

What Do Our Students Bring to Campus? The Transmittal of Values in the African-American Community

Institute on College Student Values

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Program Goal

To assist participants in understanding the values that have traditionally been prioritized in the African-American community in an effort to assist campuses in planning programs and activities that will support these values while encouraging student development, character development, and persistence.

Program Objectives

- To present Ladner's framework as outlined in *The Ties that Bind: Timeless Values for African-American Families*
- To share the ways that values have been traditionally communicated in the African-American community
- To determine what values are important to students compared to their parents and other authorities in their lives

Ladner's (1998) Framework

- A Sense of Identity
- Faith in God
- Respect for Others
- Honesty and a Sense of Responsibility
- Self-Reliance and Respect for Hard Work
- Resourcefulness
- Belief in Education
- Resilience
- Integrity
- Courage

Basic Principles Related to the Value System

- The power of self-identity.
- The power of the extended family.
- The power of the community to determine its future.
- The power of the past to influence the present.

A Sense of Identity

- Ethnicity brings significance to one's life (De Vos, 1975).
- Ethnicity is important in developing a healthy self-image and strong sense of self.
- When identity is established in the home, individuals are less likely to be affected by the negative stereotypes and images portrayed by the media, etc.

Faith in God

- Faith in God has always been an integral and life-sustaining element of African-American existence.
- Consistent with African thought is the belief that ethics and the substance of a good life have their roots and origin in God.
- The definition of religious orientation is an awareness of and commitment to a spiritual lifestyle that provides a sense of power and purpose greater than self (Hill, 1973).
- The Church has been and remains central to the life and vitality of Black Americans.

Respect for Others

- This virtue should be the foundation of our interactions.
- In previous generations, we were taught to give respect, even when it is not returned.
- Honoring elders including neighbors, teachers, etc. was once the hallmark of the African-American community.

Honesty and a Sense of Responsibility

- Honesty relates to one's essence and is a character trait sought in personal and professional relationships.
- It is considered the cornerstone of trusted collaborations.
- Trust and honesty are represented by one's commitment and dependability.

Self-Reliance and Respect for Hard Work

- The importance of a strong work ethic has been the hallmark of Black culture for centuries.
- ... that if any would not work, neither should he eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Resourcefulness

- Setting priorities
- Creating opportunities
- Sacrificing now for a better tomorrow

Belief in Education

- Education has been a key to liberation, growth, and mobility for Africans and African-Americans.
- Before formal education was available to them, these Americans were taught through oral tradition and proverbs.

Resilience

- Defined in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary as “the capacity of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress or an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.”
- It relates to rebounding, flexibility, and overcoming.

Integrity

- A part of the legacy that families pass down from generation to generation.
- The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them (Proverbs 11:3).
- It means telling the truth about ourselves (Lickona, 2004).
- Closely related to honesty and responsibility.

Courage

- Courage is not considered the absence of fear, but acting despite fear (Flake & Flake, 2003).
- It is a hallmark of the heritage of people of African descent.
- There are documented accounts of African-Americans who indicate that the values transmitted to them by their families and communities inspired them to achieve greatness in the face of adversity.

The Study

- The project's aim was to determine the impact of cultural values on ethical behavior.
- Baby Boomers were surveyed to assess the values they desired to instill in their millennial children.
- 84 parents, ages 42-63, completed the survey.
- 4 Boomer mothers were interviewed and the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.
- 188 college students completed a similar survey to assess the values they perceived as most important to their parents and the values they actually internalized.

Results: Parental Responses and Ranking of Parental Priorities

- 81.33%, Faith in God
- 68.00%, Honesty
- 62.85%, Respect for Others
- 62.67%, Belief in Education
- 57.33%, Integrity
- 54.67%, Sense of Identity/Self-Reliance and Respect for Hard Work
- 52.00%, Courage
- 50.67%, Resilience
- 48.00%, Resourcefulness

Results: Student Perceptions of Parental Priorities

- 76.11%, Faith in God
- 45.00%, Sense of Identity
- 43.00%, Respect for Others
- 41.99%, Honesty and a Sense of Responsibility
- 41.67%, Belief in Education
- 41.57%, Self-Reliance and Respect for Hard Work
- 37.93%, Courage/Integrity
- 30.73%, Resilience
- 30.56%, Resourcefulness

Results: Values Internalized by Students

- 82.02%, Faith in God
- 48.00%, Sense of Identity
- 40.23%, Belief in Education
- 39.77%, Self-Reliance and Respect for Hard Work
- 38.80%, Honesty
- 37.84%, Respect for Others
- 36.73%, Courage
- 32.95%, Resourcefulness
- 32.77%, Integrity
- 32.57%, Resilience

Other Results

- In considering the modes of value transmission, students are more likely to internalize values when they are transmitted orally and by example.
- In considering the conduct and behavior of the study participants, their values were determined to influence their interactions.

Conclusions

- Institutions must identify and continue to consider and build on the moral and spiritual foundations that students bring to campuses.
- Administrators, faculty, and staff must be examples and **model behavior** that students can emulate.
- Parental values, for the student participants, often became core values for them.
- A spectrum of topics and demographics impact change in and the transmission of values.

Implications for Student Affairs Work

- Give students opportunities to share their understandings of their individual faith practices and culture.
- Provide platforms for students to share their stories.
- Assist students in setting priorities.
- Assist students in ways to effectively support their families while in school.

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