

OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY: A FRAMEWORK FOR CHARACTERIZING THE EDUCATIONAL CONDITION OF BLACK MALES IN FLORIDA

Four Issue Clusters

Although there exists a rich literature on the subject of the education of minorities in general, and of blacks in particular, the study of the education of black males as an academically "endangered population" has not generated the volume of research typical for other special populations within the educational system. Our examination of a variety of government studies, scholarly research, and testimony has resulted in outcomes suggesting a framework for characterizing the educational condition of black males in Florida. This framework can be described in terms of four *issue clusters*:

I. Capacity

1. pre/postnatal experiences
2. maturation and physical development patterns
3. psycho-social development patterns

II. Knowledge

1. family acculturation and socialization patterns
2. modeling and referencing opportunities
3. measurement and norming experiences

III. Opportunity

1. academic exclusion patterns
2. scholastic participation patterns
3. educational financing patterns

IV. Experience

1. family-community experience
2. school-peer experience
3. work-society experience

Issues of Capacity

Individuals develop abilities or competencies to cope with problems and generate ideas and concepts through the acquisition of material things (an adequate income enables one to cope with the problem of inflation, for example) and intellectual skills (a knowledge of history, economics, geography, etc., enables the effective citizen to make rational political decisions). This *intellectual* and *material power* can be termed *capacity*. A child's initial capacity is developed or diminished through the application of the parents' intellectual and material power to the circumstances of his birth. If, as we have found, black males are more likely to be born into homes with insufficient power to provide the requisite medical, nutritional and intellectual nurturing, if they are more likely to receive inadequate *day care*, if they are subject to *pedagogical neglect* and *exclusionary academic policies*, then their initial capacity, their potential, no matter how great as children, may be so diminished by the cumulative effect of these nested issue clusters that their potential will rarely be translated into real achievement. In the specific case of black males this pattern is likely to repeat itself to the detriment of succeeding generations of black families. However, the pattern for black females is identical. Thus, black male-female differences cannot be attributed solely to family circumstances of power.

Experience is a factor to consider when we measure *achievement*, whether we speak of the score "experienced" by a black male assigned to an EMR class or the GRE number earned by a black male applicant to a Ph.D. program. Experience, the *fact* of black male educational attainment and economic status, is an outgrowth of *opportunity* and the accumulation of *knowledge* beginning with infancy and continuing throughout life. One's *capacity* to achieve, to grow and to prosper, then can be seen as the sum of one's accumulated knowledge plus one's *opportunities* to expand that knowledge. Finally, the experiences one is of-