility of the advisor as well as the students, to make certain that the appropriate classes and teacher tests (Praxis I and Praxis II) are taken during the appropriate

semester. Overwhelmingly, if a student does not enroll in the proper class that should have been taken, the student points the finger of blame at the advisor, and vice versa.

Selective Admissions Procedures

Students wishing to pursue a degree and teaching certificate in elementary education must first be selected to the program. Selections are made at the beginning of each fall and spring semester. Minimum requirements must be met before the student is eligible to apply. Their requirements include, but are not limited to: admission to Tupelo College; completion of core courses with at least a 2.5 (C+) grade point average; successful completion of two practica, passing scores on the Praxis I teachers test, and an interview with college elementary education faculty.

At the time of application, each student must submit three copies of a portfolio in which he/she reflects on events and /or life experiences. The portfolio includes reflection on the applicant's personal accomplishments, such as academic, individual or group participation in community service, or any other experiences that have given the applicant a sense of achievement. In addition to this, the portfolio must include the applicant's reflections of the practica experiences. Well written accounts detailing how the applicant has changed as a result of the practica experiences merit higher scores than those that do not include an element of personal growth.

Each portfolio is read by at least one education faculty member. A score of 1-5 is assigned to each section of the narrative—the student's writing ability and the student's practica evaluations. A score of one represents far below average experiences; a score of

two represents below average experience; a score of three represents acceptable; a score of four represents well written; and finally a score of five represents outstanding. After each portfolio is read and scored, they are then rank ordered from the highest to the lowest score. The rank order is kept confidential and not revealed to the students. Prior to making final selections, faculty and staff interview the perspective candidates. This serves as a system of checks and balances to ensure that a qualified candidate is not accidentally turned away. After the interview, approximately two weeks later, applicants are notified by mail as to the status of their application or of the committee's final decision.

In closing, Tupelo College's elementary education program is an extremely rigorous endeavor that takes the average student five years to complete. It is a program in which the advisor plays an integral role in the success of the students. His/her role is magnified because if a student were to not schedule a class that is only offered once every other fall/spring semester, it is not unfathomable for the program to take as long as six or even seven years to complete. The elementary education program provides students with the opportunity to learn through the use of praxis, in that it combines traditional teaching strategies (classroom lecture) with practical learning opportunities (field experiences, student teaching). Thus, making the elementary education both challenging as well as comprehensive. Finally, for a student to be considered part of the elementary education program, he/she must satisfy all of the requirements associated with the selective admission procedures of the elementary education department. Once all of the requirements are fulfilled, the student is granted full admission into Tupelo College's elementary education program.

Introduction of the Participants

During this study I focused on two African American male elementary education majors. The fact that they are both African American and male is the extent of the similarities between them. For the purpose of this study I will refer to one participant as Casper and the other as Homa. When this study began, Casper was in the last semester of his coursework and needed to pass the Praxis testing series for teacher licensure. Homa, on the other hand, was working on his senior paper, student teaching, and had to take and pass one part of the Praxis series, which he has successfully passed.

Casper

Casper is an African American male that is five feet eight inches tall. He has mocha brown colored skin with a round face. He wears gold-framed glasses that portray the persona of a very studious individual. Casper wears the latest in hip-hop fashion in that he wears a large silver chain around his neck and an impressive silver and gold watch around his wrist. These accessories often accompany a pair of "baggy" or loose-fitting jeans with a large pull over or button-down shirt. He wears the latest fashions in shoes (timberlands or Nike tennis shoes). He tries extremely hard to "fit-in."

Casper is a twenty-two year old fifth year senior from an extremely small town in the Mississippi Delta. He grew up with his unwed mother and three siblings. He also has a three-year old daughter, yet he is not married. Casper stated that even though he is not

married to the mother of his child, he refuses to allow his daughter to grow up without a father.

Casper is an extremely outspoken and "street-smart" person with the gift of gab or small talk. He enjoys participating in extra curricular activities. He stated, "the more, the better...I like to network." He is a member of many organizations including Student National Education Association (president), Project Men in Education Network (president), Ambassador for Meritorious Scholars (president), Men of Impact (co-founder), and Student Support Services (vice-president). In his spare time, Casper finds time to mentor young African American males at a local elementary school. One of his various achievements that he marvels about is the fact that he was voted the first Mr. Tupelo College in school history.

Academically, Casper maintains a modest 3.0 grade point average. He is also a member of two national education organizations, National Education Association Student Program and Mississippi Association of Educators Student Program. He serves as parliamentarian of the latter.

Casper has several role models. He adores his mother and cites her strength of being a single mother who raised four children. He is determined to be an elementary teacher because of an African American male elementary teacher that became his mentor or "father figure" while he was coming up as a young adolescent. His final role model is the Tupelo College's chaplain whose inspirational words have helped him make it to the brink of graduation.

Casper's personal goals are "to gain a better relationship with God and with my family...to graduate from Tupelo College; go on to graduate school and receive my

masters in elementary education; become an effective elementary teacher; and eventually become a school guidance counselor." Casper made for an exciting subject that provided very useful information to this study.

Homa

Homa is an African American male that is approximately six feet tall. He has a brown complexion and is a little on the slender side. Homa talks with a country "drawl," meaning that his pronunciation of many his words are done in a slow thought out manner. He has a very passive personality, and he is a very easy-going person. Homa wears many different styles of clothing and he is not overly concerned about whether the clothes match or not.

Homa is from a moderate sized town in the central part of Mississippi. He comes from a two-parent home and has one older sister. He also comes from a long line of educators. His mother has been an elementary school secretary for as long as he can remember. His sister is a seventh grade biology teacher. He has older cousins on both sides of his family tree that have dedicated their entire lives to education. Thus, Homa too would like to pursue a career as an elementary educator. That is not the only reason that he wants to become an elementary teacher. The main reason for this is that it would provide an opportunity for him to give back to his community.

Homa has many interests outside of education. He enjoys playing football and basketball, fishing and hunting, swimming and traveling, things of a traditionally masculine nature. On the other hand, Homa also likes to watch soap operas, talk on the

telephone, meet new people, and go to the mall to shop, which are all things that could be classified as feminine by nature. He is a well-rounded African American male.

Homa does not have an enormous list of accolades, although he does boast about his perfect attendance award given to him by one of his professors at Tupelo College. He is a member of two prestigious honor societies: Alpha Lambda Delta (freshman honor society), and Kappa Delta Pi. Homa is an extremely dedicated student, spending at least four hours per day in the library studying. His short-term goal is a simple one: graduate from Tupelo College with honors in elementary education. His long-term goals include being a successful elementary teacher for between fifteen and twenty years, and to becoming a school administrator shortly after he leaves the classroom.

Theme Analysis

The findings of this study relied heavily on theme analysis. Woods (1999) defines a theme as a statement of meaning that runs through all or most of the pertinent data or one in the minority that carries heavy emotional or factual impact. Thus, categorizing can then follow on the basis of aspects of the themes that are discovered (Woods, 1999). Several reoccurring themes evolved throughout the interviews with both Casper and Homa. In addition, these themes were validated by the researcher's observational field notes as well as through the process of document analysis. By using these three qualitative research tools, multiple themes emerged included challenges facing African American male elementary pre-service teachers, teacher expectations, lack of positive African American male role models, African American male pre-service

teacher's ethic of care, discipline (you better mind), the use of touch (the armless men), stigma surrounding elementary education (I've done nothing wrong), and influence and encouragement.

Challenges facing African American Male Elementary Pre-service Teachers

The first theme reported by the participants of this study was that African American male elementary pre-service teachers have to cope with many challenges. The relationship between the socially constructed categories of "man" and "teacher" are particularly troubling. For instance, males who want to teach elementary students face the task of eroding the multiple layers of false popular beliefs about "those men who want to teach or be around young children." Homa referred to this as the syndrome of wrong interpretation. Both Casper and Homa feared the first time that a female kindergarten student raised her hand and asked to use the bathroom. Casper describes his thoughts about young female students and bathroom procedures:

> That's one of the things that I get emotional about. Certain things about being an African American male, or just male in general, that I just can't do for female kindergarten students…there are certain things that I just can't do. I can't touch a female student or they may look at African American males as child molesters, and that's kind of frustrating. I may want to do a good job, but certain things won't allow me to do that.

Homa had similar sentiments, but he said that he would simply send a female "student monitor" to the bathroom with a female student if that kind of emergency arose and she had to go.

There are several issues associated with the challenges that African American male pre-service elementary teachers have to cope with. The first challenge is making it through the program. Issues surrounding the completion of the elementary education program are dealt with in terms of finding support and encouragement, coping with the perceptions of others, and dealing with financial barriers while in the program. Then, if an African American male makes it through the elementary education program, he is thrown into a whirlwind of issues that occur simply because of the nature of the business. However, African American male pre-service teachers cannot wait until they graduate and enter the field to begin thinking about important issues that will have a direct effect on their careers. These are issues such as: teacher expectations; the lack of positive African American male role models; African American male pre-service teacher's ethic of care; discipline (you better mind); the use of touch (the armless men); stigmatism surrounding elementary education (I've done nothing wrong); and finally, influence and encouragement.

Teacher Expectations

The African American male pre-service elementary teachers that participated in this study constantly mentioned a concern about what was expected of them once they entered the field. Teacher expectations, a second theme, created a great deal of

conversation. The role that African American male elementary teachers play in the lives of their students is critical, because they (teachers) are role models to the students. Therefore, the teachers' personal and cultural attributes as well as their attitudes and behaviors are important. Casper talked about having a relationship based on mutual respect with his students. He stated that:

> Students will have the opportunity for me to hear their views on certain things, (they would) know my views and be able to open themselves up to me. They would be able to understand what I want from them, and I would be able to understand what they want from me.

Respect is a good starting point in the process of gaining the students' trust. However, the organizational and environmental context in which teachers perform their duties is an important attribute that must be accounted for. Homa stressed this fact as he suggested "male teachers must have classroom management skills along with people skills in order to offset some of the environmental factors that his students will face simply because they come from the inner city."

It is the care and concern that the teacher has for the student that sets the tone for the classroom. According to Irvine (1990), the role that educators play in the school performance of African American children is central and critical. Teachers bring with them into the education profession perspectives about what race entails which they have constructed from their own life experiences and vested interests (McCarthy & Chichlow, 1993). Furthermore, Irvine (1990) suggests that education personnel, cultural attributes, teachers' attitudes and teachers' behaviors are very important attributes of the teacher. She also pointed out that:

Many educators speculate that low-income black children bring to school a set of

antisocial behaviors and traits that emanate from a culture of poverty. They

rationalize their harsh treatment of these children by citing instances of an

undisciplined and unstructured home life, a lack of positive role models, and early

exposure to crime and delinquency, and disrespect for adult authority figures.

(p.17)

Negative attitudes on the part of the teacher may act to destroy a crucial bond, or prevent

it from ever developing, thereby creating student resistance to the teacher both personally

and educationally. If the teachers of African American students allow stereotypical

perceptions to develop, then these students are apt to misbehave.

Teachers socialize and condition students by using both a hidden curriculum as

well as the required state mandated curriculum. They both consciously and

unconsciously mold students in order for them to perform a role that is beneficial for

society. Teachers shape students' behaviors by delivering messages, sanctions, and

rewards about appropriate behavior expectations. In most cases, when students adhere to

the teachers' rules they are rewarded, and when they do not, disciplinary actions occur.

Discipline (as I will discuss later) is one of the main "expectations" or job requirements

for any male teacher, especially an African American male elementary teacher. Casper

shared a story with me of how a particular African American male elementary teacher

that he had observed disciplines his class:

I've (Casper) been in one class where a teacher, it was a male teacher, puts the

students in an area of the room where he blocks the area off with a big old board

(portable chalkboard). He gives them work and they have to sit in a desk behind

the board and complete the work. They can't see the other students and they can't see the main chalkboard. They are isolated.

The male teacher in this instance chose to use a form of isolation or time out as one method of controlling his class. The reason that he was able to use this strategy effectively was because of the rapport that he had established with the students that came to his classroom. One reason that this concept was so powerful and effective was because of the fact that the relationship between the teacher and his students rivaled the relationship between parents and their children. This expectation, according to Casper and Homa, places an enormous amount of pressure on the teacher. Jackson (1983) estimated that from the time a student enters kindergarten until he/she completes elementary school, more than seven thousand hours is spent at school. Jackson (1983) furthers this notion by suggesting that beginning when the student is six onward, "he/she is a more familiar sight to his teacher than his father, and possibly even to his mother" (p. 30). This statement implies that teachers have an enormous and important burden to bear for their students. Furthermore, not only do teachers influence students' achievement and scholarly development, but they influence self-concept and attitudes as well. According to Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1986), students identify teachers as significant others in their lives, and how a child feels about himself or herself is to a large extent determined by the child's perceptions of how the teacher feels about him/her. Many children, particularly African American males, who believe their teachers do not care for them, are infused with low self-esteem and do not like themselves or school. These students feel isolated, discouraged and have a more difficult time succeeding academically. These are

the students who will greatly benefit from having a caring African American male teacher to challenge them both emotionally and academically. Homa suggests that:

> A child might have low self-esteem and come from a low economic status. He might not have the funds that other students have. So that kind of situation might put a little strain on the teacher, but a male teacher has to be a good role model. (I would) tutor him, encourage him, and help him become successful. In the long run, he will appreciate me, and come back and thank me for being there to push and to help him.

Lack of Positive African American Male Role Models

When African American male pre-service elementary teachers enter their first elementary education classes, they are surprised by the fact that there are very few of them, but many female students. It is not uncommon for elementary education classes at Tupelo College to consist of absolutely no males at all. So if there are one or two males in a class, it is classified as a "good" thing. Furthermore, as they enter elementary education as a profession, the trend of being surrounded by mostly women continues. Therefore, African American male pre-service elementary teachers are encouraged to be role models.

Both Casper and Homa expressed a strong desire to be a positive influence in their students' lives. When asked to identify people that were instrumental in influencing them to teach, each participant identified strongly with either a male instructor, supervisor, or cooperating teacher that served as mentors for them. In addition to this,

both Casper and Homa discussed at some length the lack of positive male role models for elementary students, especially African American males that they witnessed during practicum experiences. There is definitely a great need for more African American male elementary teachers, even though the pre-service teachers' personal awareness of this need appeared to diminish as they became accustomed to being constantly around women in the field.

However, effectiveness of male elementary teachers as positive role models for their students is directly related to the length of time they remain in their jobs. The brief time span of six weeks (Madsen, 1968), eight weeks (Sciarra, 1970), or one year (Brophy & Laosa, 1971) has little or no effect on children. Conversely, significant gains in masculinity have shown up after a two-year period in which males worked in the classroom. Nevertheless, it is questionable that the average male elementary teacher remains in his job long enough to provide this modeling value. One of Casper's most daunting concerns was that female pre-service elementary education teachers in his classes would view him as just using elementary education as a stepping-stone to administration. But to Casper, administration was the furthest thing from his mind because he wants to be "that positive male role model or father figure to students that are in need."

African American Male Pre-service Teachers' Ethic of Care

A fourth theme that was reported by the African American male pre-service teachers is the high standard of care associated with teaching elementary students. In my

many discussions with Casper about his elementary education program, he emerged as an elementary education student that was continuously looking for better approaches to apply to the field. Casper enjoyed sharing his thoughts with anyone who would take the time to listen to him. Concerning elementary education and the ethic of care, Casper stated that:

> In elementary education, I feel that students will relate to me in a positive manner, because I can be a father figure in their lives. I have to be a good role model and be there for them at all times. I can't just come around once every blue moon, because having a male come into their lives and leave will take a negative toll. This will create trust issues for the child in that the next man that comes into the child's life will be treated like "well he won't be here for long." So I have to stay positive.

This statement exhibits that Casper realizes to some degree that the aspect of care plays an important role in the elementary education field. One might say that it is part of the job description. In the same interview, Casper discussed how he came to discover one aspect of the ethic of care as it relates to the field of elementary education during his elementary education classes:

> Here at Tupelo College I observe many of my female counterparts (teachers) hugging the students after my classroom observations. They would give full hugs. But I also noticed that my male mentor would just give small pats on the back. I would describe the field as rewarding and emotional. It's hard because it is a "two-edged sword." Female students and teachers can touch a student or give

a student a hug if he or she needs it. I want to provide the same type of affection.

It's frustrating and it takes an emotional strain on me because I can't.

Casper's statements validate his awareness that teaching elementary education requires an ethic of care. According to Casper, care relates to touch as well as the feeling that everything is "alright." He demonstrates that with his definition of positive relationships "as long as you keep everyone happy and they have a good perception of you then the relationship is a good one." He believes that as long as he remains positive or stay in other people's good graces that everything will be just fine. Conversely, Casper did demonstrate one concern; he did not feel comfortable touching elementary-aged female students. This placed him into the category of a "nontoucher" (King, 1998) and in a sense placed him at a disadvantage as far as being deficient for teaching in a caring role.

Acts of care are special instances of moral and ethical relationships (Noddings, 1992). These acts of caring between the one caring (teacher) and the one being cared for (student) are not exclusive to elementary teachers or any teachers in general. Yet, it is intriguing that most of Noddings' (1992) discussion is related to student-teacher relationships and interactions where the student is the center of attention. Homa found the interaction between male teachers and male elementary students as one in which the student was at the center by stating:

> He (the student) might tell me some things that are going on, if he's angry, filled
> with anger...something may be going on in the household, he might open up to me
> as a friend because I am a male.

This clearly demonstrates that the student, in a sense, has to be the center of an elementary teacher's attention. According to Noddings (1992), teachers accomplish their

focus on students by being totally and nonselectively present to the student. Along the same lines, Noddings (1992) suggest that the "soul" of the one caring, in this case, the teacher, empties itself of its own content in order to receive the other. Therefore, Noddings suggests that students' needs are not only academic needs but also include interpersonal needs as well. Teachers' abilities to be there for their students are related to, if not determined by, their comfort levels with being themselves in the classroom. Both Casper and Homa expressed that being comfortable with themselves would make them more capable teachers for their students.

The question here is not as simple as "Can men care about young children?" Of course a concern for young students' welfare is possible for males to exhibit. Yet, the following excerpt from a pilot study that I conducted with Omar illustrates that there are personal costs associated with being a male elementary teacher. Omar, a beginning male elementary teacher tells the story of his teaching experiences.

> *Well, as a beginning second year third grade teacher, I still have a lot to*
>
> *learn. When I enrolled at Tupelo College, my major was business/economics,*
>
> *until I chose to tutor an elementary football team. This changed the entire*
>
> *direction or focus of my studies. I decided to change my major because I liked to*
>
> *see the growth in the students. During my time as a teacher, I have been*
>
> *frequently asking myself the question, "Do I belong?" On one hand they (females)*
>
> *want to see males because of discipline. They think the children will respond*
>
> *better to a man. But on the other hand, I think that females still feel as though*
>
> *this is their field—a female dominated field. It is just like if a female try to play*

professional football, males would object. In elementary education, they

(females) might not object, but they still dominate the profession.

I am torn between the expectations from everybody. The students expect

to see a role model everyday. They pretty much notice how you walk, talk, and

eat. All eyes are on you constantly, because they don't see males on a regular

basis. The other teachers expect you to be a strong disciplinarian, and expect you

to be on top of the subject matter, especially math since you are male. The

principal has higher expectations of you...they want to have the "top" male

teacher of all the schools. Even though everyone expects something different

from me, I stay in the field because I like to see the growth of my students. For

example, a student that I had in my class last year came to me reading at an

extremely low-grade level (1.5). This means that he was reading on the middle of

the first grade or early second grade level. If a student comes to me that far

behind, I have to figure out or come up with an individual education plan. I

basically have to write two lesson plans, one for the majority of the class and one

for the student. I have to ask myself, "How does this child best learn?" I have to

research the problem and then find techniques to improve his reading level.

Sometimes I would have to pull the child out of music or library and work with

him on a one on one basis. I would have to start with simple reading books such

as the Little Red Hen. I would have to take the book and list all of the words that

the child did not know. We would constantly go over the list in order to give the

child power over the words. I would let him type a story using the words on the

word processor. Gradually, the child improved, and ended up passing the third

nine weeks test. I was very proud of the amount of progress that this child had

achieved.

This passage clearly describes some of the conflicts that a male elementary teacher has to

overcome in order to engage in the process of caring for young children.

One of the coveted processes that male elementary teachers are given little credit

for utilizing is called child centering. Child centering can be heroic when the adult male

temporarily surrenders a dominant position framed by both male and adult privileges

(King, 1998). King (1998) furthers this idea by suggesting that it can be seen as a

"female attribute," as a "male performing a female attribute," a "male choosing to

perform a female attribute," wherein the intention to care can be understood as

"compulsory care that traps women." Males that care for children, other than family

members, have been watched in a suspicious manner. Often, adult males that teach

elementary students are thought to have ulterior motives. This is part of the personal

sacrifice that male elementary teachers are forced to live with. In fact, not only do people

within the schools view male elementary teachers as suspicious, but also outsiders or

people within the community may view men that work with children in the same manner.

You Better Mind

A fifth theme that was continuously alluded to throughout this study was

discipline. Both Casper and Homa had concerns dealing with how they would manage

behavior once they entered the classroom. Homa provided an excellent example of the

tension surrounding this issue by stating:

> Some challenges I've gone through have to do with how to handle my classroom, classroom management with my students, because you are going to have problems in the classroom. The challenge is how to apply what I have learned in my classes in order to set up a positive classroom environment. This will prevent classroom problems as well as make the class more interesting.

From this statement, it appears as if preplanning is an important aspect of dealing with classroom management. For male elementary teachers, discipline is a tool that is equated to control and is authority based. The underlying assumption is that men as elementary teachers are better equipped to provide problem students with needed discipline. This was clearly the case in the pilot study, especially in the excerpt on Omar written in the previous section.

In many instances, because of the lack of males in elementary education, female teachers are forced to deal with their own discipline problems. Some female teachers are very capable of handling this challenge, but some are not. Casper provided an excellent example of a teacher that had very little control over her class by stating:

> I noticed that a female teacher, who was black, and a black male student would have confrontations. He would say and do certain things in her class that he would not do in a male's class. For example, one incident that I witnessed was that the female teacher told the male student to sit down. The male student replied, "you are not my mother, you can't tell me what to do." Furthermore, this student proceeded to call the teacher a bitch, a whore, and disrespectful things of that nature. He didn't have much respect for her, and as time passed his attitude toward her remained the same.

This example exemplifies many of the difficulties that many teachers, not just African American female teachers have when dealing with young African American males. Conversely, in another instance, Casper observed the same student's behavior during his time in an African American male teacher's class. Casper stated:

> In a male's class, I've seen the same student. He would tell me that he didn't respect his (female) teacher and call her all types of names. I witnessed a similar situation in the male's class. The student would say or make a negative comment such as, "you can't tell me what to do." But, as time progressed his attitude changed, because the male teacher in this situation seemed to be more aggressive. He corrected the student instantaneously, whereas the female teacher would kind of shy away.

Another perspective on discipline or classroom management, as shared by Homa earlier, was that it results from close meaningful relationships between the teacher and the student. Walkerdine (1990) viewed discipline as an outcome and reasoned that teachers in the early grades produce rationality within their students by systematically moving over to make way for the decisions of the emerging child. Furthermore, Walkerdine (1990) views this giving over of self as a potentially problematic condition in which she labels the teachers as containers of irrationality. While the students' situation outside of the classroom may include neglect, competition, and aggression, inside classrooms the intention is that the students take turns, listen and are listened to, and are required to participate along with parents, in the solutions of classroom problems. For example, Casper provided his thoughts on the way that he conceptualized dealing with classroom discipline:

I don't agree with corporal punishment. I don't believe in time out either. And, I definitely don't agree with sending a student out of the classroom (to the office) every time he/she does something. I think I would kind of try to understand what the student's problem is, instead of just writing a student off as most teachers do, especially to black males. If a student is having problems, some teachers' solutions are to write the student off and then label him for the rest of his life. I would basically try to handle a lot of my discipline problems by building a relationship with the parent(s) of the student. I would try to build a close relationship and let them know not only when their child is being disrespectful, but also when their child is doing well.

Men who refuse the use of harsh, threatening discipline often attempt to engage the student in self-monitoring. This coincides with Homa's philosophy of appointing a child as a "helper" in order to aid in the facilitation of the class. This is also consistent with a child-centered, caring approach, which in the essence characterizes the philosophy of elementary education (Noddings, 1992). Ironically, from the participants' of this study point of view, it is still safer for a male elementary teacher to apply the use of corporal punishment than for him to touch a student in such a manner that exhibits love, care, and nurture.

Many discipline problems concerning African American male students are really not discipline-related problems at all. Rather, they are related to other extraneous factors such as problems at home, a lack of understanding of the concept of "physical developmental norms" of African American males by the teacher, and poor classroom management skills on behalf of the teacher. Yet, many teachers, female teachers in

particular, tend to "shy away" from African American males because they consider them troublemakers as Casper suggested.

As a beginning point in reconceptualizing the behavior management of African American males, teachers must be aware that there are no physical developmental norms for this group of children. It is generally assumed that all children conform to a model, which was developed for Caucasian children. In instances where African American males turn out to be more hyperactive, they were labeled as "troublemakers" or excessively hyperactive. Homa understands that African American males tend to be more energetic. This is the reason why he suggests:

> He (the student) can tell me some things about what's going on, why he's angry, it might be something in the household...I think a male in the classroom can play a big role in that situation in the classroom by helping that child. You know he might happen to just have a bad day.

By this statement, it appears that Homa equates discipline problems to the student's mental state. In this case, the student was angry. But Homa also suggested that the teacher has the ability to create a good classroom atmosphere, which in turn would greatly lessen the chance of classroom disruptions. Therefore, elementary teachers have the ability to avoid many discipline problems by simply planning classroom activities that encourage students to actively participate with the daily lesson.

I've Done Nothing Wrong

A sixth theme that the African American male pre-service teachers participating in this study mentioned was the negative stigma attached to them simply because they want to teach in an elementary school. For example, Casper stated that he has actually overheard conversations between other students, both male and female, that said "most African American males that go into elementary education are either homosexual or they are not intelligent enough to go into another field." Accusations of being homosexual are frequently used against men who choose to teach elementary students. In some instances, the male teacher may in fact be homosexual, but in most cases they are not. It is important to realize that this label is applied to most if not all, male elementary teachers. In a sense, questioning sexual orientation manages behavior by causing qualified male teachers afraid to avoid the field. For example, Homa told the story of one student who desperately wanted to become an elementary teacher but "he decided that it would be easier for him to major in economics rather than deal with constantly having to look over his shoulders to see who was looking at him questionably." This applies to the overall teaching strategies that males have at their disposal in order to deal with the young students that they are placed in charge of. For instance, a male elementary teacher would have to pat a student on the back instead of giving him/her a full hug.

Being perceived as feminine was an issue that both Casper and Homa experienced while enrolled at Tupelo College. Throughout the program they were concerned about other peoples' perceptions of them. This concern was strongest when they first entered the program, but once they became accustomed to the field of elementary education, they

became increasingly comfortable about constantly being around females, making it a nonissue. For example Homa stated, "people can think what they want to think...I'm doing this for the kids."

The caring and nurturing of children, which are characteristics of elementary education, have shaped the perception of the field as women's work. Many factors influence the under-representation of men in elementary schools, but perhaps the most daunting is the fact that many parents do not want their children exposed to male teachers that are characterized as being "soft." Moreover, male elementary teachers are viewed as being feminine, homosexual, and/or pedophiles in search of prey in the form of young children. Unless this point of view is challenged, African American males will continue to avoid the field of elementary education completely.

The Armless Men

A theme that goes hand in hand with the previous one that was reported by the participants of this study was that male elementary teachers that touch students in any fashion carry with it a negative connotation. African American males are placed in a no-win situation. On one hand, they chose to enter elementary education because they want to make a difference, and many times they are not allowed an authentic opportunity to accomplish this goal. On the other hand, males are the minority group in elementary education, participating in a woman's culture in which they (men) are placed under a microscope and continuously monitored by others. If the male wishes a prolonged career in elementary education, he allows this to happen. For example, Casper gives the

example of how he would handle an emergency in which a kindergarten female student had to use the bathroom. He stated that:

> It would not be a problem if a male student used the bathroom on himself, but with a female, what I would probably do in that circumstance, I would probably go ask one of my female counterparts to see if she could possibly assist me or assist the student in that job or with her problem, so I would probably ask one of my female counterparts.

It is clear that Casper understands that there is a "double standard" associated with the field of elementary education. The double standard occurs when male elementary teachers must always have a female teacher overseeing certain functions associated the field (i.e. a female student wets her pants). Whereas, if the situation is reversed, the female teacher can assist a male kindergarten student in any manner that she deems necessary without anyone providing supervision.

Society allows men to hug their children at home, but this is not acceptable behavior for other people's children. Proger (1990) argued that gender is the myth that justifies, expresses, and supports the power of men over women. He also suggested that gender polarizes the sexes and implicates minor physical differences between men and women as the site for creating opposites, a prerequisite for the perpetuation of a male dominated society. Fine (1993) found that in contrast, women's socially constructed sexual identities have been absent, repressed, possessed, and controlled. A privilege such as autonomous sexuality can also be construed as predatory, and it becomes more visible in contests that are construed as asexual (McWilliam, 1994). Whereas, elementary teaching may still be viewed as virginal work and men are viewed as sexualized in

predatory ways (King, 1998). It is a difficult negotiating place in this sacred trust of caring in desexualized ways for desexualized children (Kincaid, 1992) when the male teacher is viewed as a sexual suspect.

Some male elementary teachers feel compelled to monitor themselves very carefully because of other educators' and parents' beliefs that physical contact with male teachers are harmful for the students. Such self-censoring preempts caring relationships with young students. The use of touch in classrooms is viewed as extremely suspicious behavior and requires self-discipline. Feeling paranoid about that, male elementary teachers have adopted coping strategies that appear to reduce their effectiveness as teachers. Social constructions that have worked against males teaching in early elementary grades can be found in the implicit but pervasive relationship between male elementary teachers and pedophiles, a relationship not supported by data (King, 1998).

For the past twenty years the trend toward abstaining from touch in schools has been growing in direct response to the growth in sensitivity toward the problems of sexual harassment, molestation, and abuse. In an effort to keep one step ahead of sexual offenders, more and more schools are sending the message of a hands-off approach to adults, especially male teachers (King, 1998). Compounding this situation are laws that interpret touching in vague terms. This is the reason that most teachers, counselors, and sometimes even parents refrain from adding affectionate touch to their interactions with their children. Touching children has become a game with high-risk stakes.

However, not touching children could be considered neglectful. By demonstrating a distant style of interacting with children by avoiding any physical contact, schools may be sending the message that physical expressions of warmth and

affection such as a hug or a pat on the back, is inappropriate behavior. Both Casper and Homa felt that not expressing warm emotions by the use of touch would serve as an injustice to the students. For example Homa stated "it is not fair if students do not get the same love and care from me that they would get from own parents." Furthermore, teachers should not have to think about the consequences of patting a student on the back for a job well done, or an arm around a young boy or young girl as a comforting measure. These are powerful methods of showing students that they have done a good job, are loved, and most importantly are safe.

The participants of this study recognized that many children are being reared by single mothers. They felt that these children viewed them as role models or buddies to talk to and play with at school. Both Casper and Homa are empathetic to the needs of these children. They enjoyed this role and felt that they were valued by their students. Conversely, the participants also realized that the single mothers, as well as the children, looked at them as surrogate fathers. As they continued in this role, they started to develop guidelines in regard to making distinctions between the role of student teacher and surrogate father. Both participants expressed a strong desire to be viewed as the teacher instead of a surrogate father.

The dilemma of touch, or the controversy surrounding the use of physical contact with children is an issue that both participants in this study as well as Omar in the pilot study struggled with. Although this was an uncomfortable topic to discuss, they all felt as if it needed to be addressed because of the impact that it has on the males that choose to pursue a degree in elementary education. This is a critical issue for all elementary grade levels as many parents are hesitant to entrust the care of their young children to

male elementary teachers. Yet, many male teachers are asked to play the role of surrogate father to the rising number of students that are not fortunate enough to have biological fathers at home.

Influence and Support

The final theme that the African American male pre-service teachers that participated in this study constantly discussed relating to the recruitment of more African American men into elementary education was the influences that brought them into the field. Based on their experiences, the influence of former male teachers and family members had a direct impact on their decision to enter the field of elementary education. Both Casper and Homa had similar experiences that guided them towards choosing elementary education as a profession. As pre-service teachers, the participants used a different lens to identify why they continued to pursue a degree in elementary education (or in Casper's case a closely related field). The major factor for them choosing to stay in the field was that they enjoyed working with, as well as being a mentor to, the children that they mentored. By the end of the study, the participants did not overstress external influences (family and friends) as much as the internal rewards that came from their experience they had mentoring children.

According to the participants in this study, a mental shift occurs for them in the way that they view factors that keep them interested in the field. For instance, when the participants of this study first entered elementary education, they had the tendency to identify external factors as the main reason that influenced this career choice, such as a

former male elementary teacher or a family member. As they continued to progress through the elementary education program and neared completion, they began to focus more on the rewarding experiences that they were encountering. For instance, Homa talked about his growth by stating:

> When I began student teaching, I realized that everyone can learn and be successful...I have also learned that an elementary education teacher has to have three things—commitment, dedication, and patience.

Therefore, as the elementary education program commences, the participants tended to identify internal factors as having motivated them to stay in elementary education despite the fact that it is considered women's work.

Another element that must be considered is methods of providing support and encouragement to males once they actually enter the elementary education field. During the numerous interviews, the participants mentioned specific people that provided encouragement to them by emphasizing and reemphasizing to them that they were good with kids, and could make a difference in a child's life. They could recall the exact words that were relayed to them. The fact that they had specific recollections of what people said to them indicated that those words supplied a significant amount of satisfaction to the young men. If more males, in fact, are needed in elementary education, then it is important to initiate encouraging discussions about meaningful careers in elementary education.

It was interesting that most of the support that the participants of this study received came from the very people who influenced them to make elementary education a career choice in the first place. Family members were identified as the most influential

factors in helping the participants not only to survive, but also to succeed in a program that is dominated by women. Additionally, both Casper and Homa, established a network of people who encouraged them in their quest to become elementary educators. Male and female peers, cooperating teachers, mentors, and friends for the most part make up this support system. This system of support is extremely vital in the retention of male African American pre-service teachers, especially since there are so few African American men currently in and entering the profession.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An African American male teacher is a scarce commodity in elementary schools all around the country. This is in part because of low but rising salaries; the fact that elementary education is a female dominated field; and the negative assumptions associated with the few males that have already entered the field. These factors contribute to an increase in the demand for male, especially African American, teachers. Therefore, school administrators actively recruit the few men who do not mind the obstacles associated with the field, and are prepared to work with young children.

Gender inequity is commonplace in elementary education, and very few have questioned this practice. In fact, because of the nurturing nature of elementary schools and of women, generally speaking, it is assumed that they are better suited to teach young children. In order for progress to be made in the attempt of attracting more men into the field of elementary education, that assumption must be challenged. Thus, the education of young children will make great strides when the approaches of both men and women can be observed by children at their inception into the educational process—as early as kindergarten.

In other arenas of today's society, gender stereotypes are dispelled on a constant basis. It is past the time to review our attitudes about gender as it relates to which gender

makes the best elementary teachers. There are good female as well as male elementary teachers, along with horrible female and male elementary teachers, and everything in between. But at this point in time, females are given by default more of an opportunity to prove their abilities. When in fact, there are men who have the ability and desire to make a meaningful contribution to elementary education. These are the male teachers that must be targeted and actively recruited.

The field of elementary education must revise the outdated but still prevalent attitude that women belong in the lower grades and men in the upper grades. This form of sexism has placed the negative stereotype on male elementary teachers as either homosexuals or pedophiles. These men are thought of as "suspect." Men must be encouraged to enter elementary education in order to fulfill the androgynous demand of the elementary classroom. Thus, pre-service teacher candidates should be re-educated on the importance of men in elementary education. With more emphasis placed on the recruitment and retention of male teachers, the negative labels associated with these teachers can be alleviated.

The twenty-first century male is quite different from the twentieth century male. In fact, over the past fifty years, society has redefined what is meant by sexuality. Both men and women have crossed sex-role barriers and adopted gender neutral jobs as well as behaviors. Therefore, a more current rationale for recruiting African American men into elementary education is to break the assumption vastly perpetuated in the educational literature that men are valued most of all for his macho image.

This study attempted to bridge two gaps in the literature concerning African American male pre-service teachers. First it suggests ways in which readers can gain a

greater knowledge and understanding of the experiences that African American pre-service teachers have to deal with on their road to becoming elementary educators. Secondly, this study provided insights regarding steps that should be taken in order to effectively recruit African American men into the field of elementary education.

Recommendations of the Study

Recommendations are an essential part of any research study. These suggestions are used as a basis to expand and extend the common core of knowledge. Based on the results of this study, several recommendations can be made pertaining to elementary education programs at colleges and universities. If these recommendations are adhered, they can have a profound influence on the recruitment and retention of African American male elementary pre-service teachers.

The participants of this study were asked to participate simply because they were African American males who wanted to enter elementary education and were currently the only males enrolled as elementary education majors at Tupelo College. I believed that their experiences would be extremely beneficial to this study as it related to their perceptions of their elementary education teacher program. Until I began conducting formal interviews, I had no idea about what they perceived elementary education to be. Therefore, I believe that the information that I have received from the participants has placed me in the position to make several recommendations.

First of all, more African American male elementary teachers must be portrayed as positive role models in class lectures, discussions, and other activities, such as inviting

them in as guest speakers. In an era when elementary education is composed of many practica and field experiences, this would provide both pre-service teachers as well as disadvantaged students with positive role models. This would also provide the opportunity to develop a greater acceptance of these teachers. Additionally, this would help to foster a feeling of encouragement and pride to all involved in the process.

A second recommendation of this study is to pair pre-service African American male teachers with a male mentor early in his educational experience. This mentor should be preferably a cooperating male elementary teacher, a male college supervisor, or another pre-service male student (if applicable). This would provide the pre-service teacher with a support system in his time of need. The participants in this study identified that having male mentors was beneficial in that it provided a positive role model for them to talk to or confide in during both good times and bad times.

A third recommendation is that the advisors to African American male pre-service teachers, as well as to any student, must keep him abreast of the progress that he is making toward graduation. Unknown to the researcher at the beginning of the study, one of the participants had to change his major from elementary education to child development, because "I did not know that I had to take the Praxis I test at the end of my junior year. I missed the deadline and now I am in my fifth year, with no more financial aid. I have to graduate now." Yes, the student has some responsibility to be aware of the requirements that are needed for graduation, but it is the advisor's job to constantly remind the student to stay on the right track, especially in the case of an African American male aspiring to be an elementary teacher.

A fourth recommendation of this study is to provide financial incentives to African American males in order to recruit them into elementary education. The participants of this study found it extremely difficult to focus on their schoolwork, when they constantly worried about their college tuition, room and board, as well as having to work in order to help out at home. Am I advocating giving every African American male that enters elementary education full scholarships? No, but I do recommend that some type of financial assistance and incentives be given to African American male pre-service elementary education majors in order to bolster their numbers in an increasingly demanding marketplace. Tuition and fee waivers as well as small monthly stipends are feasible methods of lowering the burden to this group of students.

A fifth recommendation is to hold open forums for all students, especially education majors to discuss racial/gender-related issues. Often, society operates with blinders on simply trying to pretend that gender and racial issues simply do not exist. Therefore, forums would provide students, faculty, and staff of both genders and various races the opportunity to express concerns, obtain answers to their questions, and create social networks in an effort to increase their awareness of issues dealing with the opposite gender as well as different racial backgrounds.

The final recommendation of this study is that changes in any elementary program should not be made entirely for men but should encompass the pre-service student population as a whole. This would prevent singling out males that could lead to tension between them and their female counterparts. This would serve as a sign that the university or college recognizes that both male and female teachers are important in the process of educating young children.

Recommendations For Further Research

Judging by the results of this study, what is apparent to me is that society must pay attention to what African American pre-service teachers say. They are anxious to share their experiences with anyone who is willing to listen. Most researchers talk about African American male teachers, but very few take the time to listen to what they have to say. With all of that noted, several issues emerged through my endeavors with this special group of subjects that should be considered for future investigation in order to further this research.

The participants stated several issues that they seemed increasingly concerned about. The uncertainty related to the physical contact with students, especially female students was perhaps the most intriguing issue. Further inquiry related to the effects of a male's physical contact on the teacher and the student would be an interesting study with powerful implications. This study looked at both participants as the same although one participant was already student teaching, and the other was at a point in which he could still change his major. If both pre-service teachers were at the same point in their programs, different results or narratives could be yielded. It would be interesting if this study was replicated in order to see if the same results would be yielded. Also, if a historically black university, instead of a historically black college was used as a setting, chances are that more African American male pre-service elementary teachers would be available to participate in the study, but not necessarily. Furthermore, if this study had taken place at a regional university, additional ways of attracting African American male pre-service teachers to those schools could have surfaced.

Studies of successful African American male elementary teachers could be conducted in an effort to obtain data specifically related to their recruitment and retention into this female dominated field. Conversely, studies pertaining to African American male pre-service teachers that drop out of teacher education programs could provide insights into factors that influenced their decision to leave the program. These insights could lead to recommendations regarding the improvements to elementary teacher education programs. Hence, further exploration dealing with the methods used by universities to recruit, train, and retain African American male pre-service teachers would provide valuable information for universities seeking to increase this population's enrollment figures. A study of what state departments of education are doing in order to increase the number of male teachers would provide another dimension in which to view this phenomenon. Finally, it would be interesting to study gender across the curriculum. Are there certain subjects that men "flock" to in teacher education and why? These recommendations will hopefully provide further research into a problem that must be addressed at some point.

Personal Insights

Education, as John Dewey once stated is about experiences, both lived and shared. It is through the participants lived and shared experiences that this study has grown. A question that I anticipate being asked is, "Are the results of this study relevant to this study?" Of course, I believe the findings of this study are relevant as a first step toward a turn around of the prevalent negative perceptions about males in elementary

education. I also believe that a realignment of our current public school system, from the personnel to the curriculum, is in order. I view the curriculum as an outgrowth of self. Once it is viewed as such by society as a whole, then the students that we teach will begin to identify with the curriculum. Thus, they will have an incentive to learn. But this dream cannot be realized without first researching issues that pertain to perhaps the most important as well as influential figures within the public school system—the teacher.

I chose to research African American male pre-service elementary teachers because there is very little literature concerning them. I would have loved to have made a new discovery with this study, but I feel as if African American male elementary teachers have many of the same issues as any male elementary teacher. With the exception of being able to better relate to the "urban" male, they are for lack of a better word the same. I cannot help but to wonder if I have missed something. Yet, when a member check was performed, the results came back that I was correct. Each participant stated that I had conducted a reasonable study that has portrayed realistic imagery of what it is like to be an African American male pre-service teacher. Regardless of the participants' confirmations, I cannot help but think that there has to be more. The main reason that I have some doubt as to the depth of this study is because as a researcher I attempted to look at two very broad topics—gender and race. For the purpose of this study, I believed that race and gender were intimately intertwined. In my opinion, to focus solely on race or gender would leave something to be desired, although, in retrospect, gender appears to be the main focus of this study.

Essentially, this study was about exploring ways of training competent African American male pre-service elementary teachers. For me, "competent" relates to

something that is credible or good. A good teacher is one who cares for and has a strong inclination toward others. It is this caring attitude that motivates him to make his students the cornerstone of the educational process. Ayers (1989) suggested that good teachers are those who are committed to dialogue and interaction with children. Therefore, I believe that they can relate to their students because they are concerned about them and have compassion for them. It is this care and compassion that should be used in the process of selecting male pre-service elementary teacher candidates. I believe that these are the teachers that will make a difference in the elementary education profession.

Furthermore, it is my belief that African American male elementary teachers are responsible for encouraging potential male candidates to join the field. In order to effectively recruit, I believe that they must be knowledgeable about what research says concerning: male elementary teachers, care as it relates to children, and the role that compassion plays in the classroom. Being knowledgeable about this research would allow male teachers the opportunity to be keenly aware of potential recruits who possess the necessary attributes that are needed to be successful elementary teachers. Likewise, it would allow them to have a frame of reference and the knowledge to dissuade and redirect males, who do not possess the necessary elementary teaching persona, into other fields. This would give each perspective teacher a chance to receive proper guidance into elementary education or a field in which their skills could be utilized to the best of their abilities.

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of African American male pre-service teachers. The methods used to discover these recruiting strategies were vastly driven by the "essence" of the participants lived experiences. Van Mannen (1990) described essence as "what makes a thing what it is, and without which it would not be what it is; that which makes a thing what it is rather than it being or becoming something else" (p.177). Therefore, the essence of this study was what it was, because of the shared lived experiences of both the researcher and the participants. If one participant would have been added, subtracted, or substituted, then this study would have probably been quite different. If the participants had shared any different lived experiences, then the results of this study would have perhaps been completely different. Thus, it is their lived experiences that made this study what it was.

I believe that all of the recommendations of this study are reasonable. Some have been thought of at earlier times, some will be considered after this study comes out, and some are in the process of being instituted. Yet, all of the recommendations suffer a common and tedious setback—they take time to implement. Many people believe that it is easy to recruit African American males into elementary education. Actually, there are important variables that can make recruiting African American males into elementary education nearly an impossible task such as adequate financial support, realistic admission requirements, outlook on care, and effective mentoring. Conversely, the results of this study may lead to increased completion rates as well as program improvements for African American male pre-service elementary teachers.

We have moved a long way from having only female students pursue degrees in elementary education. We are also beginning to understand that elementary education programs should be designed to prepare both male and female students for a wide variety of roles within the realm elementary education. This study was an important first step toward reaching perspective African American male pre-service teachers. Thus, I believe that a thorough research study of African American male pre-service teachers' perceptions of elementary education has been done. But, is it complete? No, there is still a lot of work to be done. This is just a temporary place that the researcher found as a suitable resting point. Perhaps a future visit with this group of participants will be possible. I am quite certain that this visit would produce a wealth of knowledge.

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APPENDIX A

Participant Solicitation Letter

To: Perspective Participant

From: Robert Z. Carr, Jr.

Regarding: Research Project dealing with African-American Males in Elementary
             Education

First and foremost, I would like to take this opportunity and thank you for agreeing to
consider participating in this study. My name is Robert Z. Carr, Jr., and I am a graduate
student at Oklahoma State University. I am extremely interested in exploring African-
American males' experiences with the elementary education teaching process. I am
specifically interested in teacher elementary education programs. Hence, African-
American male views are desperately needed in order to improve current elementary
education teaching programs. If you choose to participate in this study, I will be asking
you to you to take part in these following activities: 1. Informal and formal interviews 2.
Allow me to shadow you to some of your classes for participant observation purposes and
3. To write a participant autobiography (if necessary).

During the interviews, I will be asking the same questions to every student/teacher who
agrees to participate in the study. You do not have to answer any question that you do
not want to. The formal interview will take about 45 minutes and I will ask your
permission to tape record so I don't miss anything that you say. The informal interviews
will take place periodically when I need to clarify something that you have already said.
If you are willing, I may ask you to participate in an interview for a second time. All the
names of the students who agree to participate in the study will be changed in order to
provide for the most accurate reporting possible. Any list of student names and
pseudonyms will be kept in a locked file and destroyed after two years. You can stop the
interview anytime that you want. If at any time and for any reason, you do not want to be
a part of the study, then inform me and your name will be marked off of the list of
participants.

I want you to know that you will not be at risk of physical harm in any way, and I will not
ask you any intimate questions. Let me give you some examples of the questions that I
intend to ask.

1. If I were to refer to you in the study, how would you describe yourself?

2. Who and or what influenced you to pursue a degree in elementary education?

3. You are in a field that is predominantly female and dominated by a Caucasian point
    of view. What is this experience like for you?

I also want you to know that if you decide not to be a part of my study, you will not be harassed by me about that choice. The choice to be interviewed is your decision alone. There will be no penalty for not being part of this study.

I hope that you will agree to participate in this study. I think that finding out more about the experiences of African-American males throughout elementary education in general will help make elementary education programs around the country more diverse and accessible to them. I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Z. Carr, Jr.

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form for a Study Regarding African American Male
Pre-Service Teachers' perceptions of Elementary Education

Dear Student:

I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University who is interested in learning about
African-American males' experiences in elementary education. I plan on interviewing
you formally and informally throughout the Fall semester of 2001 in order to learn about
your experiences as an African-American male participating in elementary education. I
would also like to shadow you to some of your classes for observation purposes. In
addition to this, I will be asking you to write a participant autobiography. During this
study, I will be investigating African-American males' perceptions of elementary
education. I hope that this inquiry will give me insight into how to restructure the current
curriculum in elementary teacher education programs in order to ensure that they are
more diverse in their efforts to attract African-American males.

I would like the one-on-one interviews to take place at times in which they will not
interfere with your class times. If given permission, I would like to tape record the
interviews for easier and more accurate transcription. Your name will be kept
confidential and locked in a secure place. In fact, all of the participants names will be
given pseudonyms (changed) so that no one will know who said what; this is also true for
the name of the school and name of the city being investigated if agreed upon.

You may withdraw your consent at any time during the semester by notifying the office
or myself. Not participating in the project will not jeopardize any future relationship with
Oklahoma State University or your current standing with your affiliated school.

For more information on any of these topics, please feel free to contact me or Dr. William
Segall, (405) 744-8023 my dissertation advisor. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Robert Z. Carr, Jr.
(601) 936-0597

I have read and fully understand this consent form; by signing it, I give permission to participate in this research project concerned with African-American male pre-service teachers' perceptions of elementary education. A copy of this consent form has been given to me. If I have any questions, I will contact Robert Z. Carr, Jr. at (601) 936-0597 or Sharon Bacher, Vice President for Research, Institutional Review Board, 203 Whitehurst, OSU, Stillwater, OK 74074 at (405) 744-5700. I can also contact Dr. William Segall at (405) 744-8023 if I have any questions or concerns.

Date: _____

Participant's Name:

_____

Participant's Signature:

_____

Researcher's Signature:

_____

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

Date_____

Name_____

Pseudonym_____

Introduction:

I would like to take this time to thank you for participating in this study. I will be recording and transcribing what we say during the interview. Later, I will ask you to review the transcription as well as some of the notes that I take regarding my interpretations of what you say. The transcription will be verbatim, but I reserve the right to modify or delete and "uhs" and "ahs" that you might say during the interview. I have given you the chance to review the questions that I am going to ask you today, so please feel free to discuss your perspective views. I may ask you some additional questions that you have not reviewed as we go along in order to clarify an idea that you mention that might cause me to think several different things. Thank you for your time and consideration.

4. If I were to refer to you in this study, how would you describe yourself?

5. Who and or what influenced you to pursue a degree in elementary education?

6. You are in a field that is predominantly female and dominated by a Caucasian point of view. What is this experience like for you?

7. Describe for me the relationships that you have built with your female counterparts.

8. Tell me what you find challenging if anything about being an African-American male pursuing a degree in elementary education?

9. As an African-American male pre-service teacher, how do you feel students and teachers will relate to you?

10. Tell me about experiences in your teacher education program that you feel are unique to African-American men.

11. As an African-American man in a predominantly female profession, how do you find support and encouragement?

12. If you were going to market your colleges' teacher education program to encourage other African-American men to join the program, what types of things would you say?

13. What suggestions would you have to university deans about making elementary education programs more accessible to African-American males?

14. If you were asked to be on an advisory board to provide University's faculty and staff with feedback regarding how they could make the Program better for African-American men, what kinds of suggestions would you make?

15. What suggestions do your have for African-American males that are thinking about pursuing a degree in elementary education?

16. What can you tell me about the classes that you are presently or have recently taken?

17. What strategies would you suggests for recruiting more African-American males into elementary education.

18. What else could you tell me about being an African-American man in or pursuing a career in elementary education that could help me better understand your experiences?

APPENDIX D

Participant Autobiography

Consider these in addition to other topics that you are going to use in order to describe yourself as a person and as a future elementary educator:

Who are you?

How do you describe yourself?

What could you share about your family, friends, and your personal life in general?

Where have you lived prior to coming to college?

Where are you in terms of your professional goals?

What are your hobbies?

What experiences do you have with children?

What are your interests in elementary education?

What are your personal goals?

What are your professional goals?

Who are your role models?

APPENDIX E

Institutional Review Board Approval

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 9/5/02

Date: Thursday, September 06, 2001   IRB Application No   ED029

Proposal Title: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

Principal
Investigator(s):

Robert Carr   William Segall
206 Lowe Circle #21C   258 Willard
Richland,, MS 39218   Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved *

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the
expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals
who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a
manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol
   must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year.
   This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are
   unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB
procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to
the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

*NOTE: Please be aware that any change (modification) to this approved protocol requires approval from the IRB. In research
        activities where the sample size is so small, that can be a problem.

VITA 2

Robert Z. Carr, Jr.

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS'
PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: A MULTIPLE CASE
STUDY

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in East Orange, New Jersey, on March 19, 1975, the son of
Robert Z. Carr, Sr. and Georgette Faucher.

Education: Attended Kosciusko High School, Kosciusko, Mississippi; received
Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Tougaloo College, Tougaloo
Mississippi in May 1997; received a Master of Science degree in
Curriculum and Instruction from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater,
Oklahoma in May 1999. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of
Education degree with a major in Curriculum and Supervision at
Oklahoma State University in August 2002.

Experience: Employed by Oklahoma State University, College of Education as a
graduate/research assistant, and student teacher supervisor August 1997 to
May, 2001. Taught alternative school for one semester at Canton
Educational Services Center, Canton, Mississippi from September 2001 to
November 2001. Employed by the Mississippi State Department of
Education from December 2001 to present as an education specialist.

Professional Memberships: American Educational Research Association
(AERA), Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
(ASCD), Phi Kappa Phi, Kappa Delta Pi