

Kufundisha: An Innovative Teaching Approach for Student Engagement and Experiential Learning

by

Cedric D. Hackett

Assistant Professor, Department of Africana Studies
California State University, Northridge
cedric.hackett@csun.edu

Cedric D. Hackett, Ed.D., is Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Northridge and the director of the DuBois-Hamer Institute for Academic Achievement, which supports student success through community and campus partnerships. He also works in the athletic department at Santa Monica Community College as a Counseling Faculty member. His recent scholarship includes *Student Satisfaction and Success in a Low-Income Community College Environment* (Journal of Applied Research in the Community College, 2016). His research interests are broad, spanning from effective teaching pedagogy, athletics and student development & engagement, to the psychological and sociological nature of underrepresented groups (i.e. experiences of Black Men in higher education).

Abstract

This article examines an undergraduate Africana Studies course on Black men in contemporary times at a public institution in California, with the majority (74%) of the students identified as Black or African American. Concepts of *Kufundisha* (Neville & Cha-Jua, 1998) were employed to create a co-curricular field-exercise called the “Men of Color Enquiry & Student Research Poster Session.” The poster session is an instructional practice that fosters intellectual investigation, discovery, and critical thinking skills of participants. Student groups develop a research question or hypothesis relevant to the course content. The research posters provide a means for communicating background information, methods, frameworks, and discussion of a topic of collective interest, while focusing on the specifics of the investigation results (Newbrey & Baltezare, 2006). As a culturally responsive teaching model used in Black studies, *Kufundisha* allows a professor to observe the collective categories of learners in order to support and encourage students to explore their social experiences in ways that are racially inspiring and liberating. This model also encourages the construction of an emancipatory educational setting which permits students to become actively engaged in their own learning process. Applicable components of the model, the student poster assignment and evaluation, and student reflections are discussed.

Keywords: Kufundisha, Culturally Relevant Teaching, African Centered, Black Studies Pedagogy.

Introduction

Traditional teaching approaches are not always effective pedagogical practices in engaging students to actively participate in their own learning. This is particularly true for African American students at predominantly white institutions (PWIs), as well as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). Scholars have questioned the use of the traditional lecture format (Paul, 2015). Paul concludes that the lecture format suggest “unfair” gains towards the dominant traditional student while forming barricades to underrepresented and marginalized groups (e.g. minority, low income and first generation). Since the existing teaching systems in public education remain Eurocentric (e.g. seeing the world based on European values and experiences), it is important to create models of racially engaging pedagogy that promote racial uplift, a sense of belonging, and self-empowerment for all students, particularly students of color (Paul, 2015; Vaught, 2013; De Lissovoy, 2010; White, 2003; Neville & Cha-Jua, 1998; Madhubuti & Madhubuti, 1994).

Pedagogies that are African-centered provide an alternative tool for addressing biases within the traditional teaching models, such as lecturing. Paul (2015) has speculated that lectures are “a specific cultural form that favors some people while discriminating against others, including women, minorities, and low-income and first generation college students” (para 2). However, active teaching models such as inquiry based learning aid in engaging students toward content knowledge both in and out of the classroom. Other teaching models that emphasize the positive contributions of a group’s culture to the development of Western civilizations, such as an African centered pedagogy, are better suited for communities of color, particularly African Americans (Vaught, 2013; De Lissovoy, 2010; White, 2003; Neville & Cha-Jua, 1998; Madhubuti & Madhubuti, 1994).

Madhubuti and Madhubuti (1994) describe the goals of an African-centered model grounded in the particulars of general pedagogy. These attributes include the following:

1. Legitimization of African stores of knowledge
2. Positive exploitation and scaffolding of productive community and cultural practices
3. Extension and construction of the indigenous language
4. Reinforcement of community relationships and idealization of services to one’s family, community, nation, race and world
5. Promotion of positive relationships
6. Positive worldview that promotes self-sufficient future for one’s people without denying the self-worth and right to self-determination of others
7. Supporting cultural continuity while promoting critical consciousness (p. 21).

With all these elements considered, White (2003) argued for effective teaching strategies for African Americans that emphasize structures that reflect one's lived experience, which ultimately promotes self-identity and social justice. To this end, an alternative approach to classroom praxis, a paradigm labeled *Kufundisha* helps to tailor a classroom to a specific student group. *Kufundisha* is a Swahili word and its meaning is "to teach" (Neville & Cha-Jua, 1998). The emphasis is on "encouraging educators to understand the social reality of students in ways that are relevant, meaningful, and applicable to the subject matter" (White, 2003, p. 387).

Kufundisha

According to Vaught (2013), Black studies programs were conceived of in the late sixties to provide leadership for tackling issues related to educational disparities and neighborhood calamities within the Black community. As a culturally responsive teaching model used in Black studies, *Kufundisha* allows a professor to observe the collective categories of learners in order to support and encourage students to explore their social experiences in ways that are racially inspiring and liberating. These categories include the visual learner, the auditory learner, and the tactile learner. The visual learner learns best by seeing, visualizing, and diagramming. The auditory learner learns best by listening, talking to others and talking to oneself. The tactile/kinesthetic learner learns best by doing, through movement and physical activity. The *Kufundisha* model also encourages the construction of an emancipatory educational setting which permits students to become actively engaged in their own learning process.

Grounded in the attributes of the African-centered model mentioned above (Madhubuti and Madhubuti, 1994), *Kufundisha* is divided into eight components: a) teaching philosophy; b) goals and objectives; c) learning styles; d) Text and readings; e) method of instruction; f) creating a safe learning environment; g) evaluating learning objectives for students, and h) evaluating the course for revision (Neville & Cha-Jua, 1998). Table 1 illustrates the components of *Kufundisha*. These collective components provide a template that suggests a racially engaging connection between teacher and student. De Lissovoy (2010) contends that:

It is a relationship of solidarity between beings finding a commitment together against the social, institutional, and discursive violence that denies their shared humanness. To the extent that the classroom is both built from and shot through by dominative structure and processes, this is a journey through a difficult wilderness in which faith in and love for others takes precedence over the moral authority and certitude that educators have usually sought to appropriate for themselves (p. 212-213).

Black studies programs provide this pedagogy of racial engagement by confronting the issues of being underrepresented and discriminated against in Western society.

Table 1

Eight Components of the Kufundisha Model for Black Studies Pedagogy

Component	Description
Teaching philosophy	Explicate your basic assumptions about the teaching-learning process, including goals and objectives of the discipline and the course, beliefs about student learning styles, selection process of the texts and readings, method of classroom instruction, optimal learning environment, and method of student learning evaluation. Make explicit your ideological perspective and methodological approaches to race, gender, class, and nationality.
Goals and objectives	Clearly outline the purposes, paradigms, and methods of the discipline and the goals and objectives of the course on the syllabus. Also, include a statement on the syllabus about the incorporation of race, gender, class, and nationality into the course. Discuss the origin and historical development of the discipline of Black studies and the goals and objectives of the specific course. Emphasize the dual origin and dual character of Black studies. Black studies originated in the community and on the campus, and it has intellectual and social missions.
Learning styles	Be attentive to individual learning styles and cultural tendencies that may affect student learning, including field sensitive/ independent learning, holistic learning, and psychological and behavioral verve.
Texts and readings	Vary the type of required readings (e.g., textbooks, anthologies, autobiographies, literary work, journal articles, primary documents, and newspaper and magazine articles). Also, texts and readings should emphasize commonality and diversity among African-descended people, especially in terms of class, gender, ideology, and nationality.
Method of instruction	Vary teaching techniques to connect with different student learning styles, including using didactic lectures, interactive lectures, and discussions, guest lectures, panel discussions, simulation and small group exercises, and film/video/music. Demonstrate concern for students' affective as well as cognitive development. Emphasize that learning is a social process; use pedagogical methods that decenter the instructor(s) and actively engage students in the learning process. When lecturing, use an interactive style derived from Black cultural traditions and modeled after African (American) communication styles.

	Lectures and projects should facilitate student awareness of the class, gender, nationality, and ideological differentiation in the Black community. Use examples that reflect the experiences of both Black women and men.
Method of evaluation	Use a variety of methods to evaluate student learning including time-objective tests, take-home essays, general writing assignments, group projects, and oral presentations. Require students to attend out-of-class, university-sponsored events, especially those sponsored by Black studies or the Black Culture Center. Schedule out-of-class conferences, each student to receive a self-evaluation of learning and of the course.
Learning environment	Establish ground rules for communication; encourage nonracist and nonsexist language. Work to develop a supporting environment that encourages constructive criticism and cooperation.

Helen Neville & Sundiata K. Cha-Jua (1998)

Challenges for Faculty of Color

As a newly tenure-track faculty member, research was initiated to observe Black faculty experiences in the academy and began to develop a composite sketch of what life in my new role as a Black male faculty member would be comparable to. Many studies discussed that Black faculty members are faced with many unique challenges in the academy while trying to support minority student achievement, including oppositional reviews compared to White faculty (Reid, 2010); academic agency matters (Trower & Chait, 2002; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999; Thompson & Dey, 1998; Aguirre, Martinez, & Hernandez, 1993; Frierson, 1990); issues of incorporation (Heggins, 2004; Dixon-Reeves, 2003; Turner, 2003; Weems, 2003); and dealing with institutional intolerance (Salazar, 2009; Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008; Williams & Williams, 2006).

Although obstacles are humdrum for Black faculty in arguably all institutions of higher education, Black faculty have been considered the primary sources for providing students of color with the academic and motivational support necessary to reverse the trend of poor performance for African American students (Strickland, 1975). Reversing negative retention and graduation rates for students of color, and in particular, Black male college students have been a topic of discourse for the past four decades.

Advising, guiding, and tutoring are among the ways in which faculty support this student population (Strickland, 1975). However, these roles of mentorship and modeling can arguably weaken African American faculty members' ability to honor the expectations of the academy if the proper support structures are not in place. All things considered, scholars have shown that proper support structures are not in place rendering a swell in African American faculty attrition (Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008). With attention to satisfaction, Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood determined that faculty of color love teaching: however, "undervaluation of their research interests, approaches, and theoretical frameworks and challenges to their credentials and intellect in the classroom contribute to their dissatisfaction with their professorial roles. In addition, isolation, perceived biases in the hiring process, unrealistic expectations of doing their work and being representatives of their racial/ethnic group, and accent discrimination are noted negatives described in the literature" (Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008, p. 143).

Challenges in College Completion & Retention

Contemporary research has revealed when comparing California State University, Northridge (CSUN) with its peer campuses, CSUN ranked 23rd in graduation rates in 2013 with 46% of students graduating in six years (<http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/institution/>). In 2013, the four year graduation rate for African American students was 8.2% (597 counted) compared to 19.5% (955 counted) for White students and 10% (1416 counted) for Latino students.

When comparing national data, the graduation rate for white students in 2013 was 64 percent, compared with 50 percent for minority students (<http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/data-mine/2015/12/02/college-graduation-gaps-between-white-and-minority-students-persist>). This represents a 14% gap between white and minority populations. Disaggregating the data by gender, graduation rates at CSUN for African American males was 4% (201 counted), compared to 14.4% for white males (464 counted) and 7.2% (570 counted) for Latino males. African American males have the lowest graduation percentage rate with a 10.4% deficit comparing white males, and a 3.2% deficit when comparing Latino males. Moreover, the decrease in enrollment of African Americans in recent years has also caused alarm in the many groups and cultural centers. The undergraduate student headcount for African Americans was 7.8% in fall 1993. In fall 2015, the undergraduate student headcount was 5.2%. In twenty two years, enrollment for African Americans has decreased by 2.6%. These figures are disturbing and demonstrated a need for addressing these issues through innovative instructional practices.

Faculty Retreat

Annually, a faculty retreat is assembled at California State University, Northridge to provide pedagogical strategies in the classroom as well as effective ways of developing a research agenda. During the faculty retreat in January 2013, I sought to attend workshops from accomplished faculty who could impart tips on surviving in the academy. The following workshop description caught my attention:

As a newer faculty member or one with a few years on the job, your challenge is to survive the process with a strategy that will be successful and sustainable throughout your career. My experience is identifying opportunities with a minimum of 3 WINS is key to maintaining a balance of life and career, preventing burnout, and creating new invigorating opportunities for you and your students. An emphasis is placed on evaluating your profession and where it fits within the university and in the world beyond our walls. By identifying need, you maintain currency and relevance for your students.

The workshop was titled, “3 Wins: A Strategy for Survival, Success, and Sustainability” by Dr. Steven Loy, Professor in the Kinesiology department. Dr. Loy provided the participants with insight on how to survive the tenure process by developing innovative ways of identifying opportunities that will add a WIN in each of the three categories for gaining tenure, which include professional preparation, teaching effectiveness & direct instructional contributions, and contributions to the university and community.

I left the session inspired to create instructionally purposeful activities for my courses, namely the Black Man in Contemporary Times (Africana Studies 325). In preparation for the spring of 2013 semester, I decided to endeavor in instructional methods that students could engage the community, as well as apply content knowledge to a student directed research task. Thus, the 1st Annual Men of Color Enquiry and Student Poster session was created, designed, and implemented by the students while I facilitated their efforts. This project contributed to the 3 WINS by providing a field exercise for student and community engagement, effective classroom praxis through instructional scaffolding, and emerging cultural pedagogical methods and tools.

Inquiry Based Learning (IBL)

The Men of Color Enquiry & Student Poster session was articulated as a field exercise that complimented the instructional content for the course: The Black Man in Contemporary Times (AFRS 325). The pedagogical method utilized for the field exercise and consistent with Kufundisha principles is known as Inquiry-based learning (IBL) (Levine-Rasky, 2009). Inquiry based learning reflect “John Dewey’s belief that students need to develop critical thinking rather than memorization skills” (Justice, Rice, Roy, Hudspith, & Jenkins, 2009, p. 843). IBL can be defined as a self-guided appreciative inquisition of understanding the phenomena under investigation. As such, this instructional practice was established to foster intellectual investigations, discovery, and critical thinking skills.

The students were provided a poster planning guide to review and were given the autonomy to develop an accountability contract for group responsibilities and duties. Learning lab sessions in the library were built into the project for scholarly resources that would complement the course textbooks. The librarian for our Africana studies department was a great resource for students to guide them in inquiry exploration, information resources, and research. Once the topic was selected collectively by each group, due dates were assigned every two to three weeks until the event in the 10 week of the semester. This included developing drafts of the title of the poster, research question(s)/ hypothesis, abstract of the poster, theoretical underpinning, poster template, etc.

While the exercise was faculty-directed, student groups produced gripping questions in a supportive setting. Students were able to apply course content towards their research inquiries. The fundamental components of the inquiry-based learning approach include: “student generated research questions, the exploration of appropriate resources and research strategies, and building of knowledge on a selected issue” (Levine-Rasky, 2009, p. 309).

Student groups (e.g. Micro Investigative Groups) developed research posters and distributed information conveying their research topics central to the Black Male. The groups of three were randomly selected. The theme for the poster session was “Men and Masculinities.” A featured speaker who has written extensively on the topic of men and masculinities (Dr. Frank Harris III) provided a discussion on “*Situating Men in Higher Education: A Conversation about the Crisis, Myth and Reality of College Men.*”

At the conclusion of the guest speaker and question/ answer period, the student research poster session was launched. The student research posters provided an “efficient means of conveying a brief outline of background information, methods, and discussion while being more specific about the investigation results” (Newbrey & Baltezare, 2006, p. 550). Along with the lecture presentation, the student research poster session was utilized to educate the campus community on issues pertinent to Black men in contemporary times.

Student learning outcomes were developed, which stated that the student groups will: Demonstrate, within the context of the Black Man, specific skills and expertise acquired in the AFRS 325 course, including research, annotation, analysis, and presentation of results; Identify and analyze appropriate primary and secondary sources, appropriate to the study of Black men and issues of masculinity; Engage with a community of scholars, presenting the groups’ work to peers and the campus community through dialogue and appraisal.

The Student Research Poster Project

The syllabus stated that the course examines the social, political, and psychological forces affecting the lives of Black men and focuses on their expectations, opportunities, problems, and goals in contemporary society. The contributions of the Black man and his relationships to the family, the community, and to American society were studied. The challenge of this course was to provide a safe space for which to deliberate on critical issues, ideas, and assumptions regarding the Black Man in modern times. As such the course had been designed: to provide overview of selected events and issues concerning the Black Man from an Afrocentric perspective; to provide a foundation for sound intellectual inquiry, analysis, and interpretation of Black male masculinity; to provide a basis for improved self-awareness of and increasing one’s sensitivity to issues related to Black men; and to develop critical skills in analysis work, investigation, comprehension, and clarity of interpretations.

Topics covered in the course included historical foundations, current manifestations, Black male images and alternatives, men and masculinities, social psychological barriers, entertainment, sports, and educational disparities. The student research poster assignment represented 20% of the overall grade for the course.

Effective Instructional Tools

The students' self-selected groups of 3 or 4 were given a "Poster Session Preparation Guide" with the following components: the poster layout and design, the poster content, the poster presentation, and poster session logistics. The idea of instructional scaffolding was used to provide support and resources to the learning environment. Instructional scaffolding is a learning process where the instructor supports the student while promoting a deeper learning. During class sessions, students were given time to refine their topics and I would provide critical feedback throughout the process. For example, the groups had to turn in drafts of their research questions/ hypothesis, theoretical frameworks, abstracts, and poster template. These tasks promoted the development of critical skills in analysis work, investigation, and comprehension. Other supports for the poster session included learning lab sessions concerning information resources in the library.

A library representative gave a presentation and demonstration on the resources and learning tools available. Students received hands-on training on effective research content including, topical refinement, research vocabulary, locating resources in OneSearch, limit, expand and sort search results, databases, evaluate resources, and creating and managing citations. Students were also given an assignment where they researched and created an annotated bibliography that was utilized for building the content for their poster session.

Additionally, a critical assessment assignment was assigned as part of the course requirements in the form of a journal article critique. A journal article critique template was available as a guide. I also provided opportunities for reciprocal scaffolding in the classroom through group tasks and their micro learning communities. Reciprocal scaffolding is intentionally providing learning opportunities where the groups share their experiences and knowledge in pursuit of a new construction of knowledge. For example, students were given time in class to share their article critiques in groups through a pair-share activity. Groups were asked to provide feedback on the themes addressed as well as share experiential knowledge from personal accounts relative to the topic.

These instructional strategies were consistent with my teaching philosophy, which comprises the usefulness of cooperative learning, experiential knowledge, and racially engaging pedagogy in order to develop depth and capacity in the students I serve. This belief consisted of engaging my students in interdisciplinary knowledge about my field of inquiry, bridging theory and praxis, and providing the right amount of challenge and support in the learning process.

High Impact Practices

The teaching and learning practices involved in the poster project addressed at least two known high-impact practices that educational researchers have suggested increased student retention and student engagement (Kuh, 2008). They were learning communities and diversity/global learning. Learning communities provide integrative learning opportunities (Kuh, 2008), as the students were required to join micro learning communities (e.g. Micro Investigative Groups) in my Africana Studies 325: Black Male course during the spring 2013 semester. Diversity learning programs aid students in discovering beliefs, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own as well as their own culture (Kuh, 2008). The racial and ethnic representation in the classroom was very diverse, with the majority (74%) being African American. Since spring 2013, the Men of Color enquiry and Student Research Poster Session has been implemented and showcased to the CSUN campus community.

Program Evaluation

In spring 2015, I decided to evaluate the Student Research poster session formerly by developing a satisfaction survey, while also including the Africana Studies department's learning outcomes. The Africana Studies learning outcomes include: a) Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate and analyze the political, social-historical and cultural perspectives of African and African Diaspora communities; b) Students will demonstrate through written and oral communication the ability to critically analyze the cultural, political and historical contexts of African and African Diaspora experiences; c) Students will identify and demonstrate culturally appropriate skills in research design and methodology used to examine the various dynamics of African and African Diaspora communities; d) Students will demonstrate applicable knowledge of requisite skills in Africana Studies through civic and community engagement.

Participants

One hundred twenty four participants attended the event and eighty two surveys were collected. Participants included the student presenters as well as the campus community, which comprised of students, staff, and faculty across campus. More than half of the 82 participants (74%) were African American. Hispanic/Latino students comprised 11% of the sample, while 6% of the participants were White. The remaining 9% of the sample was dispersed among multi-racial and Asian/Pacific participants. Sixty-six percent of the participants were female while 34% identify themselves as being male. Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics

	Sample	
	N	%
Gender		
Female	54	65.9
Male	28	34.1
Race		
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	4.9
African American	61	74.4
Hispanic/Latino	9	11
White	5	6.1
Two or More Races	3	3.7
Total	82	

Correlations

Pearson correlations were employed to explore the intercorrelations of the variables, which included: Confidence in assisting and serving Black male students (CASBMS); Better understanding of Black males students' needs and resources (UNR); Understanding of the political/ social-historical/ cultural perspectives of Africana people's experiences (PSHCP); Cultural experiences of Africana people. (CEAP); Appropriate research approaches to examine Africana peoples' experiences (RAAPE); and Adequately addressed diverse points of view (POV). Each of the six cultural competence variables was normally distributed and the assumptions of linearity were not violated. Table 3 confirms that all fifteen pairs of variables were significantly correlated.

The strongest positive correlation, which would be considered a very large effect size was between "Better understanding of Black males students' needs and resources" and "cultural experiences of Africana people," $r(75) = .83, p < .001$. Participants who reported that the Men of Color (MOC) event addressed the cultural experiences of Africana people were very likely to have a better understanding of Black male students' needs and resources. Appropriate research approaches to examine Africana peoples' experiences was also positively correlated with diverse points of view, $r(75) = .77, p < .001$. Participants who reported that the MOC event adequately addressed diverse points of view were highly likely to also agree that appropriate research approaches to examine Africana peoples' experiences were suitable.

Table 3.
Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Six Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	M	SD	N
1. Confidence in assisting and serving Black male students. (CASBMS)	--	.76**	.66**	.73**	.68**	.71**	1.55	.925	77
2. Better understanding of Black males students' needs and resources. (UNR)	--	--	.71**	.83**	.74**	.67**	1.45	.804	77
3. Understanding of the political/ social-historical/ cultural perspectives of Africana people's experiences. (PSHCP)	--	--	--	.76**	.61**	.57**	1.48	.883	77
4. Cultural experiences of Africana people. (CEAP)	--	--	--	--	.75**	.73**	1.38	.744	77
5. Appropriate research approaches to examine Africana peoples' experiences. (RAAPE)	--	--	--	--	--	.77**	1.34	.620	77
6. Adequately addressed diverse points of view.(POV)	--	--	--	--	--	--	1.40	.782	77

** $p < .01$

Multiple Regression

Simultaneous multiple regressions were conducted to investigate the best predictors of participants' confidence in assisting and serving Black male students. The combination of variables to predict participants' confidence from the following was statistically significant, $F(5, 71) = 28.31$, $p < .001$: UNR; PSHCP; CEAP; RAAPE; and POV. The beta coefficients are presented in Table 4. Having a better understanding of Black male students' needs and resources and a belief that diverse viewpoints were adequately addressed significantly predicts confidence serving and assisting Black male students when all five variables are included. The adjusted R^2 value was .642. This indicates that 64% of the variance in Confidence was explained by the model. According to Cohen (1988), this is a very large effect.

Table 4.

Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis Summary for UNR, PSHCP, CEAP, RAAPE, and POV Predicting Confidence in assisting and serving Black male students (CASBMS).

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	β
Better understanding of Black males students' needs and resources. (UNR)	.44	.15	.38**
Understanding of the political/ social-historical/ cultural perspectives of Africana people's experiences. (PSHCP)	.17	.11	.16
Cultural experiences of Africana people. (CEAP)	.05	.19	.04
Appropriate research approaches to examine Africana peoples' experiences. (RAAPE)	.05	.19	.03
Adequately addressed diverse points of view.(POV)	.37	.14	.31**
Constant	.01	.15	

Note. $R^2 = .67$; $F(5, 71) = 28.31$, $p < .001$.

** $p < .01$.

Discussion

The results of the program evaluation suggest that exposure to cultural experiences of African peoples will develop an awareness of the needs and resources of Black males in higher education. In addition, findings indicated that events such as the Men of Color enquiry encourage diverse view points on issues relative to Black males and promote alternative ways to frame the challenges that Black males encounter and endure in society. The results of the study also indicate a need for increased institutional support and implementation of programs that foster interaction among students to develop cultural sensitivity and competence of underrepresented populations, namely communities of color.

Kufundisha as a teaching model develops cultural competence in students. One key finding from the study concludes that student confidence is increased in assisting and serving men of color when alternative cultural frames of references are explored. Students who acquire knowledge of cultural differences become key agents in serving the needs of their peers while also informing them on the types of campus resources available to certain groups.

Student Testimonials

Students were asked to provide feedback of what they learned as a result of taking the Black male course and going through the process of developing a student research poster session. One female student of Persian descent expressed her gratitude in this way:

I learned about the obstacles the black man has to face and how ill-informed some of us are on these issues. Ultimately, I left with a newfound respect and a different perspective on the black man. Despite my open mindedness, I will be the first one to admit even I had some negative impressions of the black man (from the images and societal portrayals of black men) that I was not even aware of. This poster session just corrected my ignorance and I am grateful for it.
-Female student (Persian)

A white male student revealed the following:

One of the major benefits that came with working in my micro investigative group was the research done that I found to be extremely insightful. The information and severity of the issue surprised me..... if I had not worked within these groups, I would have not known what I do now.
-Male student (White)

One of my African American male students really captured the essence on why I decided to implement this co-curricular exercise for my students and why Kufundisha as a teaching model is a powerful pedagogical practice:

My take away from this poster session was to be confident in what you research. We had a few of our colleagues try to challenge some of our research but the fact that we were confident in what we knew and were able to speak on it in a compelling manner made our project effective to people. I am happy because I know my colleagues learned from me that day. I also learned from many of my colleagues and it was interesting to see a lot of them present their topics with passion about their topics.”
Male student (African American)

Conclusion

Kufundisha is a proven teaching paradigm that allows instructors to understand the social realities of their students in ways that are racially engaging and culturally responsive regardless of race and ethnicity. Gay (2010) suggests that making use of cultural information, former knowledge, cultural frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students make learning situations more applicable and effective. Thus, Kufundisha can be considered as culturally responsive instruction, which fosters validation, empowerment, liberation, transformation, authentic investigation, and discovery. Irrefutably, this instructional model encourages students to unsympathetically explore their social experiences in ways that are racially inspiring and liberating leading towards college retention and success.

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