From the reading in the class, we learned that in the 1900s, African Americans had a life full of discrimination and unfairness. W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington are two of the civil rights activists that fight for the equality and civil right for African Americans in the 1900s. Although they share a common course and goal of creating a better future for the race, they adopted different measures and concepts. In general, Washington preferred to practice pragmatic education among all African Americans, but DuBois valued elite education and made those talented individuals act as mentor of the race.

In Up from Slavery, Washinton’s biography, I found that the original family and childhood of Washington was a tragedy experience. Being a kid of slaves and didn’t even know who his father was, Washington desired a life with enriched materials and being a cultivated person from his early years. Washinton later enrolled in Hampton institute, and after years of learning served as principal of Tuskegee University. Based on his own experience, Washington believed Africa American people learned only to “get an easy way to make a living” (Up from Slavery, 69). Besides that, even people respect people mastering Latin or Greek, learning Greeks or Latin could not make contributions to either race, or the community. Washinton believes what Africa American really needs is the pragmatic education. Washinton tried to teach his students not only the utility of work, but also the beauty and dignity. By teaching his students how to make bricks and contribute to the community, Washington indicated that the skill-learning is important for the material prosperity of African American community, and displayed possibilities of Business and cooperation between the white and African Americans.

DuBois, however, held another view toward the education. DuBois regarded Washington’s idea as a compromise of white oppressions of black people, and this would only make the situation worse. Dubois believes “Education must not simply teach work—it must teach life” (The talented Tenth, pg. 91). Unlike Washington, who do not value the Greek and Latin language education, DuBois strongly believes in the importance of learning Latin and Greek. DuBois focuses on the elite education as he believes only individual with knowledge and intelligence could help the race have the political and economic revolution. To emphasize his points, he mentioned a couple of black leaders, and stressed that without the help from leaders, the abolition would have failed. In addition to that, DuBois consider education as s precious resources, and thus only these capable individuals should receive high level education. Besides that, Dubois indicates that teachers could produce more teachers. People have to be capable of teaching others and then lead the African American people to a better future.

In conclusion, both of Dubois and Washington are great leaders of the time. Washington tried to push the universal pragmatic education, and create a better cooperation between the African Americans and the white. Dubois emphasized the importance of elite education, pointing that African American need leaders with knowledge and intelligence to save the race. Although they share a different view toward education, they both pursed for a better future for the African Americans.

Reference

DuBois, W.E.B. 1903. "The Talented Tenth."

Washington, B. T. (1995). *Up from slavery*. Dover Publications.