

Centennial Honors College

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Podium Presentation

The Trouble with the Trouble: Black "At-Risk" Adolescents in the Crucible of Public Education

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This presentation seeks to explore the experiences of African-American students in public education with an emphasis on the “mis-education” of the black child and what roles past and present incidents such as the Brown vs. Board of Education and the No Child Left Behind Act have contributed to the success and well-being of the African-American child today. This presentation also aims to reveal the harsh realities behind the typical life of an African-American child and how certain incidents can manipulate the direction one would begin to go in the future. Furthermore, this presentation intends to highlight the major effects of public education, the home, and, the daily hardships of life that encourage black children to become their own teachers within the system (so to speak) by letting society dictate to them what they should become. Finally, I will submit four vital steps that educators and social workers should seek to complete in order to promote the success of African-American students in public education. These steps include: visiting the home environment, exploring personal background/history, promoting awareness, and changing the policies of the system that have appeared to discriminate and discourage many black children. (These recommendations will be further discussed and elaborated upon in this presentation.)

Questions for Further Discussion in the Presentation:

- What are the steps adolescents must complete for growth toward maturity or adequately functioning adulthood?
- What troubles put these black youth at risk for not accomplishing those steps toward well-adjusted adulthood and how does public education facilitate or impede ones development toward that end?
- What must happen in public education so as to ameliorate troubled youth's outcome?

