

**Augusta Mann's
Recurring African American Cultural and Educational Themes,
Supportive Practices, and Teaching and Learning Patterns**

1. **Spirituality** pervades the traditional African and African American ethos. It is based on the belief that all elements in the universe are of one substance (Spirit) and that all matter, animate or inanimate are merely different manifestations of the God force (Spirit).
2. **Resilience** is the conscious need to bounce back from disappointment and disaster and to have the tools of humor and joy to renew life's energy. Resilience is related to verve. Verve is desire for creative extemporaneousness—a sense of utter antipathy for the mundane and monotonous, the ability to focus on and handle several issues at once. The idea of transformation (the process of becoming better) is informed by two distinct yet interrelated ideas, verve and resilience.
3. **Humanism** describes the African view of the whole world as *vitalistic* (alive) and this *vitalism* is grounded in a sense of goodness.
4. **Communalism** denotes awareness of the interdependence of people. One acts in accordance with the notion that the duty to one's family and social group is more important than individual privileges and rights.
5. **Orality and Verbal Expressiveness** refers to the special importance attached to knowledge that is passed on through word of mouth and the cultivation of oral virtuosity.
6. **Realness** refers to the need to face life the way it is without pretense. It is manifested by frankness of manner, casualness in social transactions, contempt for artificiality and falseness in human conduct, and an aversion to formality and standardization.
7. **Personal Style and Uniqueness** refers to the cultivation of a unique or distinctive personality or essence and putting one's own brand on an activity. It implies approaching life as if it were an artistic endeavor.
8. **Emotional Vitality** expresses a sense of aliveness, animation, and openness conveyed in the language, oral literature, song, dance, body language, folk poetry, and expressive thought.
9. **Musicality/Rhythm** demonstrates the connectedness of movement, music, dance, percussiveness, and rhythm, personified through the musical beat. Also implied is a rhythmic orientation toward life. Rhythm, the fundamental principle of human behavior, reigns as the basic ingredient of African American expressiveness.

Boykin (1979, 1994), Nobles (1986, 1990), Karenga (1986), Pasteur and Toldson (1982), Akbar (1976), Mbiti (1970), Asante (1987), Richards (1990), Dixon (1976), and White (1984)

Nine Supportive Educational Practices

1. Expectations of Excellence
2. Continual Search for Patterns
3. Insistence on Working Toward Mastery
4. Teacher Modeling of Skills and Processes
5. Intensive Direct Instruction and Practice
6. Study of African and African American Philosophical Thought
7. Focus on Discourse, Inquiry, and Creative and Symbolic Thinking
8. Using Knowledge for Transformative Social Criticism and Community Action
9. In-Depth Study and Performance of African and African American Culture

African American Teaching and Learning Patterns

- RITUAL Affirmations/performances
- RHYTHM In music, speech, and movement
- RECITATION Oral performance/memorization
- REPETITION To enhance meaningfulness
- RELATIONSHIPS Relationships of love, respect, and belonging
 - Recognizing ties between humans and nature
 - Scientific study of patterns in nature and the phenomenal world
 - Making connections between schoolwork and students' life experiences

Resources

<http://www.successfulteachers.com/touching-the-spirit.html>

References

<http://www.successfulteachers.com/downloads/touching-spirit-bibliography.pdf>