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Leadership for Learning in the Context of Social Justice: An American Perspective

Anthony H. Normore, Guest Editor

A Collaboration of Community Educators Follows Crisis in Cincinnati: Two Museums and a University Join Forces to Promote Understanding

Lionel H. Brown, Judith I. Larsen, Ruth Britt, Donna M. Ruiz & Rachel Star

ABSTRACT: This paper focuses on how community educators might collaborate to help break the cycle of frustration, failure, and violence that shadows many disadvantaged inner-city African American students. It suggests that persistent, race-based inequities in urban areas are a major factor in this syndrome. These causes are proposed to be disparity in education, housing, economic opportunity, and political representation. The paper suggests that a deeper understanding of these ongoing issues is a key to educating these particular students. Specifically, it explores a collaboration between Cincinnati Museum Center, The Arts Consortium of Cincinnati, and the University of Cincinnati College of Education following violence in the city in 2001, and it traces some impacts of that effort.

Introduction

Nearly four decades ago, in June 1967, Black Cincinnati exploded. Riots took place in eight separate African American communities within the city. According to Taylor (1993),

> The anger and deep frustration that led to the "fires, acts of hoodlumism, looting and anarchy" are best captured in Langston Hughes's poem, Harlem: 'What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? or does it explode?'1 Inquiries into the causes of the riots pinpointed unemployment, bad housing, poor neighborhood conditions, and the lack of political representation" (p. 20).

These causes—inequalities in education/employment opportunities and substandard housing/living conditions, as well as disproportionate Black representation in civic government—have persisted from the 1960s until today, giving rise to generation after generation of disadvantaged and disenfranchised, alienated Black youth. In spite of legislated efforts to improve opportunities for African Americans (e.g. Affirmative Action initiatives), factors remain that have contributed to the persistence of inequality between Black and White people today. And while White treatment of Black people has been the target of public policies and intervention efforts, deeper understanding of Black frustration has not yet resulted within many sectors of the White community (Ogbu, 1994).

The 60s was a decade of social, cultural, and political upheaval. The civil rights movement, student activism and anti-war movements, political assassinations, race riots, the "hippie" counter-culture, the sexual revolution, the beginnings of feminism and the environmental movement, the movement toward Black Pride and Black Power, and the rise of the drug culture all challenged traditional respect for authority and the law. And yet, amidst all this upheaval, according to Taylor (1993):

> Race and class [still] defined the position of blacks in Cincinnati's plural but unequal society. Prejudicial thinking, discrimination, segregation and location on the economic margin determined the life chances Americans at every stage in Cincinnati's social, economic and political order. Blacks marched, demonstrated, picketed, harangued, and worked behind the scenes to educate, plead their case, and negotiate" (p. 20), but to little avail.2

The momentum of the previous decade's Civil Rights gains led by Martin Luther King, Jr. carried over into the 1960s, but for most Black people, the tangible results were minimal. Only a tiny percentage of Black children actually attended integrated schools; and in the South, Jim Crow practices barred Black people from jobs and public places. New groups and goals were formed, and new tactics were devised to push forward for full equality of the races—but as often as not, White resistance resulted in violence. For Cincinnati, mid June 1967 marked the beginning of a series of riots in the city. Soon hundreds of national guardsmen and city policemen armed with rifles, pistols, and machine guns were patrolling Black sections of Cincinnati. In the words of Taylor (1993) "...armored tanks roared up and down the streets, and as angry young blacks burned, looted, and marauded, it seemed significant how much things had changed yet remained the same" (p. 20).

Issues raised by rioting and political action in the 60s are still having a profound impact upon today's society—as evidenced by the continuing civil rights movement and by the struggle for racial equality and better race relations in America.

Why haven't the longstanding, underlying, causal conditions of racial unrest changed? It appears that institutionalized conventions persist in the Cincinnati inner city, and in other similar communities throughout the country that have made it hard for Black people to advance and increase their chances for success. Physical and social segregation within the city has exacerbated the problems. Disparities remain between Black and White people in both educational and economic outcomes. Both the national and local Cincinnati NAACP listed the achievement gap as a prime educational concern. Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust, stated that "the gap is established by the time students enter kindergarten and the gap widens as students progress through school" (Mrozowski & Kranz, 2002, p. A1). It is important, therefore, to understand the relationship of early educational achievement during elementary and secondary school years and later academic and economic success. Recent longitudinal studies investigating the relationship between early educational achievement and subsequent academic and economic outcomes used multiple datasets from the years 1972, 1980, and 1992 to explore this relationship (NCES, 2002). The researchers found that educationally disadvantaged Black people also fared more poorly in the labor market and were much more likely to be unemployed than White people with better educational opportunities and early success.

This paper explores the place where the efforts of community educators and urban educators intersected in their mutual quest to understand the underlying causes of racial unrest in the inner city. It should be noted that in Cincinnati it is understandable that racial concerns have dealt mainly with the interactions between the Black and White populations, since according to 2003 census figures, the African American population is 43%, while Native Americans, Asian, or Hispanic/Latino were each under 2%. This paper proposes that the causes for unrest, and causes for persistent, complex problems in educating urban Black youth are the same, and suggests that a more informed approach to educating this population may be one of the keys to change for these students' futures. The authors propose that a more informed pool of educators can be a key to open the door of communication between people of different races isolated from one another in different economic and social situations. This key could help open a world of opportunities for those who are living largely without hope. But to operate this key requires a deeper understanding on the part of community educators.

' Community educators,' as used in this paper, includes not only teaches, local and district administrators, and college professors, but also, parents and caregivers, religious leaders, social workers, and police and juvenile justice system workers. Each single strand in the web of community education has power and strength, but the entire web is needed to prevent urban Black youth from falling through the cracks of society.

Examining Roots of Recurring Race Conflict in Cincinnati

Background and "Trigger" for the 2001 Unrest

Following the shooting of an unarmed, fleeing young Black male by a young White policeman in April of 2001, the streets of one underprivileged, largely Black inner city neighborhood in central Cincinnati burst into violent protest. The shooting incident was the culmination of a string of seemingly race-biased acts committed against Cincinnati's Black population by city police. In a 5-year period, 15 Black males were killed by Cincinnati Police. Circumstances surrounding a number of these deaths seemed to justify forceful defensive action by police. It is significant, however, especially to the African American community, that no White people were killed by Cincinnati Police during that same 5- year period. Previous efforts by the Black community at peaceful communication with city leaders and police about this perceived inequity had been unsuccessful. In 1999, the Sentinel Police Association, which represents the city's Black police officers, compiled a report that urged city leaders to take immediate action, warning that something must be done to "quell the very tense and volatile atmosphere that currently exists between the police and the community." (Horn, 2001, p. A6). That warning went unheeded. Three times—on May 31, November 8, and November 13 of the year 2000—African Americans protested at City Hall concerning young Black males killed during their arrests by Cincinnati police. On March 14, 2001, Black activists and the American Civil Liberties Union sued the city of Cincinnati, asking a federal court to end what they said had been 30 years of unchecked discrimination by police officers (Goetz, 2001).

The crucial April 2001 shooting incident that triggered the violence looked very different from different eyes. Was the killing of this Black man an excuse by anti-social young Black males to stir up things in the city? Or was the resulting violence the act of desperate people needing to be heard and reacting to the last straw in a series of police acts that seemingly singled out African Americans? Both of these views are over simplifications of what happened. Neither view addresses the underlying causes. Calm has returned to Cincinnati. Under the surface, however, serious problems remain.

Race Riots in the 1960's/Unrest in 2001: The Same Root Causes? A First Person Comparison

University educator, Dr. Lionel H. Brown, offers a personal reflection on the 1967 race riot in Cincinnati and the 2001 civil unrest in the city. He compares and contrasts the two events and proposes that the root causes have remained distressingly similar, although decades of social upheaval and striving for equality separate the two.

Cincinnati—1967. On a mid-week summer evening in 1967, I was driving down Reading Road on my way home from the University of Cincinnati where I was a junior in the college of Design, Art and Architecture. I had been working late that night in the design lab. As I passed the intersection of Rockdale Avenue and Reading Road, I noticed a large unruly crowd in the middle of Rockdale. People were running out of their houses and a nightclub. As I slowed my car, there was a loud explosion. Flames leaped into the air to the right and left of my car. I heard shouts of 'Black power' and 'power to the people.' I turned onto Lexington Avenue and came to a stop. To my far right, I heard another thunderous explosion. I realized it was in the vicinity of Model Laundry where my grandmother worked during the day as a shirt press operator. I could hear loud angry voices of crowds moving in all directions and the sound of glass breaking and smaller explosions. There was the sound of bricks crashing through car windows and frightened screams from inside the automobiles. I sped off down Lexington Avenue, turned onto Victory Parkway, past Walnut Hills High School. As I turned right onto Gilbert Avenue, there was another loud explosion further up Gilbert near the Thompson Cadillac showroom. I hurried onto Bresford Avenue. As I turned onto Kerper Avenue and drove to my house, I could see flames leaping higher into the air as Model Laundry burned. (Gilbert Avenue, Reading Road, and Victory Parkway are major thoroughfares extending like spokes from the central city.)

The next day as I drove the same route, I saw that Model laundry—a plant that employed hundreds of people—was burned to the ground. Thomson's Cadillac, where new cars were displayed daily, was damaged badly. Large plate glass windows that had previously allowed passers-by to look through and be tempted by shiny new cars now were replaced with wooden boards. Reading Road and Rockdale Avenue were a complete shambles—debris everywhere, stores damaged beyond repair. Windows that had managed to survive thrown bricks, trashcans, and Molotov cocktails the night before were now boarded up. A curfew was enacted but similar acts of destruction went on until the National Guard was called in, arriving in full riot gear, driving military jeeps, to protect the city from rioters and looters.

One night later in the week as I was again driving home from UC, I was pulled over by the National Guard. I was ordered out of my car, directed to lean spread-eagle against the car, and searched with a bayonet pressed against my backside. My car was also searched. Riot conditions that started that night in early June of 1967 lasted for the remainder of the summer (Amos, 2004).

Cincinnati—2001. In April 2001, a group of fifth and sixth graders and I were returning from a college tour. These students were participants in GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). As the last group of students stepped off the bus at Parham School not far from the city's center, the custodian told me there had been a disturbance in downtown Cincinnati. Later that evening, I drove to the downtown post office and passed a large crowd of angry people moving down Vine Street and another large crowd moving up Central Parkway (urban thoroughfares located in a central part of the city). Violence had erupted. Windows were broken; food carts were overturned; a few buildings were looted and set afire. The next night a curfew was enacted. Once again, as many years earlier, I drove home from the University of Cincinnati, this time not as a student but as a research associate, and not to Kerper Avenue, but to an area outside the city—a quiet area unaffected by the unrest and civil disobedience. The April 2001 unrest lasted for several days and a curfew was enacted, but it was lifted in less than a week (Thompson, 2001, Vulliamy, 2001).

Differences Between the 1967 Riots and the Unrest of 2001

What the city and I experienced in the 60s and what we experienced in April 2001 were not the same. The riots of the 60s were a forest fire, and the unrest in 2001 was the threatening flame of a match. However, in the 60s, in spite of the fact that violence and physical harm were much greater, city government and activists were willing to seek common ground for discussions. In contrast, in 2001, city government and activists were unwilling to sit down together to look for common ground that can lead to solutions. Subsequently, Cincinnati Black United Front leaders and others called for a boycott that continued into 2004 (Aldridge, 2004). A proportion of the Black population felt that the boycott was the only bargaining chip available to them to keep attention on the problems in the city. Those who opposed them refused to negotiate while the boycott was still in place. The boycott did keep millions of dollars in convention and entertainment business away from downtown Cincinnati; consequently the city and its economy have suffered (Aldridge, 2004). The image of the city is sorely damaged and the racial divide remains and grows larger.

There are a number of general underlying reasons that could be contributing to this lack of progress in communication. Many of the "deeply held grievances" listed by the Kerner Commission when it investigated causes for the 1960's riots have still not been addressed[3]. In addition, recent recalls of some Affirmative Action initiatives have been interpreted by some as a movement to turn the clock back and remove gains made by Black people. Even the right to vote and the promise of a voice in a democratic society often seem to be a waste of time. Why vote when it appears to many that a good portion of those elected can't see a voter's worth beyond a campaign promise? Franklin Raines, first Black CEO of a Fortune 500 corporation, has observed that Blacks are "... so suspicious of the establishment that, until the establishment demonstrates it will do something, the assumption is that it will not [italics added] do something" (Cose, 2002, p. 35).

Two of Cincinnati's current problems, for example, police profiling of Black men, and apparent targeting of Black youth, are both symptoms of a much greater problem of racial attitudes that have persisted from generation to generation. The 2001 shooting of the young Black male was just the match that ignited issues that have been smoldering over time. Sadly city leaders, government officials, and influential community members still cannot seem to find ways to bring about systemic change.

Educators Must Help Bridge the Gap

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the many factors that influence the educational success of Black males. For example, some have suggested that desire for an education among this group has been replaced by an attitude that excellence in achievement is akin to 'acting White' and is a symbol of femininity, while other theorists dispute the real meaning of that phrase (Harpalani, 2003). In addition, it is impossible to look at race without a consideration of other influences such as class (Horvat, 2003). Nevertheless, a current view of the success rates of students in Cincinnati public schools shows that the task of improving educational outcomes is daunting. High rates of suspension and expulsion coupled with a dismal attitude toward education have brought the Black male's journey from poor attendance to high school dropout. Poor scores on standardized tests and huge gaps in achievement between Black and White students diminish hope among Black students that college can be apart of their lives. Low expectations and hopelessness cause Black males to trade classroom chairs for street corners and eventually for jail cells when they turn to crime, violence and self-destruction. As Cose (2002) has said,

> Public schools in poor urban communities are often nothing but factories for failure. Instead of taking black and brown children seriously, instead of treating them as human beings fully capable of great success, they frequently treat them like dullards simply marking time until they are ready to collect welfare or go to prison (p. 91).

One local African American minister, active in efforts to bring about change in the urban core of the city, cites another often discussed idea. He believes that the standard, 13-year education in our schools presents only a "Eurocentric" viewpoint without acknowledging other cultures. African American children (and children of other cultural and racial minorities) are hard-pressed to develop a sense of self worth and self determination, and conversely, White students often cannot understand the African American perspective. The two groups not only live in different worlds, they see the same events very differently. Education from a multi-cultural perspective could be one key to supporting future dialogue and understanding within our city and others.

Exploring the Lack of Understanding Between Black and White People

One fundamental obstacle to communication and change became clear as the events of 2001 unfolded: how can our diverse communities begin to face and address the city's problems together when often we come from separate worlds and separate understandings? Cincinnatians are segregated by race. For the most part, African Americans and Caucasians live in separate parts of the city. In fact, the current city manager recently repeated a description of Cincinnati as the '6th most segregated city in America' at a "Hope in the Cities" December 2003 meeting in Richmond, Virginia4. Lionel Brown, one of the authors of this paper, was deputy superintendent at the time of a 1976 NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) judgment against school segregation in Cincinnati. His view quoted recently in a local newspaper was that

It is now nearly impossible to end school segregation... [in Cincinnati]. There are fewer students in the district overall and, of greater import, fewer white students. Lack of resources, poor discipline and underachievement have taken their toll on the district's demographics (Amos, 2004, p. A16)
People in Cincinnati are also segregated by economics, as most cities are, but does this separation also have a racial component? Even though the Black middle class is growing, is it still harder for African Americans to make the climb out of poverty and escape a bleak future?

Community and Urban Educators Become Involved

Two educational institutions were among the first to promote communication and understanding. Realizing the complexity of the problem and the need for understanding on both sides, Cincinnati Museum Center and the Arts Consortium of Cincinnati took on the challenge to provide historical perspective on the racial violence of 2001 to show as many viewpoints and voices from the community as possible, to present the issues for consideration, and to provide a safe place for dialogue and options for individual involvement. The two museums came together, combining

their physical and human resources, to produce an exhibit to educate and to encourage dialogue.

Cincinnati Museum Center, located close to the center of the disturbed area, felt it was within its mission to document the events as part of its historical museum/library. In a move that went beyond this mission, CMC decided to partner with the Arts Consortium of Cincinnati (an African American institution also located in the same area) to produce the exhibit. The exhibit also went far beyond the mission of the Arts Consortium and represented a perilous step for both.

Very quickly, the University of Cincinnati College of Education added its strong support to the effort. Several education professors and their graduate student classes toured the exhibit and participated in discussion groups, and students wrote papers on the exhibit. The experience became a unique, first-hand and personal way for students to absorb the complexities of the racial inequalities in the city and to see how the situation impacts inner city students. It is significant that the graduate students most involved with the exhibit were doctoral candidates in one of the few programs in the United States that offers a degree in urban education leadership. One education graduate student, who was teaching in a Cincinnati suburban school at the time, struggled with the realization that, even though she believed she was caring and unprejudiced, true understanding was difficult because her social world did not intersect with African Americans who felt injustice. She had to agree, saying in effect, we are segregated—our worlds don't cross.

Historical Perspective: A Necessary Foundation

As preparations for the exhibit "Civil Unrest in Cincinnati: Voices of Our Community" proceeded, research showed that basic economic conditions and opportunities for poorer inner city dwellers had not changed much since the riots of the 60s. Lack of proportionate African American representation in the city leadership, disproportionate unemployment, excessive poverty, unequal educational opportunities, and substandard housing were still common in 2001. A study found that in 1990 almost 85% of residents in the Findlay Market District, at the center of the 2001 violence, were living below the federal poverty level (Cerveney, Haney, & Vredeveld, 1997). Cincinnati has, in fact, become a more segregated city since the 60s, with many White people living in mostly White neighborhoods and Black people living in mostly Black neighborhoods. Cerveny et al. (1997) found that within the area surrounding the violence, 83% of the residents were Black. In contrast, the overall racial make-up of the Greater Cincinnati region was found to be 87% White and 12% Black.

Educational data also show a lack of positive change for city school students. School district 2001 data showed that the high school graduation rate for African American students was under 50%. In addition, proficiency test scores were far lower in the city school district than in all of the other surrounding suburban schools of greater Cincinnati5. This kind of data is especially disturbing in view of longitudinal studies that link educational success with later economic success.

One panel in the completed exhibit quoted from a report on the 1967 race riots in Cincinnati, comparing the riots to previous violent disturbances in the country: "It is a kind of Alice-in-Wonderland—with the same moving picture shown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations and the same inaction." (Kemer Report, 1968, p. 483). In fact, prior to the 2001 disturbance, Cincinnatian Cecil Thomas, a former policeman who now heads the Human Relations Commission, had warned that the city was "...one questionable shooting away from riots" (Edwards, 2001, para. 5).

Another exhibit panel showed that nearly 1/3 of the city's children—who by 2001 were more than half African American—were still living in substandard housing in distressed neighborhoods. Unemployment among White people in the city at large stood at around 5%, but in the largely Black neighborhood of the disturbance, unemployment was over 20% (AECF, 2001). Figures from a University of Cincinnati economic study further show that Black males represent the highest category of unemployed. Census figures from 1990, in fact, showed that 50% of Black males in the Findlay Market district (at the immediate site of the violence) were unemployed. This figure rose to over 60% unemployed when the surrounding economically distressed urban areas were included (Cerveny et al., 1997). The exhibit showed movement in city representation, but not consistent with population percentages—in 1967, not one of the 69 city officials was Black; in 2001, 11 of the 56 comparable officials were Black, but the city's Black population had grown to 43%.

Responses by city leaders to the riots in the 60s and the unrest in 2001 were distressingly similar as well. Three examples from the exhibit follow: a) In the 1960s, "Home Visit Sundays" were held in an effort to allow Cincinnati's Black and White residents to meet in informal, social settings, small discussion groups and book circles were created for Cincinnati's Black and White citizens and members of the police to come together informally to share ideas and experiences. In the 1960s, business leaders pledged to create jobs and job training for inner city youth (Official city of Cincinnati publication; Trapp, 2001, para.1). In 2001, business leaders again pledged to create 3000 jobs for inner city youth (Rutledge, 2001a; Trapp, 2001 para. 2). c) From the 60s up through the crisis of 2001, city commissions, committees and panels were organized to study the problems and suggest change (Kiesewetter, 2001). As newspaper headlines in 2001 asserted, past ideas for correcting the city's problems have not been implemented, for example, "Past race reports gather dust" (Rutledge, 2001b), and "Panel to plow familiar ground" (Horn, 2001).

While there is no doubt that some progress has been made, the underlying attitudes have not only remained similar, but in the view of some informed citizens, have perhaps regressed. Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, a legend of the Alabama Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, has served a congregation in Cincinnati for many years. In 2001, he said,

> Race relations haven't changed very much since those days. If anything, things are worse if everybody thinks they have changed yet, in reality, those changes are not every-vein deep... Cincinnati ...has had time to change, but the whites have blocked progress and the police is more a prosecutor than a protector... people will rebel if they don't see... progress. The riots happening now are the result of Cincinnati not responding to change (Vulliamy, 2001).

Seeking a Broader Base of Understanding in the Community

As alliances formed in new ways between the two museums and the university and additional community educators, the influences of the collaboration multiplied. Influence within the traditional educational community was immediate and far reaching. Educational institutions at all levels contributed directly to the exhibit. Elementary students, from a school just blocks from the major violence, sent their pictures and poems. Poetry and artwork from high school students from a suburban school covered one section of the exhibit wall. In turn, any visiting teacher who requested it received transcripts of the entire text for use in their classes after visiting the exhibit, lists of children's books dealing with the topics of race relations and urban violence compiled by staff at the children's section of the Cincinnati Public Library and at the Center for Peace Education were also popular with parents and teachers alike. In addition, the exhibit drew many school groups in the short, four-week span that it was open at the beginning of the 2001 school year.

A university student group, with a diverse membership working toward racial awareness—Racial Awareness Pilot Project—came to see the exhibit and held a discussion following their visit. In addition, the closing event for the exhibit brought together elementary African American school children who read their poetry and Caucasian students from a suburban high school who had contributed poetry and art work for the exhibit. These high school students who participated also had carried out a two-day exchange with the inner city high school nearest the civil unrest. A community project called "Posters4Peace" headed by a university professor in the school of social work also became part of the fabric of the exhibit, since posters drawn on cardboard by citizens concerned about bringing the community together were scattered throughout the exhibit. An organization dedicated to working toward tolerance and understanding in children called the Center for Peace Education also provided hand-made masks and a display of books for children.

As previously mentioned, university education students in the University of Cincinnati's Urban Education Leadership (UEL) program became immersed in the exhibit. The UEL is a program specifically dedicated to helping education leaders tackle the difficult educational challenges in problem inner city areas. These students, therefore, are a direct link to the future of education within challenged urban areas. The coordinator of the program recognized the unique

opportunity to build an action-oriented museum/education partnership using the exhibit as a focus for his students. As part of the process, he assembled a panel of community leaders who belonged to an organization "Changing Hearts and Minds One Block at a Time" to present their visions for positive change in Cincinnati to the UEL students. That panel reflected a broad spectrum of community educators—as this paper defines the phrase—including concerned business leaders, a pastor, the exhibit designers, university educators, a museum evaluator, and the publisher of the city's leading African American newspaper.

The opportunity to speak to a wider traditional educational audience arose through several presentations for leaders in education at national meetings. A panel presentation at the 2001UCEA national convention held in Cincinnati (University Council for Educational Administration) described the education/museum partnership. Again, a group of community leaders—some formal educators, others supportive of education (all community educators)—came together to address the underlying issues facing Cincinnati and other cities. A panel of presenters from the Cincinnati collaboration also spoke in Savannah, Georgia, at the 2002 Teachers' Education Division (TED) of the Council for Exceptional Children Conference. The title of this presentation brings home the message: "Conditions affecting urban children: Street violence, the impetus for broader educational partnerships."

Both the connection to the Urban Education Leadership Department and to the educators at the TED and UCEA conferences hold much promise for the future. Administrators and educators of teachers are in a unique position to help prepare teachers to better understand communities where a history of unfavorable urban conditions has been responsible for violence and poor outlooks for children. These trained teachers can affect positive change for the outcomes of individual children and therefore can have a profound affect on the future.

A practical plan for action is also in the works, spurred on by the 2001 violence. A center called the Urban Technology Community Center (UTCC) is being planned for families from the inner city neighborhood most affected by the violence. The University of Cincinnati education department, a local organization called "Changing Hearts and Minds One Block at Time," and a number of individual business and religious leaders are raising money to open a center where young children can have access to technology and learn together with their parents. It would offer job application skill training and address health issues and community responsibility. A site has been chosen and serious planning is underway. See Appendix A for a detailed description of the proposed center.

Impacts on Informal Education

Reaction to the exhibit "Civil Unrest in Cincinnati: Voices of Our Community" also reverberated throughout the national museum community and continues to create thought and discussion. Panels, presentations and articles in museum publications have given museum professionals the opportunity to consider wider, community-oriented missions that respond to current local issues (Larsen, 2002a, 2002b).

Presentations about the process of designing and implementing this kind of exhibit (serving the community as an immediate response to a local crisis) as well as studies looking at the lasting effect on visitors have been presented both at the 2002 African American Association of Museums Annual Conference in Washington, DC6 and at the 2003 Visitors Studies Association Conference in Columbus, Ohio. Another indication that museums are becoming increasingly interested in this kind of community education mission is shown by trends in museum studies programs. For example, one graduate class in museum studies recently traveled to CMC from Indiana University expressly to talk with the designers, curator, and evaluator for the Civil Unrest exhibit.

A small, but direct consequence of the collaboration occurred with the museum building itself. The Arts Consortium exhibit partner has been housed within the Museum Center Union Terminal building ever since the Union Terminal opened as a museum, although its board and operations have always been completely independent from CMC. After this exhibit collaboration, awareness of the programs of this African American Museum partner has increased and also recognition of the important connection it offers to contemporary local African American artists and their public supporters. For the first time its hours of operation are now listed along with Cincinnati Museum Center activities on the monthly calendars available for visitors.

Tracking the Educational Impact of the Exhibit

A key to turning emotion and sentiment into action is arming citizens with knowledge. Ninety percent of the 10,000+ visitors said that the exhibit evoked emotion and 98% felt that Cincinnati needed to change. Half of those writing about the exhibit in a journal (around 200 individuals) wrote about how much they had learned about the root causes for our city's current problems. Many visitors expressed surprise at how little has changed in the living situations and opportunities available for the people living in the area where the civil unrest occurred. They said they saw that "things hadn't changed" and that "the exhibit was thought provoking" or "opened their eyes." Another common statement was that "the exhibit should be seen by more people, stay longer, or travel." 7

Visitors' comments also suggested opportunities for education to make a difference. In spite of the fact that open-ended questions did not direct visitors toward the topic of education, over 50 visitors specifically mentioned the need for education to help overcome the city's problems. Personal comments also showed that many felt parents are a crucial part of this educational process, describing "mentoring" and starting education at home. A few examples:

" I am educating myself and others to diversity"
" Provide the children with opportunity to learn about others"
" Find ways to 'confront' people when they say/do racist things. EDUCATE!"
" Educate consciously and continuously. I've had enough of knee-jerk reactions. Let's be proactive."
" Improving educational opportunities and improving communication opportunities and skills are vital, I feel."
" We need direction and leadership. We also need better funding of public education and more grants and loans for post high school training."
" Yes we need to fight poverty & its consequences - our schools are vital."

Educational Initiatives Moved into the Local Community

Following the end of the exhibit run, its impact continued to be felt in the larger Cincinnati community. The following three initiatives serve as examples. First, the soundtrack from an evocative component of the original exhibit called the "Whisper Tunnel – an audio space that presented unflattering comments commonly used to describe people of another race – was borrowed for use in a Martin Luther King Day assembly. Cincinnati students from four schools were gathered for the event. The "Whisper" soundtrack played while they entered and continued until all students sat down and could hear it all the way through. Then several students who had visited the exhibit themselves spoke about their experience.

Second, on the anniversary of the civil unrest, another community educator, The Center for Peace Education, held a workshop at CMC, again using the museum as a safe place to encourage dialogue. This "Peace Day" brought representatives from the urban environments and beyond, including organizations ranging from homeless shelters to evening continuing education centers. The Poster4Peace professor also returned to the museum on Peace Day to involve more people in a tangible artistic expression of working toward understanding and peace.

Third, the designers of the museum exhibit have established a new arts initiative aimed at increasing diversity in the theatre community. As their awareness of the social and cultural segregation in the Cincinnati area increased, the husband and wife team, long active in community theatre groups, set out to build a bridge between Black and White communities based on this art form. Efforts progressed through several smaller presentations to the November 2003 full-length and fully-staged performance of the classic African American play "A Raisin in the Sun" in collaboration with another community theatre group. A second collaborative performance took place in March 2004. Actors trained by the African American Theatre Company of Butler County have also won parts with other, previously all-White community companies. The AATC/BC continues to train and network Black actors with the larger theatre community in the Cincinnati area, and to present its own Black-themed productions for integrated audiences.

Current Efforts in Cincinnati

The current situation in Cincinnati shows the need for continued efforts at dialogue. Although the scene seems calm on the surface in Cincinnati, serious problems remain. An observation made by *All Things Considered* co-host Noah Adams while visiting Cincinnati in 2001 noted that despite the meetings and conversations and negotiations, city officials and citizens seem far from closing the racial divide (NPR, 2001). This is for the most part still true. Three main factions—the Black United Front, Cincinnati Police, and the city power structure—remain at odds and will not accept conditions set down by the others. A "Boycott Cincinnati" group is still active in the city, using boycotting as a tool to exert pressure on city administrators to address policing and other issues that fuel the climate of racial intolerance. In turn, top city officials still refuse to negotiate with boycott advocates. News headlines in 2003 suggest some community perceptions and continuing racial tensions: "Police race data filed and forgotten" (Prendergast, 2003) and "Black firefighters file complaint" alleging hostility by White colleagues (Driehaus, 2003).

Meanwhile, dialogues sponsored by the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission still continue between residents and police. In addition, a number of organizations formed at the time of the outbreak of violence carry on the fight. A commission started at the time of the violence, Cincinnati CAN (Community Action Now), has disbanded but several initiatives are continuing, including a program to accelerate minority businesses and a community-police partnering center. The Women's City Club, League of Women Voters, and Grassroots Leadership Academy have combined forces to present programs supporting Community Problem Oriented Policing. The more that groups like these interact and combine their efforts, the better the chance for change. The question remains: will all of these heartfelt efforts make a long-term difference or will the city once again come full-circle to another violent event.

Another positive change in the scene is the inclusion of more African Americans in positions of leadership in the city government, with both a Black City Manager and Vice Mayor. An African American has also been chosen as Head Coach of the local professional football team—a first in Cincinnati. There has been strong community support for the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (NURFC), soon to open in the city. NURFC is already partnering with CMC and the Cincinnati Art Museum, to design an exhibit about an African American Cincinnatian who was a highly successful daguerreotype photographer in the city around the time of the Civil War. In addition, several Community School Centers are being developed in Cincinnati, combining health centers, police sub units and local arts or cultural organizations with traditional education. Both CMC and the Arts Consortium arc each currently in partnership with one of these centers.

Conclusion

Cincinnati, like many other cities, needs to face its current problems, but also desperately needs to help overcome problems for future generations—to stop the cycle of inequality, frustration and violence from repeating. There are many areas in which attention is necessary if the chronic conditions discussed in this paper—disparity in employment/education opportunities, substandard housing, and lack of representation in civic government based on race—arc to undergo change. But communication and the opportunity to see problems from the perspective of the 'other' side are also crucial. Traditional educators and political, religious, social, and business leaders must work with community leaders to increase understanding, with the goal of creating a society made stronger by its diversity.

Perhaps a large part of the success of the museum-university partnership in "Civil Unrest in Cincinnati: Voices of Our Community" was that it became a catalyst that brought together the efforts of many, already-existing community groups, helping to give a focus to their similar goals. Other initiatives that hopefully will carry on this spirit of collaboration, building on the collective strengths of other community institutions are: Community Education Centers combining traditional schools with health, law enforcement, and cultural organizations, the University of Cincinnati's Urban Educational Leadership doctoral program taking students from theoretical foundations in educational leadership to actual practice in urban schools and communities, and finally, a proposed Urban Technology Community Center (UTCC) that would provide a safe welcoming center where children and their parents can go to learn, interact casually with police officers, and have access to technology that could change their future prospects. See Appendix B for details about UTCC and examples of collaborations in other cities.

At the most fundamental level, urban community educators must recognize ongoing, underlying conditions faced by urban youth, especially young Black males, and pool their resources in addressing them on a daily, one-to-one basis. Obviously solutions to ongoing, long-standing social, economic and political problems are not up to educators alone, but they can play a vital part in creating the new citizens armed for future grass roots change.

The causes of racial crisis and conflict in Cincinnati are similar to those in surrounding communities and cities across our country. The authors of this paper hope that readers of this paper will reflect on the causes of racial civil unrest and find ways to help educational organizations in their own cities join together to address these problems with solutions. Community educators are in a unique position to respond on a very basic level in a way that could change lives and the cities in which we live forever.

Endnotes

1. From a discussion in Henry Louis Taylor, Jr.'s 1993 book, *Race and the City: Work; Community and Protest in Cincinnati*, 1820-1970, (pp. 19,20). His discussion of "Raisin in the Sun" comes from Amiri Baraka's chapter titled "A Critical Reevaluation: A Raisin in the Sun's Enduring Passion", in R. Nemiroff (Ed.), (1987). *A Raisin in the Sun and the Sign in Sidney Brusrein's Window*, New York: New American Library. Taylor's discussions about riot causes in Cincinnati come from the *Cincinnati Post Times-Star and the Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, June 1967; Cincinnati Historical Society Papers on Cincinnati Riots, box 11, folder 9; and the *Journal of Black Studies* 5, (15) from March of 1985.

2. Taylor notes that his statements are based on discussion in Earl Lewis's 1991 book, *In Their Own Interest: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century*. Norfolk, Virginia. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

3. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder, chaired by Otto Kerner, Jr, known as the Kerner Report was released February 29, 1968. The first seven grievances in descending order of intensity were 1) police practices, 2) unemployment and under-employment, 3) inadequate housing, 4) poor recreation facilities and programs, 5) ineffectiveness of the political structure and grievance mechanisms, 6) disrespectful White attitudes, 7) discriminatory administration of justice. Researchers on the Cincinnati Historical Society staff found many of these to still be problems in Cincinnati at the time of the 2001 violence in the city.

4. *Hope in the Cities*, Spring, 2004. http://www.hopeinthecities.org, pages 5 and 6. This is the newsletter of an organization based in Richmond, Virginia, that is dedicated to race reconciliation. The current name of the organization is: Initiatives of Change International, accessible at http://www.iofc.org

5. Demographic and educational information from Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), KIDS COUNT Cincinnati page http://www eccensus.cgi , andhttp://www.aecf.org . Additional data from Children's Defense Fund-Ohio and the Ohio Department of Education, retrieved August 2005 respectively from:http://www.cdfohio.org, 2005 Ohio County Factsheets and Federal Poverty Guidelines and http://www.ode.state.oh.us/

6. African American Association of Museums 2002 Conference abstract: "Immediately following racial and political unrest in the streets of Cincinnati in April 2001, Cincinnati Museum Center collaborated with the Arts consortium of Cincinnati to present an exhibit that explored past unrest in the city offered a fact-based look at the events of 2001, and challenged visitors to become part of the healing process. Presenters will discuss team building for the project and the challenge of turning a controversial subject into physical form. Examples of on-term effects of the exhibit upon groups working for peace and justice in Cincinnati will also be provided."

7. Information on the CMC museum exhibit: Civil Unrest in Cincinnati: Voices of Our Community exhibit evaluation: Over 10,000 people from 20 states visited the exhibit during its three-month run with a demographic profile much more diverse than Cincinnati Museum Center's usual visitation. Since about 1/3 of these visitors responded about their experience in one or more ways (by writing in a journal, on graffiti boards, on a survey, or on personal pledge cards), visitor response was well documented—1648 of these individual responses were analyzed.

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Appendix A

The proposal for an Urban Technology Community Center (UTCC) in the Over-The-Rhine (OTR) area of the city includes a specific plan of intervention by a team of educators, clergy, and business leaders in a group called "Changing Hearts and Minds — One Block at a Time." In OTR, students and their parents represent the lowest rung of the socio/economic ladder, facing a daily reality of drugs and crime in their neighborhoods. They also have often experienced failure in public school systems.

The Center would provide mentors for children, programs for parents, and technology training to enhance future educational and economic opportunities in a safe, welcoming center in OTR where both children and their parents can go to learn, interact casually with each other and with Cincinnati police officers, and have access to the kind of technology that can change their future prospects. The goals are:
1. Safety in the community: The approach would be holistic, encouraging families, business owners, police, clergy, and school personnel to work together t create a safe community. Implementation of neighborhood block watch programs would give residents a stake in securing the safety of their neighborhoods.
2. Respect for individual and property rights: The center (with support from local ministers and the police) would help parents improve their parenting skills to develop a sense of respect for individual and property rights in their children.
3. Joint sponsorship of neighborhood blocks with corporate and community area partnerships: Corporations will be encouraged to "adopt" housing segments and to work with the residents to renovate buildings.
4. Cleanliness of the community: The UTCC will promote programs that foster pride in a clean and renewed community
5. Job application skills: The UTCC would use technology to help older students and adults study for a GED diploma and encourage individuals to think beyond the GED toward continuing their education at a trade school or community college level. Job training and educational and vocational counseling would be provided.
6. Health and wellness issues: Community health agencies would help prevent problems through early identification of physical, emotional, social, family, or substance abuse problems and would improve knowledge in the area of nutrition.
7. Community responsibility: The UTCC would promote shared authority and responsibility by community stakeholders so that residents, business persons, clergy, and school personnel could work as equal team members toward common goals.
8. Educational & technology enhancement—reducing the digital divide: The UTCC would provide educational and technology instruction and enrichment to enable children and parents to advance academically and technologically.

Collaboration for implementation

A creative network of public and private support would need to be tapped to fund the center and help develop the programs. Corporate support in the form of technology donations, such as laptop computers, printers, scanners, and

digital cameras, also would be solicited. Local universities would be approached for architectural expertise in building restoration, medical assistance and chemical/alcohol dependency expertise, literacy and mathematics tutorial services, and technology skills training. Five components of the UTCC will be implemented in phases over several years.

1. Access to technology and technical training: A grant request submitted to the State of Ohio requests funds for desktop computers in the Center, refurbished laptops for school, access to internet at home and at the center, and training for adults and students on educational uses of computers.

2. Access to GED training for parents and older students: Once technology is in place it would be used to help older students and parents study for a GED diploma.

3. Location of a Police Substation at the Center: The proposed collaboration with Cincinnati Police would provide the opportunity for the community and police to interact on a casual basis, allowing mentoring and tutoring relationships to develop.

4. Alternative learning and parent support center: The UTCC tutors would work with students to improve basic and test-taking skills. It would help parents assist their children with schoolwork, stressing the importance of early child development, and work to improve the parents' knowledge of technology, nutrition, budgeting, and finances.

5. Juvenile intervention: The Center would provide a safe, supervised location for police to bring children with minor offenses (e.g. truancy). It is hoped that police at the Center could then help them work out changes in their lives. Future plans include a police-student court in which students and police together evaluate negative behaviors and determine appropriate actions for offenders.

All of these interventions are designed to address specific aspects of the neighborhood residents' frustrations and combat both racial crisis and conflict. The effects of such a center would take time and only evaluation over the long term will be able to sort out possible benefits. The plan, however, holds tremendous promise. NOTE 1 Co-founded by Dr. Lionel Brown and Randy Sandier.

Appendix B

Other community educator partnership examples

A variety of other community educator partnerships that deal with social problems are aimed at helping people of different backgrounds and cultures understand each other and providing tools for better personal success. Education is very much a part of the mission of the institutions in these partnerships.

The Open Museum of LA formed a partnership that connected museums and the power of dialogue to address the 10th anniversary of the Los Angeles riots. In April 2001 that museum produced an exhibit that traveled around Los Angeles called "Remember the Riots," which drew upon the experiences of people who had lived through the riots of 10 years ago. A book accompanied the exhibit, full of personal accounts from individuals and produced in English, Spanish, and Korean. The museum partnered with the UCLA Hammer Museum, and the non-profit organization "Days of Dialogue," which facilitated discussions at each of the venues for the exhibit.

On the opposite coast, the Lower Eastside Tenement Museum of New York (LESTM) serves as a community educator whose "pupils" (immigrants who learn English and how to cope in practical ways in big city life) often become teachers of the next new group of immigrants. The LESTM actively educates immigrants and fosters tolerance and respect for all cultures. The museum also forms partnerships with groups that carry out restoration or neighborhood improvement projects.

Brief biographies

Lionel Brown, Ed.D. received his Educational doctorate in Urban Educational Leadership from the University of Cincinnati where he is currently an Assistant Professor. He served as a Principal and as Deputy Superintendent in the Cincinnati Public Schools and continues to provide consulting services to schools and community organizations concerning issues such as youth violence and African Americans in government. His awards include: Diversity Merit Award, Mary McCloud Bethune Outstanding Educator Award, and James N. Jacobs Public Education Award.

Judith I. Larsen, Ed.D. has presented studies at national museum conferences. As Cincinnati Museum Center evaluator, she carries out evaluation studies during exhibit development and evaluates completed exhibits, including the Civil Unrest exhibit discussed in this manuscript.

Ruth. S. Britt has worked in museums for over 20 years—in exhibit design and planning, exhibit evaluation, and as a writer of exhibit text. She was co-designer of the Civil Unrest exhibit and a writer on the exhibit team. She also observed visitor behavior while serving as a docent in the exhibit throughout its three-month run.

Donna M. Ruiz, M.Ed. Ms. Ruiz is an Academic Director and Adjunct Faculty in the Early Childhood Learning Community at the University of Cincinnati. She consults with educational organizations in applied strategic planning and outcomes development and program evaluation.
Rachel Star, Ed.D. Dr. Star recently completed her dissertation in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Cincinnati on constructivist instructional practices used by middle and secondary school science teachers.

E-mail Address: Lionel.Brown@uc.edu (Primary Author)