‘Round Pegs into Square Holes:’ Teaching Black Studies in an African Centered Way at Predominantly White Institutions

by

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Abstract

It is well known that the educational system in Pre-K-12 is failing African/Black students; but, so is higher education, especially at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI’s). Because PWI’s utilize the European Worldview; use a European Centered pedagogy; and embrace racism, white supremacy, and white privilege; academia is specifically designed to work in the best interest of White students. However, the discipline of Black Studies, also present at many PWI’s, operates differently because it is based on the African Worldview; uses an African Centered pedagogy; and fights against racism, white supremacy, and white privilege. Therefore, this article will define an African Centered pedagogy; demonstrate how this pedagogy is pivotal to the success of African/Black students; offer examples on how it can be incorporated into any collegiate Black Studies classroom; and reveal potential repercussions and challenges that can occur when you work in the best interest of African/Black students at a PWI.

Keywords: Black Studies, Pedagogy, African Centered, PWI’s, African Worldview

Teaching Black Studies in an African Centered way at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) in America is both a challenge and a struggle. It is a challenge because the mere presence of Black Studies at any PWI is a constant reminder of not only the continued embracement of white supremacy, racism, and discrimination by society, but also by the university. Leroi R. Ray, Jr. (2007) believes that "Black Studies is a contradiction in the white university; for the allegiance of the white university is to the values of the larger racist society and its corporate structure" (p. 102). As a Eurocentric institution, society's racist and white supremacist views are present in the university through the embracement of the European Worldview by university officials and administration, and by faculty members who use a European Centered pedagogy. Ray, Jr. (2007) continues "Instead, the university is set in a racist mold, funded by capitalists and guided by their captured 'scholars' to preserve a tradition sanctioned by moral customs that permitted industrial growth to be developed by slavery, lynching, and massacre" (p. 102).

It is a struggle because the discipline of Black Studies fights to overthrow virtually everything a PWI stands for including: individualism; competition; survival of the fittest; hierarchies; capitalism; racism; white supremacy; sexism; homophobia; classism; etc. Just as African/Black people fought to be included in American society, African/Black people fought for Black Studies to be included in the academy at institutions such as San Francisco State University in 1968 (Hare, 2007; Bunzel, 2007; T'Shaka, 2012), California State University, Northridge (CSUN) in 1969,[i] and Cornell University in 1969.[ii] Thus, Daudi Ajani ya Azibo (2007) states that "Because the forces of institutionalized white supremacy (Fuller, 1984) recognize the potential of 'Africana Studies…to overcome the system [white supremacy] that oppresses it' (Swindell, 1991, 5), it is imperative for them to control Black Studies at the gateway, which is the Academy" (p. 525). Refusing to embrace society's white supremacist ideals and having the potential to create definitive societal change are the reasons why the university attempts to control Black Studies; it is why the discipline is merely tolerated and not accepted; and it is why we will always be vulnerable to political attacks and the threat of being dismantled. So how, under such hostile conditions, can we teach African/Black students successfully?

Linda James Myers (2007) argues that "A major issue which Black Studies has had to address is that of trying to fit round pegs into square holes, or facing the challenge of attempting to create new room for itself in a closed system" (p. 370). The closed system she is referring to is the Eurocentric academy. Since most Black Studies departments and programs exist at PWI's, is it possible to teach Black Studies in this space? If so, is it possible to teach Black Studies in an African Centered way in this space? Although I do not have all of the answers, this article will discuss the practical and innovative ways I have utilized an African Centered pedagogy in my Black Studies courses at various PWI's across the country, including the inevitable obstacles and challenges.

What is Black Studies?

Regardless of one's preferred nomenclature for the discipline (i.e. Africana Studies, Black Studies, African American Studies, Africology, etc.), Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (2007) defines African American Studies as "…an academic discipline which seeks to investigate phenomena and interrogate issues of the world from an Afrocentric perspective. The resulting finds are then transposed into communally-digestible data which will ultimately liberate the African community and cause it to see its own worth once again" (p. xxxiii). Maulana Karenga (2010) believes Black Studies is "…*the critical and systematic study of the thought and practice of African people in their current and historical unfolding*" (p. 3). Delores Aldridge (2007) states:

> Africana, Black, African-American, Afro-American, Africology, Pan-African, and Afro-Caribbean studies are but different names for academic units that focus on the systematic investigation of people of African descent in their contacts with Europeans, their dispersal throughout the diaspora, and the subsequent institutionalizes of racism and oppression as means of economic, political and social subordination. (p. xi)

Despite variations in word choice, many scholars define Black Studies in similar ways, especially those who have devoted their lives to creating and advancing the discipline. Thus, Black Studies can be defined as an interdisciplinary academic discipline based on "the examination, analysis, and investigation of African culture, heritage, and traditions" (Glocke, 2011, p. 197) through the lens of the African Worldview. Additionally, conversations in the discipline begin on the continent of Africa (usually in Ancient African societies); include African people in America, on the African continent, and throughout the African Diasporic World; all information is directly related to the African/Black community; the priority is to find solutions to the problems present in the African/Black community; to liberate all African/Black people worldwide; and ultimately, to increase the life chances of African/Black people physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially, etc. (Glocke, 2011).

Unfortunately, not everything by and about Black people is Black Studies, making perspective very important in establishing one's intentions, priorities, and goals (Azibo, 2007). Linda James Myers (2007) states, "In discussing the philosophical and academic origins of Black Studies the question of perspective is critical" (p. 369). Consequently, there is a significant difference between Black Studies and the Study of Black People: Black Studies utilizes the African Worldview; fights against racism, white supremacy, and white privilege; and ensures the liberation of African/Black people whereas the Study of Black People utilizes the European Worldview; supports racism, white supremacy, and white privilege; and thwarts the liberation of African/Black people (Azibo, 2007).

Daudi Ajani ya Azibo (2007) states, "The position taken here is that what makes Black Studies 'Black' is the usage of the conceptual universe afforded by the African worldview (see below) in studying any and all manner of phenomena and African worldview of which I speak is the universal and timeless worldview characteristic of African people throughout space and time…" (p. 527). Despite the Eurocentric academy rewarding scholars who conduct the Study of Black People, ensuring Black Studies scholars utilize the African Worldview guarantees that we are always working in the best interest of the African/Black community and the African/Black students.

Culture, Worldview, and the African Worldview

Everyone has a culture, and everyone is a member of a larger cultural group. Kobi K.K. Kambon (1998) states "…that every individual operates according to some group's conception of reality, whether they are aware of it or not, and it is a conception which they share with other members of their reference group, the group with which they are identified (in terms of values, beliefs, customs, etc.)" (p. 110). Most often, Black Studies' scholars (Azibo, 2007; Kambon, 1998; Myers, 1987) quote Wade Nobles (2006) who defines culture as "…a scientific construct representing the vast structure of language, behavior, customs, knowledge, symbols, ideas, and values which provide a people with a general design for living and patterns for interpreting their reality" (p. 70). Culture is the way a group of people perceives, understands, and interprets reality and the world around them; it helps to determine one's actions; and is a blueprint for how one lives their life in relationship to their people.

> Worldview is then the organized way people discuss culture. Marimba Ani (2004) states: World-view refers to the way in which a people make sense of their surroundings; make sense of life and of the universe…World-view does not include our rituals, but explains why they are necessary. Human beings cannot exist in chaos, and out of the chaos of life they create an ordered existence…All groups of people who have been historically related over long periods of time share a way of viewing the world and the realities with which it presents them. A world-view results from a shared cultural experience, just as it helps to form that experience. (p. 4)

Worldview dictates how one discusses culture through designated vocabulary such as cosmology, ontology, epistemology, life/space, logic, aesthetics, and ethos. Although the terminology may be the same for all cultures, the culture itself is what brings the specificity to that particular worldview. Culture and worldview also have a reciprocal relationship because one's culture informs their worldview in the same way that one's worldview informs their culture. In fact, how culture is discussed through the lens of worldview can affect a people's culture by reinforcing aspects that are important and significant.

Since there is only one worldview for each cultural group, the similarities and differences are dealt with within the distinct layers of culture. Wade Nobles (2006) states "The examination of culture and its relationship to the 'meaning' of a people's reality occurs by examining first its factors, cosmology, ontology, and axiology; second, its emergent aspects, ideology, ethos, and worldview; and third, its manifestations, customs, behavior, language, symbols, ideas, values, etc." (p. 73). Although Wade Nobles believes there are three levels of culture: the factors, aspects, and manifestations; Linda James Myers (1987) focuses on just two layers of culture: the surface structure and the deep structure (p. 73).

The surface structure includes the physical manifestations of a culture such as "…behavior, language, mores, customs, values, symbols, ideas, beliefs, and so on, which mark a people's experiences and practice" (Azibo, 2007, p. 529) allowing for diversity to occur within a particular culture. The deep structure is unchanging; it represents the core values of a culture; and connects a group of people together over time, space, experience, and history. This becomes extremely important when understanding how Black people in America view the world because most continue to embrace an African Worldview on both the surface structure and deep structure despite what they have experienced historically (i.e. being forcefully brought to America against their will, enduring the Maafa, and being forced to assimilate into American society) (Ani, 2004). Although the surface structure may differ from their ancestors in Africa, Black people's deep structure is unequivocally shared with those who reside in Africa and live throughout the African Diasporic World (Myers, 1987).

More specifically, in the African Worldview, Black people embrace an axiology, or what is valued highest, based on interpersonal relations between man/man, man/woman, and woman/woman (i.e. bartering, family reunions, and Black people's time) (Azibo, 2007). Epistemology, or how you know what you know, revolves around self-knowledge as the foundation of all knowledge (i.e. how an individual relates to their community and to their nation of people), and knowledge is known through symbolic imagery, dreams, intuition, meditation, movement, and rhythm (Akbar, 1988). Logic, or the interpretation and organization of information, is based on the unity of opposites and is diunital (i.e. everything exists in balance where there is always more than one option) (Myers, 1993). Life/Space, or the interpretation and organization of the world, is infinite, unlimited, and cyclical (i.e. rebirth, resurrection, reincarnation, de ja vu, epic memory, etc.) (Myers, 1993).

Aesthetics, or what is beautiful, is based on the balance of the internal and external, and is directly tied to ethics (i.e. being a good person makes you beautiful based on your positive vibrational energy, Un Nfr, Ma'at, etc.) (Gyekye, 1996). Cosmology, or the structure of the universe, revolves around everything in the universe being interconnected and interdependent (i.e. astrology, sacrifices/rituals, reciprocal relationship with nature and animals, etc.) (Kambon, 1998). Ontology, or what is real, views the spirit and matter as one, and emphasizes the harmony of the collective (i.e. the spirit is manifested in all aspects of life and a respect for all living beings) (Azibo, 2007).

Lastly, the ethos, or the guiding force of the worldview and a group's shared emotional response, is based on the spirit (i.e. one's spirit influences their thoughts influences their actions) (Ani, 2004). Thus, the African Worldview is communal, cooperative, holistic, spiritual, equal, harmonious, balanced, and reciprocal.

The Eurocentric Educational System

Several Black Studies scholars, past and present, have written about the Eurocentric nature of the educational system (primarily focused on Pre-K-12th grades) and the negative effects it has had, and continues to have, on African/Black students (Woodson, 1990; Freire, 2003; Hale-Benson, 1986; Hare & Hare, 1991; Wilson, 1992; Madhubuti & Madhubuti, 1994; Shujaa, 1994; hooks, 1994; Hilliard, III, 1995; Goggins, II, 1997; Pollard, 2000; Murrell, Jr., 2002; King, 2005; Shockley, 2008; Corenelius, 2014; Kunjufu, 2010; Jackson, 2011; Piert, 2015). In fact, these scholars believe that the educational system embraces a European Worldview, teaches through a European Centered pedagogy, and operates in the best interest of White students. Kobi K.K.Kambon (1998) explains "…the European worldview is defined by the basic values of materialism, control, aggression and linear-ordinal ranking, conflict, and opposition-dichotomy" (p. 131). Based on the European Worldview, the Eurocentric educational system utilizes: a universal and one size fits all approach; fosters competition; encourages rugged individualism and hierarchies; discourages class participation and interaction; is completely impersonal; emphasizes the memorization and regurgitation of information; believes that only one answer and one way of completing the work is correct; has no practical application; is devoid of critical thinking; demands perfection; and revolves around how quickly tasks and assignments are completed. It is no wonder African/Black students are not successful at predominately White schools because just like the European Worldview is a Sub Optimal way for African/Black people to live (Myers,1987, 1993, 2007); the European Centered pedagogy is a Sub Optimal way for African/Black students to learn.

Black Studies scholars have also written on how to teach Black Studies in higher education, and a few have even focused on teaching Black Studies in grades Pre-K-12 (Levey, 1970; Adams, 1970; Cortada, 1974; Clements, Jr., 1970; Butler, 1981; Banks, 2007; Neville & Cha-Jua, 1998; Scott, 2000; Hocutt, 2004; Bernard-Carreno, 2009; Leonard, 2012; Akailimat & Bailey, 2012). But, regardless of their particular focus, all of these Black Studies scholars offer an African Centered education and pedagogy as the solution for African/Black student success.

What is an African Centered Pedagogy?

An African Centered pedagogy utilizes the African Worldview in every aspect of one's teaching both inside and outside the classroom. Just as the African Worldview is the optimal way for African/Black people to live (Myers, 1987, 1993, 2007), the African Centered pedagogy is the optimal way for African/Black students to learn. We know this because the African Worldview has been in existence since the beginning of time, as per the evidence found in ancient African civilizations (Diop, 1974, 1989), and so has the African Centered pedagogy, found in ancient educational systems such as the Egyptian Mystery System in Kmt (Hilliard, III, 1995; James, 1992) and the University of Sankore at Timbuktu in Mali (Clarke, 2007). Knowing the success of these ancient African civilizations, including how individuals from all over the world traveled to study in their educational systems (James, 1992), confirms that they operated in the best interest of African people. Consequently, it is up to present day Black Studies scholars to bring these ancient pedagogical systems up to date, through the use of the African Worldview, in a way that works best for our African/Black students today.

What is interesting to note is how Asian, Latino, American Indian, and even White students thrive and succeed in Black Studies when the African Centered pedagogy is used. Linda James Myer (1993) states that "Not all people who identify themselves as African descendants, or black, have based their assumptions on an optimal world view; nor do all people of European decent think sub-optimally" (p. 15). For Asian, Latino, and American Indian students, they succeed because they have a similar deep structure to African/Black people. But, how do White students succeed in Black Studies? Since Africans were the first humans on earth, technically everyone's deep structure is based on the African Worldview (Myers, 1987). This means that all students, even White students, have the potential to adapt to the African Worldview and to learn effectively in spaces where the African Centered pedagogy is used.

Ultimately, all students, regardless of their cultural background, are represented in the curriculum of Black Studies and can join in the fight to overthrow white supremacy. Linda James Myers continues: "The sub-optimal conceptual system [based on the European Worldview] oppresses everyone" (1993, p. 15). When Black Studies successfully eliminates the obstacles standing in the way of Black people, this eliminates the obstacles for other cultural groups as well. Thus, Black Studies not only fights for the liberation of African/Black people, but for the liberation of humanity. This is why Myers also states that "…human consciousness has been and is being advanced by Black Studies…" (1993, p. 370). If teaching Black Studies in an African Centered way at PWI's benefits not only African/Black students, but all students; what are tangible suggestions, strategies, and examples of how professors can utilize an African Centered pedagogy in their own classrooms to ensure the academic success of Black students nationwide?

The Oral Tradition

Kariamu Welsh Asante (1996) states that "An oral tradition, literally a word of mouth phenomenon that preserves history and entertains in African culture, actually appears in all disciplines of the arts as a subtle undercurrent. The 'oral narrative' is in effect the story, dance, art, and the speaker becomes the *griot*, dancer, choreographer, or sculptor" (p. 73). Because African people embrace and honor the oral tradition by passing on information verbally, this tradition is also honored in my classes. For example, class participation and attendance is required and worth the same amount of points as their papers, quizzes, exams, etc. This allows the students to follow a tradition utilized by their ancestors in earning their final grade. The communal quizzes and exams, in class group work, and group presentations also utilize the oral tradition by allowing the students to share their answers and research orally. In the future, I foresee professors in Black Studies moving towards oral quizzes and exams exclusively; but, the only obstacle is that the quizzes/exams would have to be documented in some way in case the students have questions about their grade in the future.

Call and Response

Based on the life/space and cosmology in the African Worldview, African/Black people use the oral tradition to communicate in a cyclical way through call and response. Eileen Southern (1997) states "A favorite performance practice involved a lead singer supported by one or two others, or by a group, functioning as a chorus to sing refrains. This resulted in musical structures in antiphonal style-that is, alternating solo vs. solo, or solo and small ensemble, or solo and group-for which modern scholars use the term *call-and-response*" (p. 15). Call and response is when a constant flow of energy is exchanged between the performer(s) and the audience, often observed at African/Black concerts, films, church services, sporting events, and present in African/Black music and literature.

Incorporating call and response into my classes means they are always discussion based, even if they are lecture courses. In class, the energy is constantly flowing in a continuous exchange of information between my students and me, and between the students themselves. How I ensure this occurs is to always have a list of questions I can ask the students to provoke discussion. Some of these questions include: What do you think about this topic? How does this topic make you feel? Does this topic relate to your life? How does this topic relate to the African/Black community? Questions and comments are welcome at any time during class, even if they take us slightly off topic. I also require my students, especially in large classes, to download the Socrative application on their phones (www.socrative.com). With this application, I can ask the students questions they can answer anonymously, giving us even more information to discuss, especially on the days when the energy in the classroom is low. Consequently, with this approach, I am learning just as much from the students as they are learning from me.

Naming

When a baby is born in traditional African society, the child is not immediately named. This allows the parents to get to know the spirit and personality of the child before choosing a name for them (Abarry, 1997). Once a name is given, a naming ceremony is held where the community welcomes the new member of their community. Because naming is so important in African life, I never make any assumptions about my students, especially regarding their names and pronouns. Instead, I allow my students to name themselves, and to let me know how to address them. I also learn their names as quickly as possible, and try to pronounce their names correctly. I even encourage my students to learn their classmate's names. Although this can be difficult when teaching upwards of 175 students or more at a time, this utilizes the epistemology of the African Worldview by emphasizing the student's knowledge of self, and the ontology of the African Worldview because this allows me to honor their spirit.

University Classrooms as Communities

Just as African/Black people are communal and collective, my classrooms are viewed as communities, regardless of their size. Kwame Gyekye (1996) states that:

> A community is a group of persons linked by interpersonal bonds-which are not necessarily biological-who share common values, interests, and goals. What distinguishes a community from a mere association of individual persons is the sharing of an overall way of life. In the social context of the community, each member acknowledges the existence of common values, obligations, and understandings and feels a loyalty and commitment to the community that is expressed through the desire and willingness to advance its interests. Members of a community society are expected to demonstrate a concern for the well-being of others, to do what they can to advance the common good…(pp. 35-36)

He continues to say, "African society places a great deal of emphasis on communal values. The communal structure of African society has created a sense of community that characterizes social relations among individual members of African society. The sense of community is an enduring feature of the African social life…" (1996, p. 35). This also highlights the axiology of the African Worldview because African/Black people believe that interpersonal relations are the most important aspect in life. Even though this is slightly more difficult with 82 students than it is with 22 students, it is completely feasible for any size class to become a close community.

First, my classrooms are constructed to be safe spaces where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions, and being their true and most authentic self. Therefore, I do not tolerate racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, or hatred in any form. Of course, my classes are spaces of learning; but, any comments or statements that deny someone's humanity or their right to exist are strictly prohibited. In order to achieve this, I include the following note to my students in their syllabi:

> This class is also a safe space where all students can feel comfortable to be who they are. Therefore, racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. will not be tolerated for any reason. Let us continue with the mission of the elders and the ancestors who came before us by embracing an African worldview and helping to unify ALL African people (and all of humanity) together…regardless.

Moreover, I also require my students to utilize an African Worldview in every class and on each assignment, as stated in the syllabi. This attempts to protect my classes from students who are racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. because these ideas stem from the European Worldview and are not present in the African Worldview (Nobles, 2006).

Secondly, I encourage my students to get to know each of their classmates and their professor because we are going to spend an entire semester or year together (in regards to my writing classes). Therefore, on the first day of class, I give the students a group assignment to complete that is actually less about the assignment itself and more about giving the students an opportunity to converse and interact. In the Introduction to Black Studies and Black Culture (Intro) course and the African American History (History) course, I give the students a list of questions to answer to see how much of the course material they already know. In the Race and Critical Thinking (Race) course, I give them a list of terms to define. I also encourage the students to exchange phone numbers, email addresses, and social media accounts during this activity in case they need to contact one of their classmates. Doing this on the first day of class sets the tone for the semester, and already begins to create the class as a community.

To ensure the constant flow of energy in the classroom is not diluted or disrupted, I also have the students sit in small or big circles, depending on the activity, as often as possible. Applying the component of aesthetics in the African Worldview (i.e. beauty being tied to action), this forces the students to look at each other when they are speaking so that all interaction between the students is positive, peaceful, and respectful, even if the students disagree. As a result, no hierarchies are present either because each student is viewed as an equal member of our classroom community because each person has an equal place in the circle.

Fourth, I also require the students to complete several group projects, presentations, and assignments. For example, often, and in all of my different classes, the students are assigned to a specific group (a different group each time) and are required to discuss an article or chapter, answer questions about the reading, and submit their responses at the end of class. Not only does this allow the professor to cover a large amount of information in one class, it encourages class participation from everyone (especially from the students who are hesitant to speak in a larger class setting), and enables the students to earn points towards their final grade.

More specifically, in my History course, the students give a group presentation on a recent historic event that occurred throughout the African Diasporic World. In The African American Personality (Personality) course, the students give a group presentation on a diagnosis found in the *Diagnostic and statistical manual for mental disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and explain how it is not universal since it does not apply to African/Black people. In the Race course, the students present on a topic of their choosing that relates to our semester long discussion on white supremacy, white privilege, racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, etc. In both of my Approaches to University Writing (Writing) courses, the students not only work together to create music videos, films, websites, blogs, magazines, newspapers; but, they also present these group projects to their classmates.

Despite communalism being part of the deep structure of the African Worldview, some African/Black students have, unfortunately, embraced the notion of individualism from the European Worldview (Kambon, 2003). Therefore, whenever I have students work in groups on an assignment that is worth a large amount of points, I always give each student an evaluation form to discuss who completed what work and to explain whether or not everyone should earn the same grade. This usually eases the student's anxiety about working in groups because they are afraid their classmates will not complete their assigned duties.

The group work that occurs in the classroom does not always have to be completed in large groups; in fact, it can also be done in pairs. In my Writing courses, the students peer edit their classmate's essays three to four times a semester. Each time, the students are paired with a different classmate, and then they rotate to work with someone new. This offers the students an opportunity to get to know their classmates one on one while simultaneously learning how to write and peer edit.

Lastly, in an effort to establish a community between all of my different classes, I started bringing in former students who successfully completed a particular course to talk with the new students who are currently enrolled. I did this last year in my Writing courses where, on the first day of class, I brought back four to five students who offered suggestions on how to be successful, including the obstacles they encountered. My former students made such an impression on the new students that they still remembered what was said even at the end of the academic year.

Communal Quizzes

Despite the fact that I personally hate taking quizzes and exams because of their Eurocentric nature; I give communal quizzes to my students, especially in my lower division courses, to ensure they are reading the required material. In a small class, it is much easier to tell who is reading than it is with a class of 82 students. However, quizzes, in general, are a great way to check in with the students to see if they understand the information from the class discussions and course readings. My communal quizzes are approximately nine to eleven questions in length, totaling 25 points, and are given four times throughout the semester. The communal quizzes are scheduled at the beginning of the semester, and the questions are given out one class in advance to ensure the students know what to focus on when they are studying. This virtually eliminates students cheating because they know exactly what to study, and they know if they are stuck on a question, they can ask their classmates or professor for help. The quizzes are short, open answer, and are written in a way that allows for more than one answer to be correct. The students are given approximately 45 minutes in class to complete the quiz. If this is not enough time, I allow the students to take the last page of their quiz home with them to complete and turn in at the beginning of the next class.

What makes these quizzes communal is that they are given the opportunity to work with their classmates, or by themselves, to answer the questions. I do not limit the amount of students who can work together in a group, but I do not allow the entire class to work together in one large group because it is too difficult to maneuver logistically (especially with 82 students). The students are allowed to discuss the questions and the answers together verbally, but they must write down their own answers on their individual quiz. The one action that is prohibited is copying directly from another student's quiz because for me, this constitutes cheating. I also spend the class walking around and answering questions the students might have regarding the questions or their answers. What I found is that communal quizzes allow the students to critically think at a high level, they reinforce the information covered in class, and help the students retain the information for longer because they are processing, debating, questioning, and discussing the information with their classmates before they record it on their quiz.

One of my colleagues asked how I could tell if a student sincerely knew the information or just copied down what their group members said. Because I require the students to give a large amount of detail in every answer, any student who only writes down what another student told them is going to give an answer with minimal detail that will not award them full credit. Thus, it is easy to tell who did and did not study, and who knows and does not know the information on the quiz just by reading their answers.

Life/space in the African Worldview is viewed as infinite, unlimited, and cyclical, and logic is based on the unity of opposites and is diunital. These components heavily influence how the quiz questions are written, and how they are graded. The questions are short answer and open ended allowing for an unlimited and infinite amount of answers to be correct.

This does not mean there is not a wrong answer; it just means there are several right answers. Additionally, partial points and partial credit are awarded for each question because an answer could be correct and incorrect simultaneously. Grading this way also allows me to give students feedback on their quizzes by indicating what part of their answer was incorrect, and what information could have made their answer correct.

Consequently, if any of my students earn below a D- on any quiz, I automatically write "See Me" on the top of their quiz as a request to discuss their quiz with me during office hours. This way, I can find out if the student scored low on the quiz because they did not read, or because they did not understand the material. I also write comments such as "Great Progress" or "Nice Job" on their quizzes when a student's grade increases. Writing comments on the top of their quiz does not always guarantee the student will come into office hours to speak with me, but it lets the student know I am tracking their progress.

For example, after discussing racism in the English language in the Race course, questions for their communal quiz might include:

•Give TWO examples of where racism can be found embedded in the English language today (from the article *Racism in the English Language* by Robert B. Moore)?
•Why does Ossie Davis, in his article entitled *The English Language is my Enemy*, believe that the English language is his enemy as a Black man in America? What examples does he offer?
•What is one solution to racism in the English language offered by Marimba Ani in her article entitled *Writing as a Means of Enabling Afrikan Self-Determination*?

Or, after discussing housing discrimination, possible quiz questions are:

•What are protected classes? What protected classes are included on the federal level? What protected classes are included on the state level in California?
•What is housing discrimination? Give one example of housing discrimination included in your various assigned readings?
•What is steering?
•What is redlining?
•What is predatory lending?
•What is gentrification?

In the Intro course, potential questions for their quiz include:

•What is Black Studies? How is Black Studies unique and different from any other discipline in the academy?
•What is the relationship between race, culture, and worldview?
•What is White Studies? Why does society not define this term or call attention to this concept as often as it should (from *The Case for Black Studies* by DeVere E. Pentony)?
•List two characteristics that make up a committed African/Black person (from *Black Studies: A Discussion of Evaluation* by Leroi R. Ray, Jr.).
•Does Vivian Gordan believe that Black Studies has come of age? Why or why not (from *The Coming of Age of Black Studies*)?

Questions written in an open ended way give the students the opportunity to discuss their answers collectively, but also the chance to write out their answers in their own words.

My favorite example of how communal quizzes foster interpersonal relations between students occurred in my Race course in the spring of 2016. One of the students asked me a question I could not answer without giving her the actual answer. Therefore, I told her to ask one of their classmates for help. This student walked to the other side of the room, sat down, introduced herself to a student she did not know, and the two of them worked together on the remainder of the quiz. At the end of class, these two students exchanged phone numbers and social media information, and became friends. In fact, later on in the semester, they worked together, with a few other students, on their presentation.

In order to find out what the students really thought about communal quizzes, I asked the 70 students in attendance, in my Intro course in the fall of 2015, for their feedback. There were three answers possible for each question: yes, no, and maybe/unsure (following the logic of the African Worldview), and the students anonymously answered on the Socrative application on their phones. The first question I asked was if they had ever taken a communal quiz before:

38% of the students said yes
35% of the students said no
27% of the students said maybe/not sure

I then asked if the students liked taking communal quizzes:

66% said yes
6% said no
28% said maybe/unsure

Lastly, I asked if the students liked being able to take the last page of their quiz home with them to complete:

62% of the students said yes
19% of the students said no
19% of the students were indifferent

In the spring of 2016, I also asked the 50 students in attendance in my Intro course their opinions on communal quizzes. Again, there were three options for answers, and the students answered anonymously on the Socrative application. First, I asked the students if they had ever taken a communal quiz/test before:

34% of the students said yes
45% said no
19% said not sure/maybe
2% answered an option that was not available

I then asked if they had ever taken an open ended quiz/test before:

65% of the students said yes
31% said no
4% said maybe/not sure

I asked if they liked taking communal quizzes:

78% of the students said yes
6% said no
16% said maybe/not sure

Lastly, I asked if they liked taking open ended quizzes:

> 49% of the students said yes
> 26% said no
> 23% said maybe/unsure
> 2% again answered an option that was not available

Immediately after, I asked the students why some of them did not like taking quizzes with open ended questions. The students said that with multiple choice quizzes and exams, they always have a 25% chance of answering correctly. But, open ended questions force the students to think for themselves and to know the information because there are no options to choose.

Also, in the spring of 2016, the students in my Race course completed a free writing activity where they wrote about their experiences taking the communal quiz, a first for most of them. Of the 36 students who turned in this assignment, all of the students wrote that they liked taking communal quizzes, even if it was awkward at first because they felt like they were cheating. One student said:

> I felt that the communal test is a way better method of test-taking than the traditional way of test-taking. When you have doubts about a question, you can just ask one of your group members and they can help you out with the question your having trouble with it. This is a good way to learn because instead of getting the question wrong, you can get right while I'm also learning in the process.

Some students also commented on how they usually have test anxiety and stress, but working together with their classmates put them at ease. Another student said, "I'm glad we get to work with others during the quiz. It makes a huge difference on my performance." A student confirmed this by saying:

> I appreciated the communal quizzes because there were some ideas I had trouble putting into words and it was nice to have another students help me get my thoughts onto paper. I also enjoyed helping other students with ideas they were having trouble getting down on paper. The communal quizzes prove that two heads are better than one. You can get a lot more information from doing quizzes this way rather than guessing on answers you don't know.

Several students said that communal quizzes reinforced class material better than if they had taken the quiz on their own. One student said, “I feel like it teaches us teamwork, but at the same time, having the responsibility of actually knowing the material and reading. Because, at the end of the day, it is my priority to know the material and read, and should not have to depend on no one else.” Another student stated “After collaborating and building answers through discussion, I was very pleased with my understanding of the concepts. The communication allowed me to accumulate an amount of depth that I would not have had if I were to do the quiz individually. I understand the material much better how and I remember more because I actually had to ‘work’ for the answer.”

The majority of the students also said that taking communal quizzes was a great way to get to know their classmates, to team build, and to work together as a community. One student said, “Also, it helps us get more familiar with our classmates which is important because than everyone can be comfortable around each other and be able to share ideas and thoughts easier.” Another said “It was nice to have that sense of community and oneness with those around me. It was a nice, new feeling and experience.” A third student said “I absolutely loved the communal quiz. I think it is the best teaching strategy because it encourages you to trust and build a connection with your classmates.” Overall, one student said, “I actually wish that all of my classes had communal test/quizzes because then you’ll feel like you’re not alone or in competition with others.”

Communal Midterm and Final Exams

In the classes where the students do not take communal quizzes, I give communal midterms instead. Communal midterms are set up exactly like communal quizzes: they are scheduled ahead of time; the questions are given to the students one class prior to the midterm; the questions are open answer, but longer; there is still more than one correct answer possible; and the students work together in groups or individually. The differences are: the communal midterm is worth more points, the students have the entire class to complete it, and they do not take it home with them. Consequently, all of my final exams follow the same guidelines as the communal midterms except they are cumulative and cover information from the entire year.

Flexible Lesson Plans and Curriculum

Even with a syllabus, a course outline, and daily lesson plans, I still embrace a “go-with-the- flow” attitude in terms of how much information is covered in each class. Often, the phrase “The ancestors know what they are doing” is utilized emphasizing the larger cosmological forces at work guiding our class in the appropriate direction and at the necessary speed.

Marimba Ani (2004) reinforces this when she says: "We say that the African family includes the 'dead,' 'the living,' and the 'yet unborn'" (p. 7) and how "The elders of the community do not 'die,' but upon physical death are reborn into the spiritual realm as ancestors" (p. 8). Thus, the ancestors are constantly guiding our life, and our class is no exception.

Every time a professor teaches a class, it goes differently, even if it is the same class, taught at the same school, in the same department. How the class proceeds depends on the students in the class, what is happening in the world, and about a million other factors. In fact, there are some days where we accomplish more than expected, and others where we do not cover half of what was planned. This is why I send an email to my students (via Moodle) after every class to let them know what we covered, and what we will accomplish in the next class. This eliminates students asking what we did if they were absent, and also reminds the students what assignments are due in case they forget. These emails usually include details about assigned readings, paper guidelines, extra credit opportunities, etc. Although it is hard to relinquish control, especially when professors have such a limited amount of time to teach students an enormous amount of information; this approach allows class to be much more enjoyable and less stressful for both the student and the professor.

The Relevancy of Course Material to the Lives of African/Black Students

The original reason for establishing Black Studies in the university was to increase the amount of Black students and faculty, to increase the number of courses dedicated to African/Black people, and for more research to be conducted on the African/Black community (Hare, 2007; Bunzel, 2007; T'Shaka, 2012). Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (2007) states that one of the main purposes of Black Studies is "…to analyze, produce, investigate, and disseminate knowledge about African people" (p. xxxv). However, it is not enough for professors in Black Studies to research and teach information about Black people in an African Centered way; all information must directly relate to the African/Black community and to our Black students' everyday life. Emphasizing the concept of self-knowledge, the more African/Black students personally see themselves in the curriculum, the more invested they are in class, and the more successful they are overall.

Despite teaching at PWI's across the country, I always change the curriculum of each class I teach to mirror wherever I am geographically, especially to include that area's current events. For example, in the Race course, I now discuss housing discrimination and environmental racism in both Los Angeles and California. In my Writing courses, the students read several ethnographies about Black spaces and neighborhoods in Los Angeles, and how Black people helped to establish the city of Los Angeles.

In the Intro course, I show *The storm at Valley State* (Kulak, 1985), a film that discusses how Black Studies was birthed at CSUN. In general the students are offered countless opportunities during every class to bring their own opinions and experiences to the material being discussed, especially information they gathered through the epistemology of the African Worldview.

Opportunities in the African/Black Community: Extra Credit

Even though Black Studies has been present in African educational systems since the beginning of human existence, Black Studies did not officially become part of the modern day university system until 1968 through protests by students, faculty, and community members (T'Shaka, 2012). Because of the community's involvement in the establishment of Black Studies, the discipline ultimately works to serve the African/Black community. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (2007) states "Said simply, Black Studies is never Black Studies if there is no communal component. It was never intended to be an endeavor that lent itself exclusively to the academic world" (p. xl). Therefore, having students in Black Studies be involved in the African/Black community helps to fulfill the original mission of the discipline.

Unfortunately, only a few of the courses in my department are service learning courses (i.e. courses that require students to work in the community as part of their grade) primarily because many of our students commute to campus, they work up to full time while also going to school, and often have familial responsibilities that occupy any additional free time. Despite these challenges, there are ways for students to become involved on campus and in the surrounding community.

For example, I offer the students extra credit for attending events that pertain to African/Black people on campus and in the community. Possible extra credit events include films, lectures, discussions, presentations, workshops, performances, etc. Many students initially attend these events for the extra credit points, but end up enjoying them so much that they forget they are receiving credit for their participation. These events give students an opportunity to be exposed to the different Black student organizations on campus, to interact with other Black faculty and staff, and to intermingle with the Black community residing near the campus. This also allows the students to interact with their classmates, other Black Studies students, and their professor outside of class further solidifying the classroom community.

Grading

In addition to awarding partial credit and giving the students general feedback on their communal quizzes/exams, I also offer extensive, positive, and effective feedback on all of their assignments (as per the logic and life/space in the African Worldview). In fact, it is often a shock when the students get back their first written assignment because I line edit every word, and offer at least one to two pages of positive comments and constructive criticism. The students are then expected to apply this feedback to their next assignment to demonstrate their progress. Since I read every word of every assignment, the amount of plagiarism decreases significantly. Because the feedback I offer is thorough, very rarely do students ask me for a justification of their grade because the reasons are already written on their assignment. The only obstacle I encounter is that sometimes, the students cannot read my handwriting, which I am happy to read to them during my office hours.

I not only grade based on the overall expectation of a particular assignment, but I also grade on the student's potential and whether or not they have fulfilled it. In fact, I include the following note about grading on all syllabi:

> Although you will receive a rubric for each and every assignment with all of the expectations required, please do not expect a list of common sense items that must be included in order to receive a specific grade (i.e. in order to get an A, you must have a strong thesis, no grammar mistakes, no misspellings, etc.). I expect you to go into every assignment shooting for an A and working up to your optimal potential, and I find that handing out these types of expectations encourages students to work below their potential by settling for lower grades than they are capable of earning. Embracing an African Worldview means that grading is not only based on what the class does as a whole, but also on your own individual potential, how well you have worked up to that potential, and how much you have improved from the last assignment(s). For example: a student could have a well written essay with no grammar or punctuation mistakes and not have much depth or life to it and earn a B, and a student who has many grammar and punctuation mistakes with much depth and life may also earn a B. This ultimately means that you cannot compare your grades in this class to any other student since every student has a different potential. Therefore, the A your friend earns in class may be a B for you. If you are NOT working up to your full potential, that will also be reflected in your grade. For example: a paper that is an A for another student might be a B for you because you are capable of more and did not to put in the necessary work I know you are capable of for whatever reason. You will always know why you earned the grade you did based on all of the comments and feedback I include on each assignment.

Like the communal quizzes/exams, I also write on the student's assignment to see me during office hours so we can discuss their great work, or how they can improve. I have always believed that students achieve to the level of the professor's expectation. If you set the bar high, the students will rise to the challenge. Often, students tell me that my classes are the hardest classes they have ever taken, and that I demand more than most professors. This is why my students are proud of the grade they earn in my class because they know they worked for it.

Utilizing an African Centered Pedagogy Outside the University Classroom

Utilizing an African Centered pedagogy means the African Worldview influences all of your thoughts and actions, even after you leave the classroom. Despite the large amount of students I teach every semester, I still try my best to get to know each student individually. I discovered that the more time and energy I invest in each student, the more time and energy the student invests in class. Thus, every time I see one of my students on campus or in the community, I stop and talk with them. Even if I am on my way to class or running late to a meeting, I still take the time to talk with my students for at least a few minutes. I also try to attend as many of my student's activities as possible, either on campus or in the nearby community (i.e. their dance performances, plays, presentations, sporting events, etc.). It is really exciting for them to have their professor at their event, which also translates into the students putting more time and energy into class. This also offers me the opportunity to discover what the students are passionate about so I can bring that into the classroom and make the curriculum even more relatable.

Office Hours

One of my colleagues from a different department asked how I get so many students to show up during my office hours. Teaching approximately 175 students per semester helps, and so does advising approximately 130 major and minors; but, there are other reasons why the students take time out of their day to visit me during office hours which includes my utilization of the axiology, cosmology, and aesthetics from the African Worldview.

First, I do not plan on completing any work during office hours. When I used to work during my office hours at the beginning of my career, I became very annoyed when a student came to meet with me because they were interrupting my work. Now, I no longer plan on working at all, and if I do accomplish something, it is a pleasant surprise. This also means I am genuinely happy to see every student when they walk into my office, even if I know they have an issue. As per the axiology in the African Worldview, I approach office hours as a unique opportunity to get to know my students better.

In the same way I ensure my classrooms are safe spaces, my office is a safe space as well. I try to be as approachable and accessible as possible by encouraging students to speak with me at any time about any topic, and urge them not to wait until there is a problem to see me. A junior at CSUN majoring in Biology (Pre-Med) and minoring in Africana Studies, said:

> Dr. Glocke is one of the most welcoming passionate professors at CSUN. She exhibits commitment to her students, creating a welcoming environment in her office hours. You can approach her with anything and Dr. Glocke will leave you with philosophical answers and even sometimes quotes. She goes to the extent of making sure you understand it before you leave and creates relationships making them want to come back. I consider Dr. Glocke one of my mentors because her vast knowledge on almost everything and her openness to any topic you bring to her. She learns from us students as much as we learn from her.

Another junior at CSUN majoring in Sports Studies and minoring in Africana Studies, stated:

> Professor Glocke's office is a welcoming environment, where I know I am walking into a safe space. She makes it convenient to attend office hours by setting specific hours, or being able to make an appointment. Office hours have been beneficial to ask questions freely knowing I will get a more thorough response, in comparison to asking multiple questions in class. Office hours gives a student a chance to have a one on one conversation with their professor to clarify anything that was said in class, or answer any questions of their personal work. Office hours has been an aid to my success, by tracking my progression in my work, reviewing assignments with my professor, and being able to ask questions to further improve my course work.

The very popular misunderstanding is that since our students are 18 or older, they are grown and no longer need mentorship, guidance, or assistance. This is far from the truth. Because this is the first time many of our students are living on their own, away from their families, in control of their finances, and making their own decisions, the students need just as much mentorship and guidance as they did in high school. This is why my office door is always open, literally and figuratively, for any student who needs to speak with me for any reason.

Although meeting with a professor in office hours can be very scary and intimidating, especially for the first time, I try to make my office hours fun, inviting, and positive. Via the aesthetics in the African Worldview, I have decorated my office with pictures of my family and friends and other items that represent who I am as a person in order to put the students at ease.

I also play music during my office hours, I have facial tissues in case any students cry, and I have markers, colored pencils, and crayons for my students who bring their children with them. While students are waiting outside my office for their appointment, they socialize and interact with their classmates, students from my other Black Studies courses, Black Studies majors and minors, and even my colleagues. This represents the cosmology of the African Worldview by further building their social network and campus community.

Despite our Collective Bargaining Agreement (via the California Faculty Association) requiring three hours of office hours per week, I hold between 5-7 hours of office hours a week due to the large amount of students who come to see me. Because I average approximately 15 students for every three hours of office hours, I post signup sheets for appointments on my door. Each appointment is for 10 minutes, but the students can sign up for as many 10 minute appointments as necessary. Although this method is not foolproof, it has made it easier for the students because it guarantees one on one time with me and ensures they are not waiting hours to see me. Because many of my students also travel from various parts of Los Angeles in horrific traffic on days they are not scheduled to be on campus to see me in office hours, I always make sure that if there are any changes to my office hours, I announce them in class, post a notice on my door, let the department office know, and email the students.

Advisement

In African/Black life and culture, there is belief that family extends beyond blood relatives to also include extended family members and friends. Kobi K.K. Kambon (1998) states, "Extended Family (Kinship): The high popularity of family reunions, multiple parenting and socialization agents both inside and outside of the blood family circle, the widespread use of familial terms in general social relations (i.e. Brother or Sister), informal adoptions, reverence for children and the elderly, etc." (p. 134). This is why my department treats all of our Africana Studies majors and minors as members of our academic family. In fact, after students officially declare their major or minor in Africana Studies, they receive an email that says "Welcome to the Africana Studies family." We make our majors and minors a priority by helping them with anything they need. The students seem to be responding to this approach because as of spring 2016, we had approximately 130 majors and minors. A senior at CSUN pursuing a double Major in Africana Studies and Sociology, said:

> As a first generation college student we depend on advisors to help us navigate through the University system. Advisors in the Africana Studies department know my name. I don't feel like I'm just another highlighted name on a DPR [the Degree Progress Report]. Like I feel when I'm in advisement for my other major. When you get advised in AFRS [Africana Studies] it's not just an advisement it's an experience. The department aids me in succeeding by acknowledging my learning style and recommends courses that are the right fit for me. After leaving advisement, I am reassured about my future in obtaining my degree.

Our academic family also extends beyond our Africana Studies majors and minors because I also advise a large amount of Black students in general, especially those who have been stopped out, disqualified, or who are trying to return to the university after taking time off. Thus, our department has become a safe space for African/Black students in general, even if they have never taken our classes. As a Black student, it is easy to get lost in a PWI that has 10,000 students or 42,000 students, and this is why Black Studies is so important to the academic career of African/Black students on campus. Despite being under staffed and over worked, we are also trying to conduct more outreach and recruitment so that the African/Black students entering the university in the future are already educated on the many ways that Africana Studies can assist in their journey.

The mentorship offered to students in Black Studies does not end when they graduate from the university. In fact, I tell my students that we are in their life forever, if they so choose. Thus, I continue to stay in contact with my students over social media, text message, email, and phone calls. It is great to see they are still excited to share important life events long after they have left my classroom. I usually hear from my students when they complete graduate school, have children, acquire a new job, get married, etc. A graduate from the University of Wyoming with a major in Art and Psychology and a minor African American and Diaspora Studies, stated:

> I received mentorship and support from my Black Studies professors and still do. I would not have my masters without their continued support. They wrote me letters of recommendation for my graduate program and have always supported my decision to be an Art Therapist. I have learned how Art Therapy can be used with Black Studies and I would not have gotten to that point without my Black Studies minor or my Black Studies professors.

This is why I always keep the lines of communication open since I am still asked for advice, mentorship, recommendations, and advisement years later. Again, just because my students are parents themselves or working at their dream job does not mean they still do not need guidance and support in their future endeavors.

Obstacles and Challenges When Using an African Centered Pedagogy at a PWI

The first challenge a professor might encounter when using an African Centered pedagogy at a PWI is that at first, it is difficult for the students, even the African/Black students, to get used to this way of teaching after being indoctrinated into a Eurocentric educational system for over 12 years. But, when they do adjust, they are successful.

For example, the first communal quiz of the semester in any class is always a challenge for the students because they have never taken this type of quiz before, and they believe, as per the Eurocentric educational system, that working with their classmates is cheating. One student, in my Race course in the spring of 2016 wrote in her free write assignment that "The quiz was weird for me, I've never been able to ask the people around me for help. During the quiz I forgot that I could talk and kinda just took the whole thing by myself. I got stuck in some areas and when I looked around there were friendly faces to help. I am looking forward to the next one to hopefully start getting used to it." This is why the scores on the first quiz are usually pretty low. But, as the students continue to take their second, third, and fourth quiz of the semester, their grades rise because they are more comfortable and familiar with this type of pedagogy, and the activities and the assignments become normal and natural.

A second challenge is that you could be the only, or one of a few, professors in your department, even in a Black Studies department, who use an African Centered pedagogy. Embracing the African Worldview and utilizing an African Centered pedagogy means you are consciously fighting against white supremacy, racism, white privilege, etc. anywhere it is present, including the university. This could place you at odds with your colleagues who embrace the European Worldview and utilize a European Centered pedagogy because your intentions, priories, perspectives, and goals are inherently different. These ideological differences could translate into difficulty working together on committees and projects, or manifest itself in a lack of support and encouragement from your colleagues at the departmental level.

Using an African Centered pedagogy could also, unfortunately, negatively affect your tenure and promotion. Not only is it possible for the Chair of your department and the members of your Personnel Committee to be unfamiliar with this type of pedagogy, but the Dean and the Provost as well. Knowing the Chair of your department and one member of the Personnel Committee directly evaluate your teaching, and the Dean and the Provost indirectly evaluate your teaching, brings forth the following question: how can anyone effectively evaluate your teaching, especially for tenure and promotion, if they are unfamiliar with the type of pedagogy you use? Consequently, choosing to use an African Centered pedagogy requires additional work on your part to educate everyone involved in your tenure and promotion process. Otherwise, this could translate into negative teaching evaluations from your colleagues and/or negative comments about your teaching in your tenure and promotion letters from the Dean and Provost.

Another obstacle one may encounter is how information and data at a PWI is gathered using the epistemology of the European Worldview (though counting and measuring), and evaluated through the European notion of logic (dichotomous/either/or) and life/space (finite and limited). This means universities primarily use quantitative data for assessment (including course objectives/goals and teaching evaluations), and of course, they expect professors to do the same, especially when completing university tasks. But, how do you use European tools of analysis to measure African/Black phenomena?

How do you measure, in statistical data, how teaching Black Studies in an African Centered way positively affects, influences, and empowers the lives of African/Black students (Jones, Newson-Horst, Young & Miller, 2008)? Thus, the true effect an African Centered pedagogy has on African/Black students will never be represented in the data collected by the university, which is why we need to gather, analyze, and disseminate our own data using the African Worldview as our guide.

In the African Worldview, time is measured differently than in the European Worldview because, as Kobi K.K.Kambon (1998) states, "Time recognition is driven by people activities or events of nature, not mere clock time abstract numbers" (p. 134). This means that time is more fluid, flexible, and revolves around the interactions and activities of people, also emphasizing the axiology in the African Worldview, or the interpersonal relations between individuals. Ultimately, if we followed the idea of time in the African Worldview, university classes would end when the energy decreases in the classroom rather than at a specifically scheduled time. But, unfortunately, the university controls the length of the classes; the days and times classes are offered; the amount of time in between classes; the length of final exams; professor's teaching schedules; etc. For example, I taught a three hour History course on Fridays in fall 2015, and the students were often disappointed when I told them we were almost out of time. If other students had not been standing outside the classroom waiting to enter, or if my students did not have another course immediately after, I would have continued the class for longer. But, the Eurocentric space of the university forces us to have to adhere to time in a European Worldview, which is not in the best interest of African/Black students.

The Eurocentric way that time is defined in the university also interferes with the amount of activities professors can accomplish during class. One of the reasons I allow my students to take home the last page of their quiz to complete is because accomplishing an activity within a specific amount of time does not measure intelligence or knowledge. Naa Oyo A. Kwate (2001) discusses how those who embrace the European Worldview believe that "The faster the child completes the task (or, the better able the child is to transcend nature), the more intelligent he or she is deemed" (p. 231). But, Kwate continues to say "The timed condition of the WISC-III subtests is contradictory to the African concept of time...time in African culture is conceived only as it relates to events and must be experiences to become real; time is inseparable from the life force and therefore unmeasurable" (p. 232). Although the WISC-III measures intelligence in children 6 years old to 16 years old, this can easily be related to any Eurocentric test, quiz, exam, or assignment where a student's intelligence is judged based on how quickly a task is completed and not on how much information the student knows.

An additional challenge when teaching with an African Centered pedagogy at a PWI is class size. With decreasing governmental and state funding at public colleges and universities, money has become a central focus for all universities, even non-profit schools, turning many schools into businesses. When universities become businesses, the best interest of the student is lost, especially the African/Black student.

Even with less funding, universities are still continuing to accept the same number of students, or more, each year and are hiring fewer faculty. This forces universities to offer less sections of each class, but to offer larger class sizes. Hence, tenure track and tenured professors are teaching larger classes every year because it is more cost effective for the university. These large class sizes obviously make the university money and is conducive for a professor using a Eurocentric pedagogy; but, it makes teaching in an African Centered way very challenging because it is impossible for one professor to effectively teach this many students, especially in schools where Teaching Assistants are not offered.

The last obstacle one will inevitably encounter when utilizing an African Centered pedagogy is the amount of time and effort it takes to execute. Grading open ended quizzes/exams/finals; line editing papers and assignments with effective feedback; ensuring the relevancy of all course material to your students; offering and attending extra credit events on campus and in the community; holding a large amount of office and advisement hours; attending student presentations and performances on and off campus; and mentoring students every day takes an extraordinary amount of time and energy. As much as we would like to devote all of our time to our students, we have many other required academic responsibilities that are competing for our time including: researching; publishing; conference presentations; email; meetings; committee work; attending and hosting events on campus and in the community; etc. This work, unfortunately, inhibits the amount of time we can devote to the students who truly need it.

The amount of time we can give to our students is also inhibited by our personal lives and our responsibilities off campus. Family, friendships, staying healthy, working out, hobbies, relationships, possibly working another job, etc. all factor into the amount of time we can give to our students. Undoubtedly, using an African Centered pedagogy takes a great deal of time and energy; but, the more you utilize it, the easier it becomes.

Regardless of any potential challenges, obstacles, or repercussions professors might experience personally, the discipline of Black Studies must continue to utilize an African Centered pedagogy at PWI's across the country because, simply stated, it is in the best interest of the African/Black students. Although incorporating the above listed suggestions and strategies in your classroom might feel like you are trying to fit round pegs into square holes; if more Black Studies professors employed an African Centered pedagogy in their courses, universities would be forced to recognize its power, its importance, and the pivotal role it plays in the overall success of African/Black students.

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1 http://www.csun.edu/social-behavioral-sciences/africana-studies/what-africana-studies
2 http://www.asrc.cornell.edu/about/index.cfm