"It takes a village to raise a child – It takes a campus to graduate a student"
Exploring the Cultural Relevance of Student Development
Models for African Americans in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a synthesis of the literature related to cultural identity and college student development among African Americans in higher education. Racial and cultural identities for African American college students are an integral part of their student development and have been connected to a variety of positive outcomes such as succeeding in college. Currently, traditional student development models and theories, once considered applicable to all students, are being challenged on the grounds that they are not culturally sensitive. Furthermore, the diversification of the philosophical foundation of higher education is also being challenged on the grounds that its foundation is also based in one dominant worldview. Subsequently, the classical student development literature as well as the philosophical foundation of higher education is being disputed on the grounds that its theories have been generalized to all student populations from samples that were predominantly White, male, and middle class. The guiding question of this work seeks to uncover if an African American college student's racial identity can truly be accommodated and achieved at a university which utilizes college student development models based solely in a European framework. Both Eurocentric and Afrocentric models are discussed and suggestions on how to integrate Afrocentric worldviews into higher education are made.

Keywords: African American, college students, cultural identity, retention, higher education, Afrocentricity, Nguzo Saba

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"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not *to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.*"
~ Marianne Williamson

I would first like to give all praises to God for enabling me to achieve such a goal and for allowing me to walk within my life's purpose and allowing my light to shine.

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DEDICATION

The African proverb which states that *"It takes a village to raise a child"* is not only fitting for the purposes of this work; it is more fitting in describing my own personal life journey. I dedicate this work to my own village, for whom without their care, nurturing and compassion; only God would know where I would be today.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ethnic minority students' social and intellectual development will be better served when their distinct cultures and experiences have been identified and intentionally incorporated into campus life…Many institutions have attempted to educate ethnic minorities, specifically African American students while ignoring their sociocultural reality (Cheatham, 1991).

This paper presents a synthesis of the literature related to cultural identity and college student development among African Americans in higher education. The concept of cultural diversity in higher education has sparked discussions and debates which have focused on increasing faculty and students color, with emphasis on retention and recruitment (Blackwell, 1987; Carter and Wilson, 1994; Epps, 1989; Oliver & Brown, 1988; Pettigrew, 1991; Schiele, 1994). The increasing emergence of ethnic groups on college campuses presents challenges for student affairs and higher education practitioners to effectively serve these students. Currently, traditional student development models and theories, once considered applicable to all students, are being challenged by an increasingly diverse student population (Johnson, 2003; Schiele, 1994). According to Schiele, the diversification of the philosophical foundation of higher education is also being challenged as it has received scant attention Subsequently, the classical student development literature as well as the philosophical foundation of higher education is being disputed on the grounds that its theories have been generalized to all student populations from samples that were predominantly White, male, and middle class (Asante, 1991; Johnson, 2001) and is therefore uninclusive. There is no argument that there appears to be extensive diversity within the knowledgebase of higher education,

however the philosophical underpinnings of higher education in the United States are shaped by one dominant worldview - European.

Racial and cultural identities for African American students are an integral part of their student development. The development of a positive cultural identity has been connected to a variety of positive outcomes, including higher self efficacy for academic achievement (O'Brien *et al.* 1999; Smith *et al. 1999;* Robinson & Biran, 2006, Kambon, 1992*),* enhanced self esteem (Phinney *et al.* 1997), and more positive relationships with people of other races and ethnicities (Phinney *et al.* 1997). Therefore, a positive racial identity is critical for the academic success and personal development of the African American student. A student that has a positive racial identity and knowledge of self is more likely to remain and succeed in college.

Institutional practice which incorporates the inclusion of racial and cultural identity models in student development models is essential to accommodate the diversification of campuses and is a determining factor in the academic success of African American students (Boughan, 1996; Cazden, 1996; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999; Laden, 1998). The research question posed for this work seeks to uncover if an African American college student's racial identity can truly and authentically be increased at a university which utilizes social development models based in a European framework?

In an analytical review of the student development and racial identity literature, this paper will discuss the evolution of theories and frameworks, Eurocentric and Afrocentric, which have been and can be used in relation to African Americans in higher education. Considerations for the appropriateness of applying college student

development models that are based in European American/Eurocentric psychology to the development of African American college students will be discussed as well as suggestions on how to integrate Afrocentric worldviews into higher education. This paper does not serve to discredit any frameworks or worldviews which have currently been used in assessing the development of the African American college student.

The validity and significance of the aforementioned research has been made and has resulted in breakthroughs throughout college student development literature. The intention of this work serves to acknowledge the current disputes against European based theories and to engage in a conversation regarding the value and application of Afrocentric frameworks which serves to increase and preserve an authentic cultural identity among African American college students – thereby contributing to their overall academic and social developmental success.

The discussion of Eurocentric Frameworks will include the following: the influences and implications of Vincent Tinto‘s Retention Theory of College Student Departure as it relates to academic and social integration for African American students; and an assessment of Pierre Bourdieu‘s Theory of Cultural Capital and Minority Student Access.

The discussion of Afrocentric Frameworks will include Du Bois‘ Double Consciousness Model, Asante‘s Afrocentricity, William Cross‘ Black Identity Theory of Psychological Nigrescence and the Nguzo Saba, all of which will be discussed as a framework for understanding the African American student in higher education.

Suggestions on ways of implementing inclusive models based in an Afrocentric framework are discussed as well as implications for policy, practice and future research.

2. AFROCENTRIC AND EUROCENTRIC PSYCHOLOGY

African psychology is therefore Afrocentric in nature, that is, it utilizes "the history, culture, and philosophy of African people, as the frame of reference for organizing one's approach to reality survival and understanding in the world" (Kambon, 1992, p. 214).

Before engaging in a discussion of college student development models which have frameworks based in European and Afrocentric worldviews, it is necessary to preface this discussion with a review of basic distinctions between Afrocentric and Eurocentric psychologies as it pertains to the basic natures of human beings. This dialogue will also provide definitions of worldviews as they correlate with the applicability of college student development models.

As discussed in his dissertation regarding the role that racial identity plays among African Americans, Hill (2008) references White and Parham (1990) who define African psychology as ~~"a~~n attempt to build a conceptual model that organizes, explains, and leads to understanding the psychosocial behavior of African Americans based on summary dimensions of an African American worldview" (p.23). In order to provide an understanding of the psychological development of African Americans, let us first engage in a discussion of such theories which exist regarding people of both European and African descent. It is imperative to note that this review does not intend to ~~"e~~ssentialize" all people of African or European descent as being similar. However it should merely be considered as a context in understanding the subtleties between Afrocentric and Eurocentric worldviews.

African psychology is now being presented in textbooks and journals as a legitimate science and is therefore considered to be emerging although its basic tenets

date back to the beginning of African people (Johnson, 2003). This ancient psychology is believed to encompass a sense of consciousness that connects African Americans to African people, regardless of where they are in the world (White & Parham, 1990; Parham, 1993). This notion represents a view of the world that is common among those of African descent; hence the reason why the psychology is referred to as African psychology instead of African American psychology or Black psychology (Johnson, 2003).

Social scientists in the field refer to worldview as the ~~"~~distinct way in which people construe reality; their particular approach to life, existence, the universe or cosmos; their system of guiding beliefs of basic assumptions about life" (Baldwin et al, 1992. p. 142). Worldview gives the culture its identity and distinctiveness (Kambon, 1992). As referenced by Johnson (2003):

> All world views are valid in the sense that how one sees the world is how one sees the world, or whatever one believes in, is for them at the time believed. However, careful examination of systems of belief make evident that some systems are more holistic and comprehensive, depending on the limitations set by definition (e.g., a material conception of reality is finite and limited, a spiritual/material is infinite and unlimited. (Myers, 1991, p. 24)

One considerable difference between the philosophical models of the Afrocentric worldview has much emphasis on harmony and collectivity among the community whereas in the Eurocentric worldview, much emphasis is placed on conflict, domination over nature and survival of the fittest (Baldwin, 1980; Baldwin & Hopkins, 1990; Nobles; 1992; Schiele, 1991a, 1994). Individualism and materialism is commonly associated

within a Eurocentric model, in which people are conceived primarily as individuals separate from other people and nature (Akbar, 1984; Schiele, 1994) who seek control over material items, nature and other people (Baldwin, 1985; Bell et al., 1990; Carruthers, 1972; Dixon, 1976; Pinderhughes, 1985; Schiele, 1994; Welsing, 1991; Wright, 1984). The Eurocentric model then appears to value the individual over the collective of the well being of people as a whole (Schiele, 1994).

On the contrary, Afrocentricity is thought to offer a more holistic conception on human beings in that Afrocentricity offers a collective and spiritual perspective (Akbar, 1984; Boykin & Toms, 1985). One common South African proverb embraces this concept of collectivity: *"I am because we are and we are because I am."*

We see this proverb again as Warfield-Coppock (1990) demonstrates this difference in the Euro American and African American ideologies by looking at two philosophical statements. She stated that the Eurocentric mode of thought is visible in the words of philosopher Immanuel Kant (originally from philosopher Rene Descartes), "I think, therefore I am." In contrast is the African philosophical statement, "I am because we are, we are therefore, I am" (p. 13). According to Warfield-Coppock (1990), the former statement represents the concept of a person-centered existence, whereas the latter implies that the individual exists only because of the group. It is these very worldviews on which psychological constructs are built (Johnson, 2003).

Although Afrocentricity recognizes individual uniqueness (Akbar, 1984; Schiele, 1994), it perceives individual identity as collective identity. In this perspective, the individual cannot be understood separate from others because the perceptual separation

of the individual from other people does not exist (Akbar, 1984; Dixon, 1976; Schiele, 1994).

European psychology, according to White & Parham (1990) as it is known in this country, is dated back to Wilhelm Wundt in Germany around1879 and attempts to explain European behaviors from a European worldview (Johnson, 2003). It is maintained that Euro American scientists mirror this practice of defining and understanding the behaviors of Euro American peoples (White & Parham, 1990) as displayed by the volumes of psychological knowledge which demonstrate that European psychology is about the affirmation of Europeans and Euro Americans‘ culture, philosophy, and survival (Kambon, 1992).

It is contended by scholars (White & Parham, 1990; and Johnson, 2003) that this worldview is presented as universal human phenomena and implicitly and explicitly establish it as the normative standard of behavior against which all other cultural groups should be measured:

> What emerged as normal or abnormal, sane or insane, relevant or irrelevant, was always in comparison to how closely a particular thought or behavior paralleled that of White Europeans and/or Euroamericans. For many White social scientists and psychologists, the word ―different,‖ when applied to people became synonymous with ―deficient‖ rather than simply different. (White & Parham, 1990, p. 4)

As referenced by Johnson (2003), the European psychology is a fitting and appropriate way for people of European descent to view their world as long as it

maintains itself as just and not as a universal truth for all people of the world to be measured (Houessou-Adin, 1995). It is when this notion of European psychology becomes a universal truth that it becomes a powerful tool of oppression (Nobles, 1992). Similarly, this claim can also be made for those who may assume a universal truth for African psychology over all African Americans.

As a result of this perceived misapplication of Western philosophical assumptions on the behaviors and natures of African people and people of African descent, African psychology has become a necessity (Nobles, 1986). This necessity has been maintained for two prominent reasons. First it is believed that European psychology has failed to provide a full and accurate understanding of the reality of Black life. Second, the philosophical basis of European psychology –which claims to explain and understand _human nature', is not applicable to all human groups" (Nobles, 1986, p. 64).

African psychology serves to set forth new definitions, conceptual models, theories and tests of normative behaviors which are authentic and relevant the Black (African) experience (Williams, 1975). As cited by Johnson (2003), White and Parham (1990) concluded –The foundation for an authentic Black psychology is an accurate understanding of the Black family, its African roots, historical development and contemporary expressions, and its impact on the psychological development and socialization of its members" (p. 4).

As noted above, African psychology serves to set forth authentic conceptual models which are reflective of the Black experience. Social scientists in the field have provided a myriad of theories regarding the psychosocial and identity development of African Americans; however some can be perceived as problematic by essentializing all

African American people. The aforementioned review of human beings and distinctions of basic psychologies between Afrocentric and Eurocentric worldviews are the premise for this work and attempts to question the appropriateness of applying college student development models based in European frameworks to African Americans. The implications made regarding worldview distinctions are necessary and have significant implications in the relevance and application Afrocentricity in higher education.

3. EUROCENTRIC FRAMEWORKS

All world views are valid in the sense that how one sees the world is how one sees the world, or whatever one believes in, is for them at the time believed. However, careful examination of systems of belief make evident that some systems are more holistic and comprehensive, depending on the limitations set by definition (e.g., a material conception of reality is finite and limited, a spiritual/material is infinite and unlimited.
(Myers, 1991, p. 24)

Tinto's College Student Departure - Academic & Social Integration Model

The most commonly referred to and comprehensive model in the college student retention and dropout literature is that of Vincent Tinto. For the purposes of this work, Tinto's model will be the focus point of review in this section. Tinto (1987) synthesized research on student attrition and on actions institutions can implement to reduce it. Tinto made implicit assumptions about college access in his theory of college student departure. According to Braxton, Sullivan and Johnson (1997), Tinto developed a model explicating the reasons for college student attrition that has reached near paradigmatic status. Tinto's assumptions regarding what must be done to prepare students for academic life in college have influenced subsequent theories about how to prepare adolescents for this transition.

Tinto based his model of college student retention on two major theories: Durkheim's Theory of Social Integration (1951) and Van Gennep's work on Rites of Passages (1960), both of which are based in European worldviews. Tierney (1992) assessed these European influences in which he explains that Durkheim's (1951) model suggests that the cause of suicide in Western societies is due to the failure of certain individuals to integrate themselves into larger societal structures such as the state, the

church, or the family. Van Gennep‘s (1960) model focuses on the different groups of people who participate in initiation rites that allow them to move from one status to another; similar to adolescence to adulthood.

According to Tierney (1999), Tinto used these theorists‘ ideas to frame his model of college student departure, which views college as an initial ritual with the success of the initiates – that is, the students – being dependent upon the degree to which they are able to integrate into the social and academic life of post-secondary institutions.

The influences of Tinto‘s original model raised both theoretical and practical concerns for critics. In a review of Van Gennep‘s anthropological model on Rights of Passages, Tierney (1999) noted that the model never assumed that a rite of passage involved individuals from one culture seeking initiation into a foreign culture – therefore it would not be appropriate to apply this concept to the African American college student attending a predominantly white institution. Van Gennep was an anthropologist who studied tribal societies and rites of passages in a particular culture and believed that rituals were designed to move individuals from one developmental stage to another (Tierney, 1992). These transitions from one social situation to the next resulted in a succession of stages that occur in an individual‘s life such as birth, social puberty, marriage, initiation into religious affiliations, occupational development, etc. (Caffe & Vizedome, 1960). Gennep‘s model argued that all cultures had rituals that functioned similarly and were crucial to every tribal society. However Tinto‘s manifestation of this idea in his Student Departure Model did not allow for flexibility and was more general for college students, regardless of culture.

Tinto‘s (1987) original student departure model identified three major sources of student departure: academic difficulties, the inability of individuals to resolve their educational and occupational goals, and their failure to become or remain incorporated in the intellectual and social life of the institution. Tinto maintained that, in order to persist, students needed integration into formal (academic performance) and informal (faculty/staff interactions) academic systems and formal (extracurricular activities) and informal (peer-group interactions) social systems.

Criticisms have been made which suggest that Tinto‘s original model missed the mark for minority students as it does not account for various cultural factors. These criticisms maintain that Tinto‘s original framework is flawed and paints a disturbing portrait for students of color on college campuses (Tierney, 1999). Not only are students‘ cultural backgrounds irrelevant to their successful collegiate experience, Tinto‘s original model maintained that if students are to succeed, their backgrounds must be discarded in favor of the dominant culture of their institution. Furthermore, if an initiate or student fails, the blame falls on the individual, not the institution.

The connection between cultural identity and academic achievement is made in a study conducted by Lee & Donlan (2010) which sought to assess the factors affecting American Indian/Alaskan Native student persistence in higher education, they found that several factors relating to their cultural identity existed. Among these factors include family obligations and financial difficulties.

The research found that many American Indian/Alaskan Native students found it difficult to balance the challenges of undergraduate studies as well as dealing with familial obligations (Lee & Donlan, 2010). Focus group participants discussed their

strong sense of responsibility for their families and identified these obligations as being a likely cause for withdrawal from college. Research findings also revealed that focus group participants felt their university could improve by becoming more sensitive to American Indian/Alaskan Native culture with regards to their family obligations. Financial difficulties also ranked as being one major reason for students having to withdraw from school. Focus group participants admitted that many American Indian/Alaskan Native students lacked the skills needed to manage their financial aid effectively. Participants also indicated that a substantial amount of students did not know how to access grants or scholarships that would be available to them. The research on native students shows that there is more of an emphasis on family connections and financial dependence is a major part of this. While many American Indian/Alaskan Native students are expected to support either their nuclear or extended families with their financial aid, a lot of students also have to work part time in order to satisfy family needs. This level of familial obligation and balancing act is a cultural one which eventually, poses as a challenge for students; disrupting continuity therefore threatening their academic performance and integration as defined by Tinto‘s model (1987).

Tinto‘s (1987) original argument stated that to the degree participants are integrated into the institution's fabric, the greater likelihood exists for that individual to fail at integrating into the social system of college. In addition to integrating into the fabric of the institution, Tinto also implies that in order for students to be successful in higher education, they must physically as well as socially dissociate themselves from the communities of their past in order to become fully incorporated in the life of the academy. In short, Tinto (1987) suggested that whether a student persists or drops out of

college is quite strongly predicted by their degree of academic and social integration in the institution.

Lee and Donlan (2010) further describe this academic and social integration in their research utilizing Tinto‘s (1993, 2006) integration-commitment theoretical model of college student departure. This model investigates the process by which students assimilate into the higher education community and suggests that college student persistence is a process which begins before a student enrolls in college and terminates upon their departure or graduating (2010). Evidence shows that various individual characteristics such as pre-college school experiences and academic preparation (House, 1998; Kerr, Colangelo, Maxey, & Christensen, 992: Terrenzini et al.1996), study habits and attitudes (Hoover & Jacobs, 1992), as well as family background (Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nova, 1996) are all factors which influence a students‘ decision to persist or withdraw from college (2010).

In light of much criticism Tinto (1993) later theorized that this expectation may not hold true for African American students. Specifically, he explains that African American college students, particularly at predominantly white institutions (PWIs), are best socially and academically integrated into the campus community when they are able to demonstrate bicultural competence (Rodgers & Summers, 2008). That is, African American students integrated effectively by developing a dual identity to which Du Bois referred. This identity calls for the African American college student to maneuver in a predominantly White campus community in which they must retain and develop their African American identity, but must also develop a bicultural identity. Du Bois‘ Dual Identity model is discussed later in the Afrocentric Frameworks section.

More recently, in his own review of earlier bodies of work pertaining to the student departure model, Tinto (2006) acknowledges the flaws and limitations of his earlier retention models and admitted that his research on student retention lacked complexity and detail. He explained that his earlier work was based on qualitative data from residential campuses and primarily reflected students from majority backgrounds. As a result, his initial theory in its conception was not applicable to students at other types of institutions, who represented different genders, race, ethnicity, income and orientations.

It is imperative to note that to an extent, the cultural backgrounds of African American adolescents differ significantly from the middle and upper class Eurocentric cultural framework in which American postsecondary education is based. Furthermore, African American students must make significant personal, family, and social adjustments to attend college, specifically PWIs, especially if the campus is geographically distant from their homes. Many students come from communities and high schools in which they were in the majority; on the college campus, however, they are a distinct minority (D'Augelli, 1993). However, Tinto‘s (1987) model suggests that adolescents perform rights of passages framed within this idea of foreign culture. Again, while modeling Durkheimian‘s (1951) imperatives of social integration over the needs of the individual, Tinto maintains that students must abandon the communities and cultures in which they were raised and integrate and assimilate into the dominant culture of the colleges they attend in order to be successful. Conversely, if they fail to assimilate, they will fail at college (Tierney, 1999).

Tinto's contributions and works on the college student development literature are immeasurable and his models are being implemented in colleges in universities all over the world. However, given that his original model is based on the experience and worldview of the dominant White (or Eurocentric) group, higher education practitioners should question how applicable these models are and how students of color are affected by them. Aside from Tinto, there are numerous college student development theories which have as their foundation European psychology (Rodgers, 1980). For example, as discussed by Hill (2008):

> Chickering (1969) based his vectors of college student development on Erikson's (1959) human stage development theory; Erikson's work is thus an extension of Freud (Rodgers, 1980). Chickering and Reisser (1993) stated, "The major task confronting higher education is not to generate new, complex, and subtle understanding, but to act on knowledge already available, to recognize principles of learning and human development already clearly established" (p. 280). Predominantly Euro American colleges and universities are based on Anglo-Saxon, Euro American values and survive because they are symbolically related to the cultural values of the broader American society.

A stronger sense of institutional accountability in matters of diversity and cultural identity are necessary to create inclusive college climates. This level of initiative is impossible to take if higher education practitioners take on the positions of the abovementioned scholars: in placing all the responsibility on the student if they do not persist and by not developing new, complex understandings which serve to benefit and accommodate minority students.

Cultural Capital and Minority Student Access

During the past 40 years, researchers have defined and examined the implications of culture on Black student achievement (O'Connor, Lewis & Mueller, 2007). Culture has been conceptualized as consisting of norms and beliefs, and they sought to document differences in the norms and beliefs that governed the life of the poor, who were disproportionately Black, as contrasted with the middle class, who were imagined as White. Examples of these differences include language practices, parenting approaches and child-parent interactions, educational attitudes and aspirations.

Critics in the field have argued against this perspective, pointing out that researchers had not captured culture in their analyses but had only isolated and described selected behaviors of the (Black) poor (Gordon, 1965; Valentine, 1968). In doing so, researchers had imposed their own meaning on such behaviors, positioning Whites as the normative referent.

Culture is an elusive term which entails more than a set of described behaviors and plays a more dominant and valuable role in the lives of African Americans. Tierney (1999) alludes to this vagueness and defines culture as a set of symbolic processes, ideologies, and sociohistorical contexts that are situated in an arena of struggle, contestation, and multiple interpretations.

When considering Tinto's (1987) original implications of student success or failure in college based on their ability to assimilate, it would be helpful to note an alternative framework and model which has its foundation in European psychology yet includes a very constructive context of culture when considering minority student access and retention in higher education. This framework also encourages a more proactive

approach for institutional accountability and preparation. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu‘s theory of cultural capital is useful and can be applied to student development and college preparation programs. According to Bourdieu (1977), cultural capital is based on the assumption that cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities are possessed and often inherited by certain groups in society. Distinctive cultural knowledge is transmitted through the families of each social class. Subsequently, children of upper-class families inherit substantially different skills, abilities, manners, styles of interaction, and facility with language (Bourdieu, 1977). Cultural capital, then, refers to the sets of linguistic and cultural competencies individuals inherit because of their class, racial, and gender identities. Families with higher amounts of cultural capital have clearer strategies of how much and what kind of schooling each generation should hold (Tierney & Jun, 2001).

PWI‘s may struggle with the challenge of multicultural student development and continue to operate under the melting pot theory. Challenges which fuel African American departure involve interacting with the dominant culture, developing cultural awareness and appreciation, developing interdependence, fulfilling affiliation needs, surviving academically, and developing social responsibility. Higher education administrators must take on the challenge to acknowledge these cultural barriers as these challenges of African American students will lead to problems of retention and general frustration.

Education models that maintain cultural integrity have shown to be successful. As Deyhle (1995) has discussed in a decade-long ethnographic study with Navajo youths, the students who are more successful in school are the ones who are more secure in their traditional culture. The school success of these Navajo students, with strong traditions

intact, is explained by what she defined as a model of cultural integrity. By refusing to accept either assimilation or rejection, these students remained academically successful while maintaining their place as Navajos within the community.

Tierney and Jun (2001) define cultural integrity as those programs and teaching strategies that call upon students' racial and ethnic backgrounds in a positive manner in the development of their pedagogies and learning activities. Cultural integrity removes the problem from the child and looks on the child's background neither as a neutral nor a negative factor for learning. Instead, the adolescent's cultural background is a critical ingredient for acquiring cultural capital and achieving success. Student development models and preparation programs that sustain the notion of cultural integrity would mark a bold and necessary initiative that provides a more inclusive model of institutional practice. One program (Intergroup Relations) which models the abovementioned framework is discussed later in the Theory to Practice section.

4 AFROCENTRIC FRAMEWORKS

"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others. . . . One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warrings ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder." W.E.B. Du Bois *(1868-1963) The Souls of Black Folk (1903)*

Du Bois' Theory of Double Consciousness

Several notable scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1947), Ralph Ellison (1952), and Frantz Fanon (1965) took the plunge in assessing the earliest forms of racial identity and the effects on the identity development of Africans as manifested through their writings and teachings (Hill, 2008). Much of the early research viewed African American racial identity within the context of this group's stigmatized status in American society, with little regard for the role of culture. Psychological identity development gained momentum in the late 1960s. Psychologists, primarily African Americans, began to redefine African American racial identity with particular emphasis on the uniqueness of their oppression and cultural experience (Hill, 2008). However, such momentum would not be possible without the groundbreaking work of Du Bois (1903).

As one of the first African American scholars in America, W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) was one of the first to examine the effects of slavery, oppression, and the overall treatment that Blacks experienced in America (Hill, 2008). Du Bois (1903) views racial prejudice as a by-product of America's history of slavery and exploitation and eloquently articulates the double consciousness that resulted from the inherent struggle of being both

a "Negro" and an American. Du Bois‘ articulates the impact of this dissonance in this statement: ―One ever feels his two-ness, ―an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body" (p. 5).

In the Souls of Black Folks (1903; 1989), Du Bois poses the question of what can be considered as Racial Identity by contemporary societal standards as either an American, a Negro, or the combination thereof as an American Negro. Du Bois poses the question of a dual consciousness and asks if there is the possibility of being an American Negro. Am I Black or American? Hill (2008) regards to this as a schizophrenic conflict with the American/Negro is a continuous historical struggle with race and identity.

Du Bois (1903) contends that membership within either of these entities is less the result of biology or ancestry, but rather it is more attributed as a result of the socio-political systems that categorize humans into races or ―worlds" subject to competing classes. As cited by Hill (2008,) in his autobiography Dusk of Dawn (1940), Du Bois explains his personal evolution pertaining to identity development and relying less on scientific definitions of race. Based on his personal genealogy, Du Bois concludes how absurd the conception of race is and contends that racial identity is socially constructed (1940).

Historically speaking, Du Bois contributions are essential to the understanding of racial identity development and any dialogue regarding racial identity must include a reference to Du Bois, as he was one of first to examine the competing interests of being an American and Negro and how conflicting this dynamic was to have to identify with both aspects racially (Hill, 2008).

Cross' Theory of Psychological Nigrescence

The inclusion of cultural and racial identity models in the practice of student development is a beginning point for institutions to better accommodate the needs of African American students. College preparation programs and student development programs would benefit from the inclusion of identity typologies to enhance the ability to cultivate a more diverse community and to encourage cultural awareness. In staying true to Williams' (1975) assertion that African psychology should set forth new conceptual models and theories relevant to the Black experience, one primary model that would be vital in understanding the identity of African Americans students in higher education is Cross' Negro to Black Conversion model (1978, 1994), later coined as the theory of Psychological Nigrescence.

Cross, a prominent researcher specializing in Black psychology, developed a five sage model of racial identity development for African Americans in 1971 which has since then been revised and revamped. It is imperative to note that Cross' basic model has received wide appeal for almost two decades before any meaningful attempts at modification were put forth. Its broad appeal was no doubt derived in part from it being widely viewed as best capturing the psycho-social dynamics of the African American racial consciousness movement from the pre-1960s Jim Crow era – through the 1960s –Black Power" movement, to the post-60s Racial Integration era (Kambon, 1998). The model is founded in a theory known as Nigrescence which is a French word meaning –the process of becoming Black" (Cross, 1978). As stated, Cross's Identity model was inspired by issues and concerns emerging from the civil rights and Black Nationalist movements during the 1960's and 1970's.

. The original Nigrescence Model attempts to capture the stages that African Americans engage in when experiencing a major shift in their racial self-identification. Cross explains this process by highlighting the term race salience, which describes the degree of significance that race holds for individuals (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). High race salience indicates that race is central to one‘s self-concept, while low race salience refers to those who have a sense of, yet attribute very little of their self-concept to, being African American (Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001).

African American students must go through a process of growth and discovery in order to regain a positive African American racial identity. Moreover, for African American students, cultural and racial identity has a direct impact on their student development. The five stages of Cross‘ racial identity are: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization and commitment.

During the pre-encounter phase, the African American has absorbed many of the beliefs and values of the dominant white culture and has not begun the development process. This stage is marked by self-hatred which is expressed through issues dealing with low salience and pro white/anti-Black attitudes (Cross, 1995). Cross suggests that this internalization of negative Black stereotypes may be outside of his or her conscious awareness and the individual seeks to assimilate and be accepted by Whites, while passively distancing themselves from other Blacks.

Stage two of the Cross model is the Encounter stage in which an individual person has some sort of experience that shatters their current identity (Cross, 1978; Cross, 1995). This stage contains two steps: experiencing the encounter, and personalizing the

encounter. When a person experiences the encounter their reaction may include confusion, alarm and depression. After the actual experience the person will usually continue on with his or her life, however, there is now a conflict occurring internally within this person. Their old identity is being overwhelmed by the encounter experience. This brings with a considerable amount of guilt, shame, anxiety and depression. During this time the person is actively involved in internalizing the encounter experience and this stage ends when this internalization is complete. For the African American student, these feelings may be attributed to a realization that he/she is a member of an ethnic group that is not fully appreciated in this society.

The Immersion/Emersion stage is characterized by the simultaneous desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one's racial identity and an active avoidance of symbols of Whiteness. Parham (1989) describes this stage as everything of value in life must be Black or relevant to Blackness. This stage is also characterized by a tendency to denigrate white people, simultaneously glorifying Black people. The result of this exploration is an emerging security in a newly defined and affirmed sense of self. African American adolescents may change their style of speech, dress, interest and friends based on their newly affirming self-identification as a Black person. For example, an African American adolescent in the immersion stage may begin to spend more time with their Black friends, eventually associating very little, if at all with their non-Black friends.

The internalization stage is the fourth stage in the Cross model. During the internalization phase, an individual maintains his or her connections with Black peers and is willing to establish meaningful relationships with Whites who acknowledge and are

respectful of his or her self-definition. This stage signals the resolution of conflicts between the old and the new, and is exhibited through a calm secure demeanor (Cross, 1978).

Those at the fifth stage, Internalization-commitment, have found ways to translate their personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment to the concerns of Blacks as a group, which is sustained over time (Cross, 1991). After developing a Black identity, individuals in this stage demonstrate a commitment not only to incorporate the new identity but also to struggle to translate personal identity into actions that are meaningful to the group (Cross, 1978). This stage is marked by a long-term commitment to the advancement of not only the Black community, but society as a whole. Cross‘ model offers a useful heuristic approach in which individuals‘ experiences throughout these stages may vary. It would be noteworthy to point out that scholars of African Psychology have actually criticized Cross‘ original model on its roots as taking on a Eurocentric Psychological framework. These criticisms are discussed later in this section.

Afrocentricity

Researchers Cheatham and Berg-Cross (1992) contend that if college is to be a rewarding and successful experience for its students, then it must adopt a series of culturally relevant, challenging, developmental tasks: "Collegiate environments that do not acknowledge and incorporate the cultural value of African Americans and other ethnic minority groups retard rather than promote these students' psycho social development" (p. 179).

The concept of Afrocentricity has previously been used to convey a variety of meanings and has prompted some to even question its validity (Mercer, 1991; Nicholson, 1991; Ravich, 1991; Schlesinger, 1991; Shannker, 1991). Afrocentricity has received an extensive level of attention in both primary and secondary schools (Schiele, 1994; Imani, 2005) in which African American children have been largely exposed to the historical accomplishments of people of African descent. This integration of culture within the curriculum, also referred to as culturally responsive curriculum, is predicated upon the notion that African American children will perform better academically if they are exposed to the history of their ancestors. The undergirding foundation of Afrocentricity is philosophical in that it is a model based on traditional African assumptions of several African American social scientists (Abarry, 1990; Akbar, 1979, 1984; Asante, 1988, 1991; Baldwin, 1980).

Research pioneer, Asante (1991a, 1991b) shares similar beliefs regarding culturally relevant education as he believes that for African Americans to have higher achievement levels they must be empowered and centered in their classrooms. He deemed that "by 'centering' their students of color, teachers can reduce feelings of dislocation engendered by our society's predominantly 'White self-esteem curriculums'" (Asante, 1991a, p. 28). Asante‘s concept of centering allows African Americans to see themselves in their education and it is suggested that this dynamic makes learning more intimate as well as interesting for students. This phenomena is elaborated in one of Asante‘s (1991b) articles in which he indicates that seeing themselves within the curriculum created a "renewed sense of purpose and vision" in the lives of African American students (p. 177).

Asante (1991) explains the theoretical and philosophical background of Afrocentricity and its role in education thoroughly and credits the original developments as being introduced by historian Carter G. Woodson in the *Mis-education of the Negro* (1933). Woodson's work exposed the fundamental problems with the education of the African person in America. Woodson (1933) contends that if education is ever to be substantive within the context of American society, it must address the African's historical experiences, both in Africa and America (p. 7). Furthermore, he places the burden on educators, particularly those at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's), to teach the African American to be conscious of African traditions and history. Woodson's concerns regarding the education of African Americans serves as the fuel which ignites Asante's Afrocentric approach to education.

While unpacking the definitions used to explain the Afrocentric paradigm used in an educational context, Asante (1991) refers to *centricity* as a perspective ~~–th~~at involves students within the context of their own cultural references so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives" (171). This notion is supported by previous research which shows that one of the most productive methods of teaching any student is by placing them within the center of the content being taught (Asante 1990). It is argued that White students benefit as the current approach to education comes from a Eurocentric viewpoint and almost all the experiences discussed in an American classroom are based on White perspectives and history (Asante, 1991). Therefore, Asante would argue that American education is currently *Eurocentric* – not centric. An example of a classroom discussion of the American Revolution is provided where most of the discussion regarding the European slave trade concentrates on the activities of Whites

rather than the resistance efforts of the Africans (1991). This framework for teaching allows for non-white students to rarely see themselves as active participants in history. Asante suggests that a centric education model would view all groups and their contributions as significant to history.

The term *Afrocentricity*, coined in 1987 by Asante, is the frame of reference in which phenomena are viewed from the perspectives of the African person. This approach seeks to centralize the African person in every situation possible. How does this approach look for education? In using the Afrocentric approach, the teacher would provide students an opportunity to study the world, cultures, history and concepts all from an African worldview (Asante, 1987). As discussed previously, Asante's perspective maintains that in most American classrooms, regardless of the subject, Whites are located at the center of the perspective – which could cause a number of ill emotions. Asante states that the African American child who ~~is~~ taught to accept as heroes and heroines individuals who defamed African people is being actively de-centered, dislocated, and made into a nonperson…" (1987, p. 171). Simply stated, since all content areas are adaptable to an Afrocentric approach, students are able to see themselves as subjects versus the objects of education while being centered in the discipline (1991).

The Nguzo Saba

The premise for using Afrocentricity as a framework to stabilizing and enhancing one's sense of self identity in an alien environment is supported by many scholars. Subsequent research has been conducted which supports a more Afrocentric approach specifically for African American College Student Development. It is understood that

there are certain needs African American students require in order to matriculate through college. Such needs may include more diverse programming or culturally responsive curriculum to aid in the retention of African American students. However, rarely do researchers go into detail as to why these needs exist beyond feelings of academic alienation or academic incompetence (Johnson, 2003).

In her comparative analysis of European and African-Based psychologies and their implications for African American college student development, Johnson (2003) investigates the fundamental differences in social realities between Africans and Europeans. In doing so, Johnson (2001) suggests one Afrocentric- based approach that can be used as a foundation to developing programs which would address the psychosocial developmental needs of African American college students; which would be to base them on the *Nguzo Saba* (seven principles of Kwanzaa).

Johnson (2001) notes that there are aspects of African American culture, which in some instances predate slavery, which can be found in African Americans regardless of social economic status (Landrine & Klonoff, 1994). In order to demonstrate how the merging of African culture, African American culture, and Nguzo Saba affect African American college student development, Johnson (2001) created four subsequent figures.

Figure 1: African Worldview Cultivation of African Students

Figure 1 demonstrates how prior to European influence, African students (youth) would be conditioned with African worldview and culture, and their development would thus be holistic to their basic natures (Johnson, 2003). The student is represented by a circle because the African psyche is said to be Afrocircular, as opposed to the European psyche, which is considered Eurolinear (Asante, 1987). This perception is consistent with the above mentioned Afrocentric worldviews which suggests an interconnectedness of all things; the latter suggests the separateness of things or their uniqueness (Johnson, 2003). These are different human objectives derived from historical and cultural experiences (Asante, 1987). The worldview is illustrated as a pyramid because it is a mathematical expression of energy and intelligence manifested by the conversion of thought into material form (Chissell, 1993, p. xxiv).

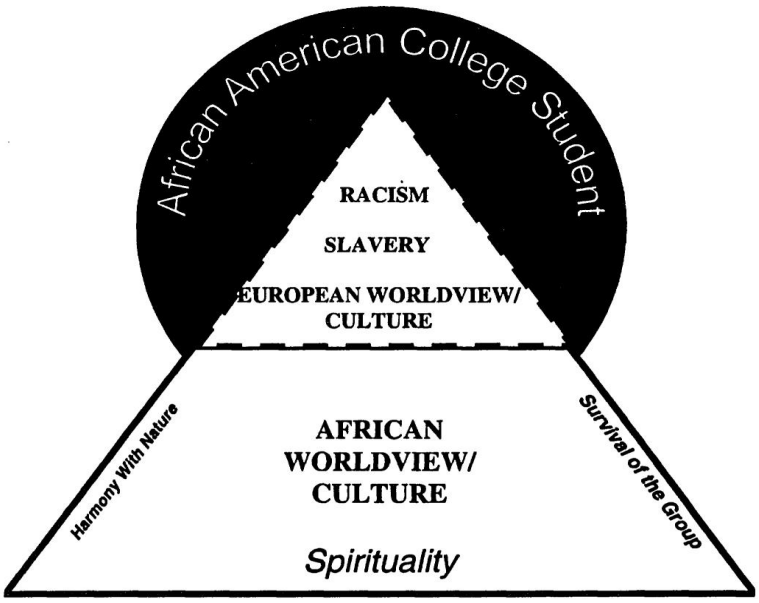

Figure 2: European Worldview and Racism's Permeation of African American College Students

Figure 2 portrays the many ways in which students of African descent are detached or disconnected from their own worldview and culture; thereby preventing their holistic development (Johnson, 2001). These detachments are influenced by the ways in which racism, slavery, and European worldview/culture have permeated African institutions and educational systems. According to Johnson (2001), this permeation interrupted the natural way that African students would be indoctrinated into family and

community based on their particular culture and worldview and culture.

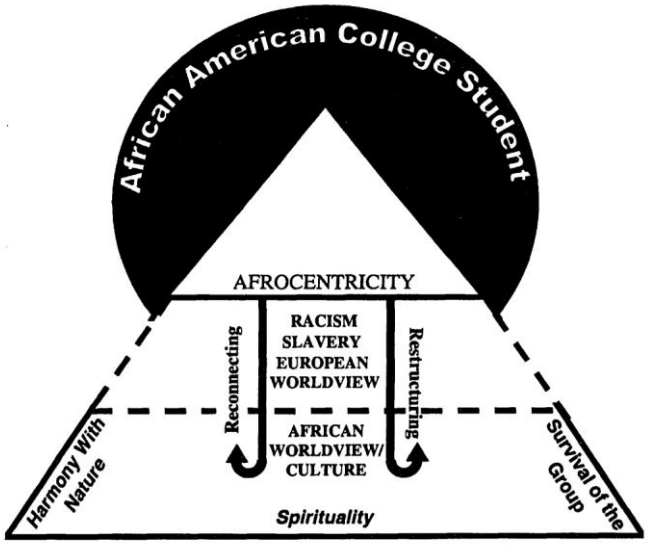

Figure 3: Afrocentricity's Reconnecting and Restructuring of African Worldview in African American College Students

The integration of Afrocentrism is illustrated in Figure 3 and restructures African worldview and culture and thus reconnects it to the student of African descent (Johnson, 2001). Afrocentrism negates the effects of racism and slavery on the development of African American college students and reconnects them to African worldview and culture (Johnson, 2003).

The applicability of Euroamerican college student development is questioned again as it deculturalizes the African American college student (Johnson, 2003). As a result, one African American college student development theory that does not have a foundation that is based in European psychology and worldview is the Nguzo Saba.

Johnson proposes the *Nguzo Saba* as a foundation for African American student development and its implications in student affairs as no other theory or ideology serves as a collective description of the African American while being based in Afrocentric

worldview (2001). She argues that in order to understand and determine the needs of African American students, practitioners and researchers should simply look at what African Americans are saying about themselves both psychologically and socially (2001). The usage of the Nguzo Saba is apparent in the wide varieties of colleges and universities that celebrate Kwanzaa in the Unites States.

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Maulana Karenga and is a holiday for African Americans to celebrate heritage, honor ancestors, and to meditate and affirm purpose (Johnson, 2001). Karenga (1988) explains that the seven principles were derived from Africa and through the African American's life and struggle and serves four basic functions for the African American community: ~~–to~~ reaffirm and restore African heritage and culture, to introduce and reinforce the *Nguzo Saba* , to address the absence of nonheroic holidays in the African American communal celebrations, and to serve as a regular communal celebration reaffirming and reinforcing the bonds between African Americans as a people" (Karenga, 1988).

The *Nguzo Saba* and its seven principles of Kwanzaa has and remains to be the fundamental basis of the Afrocentric movement in the Unites States and serves to reconnect African Americans to their African heritage (Johnson, 2001). According to Karenga (1988), these seven values were selected due to their relevance in communitarian African societies, the spiritual significance of the number 7 in African culture, the perceived relevance in the self determination of African Americans and the memorization, learning and emphasis of the number 7 in terms of teaching (1988). As displayed in Figure 4, the Nguzo Saba also serve to reconnect African Americans to their

culture by restructuring it in the context of their experiences with slavery, racism and European worldview and culture (Johnson, 2001). It is for these reasons that Johnson suggests the *Nguzo Saba* as an Afrocentric value system which could be used in designing an Afrocentric African American college student development model.

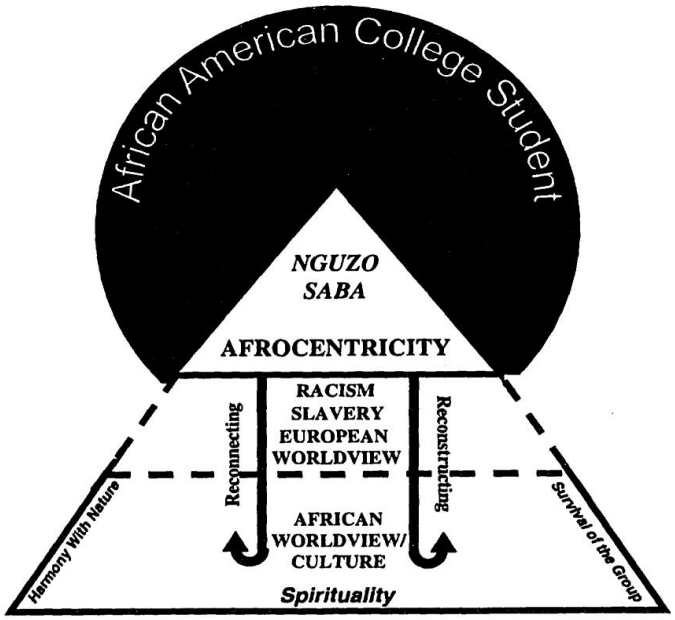

Figure 4: Nguzo Saba as Practice of Reconnecting and Restructuring African Worldview in African American College Students

These seven principles, or *Nguzo Saba*, are *umoja* (unity), *kujichagulia* (self determination), *ujima* (collective work and responsibility), *ujamma* (cooperative economics), *nia* (purpose), *kuumba* (creativity), and *imani (*faith). In moving from theory to practice, Johnson provides an elaborate framework for developing programs using the *Nguzo Saba*. The application of the Nguzo Saba in college program development is discussed later in the Theory to Practice section.

Criticisms in Afrocentric Models

Kambon and Bowman-Reid (2010) propose various categories of paradigms which explain the different classifications and constructs of African American personality theories which serve to explain Black (African) psychology. Proposed under the context of *Africentric* versus *Non-Africentric,* three distinct approaches or paradigms have emerged and have come to characterize contemporary work in this area: (1) Eurocentric Models, (2) Transitional Africentric Models, and (3) Africentric Models. This schematic is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Contrasting Africentric and Non-Africentric Approaches to African American Personality Theories

African Personality Paradigms: Modification of Kobi Kambon's Schematic

PARAMETERS	AFRICENTRIC THEORIES	NON-AFRICENTRIC THEORIES
Worldview/ Cultural Framework	African Worldview	European Worldview
Motivation/Psychic Energy	Proactive - Positive Energy Assumption	Reactive - Negative Energy Assumption
Standard of Referent	Strengths, Normality, Naturalness/Positive-adaptiveness of behavior & functioning	Weakness, Abnormality, Defensiveness in behavior & functioning
Subtypes or Variants	Africentric (African Worldview emphasis)	a. Pure Eurocentric (European Worldview emphasis) b. Pseudo Africentric (Diffuse/Predominant EWV emphasis) c. Transitional Africentric (movement toward AWV emphasis)
Goal/Outcome	Africentric Orientation	1) Eurocentric Orientation 2) Transracial/Diffuse: Universalism emphasis 3) Some Pro-Black with Diversity & Universalism emphasis
Optimal Functioning	Fulfilling the African Survival Thrust	Fulfilling the European Survival Thrust

Adapted from Kambon, 1998.

Kambon and Bowman-Reid (2010) categorize both DuBois and Cross's models as *Transitional Models*, meaning that they represent those theories under African/African American (AA) authorship that superimpose the ―European worldview as the conceptual framework, even though they focus on explaining AA personality"(p. 94 .) or some

important aspects of it. These theories have represented the oldest tradition among Black psychological and social science theorists in the general field of Black or Africana Studies.

The most poignant criticism of these *Transitional Models* is that some of these theories emphasize a predominance of negative traits as the basis of portraying, characterizing and explaining normal and natural AA personality, while others emphasize more positive traits and behavioral patterns, all of which are defined within the European-American cultural context of experience (Azibo, 1990; Kambon and Bowman-Reid, 2010). These models are believed to pay little attention to the role/forces of traditional African cultural reality and philosophy (values, beliefs, behavioral norms, etc.) in driving AA cultural reality in the contemporary psychosocial dynamics of AA personality (Kambon, 1992, 1998). Rather, they emphasize coping with and adapting to the European-American cultural reality as the sole determinant of core AA personality functioning in terms of racial identity and perhaps an African American personal-social identity void of any substantive African ―cultural" infrastructure underpinnings (Kambon and Bowman-Reid, 2010).

Literature surrounding ideas about African American personalities and identity has been dominated mainly by William Cross Jr. (1995) and his associates' (Cross & Valdiver, 2001; Helms, 1989; Parham, 1989) ideas as the theory of ―Nigrescence" is the most well-known and fully developed of the various models comprising this group.

In general, according to both Kambon and Bowman-Reid (2010) these theories in many respects seem to place a predominant emphasis on the Du Bois (1902) theme of Bi-culturalism, in the sense of racial and social status conflicts among Black individuals, and

perhaps Fanon‘s (1967) complex theme of *Existential Universalism* (Bulhan, 1985; Kambon, 1998), rather than on African cultural infrastructure as forming the psychological core of AA personality (Kambon, 1992).

Additionally, Asante‘s version of Afrocentricity has been perceived as problematic as its foundation implies a universal and essentialized truth for people of all African descent. The same can be stated for Johnson‘s application of the Nguzo Saba as a universal truth for all African American college students. Collins (1998) expresses the motivation of such theories by stating that Black cultural nationalism "concerns itself with both evaluating Western treatment of Black culture as deviant… and constructing new analyses of the Black experience" (p.159). The result is an attempt to produce an alternative, positive, philosophically discrete Black culture predicated on an "essential Blackness.” This reclamation of Black identity is no different than those Eurocentric models used to explain all people. Furthermore, Collins maintains that the search for a singular Black identity grounded in normative models of essential Blackness presents blatant problems with defining norms and deviance, which is reifying the models of positivist science which had previously been used to oppress Blacks (1998).

Finally, unlike those of Afrocentricity, Du Bois‘ view, which contends that membership within either of these entities is less the result of biology or ancestry, is more consistent with Collins‘ (1998) Standpoint Theory as it is not used to essentialize any group based on its mere genealogy.

5. FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Afrocentricity

Schiele (1994) introduced several ways in which African American educators can integrate and promote Afrocentricity in higher education: (a) promoting Afrocentricity among students, colleagues, and administrators; (b) integrating Afrocentric content in the classroom; and (c) applying and integrating Afrocentricity in scholarly and professional activities.

Promoting Afrocentricity among students, colleagues, and administrators

Schiele (1994) contends that Afrocentric ideas can and should be disseminated throughout the various academic roles in which African Americans educators have with students. For example, academic advisors are able to discuss Afrocentric perspectives during their advising sessions with all students; not just those of African descent. Collaborations on implementing Afrocentric ideas can also be discussed between educators and students involved with campus politics. By engaging in these discussions with prominent students who have influence, the conversations would take on a ~~"~~snowball" effect, reaching students and faculty throughout the campus. Interest levels in Afrocentricity could have the same impact as movements in the 1960's and 1970's with the increasing desire to integrate African American studies and programs.

Schiele (1994) also discusses the value of informal conversations with colleagues in the academy and within committee settings. These conversations would most likely be more advantageous if discussed amongst those who are flexible and willing to consider a

worldview that challenges Eurocentric ideas and values. The sensitivity in approaches and levels of influence are also taken into consideration in this context. Schiele states:

> Because Afrocentricity may be an especially threatening and politically inflammatory perspective for many European American (and even many African American) faculty, it is preferable that African American senior faculty with tenure – or who may have significant clout in the department – take the lead in interjecting an Afrocentric viewpoint. (1994, p. 162)

It is also suggested that educators identify administrators who possess political power and who are more amenable to Afrocentricity, as the power to initiate substantial changes lie with administration (Schiele, 1994). Race salience must also be taken into consideration again as one must not assume that although Afrocentricity may be significant to African Americans, it should not be assumed that African American administrators would be more receptive than others simply because of their race.

Afrocentricity in the classroom & teacher student relationships

The student/teacher relationship is considered to be the most vital social relationship within academia as it is the ―locus of service delivery in higher education" (Schiele, 1994). In diversifying the philosophical foundations of higher education and adopting a more Afrocentric model, this relationship would require both the student and teacher to develop a more humble role.

While discussing the roles of the teacher, Schiele (1994) explains that a subjective and cognitive experience of knowledge among students must be fostered. Shakir (1989)

refers to this subjective experience of knowledge as –feeling" intellect, in which students are required to have an emotional learning experience where they express their opinion about the content being presented. This dynamic is thought to transform not only the head but also the heart of the student.

Additional roles of the teacher recommended within an Afrocentric framework would encourage a more interconnected process. The teacher which assumes a role of both an information provider as well as an information receiver would allow this interconnected process to occur (Schiele, 1994).

Applying and integrating Afrocentricity in scholarly and professional activities

Finally it is suggested that Afrocentric concepts be disseminated through conference and community presentations as well as through scholarly publications (Schiele, 1994). Ensuring that Afrocentric ideas are discussed in publications as well as conferences and community presentations guarantees exposure to a larger audience. It also provides the permanency of written communications which will allow an educator to promote Afrocentricity when he/she is deceased, which guarantees the survival of Afrocentric thought for future generations (Schiele, 1994).

Afrocentric thought is not only applicable to several academic disciplines; it should also be promoted through professional practices such as: medicine, social work, education, clinical and counseling psychology, law, nursing and business (Schiele, 1994). Educators and practitioners in these fields are encouraged to find creative ways to integrate Afrocentricity in their respective practice and in serving their clientele. Advancements and innovations in this area are needed to prevent Afrocentricity from being solely an intellectual classroom discourse (Schiele, 1994).

Nguzo Saba

As previously mentioned, Johnson (2001) suggests integrating the Afrocentric approach of using the *Nguzo Saba* (seven principles of Kwanzaa) as a foundation to developing programs which would address the psychosocial developmental needs of African American college students. When discussing the first principle, *Umoja*, Johnson suggests a creation of programs and activities that include the family and/or community of African American college students. Programs and activities that unite various campus groups that consist primarily of African Americans and groups of other cultures would also bring forth the principle of umoja. Incorporating upper-class students to serve as paraprofessional counselors and mentors for freshmen and sophomore students is another example of exercising unity (Gloria, Kurpuis, Hamilton, & Willson, 1999).

The second principle, Kujichagulia calls for programming and activities that address the specific needs of African American students and student groups and encourages them to seek their collective opinions on matters which affect them (Johnson, 2001). In these environments, students should not develop feelings of guilt associated in their right to make decisions for themselves that may exclude White people from the decision making. This dynamic and expression of thought enables and encourages students to be self-determined. Johnson discusses an additional means of promoting self-determination by African American‘s organizing groups which are allocated funding, as other student groups, with which they do not have to justify their spending to fund a certain program or speaker (2001). Johnson makes the point in which many times such groups are denied funding because a program or activity is not considered to be applicable to the general student body (2001). This is particularly important to student

affairs practitioners in that "even single issues of funding basic student activities or extracurricular events with an Afrocentric bent or flavor often become dangerous power plays that many (student affairs) administrators would rather avoid" (O'Daniel, 1994, p. 9).

The third principle of Ujima suggests collaborative problem solving and suggests the bringing together of African American groups and/or individuals to address a problem that may be specific to only one group or individual. Johnson (2001) suggests that this principle would call for leaderless groups. It is important to recognize that programming which falls under Ujima should not encourage groups that operate in the traditional Eurocentric group structure that has as its head a president or abides by concepts of Robert's Rules of Order. Furthermore, keeping students politically and socially aware of issues in their community and their role in solving them also contributes to this principle. Service learning projects that connect African American students by major with African American agencies in the community that could use their services would execute the principle of Ujima (2001).

According to Johnson, the fourth principle of Ujamma is best represented in activities that encourage student groups to work collaboratively to raise funds for charity or profit (2001). Ujamma is also exercised by encouraging the soliciting of goods and services from businesses that will ultimately benefit the African American community and by creating partnerships between African American students and the community that could extend beyond graduation.

The Nia principle of purpose is practiced when students and student groups understand why they are seeking their education. Johnson notes that this understanding is

first realized with the reconnecting with African values and traditions. Johnson states that –If African American students are made to understand that the worldview of their past was based on harmony with nature, survival of the tribe, and spirituality, then they will understand that their purpose is to uphold such tenets" (2001, p. 419). The practice of nia can be demonstrated if at each meeting, student groups are reminded of their purpose through such things as pledges and/or songs. Johnson provides examples which include the recitation of student group mission statements or their roles on campus, in their community, and in the nation. Incorporating the singing of the song "Lift Every Voice and Sing" (Black national anthem) is another song which can be incorporated in student meetings. Finally, participation in Kwanzaa celebrations on college and university campuses contributes to the reinforcement of purpose in African American college students. These various celebrations and practices bring about the collective acknowledgment of the Nguzo Saba.

Kuumba is best realized when African American students and student groups are allowed to demonstrate their creativity through art performance, writing, and other visually aesthetic means of expression (Johnson, 2001). Kummba is also realized in the way that students or groups reconnect with their cultural selves through class assignments, programs, and activities. Therefore, students should be encouraged to bring forth an African American perspective or contribution in the subject matters of their courses (Johnson, 2001).

Finally, the seventh principle, Imani, by incorporating on-campus religious services conducted by African American clergy and in traditional African American style. To account for the various faith bases and religious affiliations of African

Americans, Johnson suggests that Non-Christian services should be allowed for African Americans who practice other religions, such as Islam (2001). Furthermore, nondenominational services that bring forth African theological principles regardless of religion are also encouraged. The idea of faith is also brought forth by African American students being reminded of the endurance of their ancestors through programming. Counselors and academic advisors of African American students should consist of directing them to reach their goals. ―If they are exposed to an understanding of Afrocentrism, they will have the basis to making realistic goals for themselves, and student affairs personnel would only serve to encourage them to stay focused" (Johnson, 2001).

It is imperative to acknowledge that Afrocentrism, Kwanzaa, and the Nguzo Saba do not claim to be superior to already existing ideologies/theories or value systems. They merely define, and add a value system for people of African descent (Johnson, 2003).

The seven principles of Nguzo Saba allow for the incorporation of authentic African-American- based values into the development of African American college students.

The Program on Intergroup Relations

While discussing the contributions and considering the range of knowledge that has emerged from retention theories and college student development models (whether Eurocentric or Afrocentric in its framework), most institutions have not yet translated what is known about student retention into forms of action which have led to an increase in student persistence (Carey, 2005).

Research indicates that there are programs that celebrate the history and cultures of different ethnic and racial groups as a means of improving racial diversity and fostering social integration (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, and Allen, 1999). There are institutions that have made strides towards understanding the complexities of psychosocial theories and have implemented reform efforts into their student development scheme that serves to prepare and engage college students in practices that would increase diversity and multicultural awareness.

According to Hurtado et al (1998), a positive racial climate consists of four elements (1) the inclusion of students, faculty, and administrators of color (2) a curriculum integrating the experiences and contributions of people of color (3) student support services with the aim of recruiting, retaining, and graduating students of color; and (4) an institutional mission reinforcing a commitment to diversity. A positive racial climate can have an impact on the academic achievement of students of color, particularly Black students. Conversely, research has shown that a negative campus climate is associated with high dropout rates and poor academic performance for Black students (Allen, Epps & Haniff, 1991; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1998).

An example of a successful reform in higher education is The Program on Intergroup Relations (IGR). IGR is a social justice education program on the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus. With a joint partnership venture between the College of Literature, Science, and Arts and the Division of Student Affairs, IGR works proactively to promote understanding of intergroup relations inside and outside of the classroom. Multidisciplinary courses offered by IGR are distinguished by their

experiential focus, teaching philosophy, and incorporation of dialogical models of communication (The Program on Intergroup Relations, 2009).

As a result of heightened racial and ethnic tensions at the University of Michigan, Anne Harbor campus, in 1988, the Program on Intergroup Relations was founded. It was originally conceptualized as an academic initiative fully integrated with student life and its initial philosophy was to advance student understanding and respect for diversity in the area of intergroup relations and managing conflict between social identity groups (The Program on Intergroup Relations, 2009).

IGR established intergroup dialogue as its signature focus and contribution to the University undergraduate community (The Program on Intergroup Relations, 2009). In 1994, IGR was instituted as a unit in the Division of Student Affairs and began collaboration with the Departments of Sociology, Psychology, and American Culture to offer intergroup dialogue academic courses. In 1999, IGR was further institutionalized and now operates as a unit in the Division of Student Affairs in full partnership with the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Currently, the program offers a variety of intergroup dialogues as well as courses on intergroup relations and social justice, co-curricular programs, and consultation services.

As discussed with the Program Assistant of IGR, Mr. Nitesh Singh, the program has provided a very thorough contribution of empirical research to assess its outcomes on students and the processes through which those outcomes take place (personal communication, May 5, 2011). This research answers questions about what student‘s gain, both short-term and long-term, by participating in intergroup dialogue, and how

intergroup dialogue pedagogy influences these outcomes. IGR has the distinction of being the first intergroup relations program of its kind in higher education. Undergraduate students are an integral part of the program and the learning process. Through a sequence of social justice education courses, in particular intergroup dialogues, as well as our co-curricular offerings, significant contributions to the education and collegiate experience are made.

While focusing on multicultural factors such as gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, religion, ability status, socioeconomic class and nationality, students are encouraged to gain an in depth understanding of the complexities which exist among these variables. Courses and co-curricular programs cover topics of social group identity, social relations, intercultural communication, and social justice in which students, staff, and faculty are encouraged to learn about differences and similarities, to embrace them and to find commonality in the human experience (personal communication, May 5, 2011). The academic program offers courses which serve as transferable credits for both the psychology department as well as the sociology department. Courses are also available as general elective courses for all undergraduate students, regardless of major.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary

This paper sought to review the current theoretical literature of college student development models as well as the role that racial identity and culture has on the development of the African American college student. The research question which guided this work sought to engage in a discussion regarding African American college student‘s racial identity and if it can truly and authentically be increased at a university which utilizes social development models based in a European framework. The theoretical review of the student development literature provided the evolution of theories and frameworks, Eurocentric and Afrocentric, which have been and can be used in relation to African Americans in higher education. The review also uncovered several problematic concerns which must be considered when using an Afrocentric approach for college student development. Suggestions on how to integrate Afrocentric models into higher education have been provided as well as considerations for the appropriateness of applying college student development models that are based in European American/Eurocentric psychology to the development of African American college students.

Findings from this theoretical review of literature do not offer a definitive answer to the original research question posed above. However they do provide valuable implications for practice in critical areas institutionally, for the administration, for the faculty and for students alike. Aspects of both Afrocentric and Eurocentric frameworks discussed can be used to increase and preserve an authentic cultural identity among African American college students – thereby contributing to their overall academic

success and social development. As discussed earlier in a review of Bourdieu‘s Theory of Cultural Capital, college student development models which adopt a culturally relevant framework have been connected to the academic success for students of color. Though grounded in a Eurocentric worldview, models which maintain cultural integrity provide programs and teaching strategies that call upon students' racial and ethnic backgrounds in a positive manner in the development of their pedagogies and learning activities.

Afrocentricity provides an alternative worldview to the Eurocentric and western views of higher education. It offers students, administrators and professors of African descent to reaffirm their worldview and it offers European American students, administrators and professors an opportunity to also overcome misconceptions. In addition, Afrocentric models can also be utilized at PWI‘s and HBCU‘s as a means of providing cultural connectedness to its students of color. Integrating Afrocentric thoughts into higher education would equalize how both European Americans and African Americans view one another from their respective philosophical models (Schiele, 1994). In doing so, students, administrators and professors should refrain from essentializing and applying such models to all people of African descent.

Colleges and universities have a responsibility to implement student development and preparation programs to accommodate its African American students. Levels of accountability should also be expected from minorities as they take steps to integrate and assimilate into the culture of their post-secondary institution. However, given the unique set of cultural barriers and opportunities of access, it is imperative that institutions take proactive approach‘s to encourage a more inclusive college experience and graduate its minority students. Future research and suggested models that institutions should consider

are cultural integrity practices that would increase cultural capital which would result in the overall academic and social success of African American students in higher education.

Student affairs and higher education practitioners would find that utilizing a combination of models which may be Eurocentric but includes Afrocentric components as useful in providing developmental support for African American students. For example, a student attending a predominantly White campus and who identifies as having a low race saliency would benefit if they had someone to turn to in the event of a discriminatory experience. Culturally sensitive occurrences create a space for the institution to provide encouraging, safe spaces for students to gain a greater self concept with regards to race and learn about African American identity.

Implications for Policy and Practice

As previously discussed, culturally responsive programs are essential in developing college students as whole. In addition to the aforementioned implications for faculty, components of Afrocentric infusion with curriculum and programming should become active discussions on any institutional diversity and student equity committee. Higher educational institutions typically have a committee in their academic senate on diversity or student equity. This is usually a component of the accreditation process (Hill, 2008). Conversations regarding the enhancement and fostering a diverse learning environment should include the value of racial identities of students as well as the academic achievement and social development of students. Furthermore, professional development trainings and workshops on Afrocentric ideas should be offered on the

administrative level as well as on the academic level in which programs and ideas on integrative models can be discussed.

Institutional responsibility and the flexibility of college student development models in this regard are essential to the development and survival of an authentic cultural identity for the African American college student. Social scientists in the field would argue that the African American higher education practitioner would assume the most accountability in taking the necessary steps in the Afrocentric implementation -- according to their degree of racial saliency of course. This is also not to assume that someone of an alternative race would feel as compelled to take this initiative. In order to develop true theories of African American college student development, it is imperative that African Americans utilize their own historical, philosophical and cultural reality to inspire their theoretical frameworks (Baldwin et al., 1992).

Afrocentricity, as it relates to application in higher education for the African American student is a relevant and necessary disparity which needs to be addressed; especially when this practice is embedded in the psychological and psychosocial development of the African American student. Baldwin (1985) alludes to these sentiments by stating that Eurocentricity ~~–is~~ anti-African because it projects European supremacy and African inferiority as the natural order" (p. 217). Thus it is believed that for African Americans to accept Eurocentric values is to participate in their own oppression and psychosocial degradation (Schiele, 1994). By integrating components of an Afrocentric worldview, this would provide a space in which African American students and educators can be liberated from the distorted and pervasive views of African inferiority found in Eurocentricity. The task at hand may seem daunting and tedious

however the time has come in which increased levels of accountability must be placed on higher educational practitioners to equip themselves to be able to serve their students.

This task cannot authentically be achieved unless the traditional higher education philosophies are not adjusted. From a collective perspective, African American college student development theory must view the student as a comprising spirit, a good nature, decision-making intuition, and more ―we" than ―I" orientation (Johnson, 2003). An African American college student development program must nurture these values in its students. On the contrary, students must adjust their understanding and assume responsibility that each of their individual decisions must be for the good of the collective group. On a small scale, the collective group is their cultural group and ultimately humankind. It is imperative that Afrocentricity is not considered to condone separatism of humans. Afrocentrism merely suggests that many perspectives exist together: ―Afrocentricity is nonhegemonic; it is not a philosophy that claims blindly African superiority over other cultures" (Houessou-Adin, 1995, p. 188). Afrocentric worldview provides the foundation for those responsible for the development of African American students. In remaining true to the African proverb which states that ―It takes a village to raise a child", it also takes a campus to graduate its students – by remaining as true and as authentic as possible to the students' overall social development and academic success.

Although this work sought to focus on the integration of Afrocentricity for the African American college student, the IGR program was also discussed as an alternative to integrating a multicultural approach. Instead of relying solely on utilizing student development models based in either Eurocentric or Afrocentric frameworks, some

suggest that higher education practitioners should adopt duality models – based in both frameworks which takes on a multicultural approach. Meaning that an expanded integration of a multicultural curriculum specific to historically underrepresented students and students of color, with an understanding of Afrocentric principles equally as much as Eurocentric foundations of education and pedagogy, should be adopted (Hill, 2008).

Implications for Future Research

As Johnson (2003) noted, several authors have discussed the non-cognitive variables that most strongly influence the academic success of African American college students (Arbona & Novy, 1990; Fleming, 1984; O'Callaghan & Bryant, 1990; Pounds, 1987; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1984). These non-cognitive variables are those that are not academic in nature which impacts the development of college students, such as racial identity, self esteem, racial climate, peer relationships, relationships with faculty, involvement, etc. This research suggests that programs and services for African American students should be well grounded in theory that is culturally appropriate (Pounds, 1987). Further examination of these non-cognitive factors influencing academic achievement is necessary for researchers and practitioners alike in higher education to identify factors contributing to the success of African American students (Hill, 2008). Freeman (1999) confirms that academic ability is not necessarily the reason why Blacks withdraw or dropout of college; rather it can be attributed to non-cognitive factors. One of the more important non-cognitive factors pervasive in the academic achievement literature worthy of consideration pertaining to student withdrawal is the role of out of class experiences on academic achievement (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996).

Terenzini, Pascarella, and Blimling (1996) discovered a positive relationship between contact with faculty members outside of the classroom and the academic and cognitive gains. In attributing to the scholastic contributions of our Eurocentric models, Terenzini, Pascarella, and Blimling‘s (1996) research on faculty relationships outside the classroom is based on the research conducted by Tinto‘s (1975) original student departure theory stating students‘ satisfaction with faculty members and positive student-faculty interactions can distinguish students who persist from those who drop out of college.

In questioning why these variables are most notably more unique to and associated with African American college students, one can assume that the answer can be found in the differences in worldviews. Future research which demonstrates the application of culturally relevant, workable theories of student development is needed.

Racial salience is also a factor which must be considered when discussing the application of Afrocentricity in education. Curriculum and programs which assume a more inclusive, Afrocentric model will need to be evaluated and measured on its effectiveness on students who identify with having both a low and higher race saliency.

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APPENDIX: TABLES

Table 1. Contrasting Africentric and Non-Africentric Approaches to African American Personality Theories

African Personality Paradigms: Modification of Kobi Kambon's Schematic

PARAMETERS	AFRICENTRIC THEORIES	NON-AFRICENTRIC THEORIES
Worldview/ Cultural Framework	African Worldview	European Worldview
Motivation/Psychic Energy	Proactive - Positive Energy Assumption	Reactive - Negative Energy Assumption
Standard of Referent	Strengths, Normality, Naturalness/Positive-adaptiveness of behavior & functioning	Weakness, Abnormality, Defensiveness in behavior & functioning
Subtypes or Variants	Africentric (African Worldview emphasis)	a. Pure Eurocentric (European Worldview emphasis) b. Pseudo Africentric (Diffuse/Predominant EWV emphasis) c. Transitional Africentric (movement toward AWV emphasis)
Goal/Outcome	Africentric Orientation	1) Eurocentric Orientation 2) Transracial/Diffuse: Universalism emphasis 3) Some Pro-Black with Diversity & Universalism emphasis
Optimal Functioning	Fulfilling the African Survival Thrust	Fulfilling the European Survival Thrust

Adapted from Kambon, 1998.

Figure 1: African Worldview Cultivation of African Students

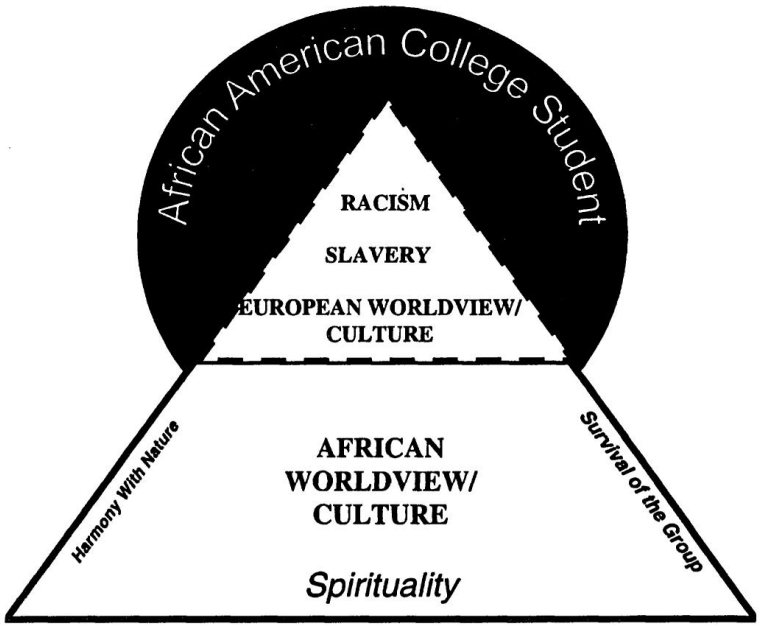

Figure 2: European Worldview and Racism's Permeation of African American College Students

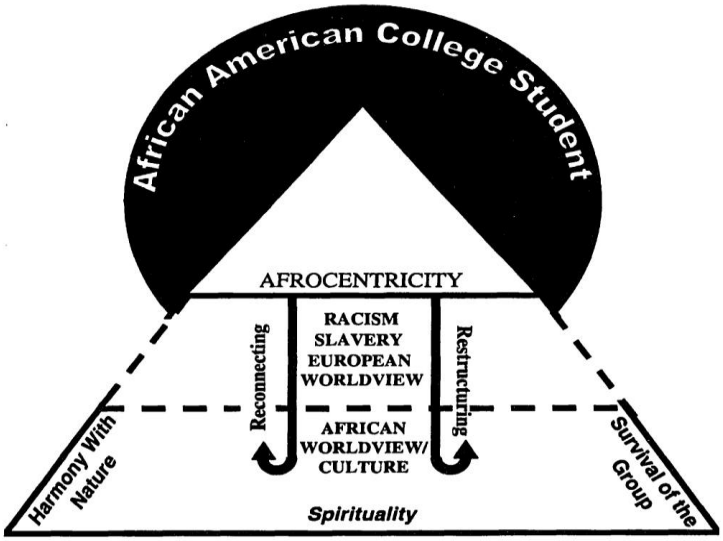

Figure 3: Afrocentricity's Reconnecting and Restructuring of African Worldview in African American College Students

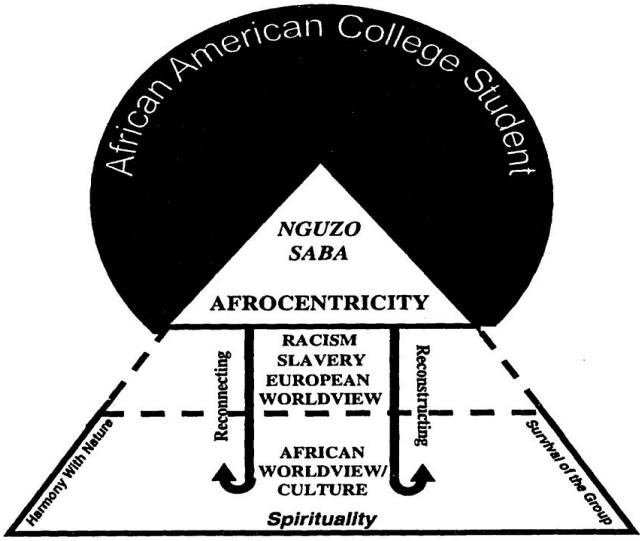

Figure 4: Nguzo Saba as Practice of Reconnecting and Restructuring African Worldview in African American College Students