

to communicate, using these as the organizing principle of the text and then developing a sequence of grammar skills, vocabulary, and cultural knowledge needed to perform effectively in these situations. Because the proficiency curriculum connects language to its real-life uses in the target culture, instruction draws heavily on authentic print and nonprint materials taken directly from the target culture.

*What do foreign language teachers need?* Proficiency-based foreign language instruction represents a major paradigmatic shift in our profession. Teachers need resources in order to put this new approach into action. First, they need significant opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required. Second, if teachers are to put their new knowledge, skills, and attitudes to good use, support for

curriculum development and the purchase of up-to-date, proficiency-oriented print and nonprint resources is needed. With these resources, teachers can begin to help students develop the foreign language skills that will be essential in the 21st century. □

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## Minority Education

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### ***African American: What's in a Name?***

The term *African American* is gaining strong support among educators as a replacement for the terms *Black* and *Black American*. Former NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell stated: "We have come full circle. It was not too long ago that we were calling ourselves Afro-American. It is significant and important that we remember our cultural heritage with Africa. Our young people should learn to understand and appreciate this link. If the term *African* versus *Black* will move us in that direction, it is a positive step."

Outside the educational realm, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, because of his high visibility, was one of the first to bring the term to national attention. Other leaders who endorse *African American* include: Coretta Scott King; former mayors Andrew Young of Atlanta and Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana; Ramona Edelin, president of the National Urban Coalition; and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who now uses the term in his written court opinions.

New terms represent no more than an attempt by a people to connect themselves to the present agenda. Educators must recognize that "Black and proud" is a historical statement of the past. Once upon a time there were *colored* and *Negro*. *Black* reflected the growing self-determination of the

1960s. Now, *African American* reflects a higher level consciousness of cultural integrity for the future. In 1989, *Black* is to *African American* what *Negro* was to *Black* 25 years ago.

As an indicator of cultural identity, *Black* pales next to such terms as *Native American*, *Asian American*, *Hispanic American*, *Italian American*, *Greek American*, and *Polish American*. Present-day curriculums have been revised to reflect awareness of various ethnic peoples and minority groups, but many have yet to include the term *African American*. Noted social psychologist and historian Asa Hilliard III (1989) believes that schools can improve communication and help children develop positive self-concepts and an awareness of cultural origins

by using *African American* to describe children of that descent.

What's in a name? Recently, Terrell, and Taylor (1988) studied the self-concepts of African-American adolescents and their parents. The subjects were divided into two categories: those with anglicized names and those with African names. Results showed that those with African names scored higher on measures of self-esteem.

Educators, usually traditional and middle-class in their values, are sometimes slow to recognize nontraditional voices. But with all the recent emphasis on learning styles, multicultural education, and high-risk students, educators would do well to use terminology which speaks to culture and self-concept. It is far better that teachers—rather than their students—initiate this process. After all, who is leading whom? □

### *References*

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