Course Overview

According to the most recent statistics, the dropout rate for African American males in US schools is over 50%. Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu links this trend with the disproportionate placement of these students in special education classes, a dearth of African American male teachers, and a failure to teach to African American boys’ learning styles. In Best Practices for Teaching African American Boys, Dr. Kunjufu prepares educators to implement solutions to these problems in their classrooms and schools. He offers strategies for preventing the referral of students to special education that include constructing Afro-centric classrooms, integrating black male role models, supporting students’ transitions through school and boyhood, accommodating these students’ needs for curriculum that appeals to their interests and other characteristics, and designing instruction that exploits the best of their energy and intelligence. The course is punctuated by workshop discussions and classroom footage that illustrate the complexity of and solutions to the issues at hand, so that African American boys have the same opportunities for success as all of their peers.

Presenters’ Bios

Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu was educated at Morgan State, Illinois State, and Union Graduate School. He has been a guest speaker at many universities throughout the U.S., and has been a consultant to many urban school districts. He has authored 33 books including national best sellers Black Students: Middle Class Teachers; Keeping Black Boys out of Special Education; Raising Black Boys; 200 Plus Educational Strategies to Teach Children of Color; and his latest title, Understanding Black Male Learning Styles. His work has been featured in Ebony and Essence Magazine, and he has been a guest on BET and Oprah. He is also a frequent guest on the Michael Baisden show.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, educators will know:

- Essential statistics about African American males’ status in education and society
- Strategies to help preclude the disproportionate and destructive referrals of African American boys to special education
- Strategies to fully engage and motivate African American boys throughout their K-12 schooling

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, educators will apply the following skills:
- Convert their classrooms into productive learning environments for African American boys
- Employ curricular and instructional strategies that increase student learning and affect student achievement

### Unit 1: Introduction

In this unit, Dr. Kunjufu and the workshop participants explore key statistics relevant to African American boys’ status quo in educational institutions and society. These statistics highlight the severity of the current conditions for this population of students and should motivate educators to make modifications to their practice. The team also addresses such questions as whether we have designed female classrooms, what the most important qualifications are for selecting teachers for these students, and the effects of media on perceptions of African American boys.

#### Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Statistics relevant to African American boys’ status quo
- Priorities for hiring teachers for African American boys
- Media’s effects on perceptions of African American boys and the impact of that in the classroom

#### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Analyze their classrooms to determine if they are female- or male-centered
- Engage and promote appropriate educators for African American boys
- Resist stereotypes

### Text: “Confronting the Racism of Low Expectations”

Participants read “Confronting the Racism of Low Expectations,” by Julie Landsman, and respond to reflection prompts that follow.

### Unit 2: The 4th Grade Syndrome

African American boys suffer a marked decline in academic achievement in the 4th grade. In this unit, Dr. Kunjufu and the workshop participants inquire into the multiple reasons for that decline—from changes in the classroom environment to changes in the teacher/student relationship—and begin to posit solutions to prevent it, including providing more purposeful guidance for students during key transitions, both academic and personal.
Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Reasons for the 4th grade decline of African American boys’ academic progress
- Strategies to assist this population through key transitions
- Effective and ineffective types of teachers

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Modify their curriculum and instruction to help prevent the 4th grade syndrome
- Help African American boys make the transition into later grades and their different environments and demands.

Unit 3: Reading

Dr. Kunjufu calls the issues of African American boys' limited reading skills “the civil rights issue of this generation.” The less we address those issues, the more we marginalize those learners. Weak reading skills are at the core of many African American boys’ increasing disinterest and disengagement in school as they grow older. In this unit, Dr. Kunjufu guides participants to scrutinize and modify their curriculum and instruction to find ways to motivate and engage these students in the critical skills of reading and writing.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Why African American boys’ limited literacy skills is “the civil rights issue of this generation”
- Strategies for promoting this populations’ engagement in reading and writing
- The phonics vs. whole language approach debate around teaching reading

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Improve the teaching of literacy skills to African American boys
- Embrace phonics over the whole language approach
### Text: “African American Males in Urban Schools: No Excuses—Teach and Empower”

Participants read “African American Males in Urban Schools: No Excuses—Teach and Empower,” by H. Richard Milner, IV, and respond to reflection prompts that follow.

### Unit 4: Gender Differences

Boys and girls learn differently for both genetic and social reasons. In this unit, Dr. Kunjufu and the workshop participants explore these differences and discuss how to accommodate them in coeducational classrooms without sacrificing any students’ needs.

#### Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Gender differences in learning patterns
- Methods for accommodating gender differences in curriculum and instruction

#### Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skill:

- Accommodate gender differences in their curriculum and instruction

### Text: “Teaching Boys and Girls Separately”

Participants read “Teaching Boys and Girls Separately,” by Elizabeth Weil, and respond to reflection prompts that follow.

### Unit 5: Special Education

“Special education is the new form of segregation,” Dr. Kunjufu argues, as it limits African American boys’ access to a full curriculum, with both immediate and long-term consequences. Throughout this unit, the participants construct a thorough list of mainstreaming strategies to end this oppressive practice.

#### Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The impact of referrals to special education for African American boys
- Strategies to preclude excessive and inappropriate referrals to special education
Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skill:

- Employ mainstreaming strategies to help preclude inappropriate referrals to special education of African American boys

Unit 6: Learning Styles

Educators who truly want their classrooms to be learner-centered need to consider the full range of learning styles their students embody. Dr. Kunjufu and the workshop participants discuss left- and right-brain learning; oral, kinesthetic, and tactile learning; cooperative learning; and the need for authentic multicultural education.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The differences between right- and left-brain learners
- Distinctions between oral, kinesthetic, and tactile learners
- Methods of reaching students with different learning styles
- What constitutes a multicultural education

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Construct lesson plans that teach to students’ different learning styles
- Provide students with a multicultural education

Unit 7: Reducing the Male Dropout Rate

In this unit, Dr. Kunjufu and the workshop participants delve deeply into the reasons for the 53% high-school dropout rate (in 2012) for African American boys. Dr. Kunjufu argues that retention rather than social promotion leads to increased chances of students dropping out. Their proposed solutions include a multicultural curriculum relevant to students’ real lives, direct instruction on what happens to dropouts, and strengthening partnerships among the school, family, and community.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:
• Why the dropout rate for African American males is so high
• Practical strategies for preventing dropping out

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

• Assist in preventing African American boys from dropping out of school
• Develop multicultural, relevant lesson plans

Unit 8: An Ideal African American Male Classroom

The issues identified throughout this course lead Dr. Kunjufu to the notion that the ideal classroom for African American boys would be single-gender and include a specific rites-of-passage curriculum. Even those teachers who cannot construct that particular environment will learn strategies to empower their black male students as learners in whatever contexts they inhabit.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

• The need for a rites-of-passage curriculum
• The benefits of single-gender classrooms
• Strategies for engaging African American male students

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

• Begin to construct rites-of-passage curricula
• Improve their teaching in relation to the needs of African American boys

Text: “Building a Positive Future for Black Boys”

Participants read “Building a Positive Future for Black Boys,” by Rosa A. Smith, and respond to reflection prompts that follow.
Methods of Instruction

- Videos (presentations consisting of lecture, interviews, and classroom footage)
- Readings
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the video presentations where participants are asked to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and their intentions for their practice)
- Quizzes (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding of the video presentations)
- Discussion forum (prompts after each unit that engage participants in online dialogue with their cohorts)
- Midterm (a project intended to get teachers to begin to develop their practice by putting to work in the classroom what they have learned)
- Final (a project that enables educators to reflect on their practice and assess their students' work through the lens of what they have learned)

Plagiarism Policy

KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as one's own and includes failing to cite sources for others' ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult plagiarism.org.

Percentage of Course Credit

- Reflection questions 25%
- Quizzes 15%
- Midterm 25%
- Final 35%

In order to complete the requirements of the course, the participant must complete all course work (e.g., reflections, quizzes, and any midterm and/or final), including watching all videos and participating in all discussion forums. We do not award partial credit.

Grading Policy

A: 3.4 – 4.0
B: 2.7 – 3.3
C: 2.0 – 2.6
F: >2.0
### Reflection/Quiz Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Distinguished (4)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Basic (2)</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>69% or below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Question</td>
<td>Participant has provided rich detail and supporting examples from the course content.</td>
<td>Participant has included appropriate content from the course content.</td>
<td>Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts.</td>
<td>Participant has included little to no content indicating consideration and comprehension of course content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant has made responses to prompts personally meaningful and relevant to his or her teaching practice.</td>
<td>Participant has included little that indicates consideration and comprehension of course content.</td>
<td>Participant has answered most questions directly but some too briefly.</td>
<td>Participant has not addressed the specific questions posed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participant has included little that indicates consideration and comprehension of course content.</td>
<td>Participant has answered most questions directly but some too briefly.</td>
<td>Participant has not addressed the specific questions posed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant has copied from the course transcript without synthesis or analysis.</td>
<td>Participant has included little to no content indicating consideration and comprehension of course content.</td>
<td>Participant has not responded to all reflection questions.</td>
<td>Participant has copied from the course transcript without synthesis or analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Midterm

Consult the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and choose a standard to use as a learning objective for a lesson plan for African American male students. Create your lesson plan, indicating its objectives, its grade range, its activities, and how you will make accommodations during the course of the lesson for boys’ particular needs.

Please do the following:

1. Select and present a standard from the Common Core State Standards in ELA as a learning objective.
2. State the targeted students’ grade range.
3. Develop a lesson plan tailored to the needs of African American boys.
4. Include three (3) activities.
5. Explain what accommodations you will make in your classroom, in your instruction, or in the activities themselves to meet the needs of African American boys.
6. Write a paragraph indicating how you expect your African American male students to respond to the lesson. What will they like? What might they struggle with? How will the lesson plan facilitate learning?
# Midterm Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Distinguished (4)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Basic (2)</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select and present a standard from the Common Core State Standards in ELA as a learning objective. State the targeted students’ grade range.</td>
<td>Participant has chosen a specific CCSS in ELA and has presented the standard as a clear and concise learning objective. Participant has stipulated an appropriate grade range of the lesson plan.</td>
<td>Participant has presented a CCSS in ELA as the focus of the lesson. Participant has stipulated a grade range for the lesson plan.</td>
<td>Participant has either not presented a specific CCSS in ELA as a learning objective. OR Participant has not stipulated the appropriate grade range of the lesson plan.</td>
<td>Participant has not presented a specific CCSS in ELA as a learning objective. Participant has not stipulated the appropriate grade range of the lesson plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a lesson plan tailored to the needs of African American Boys. Include 3 activities.</td>
<td>Participant has included 3 separate and appropriate activities, carefully aligned with the learning objective. Each activity is presented in illuminating detail, so that its objectives and content are perfectly clear.</td>
<td>Participant has included 3 separate activities, though their alignment with the learning objective is not wholly clear. Each activity is presented with sufficient detail to judge its appropriateness.</td>
<td>Participant has included 2 activities. Alignment of the activities with the learning objective is not clear. Activities have been presented with minimal detail insufficient to illuminate their appropriateness.</td>
<td>Participant has included 0-1 activities. The activities do not align with the learning objective. Presentation of activities is so spare as to prevent evaluation of their appropriateness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain what accommodations you will make in your classroom, in your instruction, or in the activities themselves to meet the needs of African American boys.</td>
<td>Participant has detailed specific accommodations he or she would make to meet the needs of African American boys for all three activities.</td>
<td>Participant has suggested accommodations he or she would make to meet the needs of African American boys for all three activities, though he or she has not provided enough detail to make evident that the accommodations will be productive.</td>
<td>Participant has suggested accommodations he or she would make to meet the needs of African American boys for 2 of the activities. It is not wholly clear that the accommodations are appropriate.</td>
<td>Participant has suggested accommodations he or she would make to meet the needs of African American boys for 0-1 activities. The accommodations appear inappropriate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Write a paragraph indicating how you expect your African American male students to respond to the lesson. What will they like? What might they struggle with? How will the lesson plan facilitate learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant has written a concise and precise paragraph with illuminating detail outlining his or her expectations of African American boys’ response to the lesson. He or she has addressed all the following:</th>
<th>Participant has written a paragraph outlining his or her expectations of African American boys’ response to the lesson. He or she has addressed 2 of the following:</th>
<th>Participant has written a paragraph outlining his or her expectations of African American boys’ response to the lesson. He or she has addressed 1 of the following:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What they will like</td>
<td>What they will like</td>
<td>What they will like</td>
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<tr>
<td>What they might struggle with</td>
<td>What they might struggle with</td>
<td>What they might struggle with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the lesson plan will facilitate learning</td>
<td>How the lesson plan will facilitate learning</td>
<td>How the lesson plan will facilitate learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formal issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant has made no grammatical errors.</th>
<th>Participant has made a few grammatical errors.</th>
<th>Participant has made some distracting grammatical errors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant has organized paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas.</td>
<td>Participant has organized most paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas.</td>
<td>Participant has organized some paragraphs around main ideas but not others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure and made careful word choice.</td>
<td>Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure though not always found the right word.</td>
<td>Participant has written in a style that communicates his or her thoughts but with no marked eloquence and insufficient attention to word choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final

Modify and extend the lesson plan you developed for your midterm to include activities that a) will appeal to oral, kinesthetic, and tactile learners and b) that facilitate cooperative learning.

Please do the following:

1. Present a modified version of each of the three activities from your midterm lesson plan:
   a. One to appeal to oral learners
   b. Another to appeal to kinesthetic learners
   c. And the third to appeal to tactile learners
2. Integrate into the lesson plan an opportunity for cooperative learning. (If your original plan included such an opportunity, use this chance to revise that piece to ensure equal responsibility from all participants.)

3. Write a paragraph reflecting on why and how assignments like the ones you're creating here can help African American male students achieve academically and stay out of special education.

**Final Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Presented a modified version of each of the three activities from your midterm lesson plan:</td>
<td>Participant has convincingly modified his or her midterm lesson plan to:</td>
<td>Participant has modified his or her midterm lesson plan to do 2 of the following:</td>
<td>Participant has modified his or her lesson plan to do 1 of the following:</td>
<td>Participant has either not modified his or her lesson plan or not modified it to appeal to any of the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) One to appeal to oral learners</td>
<td>• Appeal to oral learners</td>
<td>• Appeal to oral learners</td>
<td>• Appeal to oral learners</td>
<td>• Oral learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Another to appeal to kinesthetic learners</td>
<td>• Appeal to kinesthetic learners</td>
<td>• Appeal to kinesthetic learners</td>
<td>• Appeal to kinesthetic learners</td>
<td>• Kinesthetic learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) And the third to appeal tactile learners</td>
<td>• To appeal to tactile learners</td>
<td>• Appeal to tactile learners</td>
<td>• Appeal to tactile learners</td>
<td>• Tactile learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate into the lesson plan an opportunity for cooperative learning. (If your original plan included such an opportunity, use this chance to revise that piece to ensure equal responsibility from all participants.)</td>
<td>Participant has integrated an authentic opportunity for collaboration into the original plan, clearly detailing the roles individual students will play. If participant has revised that portion of the original, he or she has indicated how to ensure equal responsibility from all participants.</td>
<td>Participant has integrated an opportunity for collaboration into the original plan, though it is not clear what roles individual students will play. If participant has revised that portion of the original, he or she has indicated how to distribute responsibility for all participants.</td>
<td>Participant has integrated an opportunity for collaboration into the original plan, but its effectiveness is in question. If participant has revised that portion of the original, he or she has not indicated how to distribute responsibility for all participants.</td>
<td>Participant has not integrated an opportunity for collaboration into the original plan. Or, the opportunity appears likely to be unproductive. Participant did not revise that portion of the original (if it existed in the original).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a paragraph reflecting on why and how assignments like the ones you’re creating here can help African American male students achieve academically and stay out of special education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant has written a concise and precise paragraph illuminated with specific detail addressing how this kind of instruction can facilitate academic achievement and the prevention of excessive referrals of African American boys to special education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant has written a paragraph addressing how this kind of instruction can facilitate academic achievement or how it can prevent excessive referrals of African American boys to special education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant has written either about how this kind of instruction can facilitate academic achievement or how it can prevent excessive referrals of African American boys to special education.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant has not written about either how this kind of instruction can facilitate academic achievement or how it can prevent excessive referrals of African American boys to special education.</td>
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