

# Using ABCDE to propel African Americans' education for sustainable success in a context of 'everyone can make it'

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*Document Version*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Citation for published version (Harvard):*

Collins Ayanlaja, C & Taysum, A 2022, 'Using ABCDE to propel African Americans' education for sustainable success in a context of 'everyone can make it', *Journal of Groundwork Cases and Faculty of Judgement*, vol. 1, no. 2, 8, pp. 296-318. <<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZhgjiARXfVcMJZ-QnJaOB7RziiDUQxmx/view>>

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**Title: Using ABCDE to Propel African Americans' Education For Sustainable Success in a context of 'Everyone can make it'.**

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**Abstract**

This paper addresses the professional challenge 'there just ain't no making it' for African Americans. The study draws on in-depth interviews with six African American Male successful leaders who were educated during the Civil Rights movement in the United States. A review of the literature reveals i) operationalising A Blueprint for Character Development for Evolution (ABCDE) allows citizens to penetrate fake news revealing the root causes of inequalities and ii) a model of six characteristics of education that propels students to sustainable success; First, teachers are outstanding, often with PhDs. Second, students are respected with no racialised abuse. Third, exposure to and preparation for a comprehensive portfolio of opportunities in the US quadruple helix with African American role models are normalised with everyday classroom Audio-Visual, digitised, empirical, logical and ethical literacies. These are aligned with African American community values including faith based. Fourth, students and teachers like and trust each other. Fifth, a progressive trajectory to a more perfect union is evidenced by curriculum Intended Learning Outcomes mapped to Key Performance Indicators delivering equitable access to middle class and higher benefits for all. This is achieved by applying legitimate methods and hard work for sustainable success. Sixth, students have access to thinking tools to penetrate 'fake news' including the lies of White Supremacists. The narrative biographies of the six African American Male successful leaders are read through the Model and reveal proof of concept. Recommendations are school boards and Superintendents, supported by education policy and sustainable business models, apply this model to gain High Technology Readiness Level (TLR) to support mainstreaming in education systems today. If the Model of Six Characteristics of Education that propel students to sustainable success are missing from education systems, African American students are highly unlikely to become the successful leaders the participants in this research became. Thus, the Model needs to be considered for mainstreaming to Propel African American Males' Education For Sustainable Success in the quadruple helix where 'Everyone can make it'. The model has transferability for International audiences to eradicate The Black-White Achievement Gap and support democracy in education for the Black Global Majority (Campbell-Stephens, 2021) and gaps created by intersectionalities of discrimination based on race, gender, Special Education Needs and Disability and all protected characteristics of the UK Equality Act.

**1. Professional Challenge for African American Males; There just ain't no making it**

This paper addresses the professional challenge that for African American Males MacLeod identifies 'there just ain't no making it'. The study draws from in-depth interviews with six African American Male successful leaders who were educated during the Civil Rights movement in the United States. The aims of the research are to present six characteristics of an education system that mainstreams propelling African American Males to make it, just as our six respondents 'made it' as exceptional cases in a racialised society where racism prevents moving closer to a more perfect union. To address the aims we ask two questions. First, how can the characteristics to emerge from an analysis of the six respondents' education during the civil rights movement in the US that propelled them to success, be mainstreamed in a model to propel African American males to success today? Second, to what extent does this model mobilise an inclusive education system that propels African American males to success in a context of 'all can make it'. Merton's strain theory identified American society was predicated on the American Dream where material success was a legitimate goal. To achieve this goal Americans would work hard and be self-disciplined and that any individual could achieve in American society through legitimate methods. For African Americans, segregated within a racialised US, access to legitimate methods to achieve the 'American Dream' were denied and they were condemned for their lack of effort. Merton's argues crime is caused by people trying to achieve socially approved goals without access to legitimate methods. However most corporate crime tends to be committed by upper middle class or higher who have achieved socially approved goals of material wealth.

Thinking tools that empower African American students to penetrate this fake news and eradicate white supremacy offer the chance to explore the psychologies of what De Gruy calls 'Post Traumatic Slave Disorder'.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. 'There Just ain't No Makin' It in a Quadruple Helix; A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand

Taysum et al (2020) argue civic society must mobilise education to move from the unprecedented disruption caused by Covid 19 to recovery. A barrier exists to this recovery because civic society is locked out of fully and freely participating with the data collection and handling in the social quadruple helix that empowers community solutions to amplify recovery. The persistent inequalities in society, including the poverty gaps based on intersections of poverty with class, race, gender, Special Educational Needs and Disability and all the protected characteristics of the UK (2010) Equality Act are exacerbating recovery.

The social contract is between subgroups of the quadruple helix; citizens and social media, the economy (industry) the government and their governance of institutional policies (including Universities) and systems of knowledge generation, exchange and transmission in Higher Education Institutions (HEI). HEIs supervise education systems to propel successful consumption of innovative knowledge on bridges between subgroups to align commercial, human evolutionary and sustainable interests/goals. Taysum (2020) identifies the independent legislator in the quadruple helix monitors and evaluates the alignment of commercial interests, humanitarian evolutionary interests, and the ethical and moral sustainable interests found in the complexities of the quadruple helix policies as text and policies as discourse (Taysum, 2019, Ball, 2006). Open Access bottom up data bases of Science with and for Society (SwafS 31, Horizon 2020) with education systems that provide European Qualification Framework (EQF) competences to assure citizens know how to participate with these databases effectively can eradicate fake news. This is because a person meeting Competences of the EQF Levels 1 – 5 mapping to ABCDE has the cultural capital needed to make good decisions with good faculty of judgement using ‘A; their own questions’, ‘B Science with and for Society’, ‘C methods’, ‘D developing theories of change and testing them for proof of concept’, ‘E arriving at principles that they can apply to other social problems’.

## **2.2 Using ABCDE Allows Citizens to Penetrate Fake News, Reveals Inequalities, and Gives Access to Knowledge and Networks and Middle Class Benefits For All**

Operationalising ABCDE allows citizens to penetrate fake news revealing inequalities in the system and providing an incremental model for measuring impact of progress mapped to Competences of European Qualifications Framework.

**Table 1 ABCDE Incremental Framework with ‘Impact of Progress’ and ‘Measure of Impact of Progress’ mapped to Competences of European Qualifications Framework (European Commission, 2020) (Taysum et al, 2020, pp. 141-143).**

Action	Impact of Progress	Measure of Impact of Progress	Competency European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
Stage A Community members start to develop their sense making from observations to their beliefs by asking questions	Communities will be able to define problems with clarity and ask good questions. This change is a first step to recognising fake news, and trustworthy news Mapped to the EYSIER Charter Mark Award to validate successful delivery of the objectives of this SwafS 31 proposal.	Communities demonstrate nuanced robust and discerning ability to identify a professional challenge, and the constructs within it, develop objectives to deliver new solutions to old problems and develop sharply focused research questions that address the objectives and the professional challenge, such that the questions contain half the answer.	Level 1 of the EQF Competences 'Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks

Stage B Competency to interrogate the best that has been thought and said about the constructs of the questions.	Communities will be able to engage with knowledge bases that allow the synthesis between personal implicit knowledge and external scientific knowledge using Assessment for Personal and Social Learning (APSL). By using APSL at Stage B citizens have a toolkit to engage with Science with and for Society in new partnerships between science and society by i) examining the constructs in the questions that map back to their objectives and particular challenge/problem, ii) identifying where the gaps in their knowledge are, iii) recognising different kinds of knowledge such as logical, empirical and/or ethical that they need to fill their gap in their knowledge and iv) to reflect on why these gaps exist in relation to their access to the knowledge bases,	Communities demonstrate nuanced robust and discerning constructive critique of different world views in the bottom up SwafS knowledge base verified by successful submission of a grounded case study mapped to the incremental ABCDE with APSL and MoRRi that achieves an EYSIER Charter Mark Award.	Level 2 of the EQF Competences 'Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools'
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<p>Stage C Competency to design and implement methods that are robust with high quality dimensions that yield baseline data and impact data</p>	<p>Communities will know how to collect data and mobilise it to co-create evidence informed, logical and ethical impact strategies that are culturally relevant to their educational organisation.</p> <p>Communities build interdependent and interconnected inclusionary partnerships and communities of practice for the cultivation of impact strategies in their bottom up interactions with the SwafS knowledge base. This develops cultural alignment for equity which correlates with developing psychologies, philosophies and ethics of trust.</p> <p>Mapped to EYSIER Charter Mark Award basket of indicators at Bronze, Silver or Gold (MoRRi and SDG KPIs).</p>	<p>Communities demonstrate nuanced robust and discerning constructive critique of different world views in each of the partner institutions verified by tolerance for others supported by the HEIs delivered through the work packages.</p>	<p>Level 3 of the EQF Competences 'A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information'.</p>
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<p>Stage D Competency to develop hypotheses from data that can be tested for proof of concept</p>	<p>Hypotheses are verified by indicators of progress with targets for an evolving post-racial community and evolving gender relationships that the community members set for themselves and regulate.</p> <p>Their communities are characterised by tolerance and understanding for those of different faiths and none, race, ethnicity, and citizenship status including refugees. Mapped to EYSIER Charter Mark Award basket of indicators at Bronze, Silver or Gold (MoRRi and SDG KPIs).</p>	<p>Communities will have benchmarked clear and transparent ways to resolve conflict in a supportive climate that does not disempower community members to make them fearful and more compliant with confusing systems.</p> <p>Any unresolved conflict is reported to the Senior Leader of the Education Governance System who investigates and reports to the Governing Body and Parents' Teachers' Association who escalates to authorities if the conflict is not resolved.</p>	<p>level 4 of the EQF Competences 'A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study'.</p>
<p>Stage E Competency to extrapolate prime principles from hypotheses with proof of concept. from this point they can develop the competency to apply ABCDE in the Quadruple Helix to achieve ET2020 four Strategic objectives and SDG 4.7 which Empowers Young Societal Innovators for Equity and Renewal (EYSIER) to achieve all SDGs and build psychologies, philosophies and ethics of trust in bottom up SwafS Knowledge Bases</p>	<p>The multiplier effect will be made possible by disseminating the results with policy makers, the Ministry of Education who will be attracted to mainstream the objectives, methodologies, results based on the evaluation through measures of indicators of progress and impact validated by the EYSIER Charter Mark Awards achieved.</p> <p>The capacity will also be built by an ambitious dissemination programme that will include social media with a reach in excess of 500,000, conferences electronic part of the civic society of the quadruple helix. Reach, and impact on interactions with bottom up OA SwafS knowledge base. Building effective co-operation between science and society by training leaders of the four spheres of the quadruple helix to use a toolkit mapped to the MoRRi that optimises delivery of their organisation's strategic plan through interactions with open access Bottom up SwafS knowledge bases. Mapped to EYSIER Charter Mark Award basket of indicators at Bronze, Silver or Gold (MoRRi and SDG KPIs)</p>	<p>Policy makers mainstream ABCDE. The evaluation is benchmarked to a basket of indicators in the EYSIER Charter Mark rubric mapped to the incremental ABCDE with APSL and MoRRi to foster the recruitment of new talent for science using this proposal's methodology that delivers interactions with a bottom up SwafS knowledge base that build scientific groups for all in STEM, the Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities.</p> <p>As consumers of bottom up OA SwafS knowledge bases the methods will pair scientific excellence with social awareness and responsibility raising awareness of what to do to interact with the 8 lines of action, how to do this using the methodology of this RiA and why these intentions and acts are of personal and social benefit to amplify the main SwafS' objectives. This particularly focuses on developing calm climates that empower marginalised groups with scientific knowledge and dispositions for scientific deliberation to navigate turbulence and build self regulation of reactions to injustice such as bullying.</p> <p>The workshops from the MOOC will also be provided for policy makers who have the power to propel the multiplier effect and mainstream the results of the project through policy.</p>	<p>Level 5 of the EQF Competences 'A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems'.</p>

### **2.3. Using ABCDE Equips Teachers to Understand and Eradicate Bullying and Abuse On All Fronts**

White teachers need to understand their unconscious bias that may be excluding students by stereotyping them based on low socio-economic status (poverty) and its intersections with class, race, gender, SEND and all protected characteristics of the UK (2010) Equality Act. A Philosophy Degree empowers students to examine their own constructs and is the first degree that engages with philosophy. Thus, teachers with PhDs are well equipped to understand and eradicate bullying and racialised abuse that can cause Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (De Gruy, 2005). These teachers are also well positioned to move from dis-honouring African American cultural heritages to honouring cultural values from African American communities and to normalise African American role models in all aspects of the quadruple helix. Further these teachers can focus on building trust between themselves and their students drawing on Bowlby (1969) attachment theories that are built on unconditional positive regard. Such teachers develop education systems and education offers that move towards a more perfect union with Intended Learning Outcomes that deliver equitable access to middle class benefits for all. Thus, ABCDE offers a thinking tool to Empower Young Societal Innovators for Equity and Renewal who know how to distinguish fact from fiction, and can build their own narrative from their experiences, or reflections on critical incidents or cases in their own lives to build good decision making. This underpins the development of their faculty of judgement as they transition from immaturity to maturity (Taysum, 2020).

### **2.4. Model to Propel African Americans' Education For Sustainable Success where Everyone Can Make It**

The review of the literature can be summed up with the following Model of Six Characteristics of Education that propel students to sustainable success, that is to be tested with the narrative biographies of successful Black African American successful leaders who were educated during the civil rights movement:

Characteristic 1 Teachers are outstanding, often with PhDs, and experts in their field with autonomy for what Taysum et al (2021) call competences for critical thinking empowered by empirical teacher leader models.

Characteristic 2 Students are respected with an absence of bullying and no racialised abuse.

Characteristic 3 Access to knowledge of a comprehensive range of opportunities in the quadruple helix with African American role models as normalised through every day Audio-Visual empirical, logical and ethical literacies. These align with the highest of cultural values from African American



communities, often Christian based, fused with full parental participation in school advocacy for children's success.

Characteristic 4 All students are liked and trusted by their teachers and all teachers are liked and trusted by their students

Characteristic 5 A progressive trajectory to a more perfect union is evidenced by curriculum Intended Learning Outcomes mapped to Key Performance Indicators that deliver equitable access to middle class benefits and higher for all.

Characteristic 6 Students have access to thinking tools that penetrate fake news including eradicating narratives that perpetuate White Supremacy and racism.

### **3. Methods**

The research takes Mollering's interpretivist approach to build Science with and For Society databases of multiple truths. This case study contributes to what Kant calls groundwork case studies of what works and what does not in diverse social contracts over time. This study contributes analyses of rich qualitative narrative biographical data, collected by interview, from a sample size recommended by Merten's of 'six' African American male successful leaders educated during the US civil rights movement. The sample represents law enforcement, education, finance and commerce, public sector senior management, and Aviation Industries. Applying Dey's content analysis we read the education narrative biographies of these exceptional leaders through The Model of Six Characteristics of Education that Propels Students to Sustainable Success to gain proof of concept. We chose to present the data as vignettes from the participants' narrative biographies so that we hear the noble and authentic voice of the African American participants. The participants gave informed written consent to participate in the research, had the right to withdraw at any time, and were assured anonymity and confidentiality (British Educational Research Association, 2011; American Educational Research Association, 2010).

### **4. Findings**

#### **4.1 The findings were read through each of the Characteristics for proof of concept**

The findings focus on the voices of the participants.

#### **4.2 Proof of concept for Characteristic 1 Teachers are outstanding**

Proof of concept for Characteristic 1 Teachers are outstanding often with PhDs, and experts in their field with autonomy for what Haider-Baldwin et al (2020, 39) call competences for critical thinking

empowered by empirical teacher leader models, was found in all the interviews. A representative quote from a successful African American leader, who was educated during the civil rights movement that propelled these exceptional African American Males to Success with currency to be mainstreamed now is:

Yes, that school system at the time in 'City' was actually one of the best in the country early on, primarily because of the Industry. One of the things the industry wanted was they wanted to attract workers and one of the attractive things was the education and support for kids. So, they had affordable housing and they had a good educational system. So, they had a good public education system and the school that I went to at one time was considered a suburban school almost where at one time it has been predominantly white and overtime that mix had changed and gradually over a 12 to 15 year period, in the late 50s and early 60s it shifted from being predominantly white to 50-50 Black-White Ratio, to predominantly Black.

By the time I became a junior/senior at school it was predominantly Black. In my graduating class of 280 students, it may have had 5 to 10 white kids. Whereas 10 years prior there may have been in the same sized class 25 or 30 Black students and the others were white. What happened though was the teachers were pretty consistent, they gradually began to get some Black teachers, but the teachers were predominantly white. And the teaching was good because it had been a school system that attracted good teachers, I mean they were PhD level people teaching in the high schools. Our physics teacher was a PhD. So, I'm saying we had a very well educated teaching call that had been there for a few years so we were getting the level of teaching that was comparable anywhere in the state and most parts of the country and so the education system for a while had been the model for correspondence teaching programs because it had a great reputation, that was the 'City' school system.

That's why today all these years later, what happened to City is really very tragic as a school system and as a City it's like it had a promise that it never fulfilled. There were many of the educated students that left that I would say, of my graduating class, 50% went to college.

Many came back to become teachers but most of the time couldn't come back because the jobs weren't there in terms of what they had gone to college to do. I mean there were jobs in the Industry when we first graduated. There are lots of people achieving but that region didn't offer the job opportunities and I think that was one of the big things in that region you had talent leave and there was no way for that talent to come back to sustain that community. To answer your question, we had the teacher resources we have the caliber of students because many of the students and the kids that I knew came from two-parent

households. Their parents were supportive I think that was all part of it. My story wasn't that different to the friends I had because the kids I knew, some of their parents were teachers, business people that kind of thing, and they encouraged and the kids were supported and encouraged to be a good team, it kind of rubbed off on all of us.

#### **4.3 Proof of concept for Characteristic 2 Students are respected with an absence of bullying and no racialised abuse**

Proof of concept for Characteristic 2 Students are respected with an absence of bullying and no racialised abuse, was found in all the interviews. A representative quote from a successful African American leader, who was educated during the civil rights movement that propelled these exceptional African American Males to Success with currency to be mainstreamed now is:

I was aware of it (bullying and racialised abuse) earlier on I was aware of it when I first went to my junior senior high school because up to that elementary school, I was always in a segregated all African-American school. So, I didn't start going to school with white kids until I went to the seventh grade. That was my first taste of that if you will. But that said there didn't appear to be hostilities if you will, because pretty much the white kids in City were for the most part from working-class families. City was an Industry. It was a US Industry town, so it was a blue-collar area and the White folks that were there were generally blue-collar people and typically they worked with everybody's parents I knew before the White folks moved out of the neighbourhood... All of a sudden you start seeing these images on TV. That was part of the strategy from Dr Martin Luther King who said let's get this on TV so that people can see what's going on. Having visited my grandmother in State... I recognised there were some things that were going on in the country and there were people who weren't necessarily being treated fairly.

We talked about it our thing was okay, we are in a segregated society, for the most part we've got to do what we can do ourselves to be successful and do what we need to do for our people; education being one of the main things that we need to imbue everybody with so they can be successful later on in life.

So, the White kids that I knew, I had White friends; did we talk about what was going on (bullying racialised abuse)? Not much. But African American friends who had maybe siblings who have gone off to college, just about all of them came back with an activist tone because by and large most of our friends that we knew of, that went to college, went to historically Black colleges and a lot of those historically Black colleges were in the South and that was when those universities were starting to protest. So, they were bringing that back home with them and trying to educate us as far as with what was going on. So, it was

starting to generate feelings in me I didn't quite understand and yeah because I was like, okay no one had confronted me, no one had called me the N word yet. No one had told me that I couldn't do something that I should've been able to do. But that (bullying and racialised abuse) happened later, that didn't occur until I had left high school and went to college. That was when I discovered that people who were raised in areas where they weren't raised around African Americans didn't know what to do with us. So consequently, they had inherited their parents' outlook and quite honestly, growing up in the State Name, I don't know if you know your history about the state, but it was run by the Ku Klux Klan.

Oh yes, they had a clan governor one of the last lynchings occurred in State Name. So, I was less exposed to that living in City as opposed to my wife who was born and raised in Place. In Place they had to deal with racism kind of head-on... In City I was sheltered a lot from that at the time because everybody was working hard, we had a lot of immigrants we had a lot of Eastern European people so they called City a melting pot. We had all the religions represented there because we had people from all over. We had a lot of Hispanics a lot of different languages so we got along because everybody was there working and just trying to put food on the table and educate the kids so the kids could get out of City and not go and work in the Industry. And so that was the goal we tried to do that. So yes, Kennedy was assassinated in 63 I remember when it happened. King was assassinated during my freshman year (68) and Robert Kennedy. Medgar Evers was assassinated in Mississippi in the early 60s, but I was too young for that to really impact me. I just remember the mass migration from the south was still going strong during the 50s and 60s. My parents came to City from the south, so I was born and raised in City, so I was already there.

So had I been born in the South and the activism that hit me when I got to Name University, might have hit me earlier but it just didn't. I enjoyed my experience in City. I had a couple of situations when I went to a different high school one summer. Every summer I went to summer school, so I went to get extra credit and get hours towards graduation. A lot of people went to summer school because they needed the grades, they didn't get in the regular school year, and they needed to get promoted and that kind of thing, but I was there for extra credit.

In one summer, we didn't have summer school. The courses that I wanted to take that got offered at my high school, were offered at another high school that was a predominantly a White high school in City. I went there and that was my first run into racism with one of the teachers there who wasn't used to the Black kids who had got as much to contribute to the class discussion as the white kids, so he moved me out of his class. I had to take the class and finish it with another teacher. It was the same course, but it was with people who were

mostly making up credit and not trying to get extra credit like I was. So, it wasn't as competitive (and didn't optimise learning). I didn't really recognise what that teacher had done until I got older and reflected on how he moved me out of his classroom and why he did it. He tried to make me out to be a discipline problem, that was his excuse. He could tell that to any of my teachers at my high school, but they know that wasn't me. But yeah, they understood what happened. That was okay, it was a lesson for me that I later had to deal with, with my own son in a predominantly White school here in State.

So, things like that can still happen but in any event that didn't cover me so much that I held a grudge or anything, but I was becoming a bit more sensitive if you will. So now I get to Place. I decided to go to Place instead of going to the University of Name which had accepted me. I said I'm going to stay home. I get a full ride I won't be so far from City; I can go home on the holidays and so fourth. And I know the campus because I have been there for years with the student council. So, I felt confident in Place. I said yeah, I'll go to Place so I go to Place. And everything is fine. That's when the distractions start. The distractions of one, being on my own; there I am, still a young guy I'm not living under my parent's roof so I can do whatever the heck I want to do. But also, there is this uproar on campus because you have all these protests.

You've got the protest like Vietnam War; they are protesting racism all of that is going on. But particularly integration, segregation all of that is going on and we have some really really active African Americans on campus that are having 'sit ins' and protests and it was like, okay, I guess I should go and protest too. I'm going to at least listen.

So, I'm getting indoctrinated, but I'm also realising that I'm on a campus... which doesn't really like Black people. Okay so you've got people, a lot of people on the campus 22,000 students what was our percentage 22,000 we maybe had 2200 African-Americana on campus and a lot of white students there who had never gone to school with Black kids before and just didn't know how to act. You would get confronted with things all the time people would say stuff that I'd never heard before. But you had to just deal with it one way or another. I mean sometimes you deal with it, with aggression, sometimes you're able to deal with it by just talking to people, talking through it. Particularly if it was somebody in one of your classes you get to see on a regular basis.

It is one thing to be accosted by someone who doesn't know you, he just says you're on campus and you're in the wrong place at the wrong time; you're in the bookstore you're at

a pizza place or something like that. It's just the energy was such that it was becoming more and more of a distraction because it was on your mind.

How do you deal with this feeling that the country is going through this upheave because they are finally questioning what segregation is all about, and how do you integrate how do you change peoples' minds that don't like you? How do you start a conversation? How do you make friends? How do you do all of that? So that was going on in addition to the education.

And oh, by the way if you are in an environment like that it stands to reason that it is not going to feel as nurturing as the environment that you just left. All of a sudden, I went from knowing all of my teachers to <I was just a number>. You go to a lecture hall with 150 people it's not a warm place. And then with my other activities so I'm in the Marching Band, and I know different athletes that are playing different sports; the expectations on them are such that there is a lot of pressure because people don't necessarily want to treat them as the young men and young women that they are, even though they're trying to be students and athletes at the same time.

So, we had some situations where the athletes on the football team decided to protest over some treatment that they were receiving from their coaches. And they were not going to play for a particular football game. Well, when that happened there were expectations that other people would be in solidarity with them and have their own kind of protest, whether that was not going to school not going to class or if you're in the band not playing in the band. So, I'm like <wait a minute now, shoot what am I supposed to do here? I really want to support what they're doing because I know what they are going through, but the band is a class for me, I need my grade and I like playing> but I ended up protesting. Because we also had some professors from the School of music and I wasn't in the school music, they said 'well you'll be okay you'll be able to come back and play'. I did not play in a band in my senior year. Having played effectively for 2 ½ years if you will, so I got my enjoyment out of it but that was the last time I played an instrument.

I haven't played an instrument, the tenor saxophone since then. I never played again.

#### **4.4 Proof of concept for Characteristic 3 Access to Knowledge, and Networks of a comprehensive range of opportunities in the Quadruple Helix**



Proof of concept for Characteristic 3 Access to knowledge and networks of a comprehensive range of opportunities in the quadruple helix with African American role models as normalised through every day Audio-Visual empirical, logical and ethical literacies. These align with the highest of cultural values from African American communities, often Christian based, fused with full parental participation in school advocacy for children's success. A representative quote from a successful African American leader, who was educated during the civil rights movement that propelled these exceptional African American Males to Success with currency to be mainstreamed now is:

The military if you really think about it, was probably a real impetus of the civil rights movement in the United States after the Tuskegee Airmen<sup>1</sup> fought in WWII in an all segregated Unit they had a plan. I'll back track a little bit one of the things that my Dad, it was hard for me to get my Dad to talk about being in combat in World War II because he was a teenager and one of the things that he talked about was he was in Italy where they were stationed, they had German Prisoners Of War (POWs), but the US was still a segregated society. So, the Tuskegee Airmen had this and all the soldiers in Europe had this movement that they called Double V and that was victory over the allies and victory over Jim Crow segregation at home. One of the things my Dad talked about that he said he would never forget, here he is in a military installation in the middle of the War and the Commanders would allow the German Officers to enter the Officers Club even though they were Prisoners of War, but they would not let the Black Officers go into the Officers Club on base, unbelievable. To this day I will tell people that and 99.9% of the people I tell that to, had no idea that went on in World War II. So, after the war was over in 1947 Harry Truman created the Air Force and he also integrated the military so in the late 40s the military was the first part of our society that allowed Black Commanding Officers to have authority in an integrated unit. So from the late 40s on into the 50s and 60s the Civil Rights Movement took off and even after we had the Rights Act that was passed in 1964 it still took a long time for some of those things that were under that Civil Rights Act to be implemented in our Society

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<sup>1</sup> ‘The **Tuskegee Airmen** were a group of African-American and Caribbean-born military pilots (fighter and bomber) who fought in World War II. They formed the 332<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group and the 477<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group of the United States Army Air Forces. The name also applies to the navigators, bombardiers, mechanics, instructors, crew chiefs, nurses, cooks and other support personnel.

All black military pilots who trained in the United States trained at Moton Field, the Tuskegee Army Airfield and were educated at Tuskegee University, located near Tuskegee Alabama. The group included five Haitians from the Haitian Air Force, and one pilot from Trinidad. It also included a Hispanic or Latino airman born in the Dominican Republic’.

and then in the early 1970s the Air Force went a step further when they started holding joint classes to help all of the troops deal with the problem of integration, racism and all the other things that some people were still holding onto as a result of a segregated society. So, the military has had a big role and of course had a big role with me because I spent 23 years in the Air Force, and I retired a Lieutenant Colonel.

So, the Northwest actually was a real venue for Black Americans that were serving in the military to leave the military and find a place that was integrated and find opportunities to work for companies like Boeing and other jobs that were available out here in the Northwest that you could not get as a Black American in the South. So, it is funny because I was a History major in College and while I was in ROTC Reserve Officer Training Core which meant I spent 4 years in ROTC when I graduated I got my commission and then I went right into the Air Force and pilot training flying airplanes right out of college.

#### **4.5 Proof of concept for Characteristic 4 All students are liked and trusted by their teachers and all teachers are liked and trusted by their students**

Proof of concept for Characteristic 4 'All students are liked and trusted by their teachers and all teachers are liked and trusted by their students'. A representative quote from a successful African American leader, who was educated during the civil rights movement that propelled these exceptional African American Males to Success with currency to be mainstreamed now is:

Let's start with family. My father was a male carrier, and my mother was a housewife. I have an older brother and younger sister but effectively there was enough range in our ages that we were each kind of only kids as we came through. So even though I was in the middle I was there mostly by myself. That allowed a lot of attention from my parents and a lot of structure from my father who was a very strong disciplinarian if you will. He was a strong disciplinarian having been a Sergeant in the army serving in World War II and having been a young kid during the depression; so that forged a lot of his views on life and the fact that you had to work hard with good work habits. You had to respect authority and your seniors, and you follow the instruction of your parents. More so than anything else because there was a lot of temptation around that time, just like any other time, and a lot of potential for distractions and potential trouble outside of that structure, outside of the home and out on the streets.

So that very early on gave me a focus and gave me a focus towards education because that is where I spent most of my time. Because if I was not at home, I was at school and school activities. Then I participated in church activities on Sundays and on weekends with my mother who was heavily involved with the church.

I met a lot of people through church who were very good role models, and I had some very good teachers in the school system which like a lot of school systems during the days of segregation had very top notch teachers. Very top-notch teachers who had not yet an opportunity to go out and get involved in other fields because they were limited to being a teacher, maybe a lawyer, maybe a doctor, a male carrier and a domestic or a labourer and I might be missing something but that is pretty much it. Maybe an entrepreneur, may be, but very good teachers, and those very good teachers were also the same kind of people who were involved in the church at the time because the church was the centre of the community, not so much now, but at that time, the church was the centre of the community. The kinds of the social community function was the church. So, when you had the opportunity to spend time with people who are heavily involved with those pursuits, and if you are paying attention, it will rub off on you.

In my case all of those people were very encouraging to me. They were always encouraging me to learn as much as I could and to do well and to do a good job. That to me was a pretty solid foundation (a foundation of trust). All I had to do every day (I didn't have to worry about eating, I wasn't poor although we didn't have a lot, but my father had a good job and there was food on the table) was focus on going to school and having fun with my friends but mostly going to school and learning as much as I could, having fun whilst at school because it was fun and I enjoyed it.

And I think that was typical for most young men at that time who went on to do successful things in their lives and careers. They started out with, in general, a very pretty strong family and good role models around them within their family, within their school, within their church they did all those things. That was very helpful to them, so I wasn't an outlier as far as those foundational kinds of supports that I had. So, let's see I was a pretty deliberate kind of person. Technological innovations that young kids had at the time; technology was just starting to bloom, we came into the age of television, and thank goodness there were some decent things to watch on television at the time and I was impressed by that. It gave me a glimpse of what was happening in the outside world what other people were doing.

There were not a lot of Black people on TV in those days, but it gave a glimpse into middle class and upper middle class living and particularly for people who were very talented and involved in that industry, what was possible, as well as sports. I played little league and I loved sports. I had different people in sports that I idolised like any young kid, and I wanted to be like them too; so well rounded. There were some people in particular that had more impact on me than others. When I think about what I got the most joy from...one of those things was music. Music was a big driver for me. At elementary school we had a music

teacher and I got involved in vocal, I got involved in singing, so between singing there and singing at church and various programmes and so forth, that was one of my avocations if you will. That went hand in hand with the mathematics because I love maths and I was really good in that.

And a lot of people in my classes reached out to me and I tried to help them out, because I enjoyed it and I thought it was easy to learn. That did not last for ever, but it lasted at least through high school. Name of teacher, who was my music teacher, was very instrumental in getting me involved in music and for me it was going to always be a life long part of my life; music. I later went on to play instruments at junior high school, high school and college. I went on to play woodwind. To me it helped very much with maths because *if you couldn't count you couldn't play music*. And you probably play music, so you probably appreciate that. So, some time just about everybody has been involved in music. That is one of the losses, the biggest losses in our education system today, is that most school systems today do not have enough money to pay for the music and the arts. Because I am a firm believer that it goes along with the academics. It is not just Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) it is STEAM, and you need that A for an 'Arts Component' to really help you to develop the kinds of skills that you need to be successful today. That was a person that had an influence on me, so name of teacher was my band director, my assistant band director at high school who gave me private lessons on the tenor saxophone, helped prepare me and got me ready for college. I had a neighbour who was one of my maths teachers in junior high school and she was very encouraging and gave me extra work to do to keep me busy and to keep me interested in maths and it was very helpful in preparing me for the college prep tests. She was very instrumental on that side with the additional work she gave me and workbooks; that was very helpful.

#### **4.6 Proof of concept for Characteristic 5 A progressive trajectory to a more perfect union**

Proof of concept for Characteristic 5 A progressive trajectory to a more perfect union is evidenced by curriculum Intended Learning Outcomes mapped to Key Performance Indicators that deliver equitable access to middle class benefits for all. A representative quote from a successful African American leader, who was educated during the civil rights movement that propelled these exceptional African American Males to Success with currency to be mainstreamed now is:

Being a good student does not set you apart from being a good person if that makes any sense. You could fit in. People are friends across the spectrum. And if you were a good student, you were a good student because that was part of your make up. It wasn't that you

were better than anyone it was just you were a better student than so-and-so, and people respected that it was based on how you treated each other. So, there was a mixture of friendship and partying and hanging out with people across a wide spectrum of academic achievement. You do what you do, what you are best at, but that doesn't change you as a person for your ability to be friends with all that kind of thing. That was very prevalent in the school that I went to. I don't know how to say it any better than that, some of my best friends were really good students and exceptional and some were not. But there was no division created because someone was better academically than someone else, so we were all in it together, so to speak. Some did better in class than others and that was okay.

This quotation refers to their School experience. However, this Successful African American leader experienced inequity whilst being educated at College during the Civil Rights Movement and states:

So, I remember taking a class, after about 2 or 3 weeks or 4 weeks of class and the essays and papers, the highest grades people were getting were C+ and a lot of Ds and failures. A lot of the Black students from the Freshman's class started complaining and an upper class student came to their defense and said 'look you have this class of Black students, and they are all consistently getting these low grades. So, the college said, 'okay I'll tell you what we are going to do, we are going to take some of those papers and blind review them and see if other professors grade them the same way'. It turned out that when other professors graded the papers people got better grades than this guy was grading, talking about 2, and in some cases 3 letter grades. People who were getting C's were now getting B+ or A-. People who were getting Ds were now getting Bs with different professor grading, and it was so consistent that the Chairman, as I remember, sat down with this guy and said, 'look I know you are here to help but you are being so tough... because White students in those classes were not getting those kinds of grades'. They weren't necessarily doing any better. So, after that experience it changed. I was in his classes, and I had been doing okay, I had been getting C+s and stuff after that, the grades got better.

#### **4.7 Proof of concept for Characteristic 6 Students have access to thinking tools that penetrate fake news including eradicating narratives that perpetuate White Supremacy and racism**

Proof of concept for Characteristic 6 Students have access to thinking tools that penetrate fake news including eradicating narratives that perpetuate White Supremacy and racism. A representative quote from a successful African American leader, who was educated during the civil rights movement that propelled these exceptional African American Males to Success with currency to be mainstreamed now is:

I grew up in State and a lot of the kids I grew up with thought they were inferior to Whites, and I never thought that. My father never, never said that to me. And I would get into a lot of trouble because I would say things that probably embarrassed him in front of other older Black men because it was so dangerous at the time, I was growing up to make any kind of negative remark about Whites. I did not go to school with Whites until I got into graduate school because I went to all segregated schools. When I got to graduate school, I started interacting with Whites. Before that I went into the service. I had seen a lot of White people in the neighbourhood I had never been in situations in the barracks where White guys were so, one White guy said to me he had never had three 'hots' a day, three meals a day and I was thinking 'God I can't believe this' and another guy said 'I am never getting out of here man this is the greatest thing I have ever had with food and everything' and I was saying I want to get out of here out of the service.

You see how limited the horizon was for these poor Whites. I remember I was head of something, and I gave it up to him because I didn't want to be the leader of this little group and you should have seen the expression on his face because he had gotten something, and I was thinking God man that's nothing. I remember thinking that I had learned that these people were really poor, and they had got into the service to get away from the poverty they were in. That's why they were going to be in for 20 years and then go to Highway Patrol. I was thinking Man I want to be more than that. So, when I got out and went to Graduate School that's where I found there were White people who were miles ahead of me in terms of what they had written and what they had seen in terms of the world. It was an awakening to me because at Undergraduate school I was considered a very bright but when I got to graduate school, I found all these White guys who were very articulate they had read a lot of stuff and it took me a time to catch up with them. But I did and when I got my PhD these guys were saying to me you need to get a dog because of affirmative action. None of those guys in my seminar amounted to a can of beans except 2 of them. My father understood the dynamics of a society that he did not participate in he was never an academic, but he would give me advice as I was trying to figure it out, negotiate myself into an entirely different world. His advice was solid. He was a barber and he used to cut people's hair and they would talk incessantly, and he would pick up on things from people and I learned to do that to.

*I would pick up and learn things, and I would learn the counter arguments of people's positions, that enabled me to an effective academic who could write about stuff I liked to write about. I think he was the most, but also, I think being a Black person in America made me much more sensitive to things. For example, if I had been a Black person in State in the town where I was born my life would have been entirely different. If I had been born in an*



integrated society I don't know if I would have been as motivated as I was because I was born in a segregated society, a civil rights generation and I was lucky that I had lived down the street from Dr King and I knew all those people who had been involved in the civil rights movement because they knew my father and my father knew them and I went to all those meetings and at the time I did not know how important it was but at the time that was the thing that allowed me to at least be motivated. But kids used to tease me and stuff because I always wanted to be that, and I always wanted to do that. I remember once when I was a little kid of 5 or 6 and my mother said about Santa Clause and I said I want to be one of those guys who helps Santa Claus...the elves...she looked at me and everyone teased me about being so ambitious but I never thought, I just wanted to be stuff and a lot of my friends didn't want to be anything, they just wanted to be married and buy a house and buy a car and go to church and that was it. I wanted to do more than that. And everyone tells me that when they see me again and they say hey man you were so ambitious, but I don't remember being ambitious, but apparently, I must have said things to them that they thought could not be achieved by a Black man, but I never had that feeling that there was something I could not achieve as a Black man. I was wrong there are things I could not achieve but I never had that in my head.

Reading the narrative biographies through the Model of Six Characteristics of Education that Propels Students to Sustainable Success gained proof of concept.

## 5. Conclusions

The professional challenge 'there just ain't no making it' for African Americans was addressed with in-depth interviews with six African American Male successful leaders who were educated during the Civil Rights movement in the United States. A review of the literature reveals a model of six characteristics of education. First, teachers are outstanding, often with PhDs. Second, students are respected with no racialised abuse. Third, exposure to and preparation for a comprehensive portfolio of opportunities in the US quadruple helix with African American role models are normalised with everyday classroom Audio-Visual empirical, logical and ethical literacies. These are aligned with African American community values including faith based. Fourth students and teachers like and trust each other. Fifth, a progressive trajectory to a more perfect union is evidenced by curriculum Intended Learning Outcomes mapped to Key Performance Indicators delivering equitable access to middle class and higher benefits for all. This is achieved by applying legitimate methods and hard work for sustainable success. Sixth, students have access to thinking tools to penetrate 'fake news' including the lies of White Supremacists. The narrative biographies of the six African American Male successful leaders, read through the Model revealed proof of concept. This is a qualitative study and therefore limited in scope and further research is recommended.

## 6. Recommendations

The Model Propelling African American Males' Education For Sustainable Success where 'Everyone can make it' be i) further tested to gain High Technology Readiness Level (TRL) with schoolboards and superintendents, and ii) mainstreamed supported by education policy, with leverage for International education systems to eradicate what Wagner (2010) identifies as The Global Black-White Achievement Gap.

### Notes on Contributors

Dr Alison Taysum is Associate Professor at University of Birmingham, approved European Commission Expert, expert for National Research Councils around the world, former school governor, and former plant manager with Cargill. She has delivered talks and leadership training on most continents focusing on democracy in education. She is Principal Investigator for The Democracy in Education Bridge International Consortium 'EYSIER' with partners from over thirty nations. Members of the Consortium include editorial board members of this Journal of Groundwork Cases and Faculty of Judgement and have developed a robust evidence base for redesigning curricula in support of democracy. Our toolkits with High Technology Readiness Level empower students' active participation and engagement in this process. Email; contact is: [alisontaysum@yahoo.com](mailto:alisontaysum@yahoo.com)

Dr Carole Rene' Collins Ayanlaja is a native of Indianapolis, Indiana, a product of Washington Township Schools, and a longstanding resident of Chicago. She began her career in the field of Finance at First National Bank of Chicago and Kemper Financial Services. She chose to pursue a career in education after tutoring Chicago public school students and has served in the field for over 25 years. Carole earned a B. A. in Politics from Lake Forest College, a M.A. in Urban Teaching from Concordia University, and a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies and Administration from University of Illinois at Chicago. Her dissertation, "Emerging Lenses: Perspectives of Parents of Black Students on School Success" qualitatively explored how racial and cultural minority parents perceived their relationship with schools and their child's schooling experiences.

Dr. Collins Ayanlaja taught grades 6 and 8 in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and served as an elementary and high school assistant principal, along with a middle and intermediate principal in CPS and South Cook County in the Chicago area. During the Small Schools Initiative funded partially by the Gates Foundation, Carole collaborated with teacher teams, community partners, and district management to launch urban high schools. She served as a Founding High School Principal in both Cincinnati Public Schools and Chicago Public Schools. Dr. Collins Ayanlaja has served as Director of Curriculum and Assessment in Sioux City Community Schools (Iowa), Chief Academic Officer/Chief Research and Assessment Officer in Hartford Public Schools (Connecticut) and Superintendent, Rich Township High School District 227 (Illinois). As an adjunct professor, Carole

taught classes at Concordia University Chicago, and Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT.

Dr Collins Ayanlaja, is currently a tenure-track Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership at Eastern Illinois University. Her primary role is to academically and professionally develop and train pre-service principals and superintendent candidates for service in the state of Illinois. Dr Collins Ayanlaja has published collaboratively with Dr. Taysum, Editor in Chief, on impactful topics that inform the field of educational leadership including: Taysum, Alison, Collins Ayanlaja, Carole (2021). Commonalities in Schools and Education Systems around the World Shifting from Welfarism to Neo Liberalism; Are the Kids Okay? In: Arar, K., Orucu, D., & Wilkinson, J. (Eds.) *Neoliberalism and Education Systems in Conflict: Exploring Challenges Across the Globe*. Routledge and Taysum, Alison, Collins Ayanlaja, Carole (2020). *Educational Success for Black Children in the Public-School System: Parent Participation and Community Empowerment*. In: Papa, R. (eds.) *Handbook on Promoting Social Justice in Education*. Springer, Cham.

Dr. Collins Ayanlaja was lead author on Collins Ayanlaja, C, Johnson Brookins, W & Taysum, A (2018). *Empowering Superintendents In The United States To Empower Societal Innovators For Equity and Renewal in the Community: Navigating Turbulence for a Theory of Knowledge to Action* in A. Taysum & K. Arar (Eds.) *Turbulence, Empowerment and Marginalised Groups in International Education Governance Systems*, Emerald Publishing and Collins Ayanlaja, Carole Rene', Polydore, Catherine Lenna, and Beamon, Danielle Anita (2020). *Promoting Social and Academic Wellness Among African American Adolescent Males: Culturally Responsive Approaches*. In: Crosby Cooper, T. (Eds) *Implementing Culturally Responsive Practices in Education*, IGI Global. Additionally, she was a contributing author to Bartz, D, Collins-Ayanlaja, C., & Rice, P. (2017) *African American Parents and Effective Parent Involvement Programs, Schooling*, Volume 8(1) which offers culturally responsive approaches to parent engagement for marginalized communities.

Dr Collins Ayanlaja builds the capacity of school leaders to activate inclusion and implement progressive change that sustains accountability and promotes an action-oriented equity mindset.

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#### To Cite This Article:

Collins Ayanlaja, C.R., and Taysum, A. (2022) Using ABCDE to Propel African Americans' Education For Sustainable Success in a context of 'Everyone can make it'. in *Journal of Groundwork Cases and Faculty of Judgement* 1, (2) 296-318.