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Franita Ware

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WARM DEMANDER PEDAGOGY

Culturally Responsive Teaching That Supports a Culture of Achievement for African American Students

FRANITA WARE
Spelman College

This study operationalizes warm demander pedagogy as a component of culturally responsive teaching. These instructional methods emerged during a study that examined the pedagogy of two African American urban teachers as compared to the literature. Through observations and interviews, the study examined the following: (a) How did each teacher describe her instructional practices and beliefs? (b) What similarities and differences existed between the teachers' practices and beliefs? (c) Was there evidence that the shared cultural/ethnic background of teachers and students influenced instructional practices? The study proposes warm demander and culturally responsive pedagogy to support a culture of achievement for students of color.

Keywords: *African American students; African American teachers; culture of achievement; culturally responsive pedagogy; warm demander pedagogy*

The literature on African American teachers has been limited, in part, to a small number of studies on exemplary African American teachers. The scarcity of published research suggests that either African American teachers are unsuccessful or their particular teaching strengths are ignored in the research literature. Hilliard (1995) disputes the former assumption, writing that as a child he remembered many examples of good, recognized teachers in his African American community. He noted that these teachers

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Teachers' names and schools are pseudonyms.

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taught more than academics. His observations were confirmed by other historical sources that have focused on African American teachers. For example, similar comments about the exemplary instructional practices and beliefs of African American teachers were noted in the work of Collins (1990), Foster (1997), Hollins (1989), Irvine (1990), Irvine and Irvine, (1983), Ladson-Billings (1994), Lipman (1995, 1998), Stanford (1995, 1997), and Siddle Walker (1996). However, in recent years, there has been an increasing number of studies that focus on this segment of the educational community (Archung, 2002; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Cooper, 2002; Dixon, 2003; Irvine, 2002, 2003; Karunungan, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2002; Lee, 2002; McAllister, 2002; Meacham, 2002; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003; Siddle Walker, 2001).

Ware (2002), in a review of the literature, identified common traits of exemplary African American teachers: an ethic of caring, beliefs about students and community, and instructional practices. This review raised several important questions for empirical study. For instance, are the beliefs and practices identified in that review confirmed by the observations and interviews of an African American teacher in a specific classroom context? Were the common traits that were identified in the literature generalizable across time? How were specific classroom contextual variables related to the findings on African American teachers? Were there examples of teaching practices that were documented in historical examples and contemporary examples that suggest a cultural influence?

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on the theoretical and conceptual framework of the cultural context of teaching and learning. Foster (1989), Irvine (1990, 2002, 2003), Irvine and Armento (2001), and Siddle Walker (1996, 2001) have stated that there are unique and culturally specific teaching styles that contribute to the academic success of African American children and other children of color.

Culture is a variable that is often overlooked as a function of student success. The culture of the schools often mirrors the

White middle-class norms and values evident in the greater U.S. society. This mismatch between school culture and the culture of the students creates the potential for misunderstanding of actions and misinterpretation of communication between teacher and student. This misunderstanding and miscommunication or lack of cultural synchronization (Irvine, 1990) increase the possibility of failure for students who lack the cultural capital (Delpit, 1995) to navigate the unstated culture and norms of the school.

Within this framework, the theory of a cultural context of teaching and learning views the inclusion of the students' culture as essential in improving student academic success. Those students who tend to be successful in school bring to school those values the school deems appropriate. However, those students who fail to assimilate, code switch, or culture switch (Irvine, 1990, 2003) to the dominant culture of the school are at a greater risk for failing. This theoretical foundation has at its core a critical view of teaching that is responsive to the students' culture by including a teaching pedagogy that gives attention to incorporating planned instruction and teaching styles that are supportive of the students' multiple learning styles. In addition, the teacher is expected to have a broad knowledge base of subject content and adopt a reflective attitude to support the flexibility and expertise to achieve this pedagogy. Finally, the cultural context of teaching and learning and the development of culturally responsive pedagogy are firmly entrenched in effective teaching research (Irvine & Armento, 2001).

Siddle Walker (1996, 2001) noted that the attributes of Black teachers have a cultural history. The author noted that in segregated schools, Black teachers typically emphasized the importance of education for political and economic success. The teachers were also united in their approach to developing students' awareness of the role of education in their lives. The works of Foster (1997), Irvine and Irvine (1983), and Siddle Walker revealed that there were many positive experiences in segregated schools, for Black teachers and students, and they noted that the process of desegregating American schools has contributed to the decline in numbers of Black teachers.

The historical, cultural model of Black teaching is being lost, however. The recent data state that teachers of color represent 9% of K–12 public school teachers, whereas students of color represent 40% (Jorgenson, 2001). As a result, 44% of U.S. schools have no teachers of color on staff, and many students will complete their K–12 schooling without having a single teacher of color.

As such, the potential exists for an increase in the number of Black students who experience school failure. Irvine (1990) noted the research of Meier, Stewart, and England (1989), who concluded that the higher the percentage of Black teachers in schools, the lower the numbers of Black students placed in special education or subjected to expulsion or suspension. Their research indicated that the presence of Black teachers led to more Black students being placed in gifted classes and graduating from high schools.

This conclusion suggests that a synthesis of the available research is warranted to identify some of the culturally specific ways that Black teachers have successfully instructed and nurtured Black students to achieve academic success. In summary, the literature appears to indicate that (a) Black teachers have fulfilled many roles in the lives of Black students, and (b) the field is in danger of losing the special knowledge of the interaction of Black teachers and their students that may have provided the synergy and the foundation for academic success.

This qualitative study of African American urban teachers explored whether the traits, beliefs, and practices found in the review of the literature could also be identified in interviews and classroom observations.

Specifically, this study examined the following questions:

1. How did each teacher describe her instructional practices and beliefs?
2. What similarities and differences existed between the teachers' practices and beliefs?
3. Was there evidence that the shared cultural/ethnic background of teachers and students influenced instructional practices?

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the research on teaching strategies of African American teachers and to corroborate the teaching strategies of the two case study teachers with those noted in the literature on Black teachers. The veteran teacher for this study, Ms. Willis, was the subject of the pilot study. Two primary data sources were used for the pilot study. The first data source was interviews. There were three formal semistructured interviews with Ms. Willis for the pilot study (Merriam, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Five interviews also occurred following observations in Ms. Willis's class. The second data source came from observations collected as a participant observer in Ms. Willis's class. The class was observed three times for 1 hour each time. The observations occurred in Ms. Willis's classroom, during the last 6 months of her teaching career in 1998.

The comparative case study expanded on the methodology developed in the pilot study. Interview data and class observations from the pilot study of Ms. Willis were compared with observations of Mrs. Carter in her class on 25 class occasions; each observation was followed by an interview, a total of 25 interviews. In addition, two interviews were conducted to perform a member check and to clarify assumptions made from the data. These observations and interviews occurred during the academic year 2000-2001. Observations for both teachers occurred on randomly selected days and times. Because of Ms. Willis's untimely death, a clarification of the data occurred through follow-up interviews with a family member.

DATA CODING AND ANALYSIS

The transcriptions of class observations and interviews were analyzed to determine pattern codes, using the methodology as explained in the work of Miles and Huberman (1994). The coding of data and the categories that emerged or were consistent are noted.

In the pilot study, the coding of data was based on categories of a review of the literature in an attempt to compare the behaviors of Ms. Willis with those of noted exemplary African American

teachers. The interviews were coded separately from the observations. The categories were (a) ethic of caring; (b) beliefs about students, teachers, parents, and community; and (c) instructional practices. However, what emerged in the pilot study were examples of behavior that showed that Ms. Willis could be described as a “warm demander” (Kleinfeld, 1975), as characterized by Vasquez (1998) and Irvine and Fraser (1998). The following categories emerged:

1. Warm demanders as authority figures and disciplinarians
2. Special nurturing for African American males
3. Warm demanders as caregivers
4. Dedication to students' needs
5. Other-mothering
6. Warm demander as pedagogues
7. Beliefs about students
8. African American students with limited literacy proficiency

The initial categories of ethic of caring, beliefs, and instructional practices and the warm demander categories were used as a framework to organize the data collected on Mrs. Carter. However, consistent with qualitative research methodology (Merriam, 1989) and the pilot study, the warm demander categories emerged and the initial categories were collapsed into the broader warm demander categories.

Attention was given to minimize errors and biases in the study with the goal of descriptions and explanations of the world as experienced by Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter (Merriam, 1998). Thus, an attempt to attain dependability or consistency of the results obtained from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, the expectation is not that other researchers will arrive at the same results but rather that the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1998). Upon reflection, it was noted that similar questions were asked during an extended period of months, and both teachers' responses were consistent, thus providing a level of triangulation of the data.

The research design of this study was organized in an attempt to provide enough detail to show that the conclusion was reasonable and made sense within a qualitative research paradigm.

COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter were selected from the population of teachers who participated in the Center for Urban Learning/Teaching and Urban Research and Education and Schools (CULTURES) at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia (Irvine, 2003). The study was conducted as a comparative case study of two generations of African American teachers. At the end of the school year where the pilot study was conducted, Ms. Willis retired after 30 years of service and Mrs. Carter had 6 years of service. The comparison of the teachers examined their ethic of caring, beliefs, and instructional practices.

Merriam (1998) stated that the case study was appropriate to gain an "in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved" (p. 19).

This study used an inductive research strategy. Merriam (1998) identified this type of research as one that "builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than tests existing theory" (p. 4). Consistent with this research methodology, the study compared descriptions of instructional practices from the existing literature with data collected in the field.

THE SETTING

Ms. Willis taught at an inner-city school district and her most recent assignment, Triwood Elementary, was in the lowest socioeconomic community in this urban district.

The school was located in the middle of a low-income housing development that was surrounded by major corporations and a large prestigious southern university. Just prior to Ms. Willis's retirement, the school and the community underwent significant changes due to a plan to renovate the school and community. To renovate the school, the teachers and students were relocated to a temporary facility. This facility had poorly lit halls and the faculty made a concerted effort to brighten up the school by displaying student work throughout the building. However, the community where the school was situated demonstrated no connection to the school or the students. The doors were locked and the teachers' cars were frequently burglarized. Ms. Willis commented that those types of

occurrences never happened in the community where the original school was located. These inconveniences were probably tolerated because the faculty and students believed that they would be moving into a new school.

Mrs. Carter taught at Baker Middle School, a recently renovated building that had been closed for several years. Data were collected at this school during its 2nd year of operation. The school opened with only sixth graders. Each year, another grade was added until the school reached the full capacity of grades. The academic focus of the school was technology and performance and it was designed to attract middle-income families. The building was attractive with efficient lighting. Each classroom had several computers with Internet capabilities, a large-screen television that allowed the teacher to show videotapes, and computer programs. Students had access to laptop computers. Each teacher was given a laptop for personal and instructional use.

The community was made up of mixed-income residents. The feeder schools ranged from middle-class, African American families to low-income African American families with students who performed above and below the norm academically, as measured by standardized tests. Mrs. Carter was in the first group of teachers hired to open the school. Mrs. Carter was nominated Teacher of the Year during the school's 2nd year of operation.

THE TEACHERS

Ms. Willis taught 16 years in Triwood Elementary and was a respected member of the community. She lived by the principle that all children can learn. She taught third, fourth, and fifth grades because she believed that she could make up for lack of preparation with which the students began their school years. Some of these gaps in opportunities (Perry et al., 2003) were consistent with low socioeconomic communities. The classes she taught were for students who needed remediation based on test scores or behavioral problems, but they were not special education classes. In addition to teaching, Ms. Willis volunteered for 21 years at a community center near her home. She was an adopted member of a family that traced its family history from oral African tradition to the period after the Civil War. The family had members who attended schools sponsored by the

Freedmen's Bureau (Anderson, 1988). There were 18 members of the family who were educators, many with more than 30 years of service to public education.

Ms. Willis once referred to herself as a "workshop junkie" and appeared to be committed to lifelong learning consistent with Vonk's definition of "the second professional phase" (cited in Fessler, 1995, p. 176), despite her many years of teaching.

Mrs. Carter had some similarities and differences in her life experiences. Like Ms. Willis, Mrs. Carter was exposed to educators in her family. At the beginning of the 1970s, Mrs. Carter's mother taught in a suburban/rural school system in close proximity to a large southern city with a predominately White population of students and staff. Mrs. Carter's mother was the first African American teacher at the school. Mrs. Carter attended the same school where her mother taught and she experienced being a minority student at a young age. She attended this elementary school and continued to attend integrated schools where she was in the minority population through middle and high school. Her high school was a very popular magnet school where students, including Mrs. Carter, were bused to school. The school was located in an affluent suburban neighborhood. Despite her minority status, Mrs. Carter was a popular student, achieving status as an honor student and a cheerleader.

Mrs. Carter can be described as in the "phase of growing into the profession" according to Vonk's work on teachers' professional development stages (cited in Fessler, 1995, p. 176). This phase occurs during the 2nd and 7th years of teaching when the educator's focus is on improving teaching skills and competencies. Mrs. Carter appears to have gained a high level of competency through her intense commitment to professional development and personal growth.

FINDINGS

The primary, overarching finding of this work is that Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter were both warm demanders (Kleinfeld, 1975). Vasquez (1989) used the term *warm demanders* to identify teachers

who were successful with students of color because the students believed that these teachers did not lower their standards and were willing to help them. Irvine and Fraser (1998) expanded the term by using it to describe teachers who “provide a tough-minded, no-nonsense, structured and disciplined classroom environment for kids whom society had psychologically and physically abandoned” (p. 56). The term *warm demander* is used frequently to describe effective, culturally responsive teachers. This study operationalized the warm demander construct by closely examining African American exemplary teachers whose instructional practices corroborated the literature’s use of the descriptor, warm demander.

Specifically, this study posits that the two teachers were identified in the following contexts: (a) warm demanders as authority figures and disciplinarians, (b) warm demanders as caregivers, and (c) warm demanders as pedagogues. In addition to identifying characteristics of the warm demander construct, this research explored related issues of cultural/racial identity and culturally responsive pedagogy.

WARM DEMANDERS AS AUTHORITY FIGURES AND DISCIPLINARIANS

One example of Ms. Willis’s tough-minded, no-nonsense style of teaching was most noticeable during a particular classroom observation. Ms. Willis spoke to the students in a loud, clear voice and expressed her expectations concerning the importance of homework, including its timely submission and completion. She said,

Chris, pass out workbooks while I’m doing some housekeeping and I want everybody to . . . listen. Yesterday I checked for two things, number one, homework. I had about half of the class that turned in their homework. I do not give you homework everyday, but when I do it’s a practice skill that needs to be done. It’s something that you need: it’s not just something for you to do. . . . And I expect you to do it. Now from now on, if you cannot do it, then you need to write me a note of explanation. And the only reason I’ll tell you that you cannot do your homework is that you are dead—and you won’t be here then. Because if you go to Grady [a local hospital with a reputation for long waits] I told you all the time . . . take your book with you and do it while you’re sitting there. . . . We are not here to play, I’m getting you ready for

middle school. . . . I am thoroughly disappointed with you
excuse me for hollering.

What makes these statements significant was the reaction of the students to Ms. Willis's comments. The students were *absolutely quiet* and *looked at her with respect* while she spoke. No one moved or made any type of nonverbal gestures to indicate disagreement or anger. Her statements were directed at the class, not any one student in particular, so all the students shared the blame. Yet, all the students seemed to respond by listening and showing facial gestures that indicated remorse. Her comments were certainly of a no-nonsense approach to education for students who were in a remedial class based on low test scores or behavior. She was explicit about the importance of homework and acknowledged the reality that students were not always in control of their lives (e.g., the comment that they may have to spend the evening at the hospital). However, there were no excuses.

In addition to the respect the students showed Ms. Willis while she spoke, when she concluded, the students pleasantly and quietly followed the procedure she outlined as they fulfilled their tasks. In fact, the calm demeanor of the students appeared to indicate an acknowledgment that Ms. Willis was correct to reprimand their behavior. This experience suggests that the teacher and the students had established a caring and personal relationship or, as Foster (1993) described, a connectedness. Accordingly, the students' behavior seemed to reflect the attitude that she raised her voice and demanded the homework as an indication of her concern.

Irvine and Fraser (1998) indicated that culturally responsive African American teachers teach with authority. The authors identified Foster's (1991) research in which students indicated that they were "proud of their teachers' meanness" (p. 56) and saw this type of behavior as an effort to push them to attain academic progress and manage the class environment in a way that supported students' success. Thus, "meanness" in this particular context was seen as a positive attribute in warm demander pedagogy. Ms. Willis was clearly the authority in this example of warm demanding behavior, and the students were comfortable and

accepting of her authority. Cooper (2002) identifies this behavior as “community-commanded demonstration of caring” (p. 60).

Finally, it should be noted that this observation occurred after Ms. Willis had taught the class for approximately 7 months, and it is significant to note that the caring relationship, which is significant in warm demander pedagogy, the class climate, and the expectations for behavior had been established through numerous other class experiences.

In comparison with Ms. Willis, Mrs. Carter was interviewed before the start of the school year and was asked about her disciplinary procedures:

Sometimes I *mean-talk* them in varying degrees of severity. And sometimes when you do yell, it is not always right to yell. Sometimes you have to go back and say—“what was really going on with you when I yelled at you? I’m just so sorry”—you know, but what was really happening? . . . Sometimes with these kids, you have to [address the behavior] right then and there. . . . They are accustomed to a certain response and if you don’t give them that response they will read that as weakness. “She’s weak; I can do this and she won’t even say anything to me.” But if you turn around and you get them right there, where it is, and it doesn’t matter whose there or what’s going on, you don’t have that problem.

Mrs. Carter’s quotes are similar to Ms. Willis’s example because she identifies behaviors that are based on the life experiences of many African American children, specifically, parents as authority figures (Delpit, 1995). Mrs. Carter presents her discipline style, where she raises her voice, as an extension of her childhood experiences and a cultural reality. Also, she provides an in-depth explanation of parental/teacher discipline strategy that is missing from the observation of Ms. Willis. In the interview with Mrs. Carter and the observation of Ms. Willis, there is the humanity of the warm demander—the need to apologize for the authoritarian tone or the “mean-talk.” Another salient facet of Ms. Carter’s reflection is the realization that some students want the stern attention and see the teacher as weak if she does not respond with a level of power and an assertion that indicates that the teacher is in control.

As indicated by these examples, discipline forms an essential attribute of a warm demander teacher. The research (Foster, 1997; Toliver, 1993) also indicates that discipline is an important aspect of culturally responsive African American teachers; effective classroom management could only take place with strong and effective discipline. Classroom management began on the 1st day and served as the primary lesson for the 1st week of school. Ms. Willis noted, "A child cannot learn if there is no management. I would set my rules that first week. I worked more on rules the first week than I would on academics." Consistent with the instructional practices of Black teachers noted in the review of the literature, classroom management provided the structure for classroom interactions and minimized the time spent on discipline.

A similar strategy was noted in Ms. Willis's response to an interview question about discipline. Specifically, the question asked was, "Talk to me about discipline. . . . I notice that you will go ahead and discipline a child and [then return] to the lesson." She responded,

Well basically that's the way I am. Sometimes I can look at them. I handle it right then and I'm through with it. You just don't keep on and I don't like to become impatient. I tell them, I'm not going to debate you. If it warrants me stopping my class, just stop it. There is no reason under the sun for you to be doing it [misbehavior].

This quote from Ms. Willis and the observation of Mrs. Carter indicated an established relationship with their students in which students responded to requests for ending any class disruptions. Dixson (2003) suggests that "it is the fact that their students trust them and believe they care about them that makes their discipline and high expectations effective" (p. 228).

These examples also signaled that both teachers did not circumvent the learning process with excessive attention to students' disruptive behavior. This conclusion was supported by observations in both teachers' classrooms. Similar to descriptions noted in the literature (Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Noblit, 1993) and a description of warm demanders (Irvine & Fraser, 1998), Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter were firmly in charge of their

classes and moved the academic process forward with a minimum of disruptions.

WARM DEMANDERS AS CAREGIVERS

As a caregiver, Ms. Willis's warm demanding behavior indicated that she was dedicated to her students' needs and her self-perception as an "other-mother." When asked about the good or "right" ways to educate African American students, Ms. Willis responded, "The right way is to have high expectations and have a positive attitude to them." She cautioned teachers against the negative influences of low expectations or negative beliefs when teaching African American students. She further commented that she gave her students tender loving care and she became familiar with the students to learn what would motivate them to work to her high expectations.

One of Ms. Willis's strengths as a teacher was her ability and desire to teach reading to students who began school with limited language skills and speaking vocabulary. Teaching a fourth or fifth grader to read may have presented a daunting task to other teachers, but Ms. Willis stated,

I really think that is my greatest asset, the ability to teach them to read. . . . I have had children who could not read at all and when they left [me] they could read.

Ms. Willis maintained high expectations, despite students' official academic records and/or their reputation among other teachers. Ms. Willis believed that teachers needed "an open mind" when assessing their students' potential. She noted that often students behaved differently with different teachers and under different circumstances.

Mrs. Carter described that she cared for her students' personal "hunger" success and physical health. As a consequence, she encouraged them to care for their community. Mrs. Carter said,

You are not going to reach anybody if they are hungry. So as a teacher, a lot of that is finding out what your hunger is, and seeing if I can meet that. [Then] I can teach you something. If I cannot meet what your hunger is, or if I do not care what that hunger is, I am not reaching you.

Mrs. Carter's reference is not a medical, physical hunger but an emotional or academic hunger specific to her students. Concurrently, she saw analyzing and supporting her students as fundamental to the act of teaching.

Furthermore, she encouraged her students to develop a global sense of caring by teaching them to care about their communities. "They have to care about what is going to happen to them and what is going to happen to the people in the world with them." She cautioned that without a consciousness about other people, the students would become apathetic. So she attempted to teach caring behaviors and demonstrated care.

Another way she demonstrated care was through listening, because she remembered her own adolescence. Mrs. Carter shared,

One of my students said that there are only three teachers who really listen to kids, to what is going on, and really try to talk to us. My name was mentioned. I remember growing up when certain things would happen even with my mother. Nobody was really listening to me, and my friends felt like that too. Nobody was really listening to what we were trying to say. So I try to listen.

Furthermore, she elaborated on the ways she demonstrated care and identified caring as discipline. She stated that she talked to her students and disciplined them, as her way of caring, and that she was successful with this strategy. Ms. Willis's and Mrs. Carter's ethic of caring are consistent with examples suggested by Cochran-Smith (1997), Collins (1990), Dixson (2003), Foster (1993, 1997), Henry (1992), Ladson-Billings (1994), Lipman (1998), Stanford (1995, 1997), and Toliver (1993).

BELIEFS ABOUT STUDENTS

The review of existing literature on Black teachers indicates that Black teachers clearly believed and expected that their students could and would learn. These teachers assumed responsibility for implementing strategies that enhanced student learning. Their beliefs and their high expectations for their students formed the foundation of their pedagogy as warm demanders. Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter indicated in their interviews and demonstrated in their

classrooms that they fully expected their students to learn. For Ms. Willis, these expectations were grounded in the reality that her students lived in an urban, low socioeconomic community. In addition, Ms. Willis taught classes for students with low standardized test scores, who frequently exhibited behavior problems. Mrs. Carter taught students who were from low socioeconomic and middle-class communities. In spite of the conditions, both teachers still expected their students to be successful learners, become readers before they left class (in Ms. Willis's case), and improve their test scores.

Ms. Willis recalled a student who began the school year saying that she could not read and resisting participation in class. In fact, the student's resistance was so strong that the student and Ms. Willis ended the day very frustrated and angry at each other. The child's mother arrived the next day to discuss the child's inability to read with Ms. Willis. Her response was,

I know you are upset and all, but I am not going to argue with you. But I tell you, if you give me a week, and let me do it my way, next week you will come up here and thank me.

Ms. Willis remarked that the student achieved the expected progress in reading and the parent became a great supporter. Consistent with a warm demander's approach to unsuccessful students, she would tell the students that they *would* read in her class. Then, she would create the class conditions to turn previously unskilled readers into readers.

Similarly, Mrs. Carter observed African American students who struggled for success and those who attained success. She discussed the influence of the smaller class sizes for her gifted classes, although she noted that many of the students did not fit the gifted category. Despite their ranges in ability levels, she expected all the students to achieve academic success in challenging academic tasks.

I think it is the atmosphere and I think the smaller numbers. There has been an atmosphere and an environment established and they know it is a class that operates on a higher level. That is their *culture to achieve*. Other students do not have a culture to achieve; not all the time. Some of them really do not care. There is a large

number of students who are coming from an environment of it doesn't really matter [if they achieve] and that's what they generate. The students who are more serious about what they are doing have a harder time spreading their culture [to achieve] to the rest of them. I guess it's all about the majority. I think the majority of students in this class are here to achieve.

In summary, Mrs. Carter specifically challenged her students to assume a culture of achievement and overcome their personal limitations to achieve. She challenged all her students equally, including the students who lacked some of the skills needed for her gifted class. Ms. Willis had similar expectations for her students and created the class conditions to foster achievement. Both of these teachers expected and demanded students' achievement despite gaps in opportunities that create academic achievement gaps (Perry et al., 2003). This attribute is a significant teaching strategy of warm demander pedagogy—the firm, yet caring, expectation that African American students will achieve academic success in their classes.

DEDICATION TO STUDENTS' NEEDS

Ms. Willis's interviews often demonstrated her dedication to the specific needs of students who live in low socioeconomic communities. For example, she discussed teaching the whole child. To teach the whole child successfully, she explained that a relationship had to be established with the student. She said that relationship building was as important as teaching the subject matter. To help build a relationship with her students, Ms. Willis mentioned that she would allow them to listen to the radio while they worked simply because it pleased the students. Another example of how she taught the whole child and manifested her dedication to their needs emerged from her concern about children who arrived at school without adequate hygiene preparation. If the children appeared with unwashed faces or unclean clothes, she provided clothing and toiletries for their use.

In meeting her students' needs, Ms. Willis believed poverty was no excuse for lack of achievement. "The only way that I think you can eradicate poverty is to educate them. If we get one or two,

then maybe that one or two can make a difference with one or two more." Therefore, an awareness and dedication to the needs of students in low socioeconomic communities often resulted in the teacher establishing relationships with the students' families.

Mrs. Carter demonstrated a similar belief that poverty could not serve as an excuse for a lack of academic achievement. She described a student who was having family problems and financial difficulties and discussed how she encouraged the student to complete his computer-based assignment, despite the fact that he did not own a home computer. She asked the student to arrive at her classroom before or after school or during his homeroom period. She was willing to give the student a pass to gain access to her class, but she was unwilling to exclude him from the required assignment because of family or financial difficulties.

Both Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter demonstrated caring and a dedication to their students' needs. These teachers moved beyond a broad-based care for everyone to care that related to the needs the teacher identified in each student. The demonstration of care supports the relationship building essential for warm demander pedagogy.

OTHER-MOTHERING

Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002), Case (1997), Collins (1990), Foster (1997), Ladson-Billings (1994), Lipman (1998), and Stanford (1998) documented examples of teachers acting as the students' extended family. One of the successful strategies Ms. Willis used with her students was to remind them that she had a connection to other members of their families by telling them that she had taught their older brothers or sisters or that she knew their mothers. This strategy reinforced to the students that Ms. Willis was an insider in their community.

Nonetheless, Ms. Willis's unique style of other-mothering behavior became clear in the interviews. For example, when discussing the low-income community where she taught for many years, she stated,

The parents had a very low image of the school. They [parents] would come to the school wearing their bedroom shoes, walk in the

door smoking a cigarette, and hair in rollers . . . and come in the cafeteria in the morning and take the children's food off their plate. They just had no respect for school. I would say "Now listen baby, I'm old enough to be your mama, now you are not going to come in this school and embarrass your child with those bedroom shoes on. I expect more of you and your child expects more of you," and they would say, "Yes ma'am." I approached them first not from a teacher but like a mother. They knew we had the children's best interest in mind. They would accept me, and they started to respect me.

Ms. Willis provided care to the parents of her students and to other parents in the school. In addition to providing support and care to the parents, Ms. Willis expressed the belief that it was important for her to foster parents' trust in her and the school. To have these types of conversations, Ms. Willis acknowledged the age differences between the parents and her and would say things like, "I'm going to treat you like I'm your mother."

Ms. Willis's underlying belief was that the parents were young and had not been taught the parenting skills necessary to navigate successfully within the school's culture. She observed families where the child, the mother, and frequently the grandmother were born to teenaged mothers. As a consequence, there were no mature adults to manage the home and children. Ms. Willis subsequently assumed the roles of both teacher and mother to her students and her students' parents.

By providing other-mothering support to the parents in the community, she reminded the parents of the potential for a positive school-family relationship. Ms. Willis was a cultural bridge—closing the gap between the middle-class, mainstream expectations of schools and the lower income African American community where the students resided. Although Ladson-Billings (1994) and Toliver (1993) cite the importance of positive interaction with parents, the type of caring exhibited by Ms. Willis is distinct from other documented examples of caring and other-mothering found in the literature. She provided support and nurturing and taught her students and their parents the standards of behavior for positive interactions in schools. In contrast, Mrs. Carter did not demonstrate in observations or interviews other-mothering behaviors. Mrs. Carter was significantly younger than Ms. Willis and

therefore closer to the age or younger than some of the parents of her students.

WARM DEMANDERS AS PEDAGOGUES

As pedagogues, Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter demonstrated some culturally specific practices. These practices were incorporating elements of the students' culture in their teaching, adapting instruction to meet the students' learning style, and having high standards and expectations.

Direct Instruction and Inquiry Learning

When observing specific teaching methods, Ms. Willis instructed the class in what is often assumed to be two distinctly and seemingly incompatible styles—direct instruction and inquiry learning. She was observed teaching in the modality known as “teacher directed instruction,” which included teaching directly from a preprinted text (Sadker & Sadker, 1997). She led the instruction and either called on the students or had the class respond in a call-and-response style. This style of instruction is consistent with an authoritarian teacher style and with the preaching tradition of call and response in African American churches (Hollins, 1989). Conforming to behaviors found in the church, the students were engaged in the lesson and responded at the appropriate time. Similar to the teacher noted in Noblit (1993), the class was engaged and actively participated in the instruction and seemed to appreciate when Ms. Willis called on them to answer.

In addition, Ms. Willis taught science in a style using the inquiry approach. Students were given the materials for the experiment and were encouraged to examine the samples independently or with help from other students. Ms. Willis instructed the class in preparing their data collection forms and finding additional research on the topic. The science lesson was a recent addition to the curriculum, which was new to the school; Ms. Willis had taken professional development training so she could be successful with the materials and course objectives. She supported the students who needed help and, in a unique intersection of warm demander pedagogy and inquiry, she insisted that students remain focused on the

tasks and control extraneous conversations. In accordance with her directions, students were engaged in conversations with her and the other students about the experiments, and they were engaged and actively conducting their experiments. Ms. Willis acknowledged to the researcher how much she enjoyed having the students investigate for themselves so that they “really knew” the material once the experiment was complete.

These two styles of teaching appear theoretically incompatible, but the teacher was always the authority figure and the students were always engaged as active learners. She maintained discipline and order consistent with warm demander pedagogy. Ms. Willis’s care for the students and their academic growth was apparent as they eagerly engaged in the instructional process.

In contrast, Mrs. Carter taught in two instructional practices that she wove into her particular teaching strategy. These were culturally responsive and computer-enhanced teaching. First, she explained her motivation and beliefs that supported these two styles. Mrs. Carter said,

Excellence equals being persistent, being consistent, being knowledgeable, realizing when you’re not knowledgeable and going to seek that knowledge and exposing your students to it. Excellence means being innovative and creative and taking all those pieces together and building on those skills and saying okay, good job Johnny—you did this, now, go back and add four more steps to it and make it even better.

Mrs. Carter’s high expectations are evident in her quote concerning excellence equaling persistence. In addition, she wanted her students to challenge their abilities not just to make her proud but to help them develop a sense of pride in their own accomplishments, another element of a culture of achievement.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy is defined as “an approach to teaching and learning that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 18).

An example of culturally responsive pedagogy was a lesson that encouraged students to vote for their favorite musicians. Through all the permutations of this lesson, Mrs. Carter guided the students through a replication of the Electoral College process and, in the debriefing after the lesson, she explained how a president could win an election without winning the popular vote.

This example of culturally responsive pedagogy (Irvine & Armento, 2001) demonstrates that the teacher was “responsive to [her] students by incorporating elements of the students’ culture in their teaching” (p. 4). Through the use of students’ interest in rap music artists, the teacher gave a hands-on experience of selecting a candidate, waging a campaign, and voting for the artist. The experience that Mrs. Carter used in selecting the best musician nomination was transferable to the skill she wanted to teach about the Electoral College process. Mrs. Carter scaffolded new information onto the students’ present interests in music and created a lesson on the American voting process. The students were actively involved in this lesson, and when the process for electing the musician was connected to the voting process in the United States, the students appeared to understand.

Computer-Enhanced Instruction

An additional type of pedagogy used by Mrs. Carter was computer-enhanced instruction. This pedagogy is defined by Parkay and Stanford (2001) as “the use of computers to provide students with inquiry-oriented learning experiences” (p. 594). Students were engaged in student-centered independent learning, peer coaching, and cooperative-learning experiences. During one observation, a student demonstrated computer-enhanced instruction, independent learning, and peer coaching. The student spent approximately 1 hour mastering a particular computer command. Then, the student excitedly showed his newly acquired skill to other students and taught them how to use the command. As the class ended, Mrs. Carter, the warm demander pedagogue, reminded the student that he would still be responsible for the material he missed.

To further strengthen the students’ computer literacy, Mrs. Carter established a class Web site. The site contained homework, answers

to test questions, and digital photographs of the students and their projects. However, she was concerned that all students were not making use of the Web site. Undaunted by this lapse of technological literacy, Mrs. Carter held firm expectations that the students would achieve her latest challenge. She led the students through a demonstration of how to find the Web site and humorously encouraged her students to be patient if they had older, slower computer equipment at home. Mrs. Carter appeared to be encouraging her students to find the information needed for class, but underneath this challenge for her students was a sincere desire to ensure that her students would not remain technologically illiterate.

Cultural/Racial Identity and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The literature on African American communities prior to and after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 (Anderson, 1988; Irvine & Irvine, 1983; Siddle Walker, 1996) identifies African American communities that were caring and nurturing to children and committed to the successful education of African American children. Furthermore, the parents, teachers, and students in these communities saw education as an important means for collective advancement in a racially biased country.

Ms. Willis had a strong, positive cultural/racial identity. She could recite from memory many poems from African American writers. She stated, "I love poetry and my children would know, by the end of the year, 50 or 60 poems because every week we would do a poem."

Ms. Willis also occasionally dressed in African clothes. She respected and cared for the African American children and their parents in the low socioeconomic community where she taught for a number of years. Ms. Willis assumed responsibility for the African American history month celebration in her school. She wanted her students to be aware of the rich heritage of people of African descent. She also invited people from the Atlanta community to participate in these school events so the students could learn about the accomplishments of people who shared their ethnicity.

Ms. Willis lived and taught in segregated communities and began her career when the school system where she taught began the process of school desegregation and was a member of a closely knit

family structure with a long history of educators and commitment to “lifting as they climbed” (Collins, 1990). These experiences may have led her to have an appreciation for African American culture and community. Through these experiences, she developed a positive African American cultural identity and she supported her African American students and their parents. She viewed less affluent African Americans as members of her own community and not as “other people’s children” (Delpit, 1995). It is important that she was not hampered by any artificial separation of socioeconomic status.

One of the difficulties of teachers working in urban schools is that often teachers perceive African American children as inferior (Delpit, 1995; Irvine, 1990) and lacking the cognitive abilities to be successful at complex or higher order academic skills. These types of teachers become frustrated with the limitations of urban community schools, the level of support parents can provide, and the difficulty of maintaining high expectations when the teachers witness a significant amount of school failure.

In contrast, Mrs. Carter was 27 years younger than Ms. Willis at the time of the study and a benefactor of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. She was educated entirely in desegregated school experiences and attended an elementary, middle, and high school where she was distinctly aware of her minority status. Mrs. Carter remembers being the only African American girl or student in many of her classes and had only one African American teacher, in high school, prior to attending college.

The theme of this particular lesson I observed was researching historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The students were accessing Web pages of schools and making charts and brochures about the schools. This was an example of culturally responsive pedagogy because it focused on an aspect of the students’ community and positively identified the role of HBCUs for the purpose of encouraging the students to plan to attend college. Also, despite her own experience at a predominately White college, she recognized and respected the importance of HBCUs in the lives and communities of her students. As a result of her life experiences in integrated schools, she developed a strong sense of racial and political identity that appeared to contribute to her development as a warm demander and culturally responsive pedagogue.

Mrs. Carter's observations, interactions, and life experiences have shaped her cultural/racial identity. Through her experiences with African American students on a predominately White college campus, CULTURES, and her individual outside readings, she chose to embrace a strong African American cultural identity similar to Ms. Willis. Like Ms. Willis, Mrs. Carter embraced African American literature. She occasionally wore Afrocentric clothes and she chose to "lift as she climbed" by respecting and caring for the students in the community where she taught (Collins, 1990). What is significant about Ms. Willis's and Mrs. Carter's cultural/racial identity is how it influenced the political stance they took toward teaching. A strong cultural/racial identity may be a variable that supports the warm demander and the culturally responsive pedagogy of these African American teachers. McAllister (2002) describes how teachers who have heightened levels of racial identity respond with proactive attitudes toward students of color.

This article identified the many similarities in the practices of Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter and suggests that these similarities are a result of a cultural transmission of beliefs that exceeds generational differences. However, these differences appear to be outside of their pedagogy. Identified differences are their ages, marital and maternal status, and the influence of segregation and desegregation on their education.

In summary, this study posits that the teachers' warm demander pedagogy is positively influenced by their cultural/racial identity. I observed Ms. Willis and Mrs. Carter using their strong identification with their African American/African heritage to encourage their students. These teachers also used their knowledge and comfort with their heritage to teach students in their school about their heritage. Most important, I suggest that the cultural/racial heritage was an important variable in each teacher's development into a warm demander.

DISCUSSION

This study represents an exploration of two generations of African American teachers, describes warm demander pedagogy,

and relates it to the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy. Furthermore, this study proposes the intersection of cultural/racial identity, the generational nature of warm demander pedagogy, and culturally responsive pedagogy to facilitate the creation of a culture of achievement for students of color.

WARM DEMANDERS

The case studies of these teachers are significant because they inform the literature on the unique culturally specific pedagogy of warm demanders. What is also significant is the identification of teachers who are not considered to be exceptional but qualify as ordinary people responding with care, high expectations, and skilled pedagogy to African American students, thus making them exemplary.

This study documented two examples of warm demanders that explained “the fussing, mean talk or verbal discipline” of the warm demanders. This model of firm discipline is often misconstrued by people who lack a cultural sensitivity or emic perspective into the authoritarian style of parenting in the African American community. Yet, it was Delpit (1996) who explained,

A lot of us get concerned because we hear Black teachers yelling at kids, but we are not listening to what they are saying. . . . [They are saying] you are too smart to give me work like this . . . you can do better. That warm demander is saying, I am expecting a lot of you.

In summary, what is at the heart of the warm demanders’ “fussing” behavior is not a mean-spirited attempt to harm students. It is the caring, yet authoritarian, explicit explanation that says, “I expect more from you.” Dixson (2003) suggests that teachers who create safe and secure environments can challenge students to work harder.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Irvine and Armento (2001) provide a comprehensive treatment of culturally responsive pedagogy and synergize the criteria of culturally responsive pedagogy with the standards of effective teaching. In an explanation of the basic beliefs of a culturally responsive educator, the authors detail essential elements of culturally responsive

pedagogy. This article presented multiple examples of the compatibility of warm demanders' pedagogy with the beliefs of culturally responsive educators as presented by Irvine and Armento.

CULTURAL/RACIAL IDENTITY INFLUENCE

During the data collection, an unexpected response to the third question of the study emerged. The data appeared to suggest that a specific cultural/racial identity influenced the type of connectedness (Foster, 1993) or fictive kinship (Fordham, 1991) that seemed to further influence the teachers' commitment to their students.

Ms. Willis's cultural/racial identity emerged from her segregated school experiences and Mrs. Carter's from her integrated school experiences. However, both obtained a level of pride about their ethnicity and culture and demonstrated that pride through their dress, through their love for African American literature, and most important, through the ways they taught. Fraser (2002) identifies this type of culturally responsive teacher as "healthy and whole" (p. x).

In summary, cultural/racial identity, warm demander pedagogy, and culturally responsive pedagogy can be represented as intersecting circles. Each construct stands alone, but once these attributes are combined, it is difficult to know which idea influences or modifies the other. However, it is apparent from this study that these combined forces provide an explanation as to why these two teachers were supportive of their students' academic development, which led to a culture of achievement.

First, this study extends, builds on, and operationalizes the concept of warm demander presented by Vasquez (1989) and Irvine and Fraser (1998). Second, this study documented the cultural transmission of a unique African American teaching style across generations. Although the two teachers grew up in different areas and attended different types of schools, their teaching styles and beliefs were remarkably similar. What may be at the core of this culturally transmitted pedagogy is the teachers' strong cultural/racial identity that embraces African American children. Third, a significant finding of this study is the emergence of warm demander pedagogy. Specifically, teachers who skillfully use warm demander and culturally responsive pedagogies and have a strong

sense of racial identity can create a new classroom culture. This culture supports African American students who actively respond to the warm demander teachers' high expectations by embracing a culture of achievement.

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Franita Ware, PhD, is an assistant professor of education at Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia. Her research interest is culturally responsive pedagogy.