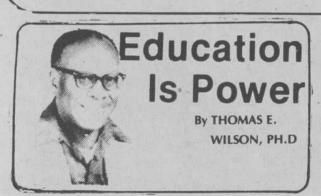
Las Vegas SENTINEL-VOICE, January 24, 1985

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February is considered Black History month. It is the month when special emphasis is placed on the accomplishments of Blacks.

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As good as this may seem, it is not enough. Black History is so important and so interwoven with African, European, and American History that it is demeaning to set aside a special month to emphasize our blackness apart from its place in

World History. Black History must be taught as a regular part of the school curriculum.

What good does it do to teach Black History in the classroom? What is its main purpose? The proponents of Black History seem to advance three main purposes which competent, well trained teachers can hope to achieve: 1) offer Black and White students a more balanced picture of the American

Talk it Up! Tell Everybody!

past: 2) improve racial relations; and 3) improve the self-concept of Black children.

This poses the quesion of whether studying. Black History actually will improve the selfconcept and instill pride. The only answer has to be: No one knows. No evidence has been produced to demonstrate whether children will see themselves and their race in a more positive light as a result of instructional materials or a course in elementary or high school. That no evidence exists, of course, does not mean that increased selfesteem and pride are not produced. But it is clear that creating a course or writing a book for the express purpose of instilling racial pride requires a selection of

content that stresses only the positive, only the success story, only the here, only the victor. And this is propaganda. I don't know whether it works, but I do know that its place in the curriculum of the school must be assured. Its teacher must be a true believer, not an inquirer; and it can only be taught by a race conscious Black person.

Within the framework of a public school, the only legitimate goal for ethnic content that can be achieved are to offer a balanced view of the American past and present, including racism and democratic ideals, and to equip students with the skills to analyze the meaning of the Black American's experience in this country. Whether this combination of knowledge and analytical skills will raise self-esteem or invest youngsters with dignity is debatable, but both could help students to know and think about the many dimensions of Our success depends upon how well

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the American experience free of propaganda.

When we turn to the contrasting opinions over who should teach history to Black children, the answers seem deceptively clear. To most Blacks and whites the answer hinges upon the academic training and competency of the teacher, regardless of race. To Black History advocates, concerned less with the facts than with redefining blackness in a positive manner, only a Black person can teach the subject. But the first point of view fails to accept the reality of experience, and the

second advocates a kind of educational apartheid that inflates skin color to the single most important variable in teaching-which it isn't. On his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964, "Malcolm

X" discovered that he could break bread with a blond, blue-eyed Moslem and be treated as a brother; the trip convinced him that skin

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color is less important than point of view. Awareness, not pigment is crucial. Black students learn the same thing when they discover that many of their Black teachers care little for the issues that confront youth today. And it is doubly galling when they see a young White teacher who is not afraid to raise issues of racial conflict. protest movements, and poverty. Bitterly, they wonder who, exactly is "White" and who is "Black."

Less attention should be paid to additional books and courses. then, and more to the craftsman or woman who will use the tools. Preachers of Black History know that the person is far more important than the materials he/she uses. Advocates of Black History have yet to learn this. There is much to be learned about teaching and learning from the unorthodox, intuitional growth of the Black History movement. But only so much.

School Board Seeks Trustee Applicants

The Board of School **Trustees of the Clark County School District** is accepting applications through Feb. 15 to fill a vacancy in the District C school board seat formerly held by Virginia Brewster.

Brewster resigned effective Dec. 31, 1984 after winning reelection to the board last November.

Candidates must submit a written letter of application containing at least their name, address and phone number. Interviews will be conducted with each candidate by the school board. Send written applications to the Superintendent's Office, 2832 E. Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89121 by Feb. 15, 1985 at 5 p.m. For further details call 736-5304.



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