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Adults take pride in group learning about Black culture and history.

1) Our nation is fast giving up its production end of the economy. It has become an information economy, engineering/designing; exporting the production functions.

2) An information/engineering/design economy creates a need for leadership and human resources with strong backgrounds in communications, science, mathematics, and technology.

3) If students do not have mastery of the language we use (English—reading/writing/speech and, in the future, Spanish), they cannot expect to create and think in the critical areas of our economy: science and technology.

Therefore, an illiteracy-prone population has no future in the Year 2000.

II. The Schools

• Children at a very early age must feel good enough about themselves and about their surroundings so as to be motivated to want to learn. However, for the Black child in a White-oriented environment, there is a costly lack of positive images presented because the "original intent" of the White-oriented system did not induce any *compensatory rectification* focus for the mindset needs of the Black child.

• Language development must begin at an early age and continue progressively throughout life. Instead of placing more emphasis on vocabulary building and other forms of language arts development, schools often allow so-called Black English to be used.

• High schools are finishing institutions. They improve what you bring to them. If you bring nothing—they improve nothing.

• When a student enters secondary school functioning in science, mathematics and language below the 5th grade, it is too late for that student to expect to qualify for the IBM-type technical pool, or expect to become a physicist, mathematician, or a statistician, electronic engineer, etc. This student, if remediated appropriately, can be prepared for a low-ended service job in the Year 2000. Compensatory rectification is probably too late.

III. Outside, or "Affective" Rectification Forces/Tools

Secure, viable, value-laden and hope-filled communities are the best en-

vironments by far in which almost all students have "can do" attitudes and extraordinary "wills to learn." The strongest sense of pride—and consequent motivation to achieve—is engendered among those groups who control their own businesses and lead their own institutions.

Moreover, since the Black child needs extraordinary help, the Assault On Illiteracy Program (AOIP)—a coalition of well over 90 national Black-led organizations—has compiled a list of rectification and remediation tools needed to prepare the Black child to face the challenge of the scientific and technological era upon us.

According to AOIP, the predicaments, along with the easy-to-use tools which supply the "Missing Links" are as follows:

Unique Predicament #1:

A "functionally-illiterate" parental population body. Nearly half (i.e., well over 47 percent) of all Black adults—age 18 and above—have not been enabled by our school systems either to read or to comprehend above the 4th grade level.

Thus, when a large part of learning must take place within the home—and these societally-disabled persons also are the "community body" on whom the school must rely under present circumstances for much of its support—how can there be anything other than only limited success? All of us have an obligation to do everything possible to "uplift" these valuable people to a truly functional level as immediately as possible. And, that is precisely what is the intent of the "Missing Link" tool and a combination of others described below.

AOIP-Developed "Missing Link" Tool #1:

This is known as *The Who Am I Guide*

to *Learning to aid teachers and tutors in effectively motivating total non-readers, young and older.*

Unique Predicament #2:

The lack of a continuous pride-producing entity which parallels the "institutionalized" ego-strengthening devices available continuously to students who can identify as White.

AOIP-Developed "Missing Link" Tool #2:

It is called *The ADVANCER*. This is an 8-page ego-strengthening and "fun-to-learn" supplement written at the third and fourth grade levels and inserted within an adult-oriented community newspaper focused in a compensatory way on Black community "uplifting" needs.

A very important collateral value of *The ADVANCER* is its ability to reach the parents who—in most cases of Chapter 2-type students—also can neither read nor comprehend above the fourth grade level and need this carefully-developed instrument for their own growth and ability to relate more effectively with their children.

Unique Predicament #3:

A lack of good role models, as well as realistic racial awareness as to discrimination and other realities that have existed among—and can be overcome by—all groups of people when they work together. However, in far too many instances, our educators have seemed more prone to stress "integration" in ways that down play the often awesome realities of race to the detriment of the student. When these "unprepared" students with no built-in supports come face to face with those ever-present and often devastating realities, they often fall into drugs, teen sex and other forms of dysfunctional behavior.

AOIP-Developed "Missing Link" #3:

This is the local "community-building" AOIP-cooperating newspaper which not only carries *The ADVANCER* but also must serve to compensate for the lack of an equitable amount of positive and racially-realistic news about minority life every week of the year.

Thus, it must carry local pride-producing news about our Black teachers, Black public officials and successful Black business and professional men and women who are the ideal "role models" instead of the "pimps, hustlers and addicts."

Black would-be learners need a compensatory and parallel means of "glorifying Blackness" on a continuing basis by presenting their positive achievements every week of the year and not just during Black History Month. This is one of the pride-producing roles fulfilled by Black community media like these AOIP-participating newspapers.

Unique Predicament #4:

Lack of an appreciable interest in either scientific pursuits or in the subject matter that most keenly helps develop skills for reasoning. This lack is so great that less than a dozen Black scientists per year earn doctoral degrees in mathematics and only one or so earn those degrees in physics. Engineering degrees are likewise lessening among Black students who are given little or no pre-conditioning to the otherwise alluring challenges of this scientific pursuit which is part of the widening opportunity field of the future.

AOIP-Recommended "Missing Link" Tool #4:

The amazing instrument used—and encouraged to be used—by the leader-
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Learning to read is fun when you have learned to feel good about yourself and your environment.