DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 025 367 95 RC 003 114

By- Carter, Thomas P.

Preparing Teachers for Mexican American Children.

National Education Association, Washington, D.C. ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education.; New Mexico State Univ., University Park. ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Spons Agency- Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.

Pub Date Feb 69

Grant- OEG-0-9-411906-1714-721

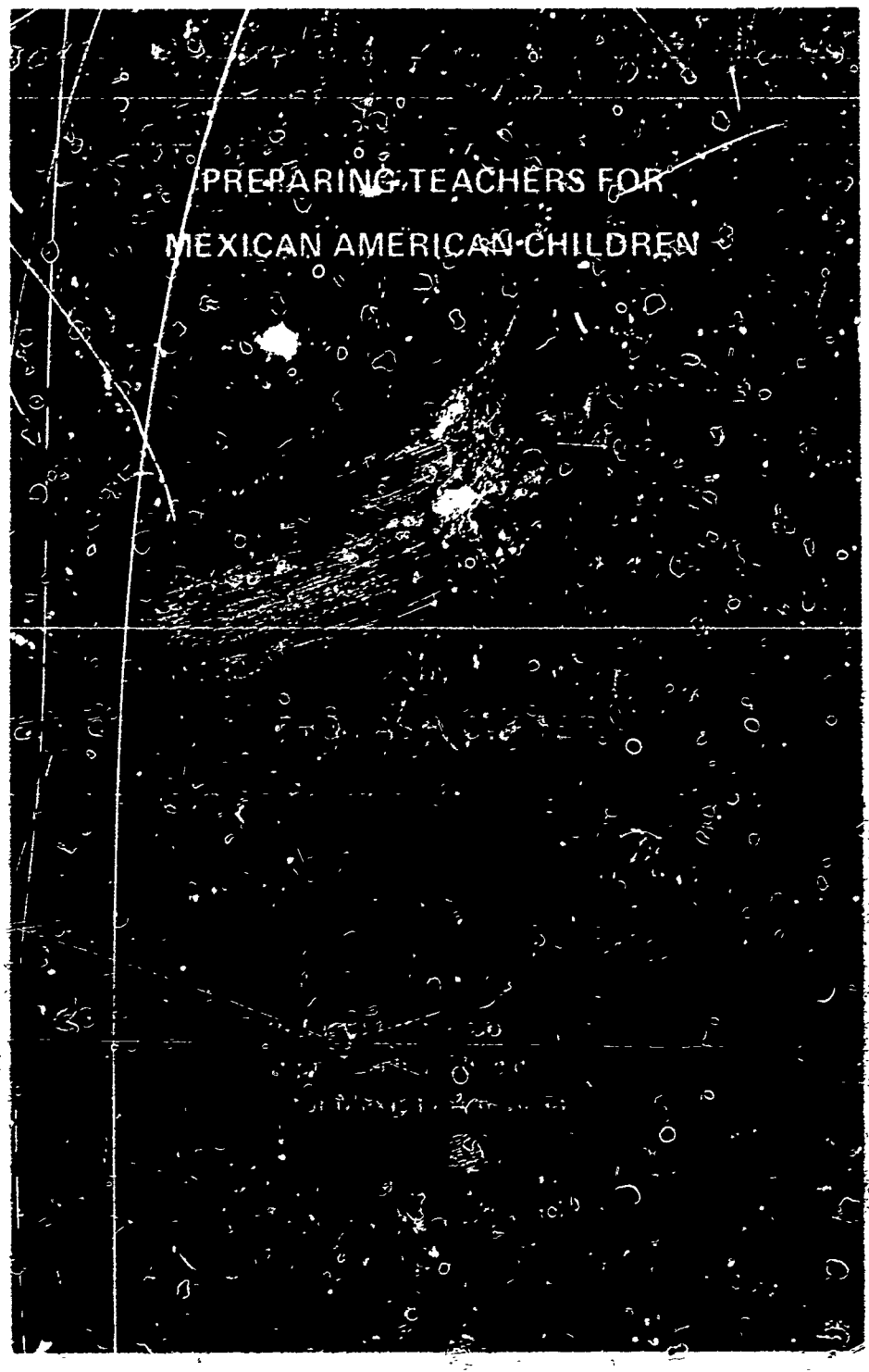
Note- 16p.; Paper prepared for the Conf. on Teacher Educ. for Mexican Americans, New Mexico State Univ., February 13-15, 1969.

Available from- Manager, Dup. Serv., NMSU, P.O. Box 3CB, Las Cruces, N.M. 88001 ($1.00, over 5 copies $0.85 each)

EDRS Price MF- $0.25 HC- $0.90

Descriptors- Acculturation, Education, Educational Problems, Ethnic Groups, *Mexican Americans, Minority Group Children, *Minority Group Teachers, *Teacher Education, *Teacher Improvement, *Teacher Programs

The school is presently the primary social institution directed by the community to assume a major role in taking steps to improve the Mexican American's status. The school has 3 possible avenues for action in correcting low school and societal achievement: (1) change the child, (2) change the school, or (3) change the social systems. Responsibility for such changes is passed on to the teachers. However, the teachers' failure to understand the interrelationships between culture, society, personality, and behavior often impedes this change. Thus, teacher improvement, in addition to other institutional changes, can contribute to raised Mexican American group status. Changes must occur in present teacher preparation programs, in teachers, and in schools. Cooperation between schools and teacher preparation institutions can produce changes which will ultimately trickle down to the real clients--children. (SW)



NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

Published Jointly By

ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001

and

ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education
1156—15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

PREPARING TEACHERS FOR MEXICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN

by

THOMAS P. CARTER

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ED025367

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> . . . education is a mirror held against the face of a people; nations may put on blustering shows of strength to conceal political weakness, erect grand facades to conceal shabby backyards, and profess peace while secretly arming for conquest, but how they take care of their children tells unerringly who they are.[1]

The most personally disturbing part of this introductory quotation by George Bereday is the last phrase. The serious undereducation of Mexican Americans implies numerous unpleasant things about present and past Anglo society. We have not taken very good care of some of our children. In spite of our "professtations" and grandiose statements concerning the goals of democratic education, the facts glare in our collective face. Innumerable social forces have belatedly brought the grievous conditions of this major sector of our population to society's serious attention. Governing elements of that society are slowly but surely directing the agencies and institutions under their control to take steps to improve the minority's status. The school is the only primary social institution directly under the authority of the community and as such is being directed to assume a major role in these efforts. Specifically, educational institutions must radically improve the academic achievement and school attainment of children of Mexican descent, thus providing them with the skills and credentials essential to climb the social ladder. Educators willingly accept this role—however, problems exist. Schoolmen often do not know how best to accomplish this goal, they do not comprehend the complexity of the problem, and they often assume too great a share of the responsibility for creating it. Educators tend to give too much credence to the exaggerated statements of both vocal minority group spokesmen and members of the "establishment." The school may be becoming the scapegoat of Southwestern society. Too many see the school as principally or solely responsible for the disadvantaged status of the minority. Unfortunately, very few educators or laymen recognize that the school reflects and is a microcosm of the society it serves. Indeed, the backyards of Southwestern communities are shabby, to paraphrase Professor Bereday. However, the total society, including formal educational institutions, created and perpetuated the shabbiness—the subordinate Mexican American "caste." While the school has accepted its role in remedying the situation, it must not be assumed that it can accomplish the task alone. As the total community created the problem, it must cooperate to resolve it; the school unsupported by other agencies and institutions can accomplish little.

School board members and administrators faced with community pressure to accept the "guilt" for the minority's socioeconomic plight often "pass the buck." They merely transfer the responsibility for the Mexican Americans' "school failure" to a single institutional ingredient—the teacher. It is regularly argued that the qualities and capabilities of Southwestern teachers are at fault. The villain within the institution is the teacher; re-educate the teacher, and the Mexican American will succeed. While all agree that teachers must be better equipped in the skill area and must better understand minority children, it is not true that this alone will radically improve the school

performance of the ethnic group. As is the case in general society, numerous forces are at play within the school. To improve the teacher without modifying other institutional elements is of little avail. Quality teachers plus other institutional changes can create the quality of schooling essential to contribute to other forces leading to raised Mexican American group status. A multitude of socioeconomic and cultural conditions hold the minority subordinate; these same forces must help raise him to parity with other ethnic or racial groups. Regardless of the complexity of the situation, programs to improve the capabilities of the teacher are at least steps in the right direction.

Approaches to Solve the Problem

The type of approach or orientation taken by schools is crucial in determining the kind of teachers required and the nature of programs to prepare them. Educators have three major alternative approaches theoretically open to accomplish the goal of a better-educated Mexican American. The three avenues for action correspond to an equal number of "causes" of low school and societal achievement. The first orientation perceives the Mexican American culture and the socialization it provides its children as being principally responsible. This is the very prevalent "cultural deprivation" or "disadvantagement" position. The logical action by the school in this case would seem to be "change the child"—make him as much like average middle-class children as possible. A second position argues that conditions existing within the school itself produce the undereducated population. The remedy becomes "change the institution." Finally, there are those that see the nature of the rather distinctive Southwestern social systems as being responsible, the contention being that the agricultural economy and caste-like communities provide only limited opportunity for the minority. If this is the case, the school conceivably could encourage changes in the community. This threefold division of "causes" of Mexican American low achievement in school and society is oversimplified, as are the three "solutions." In actuality we are not dealing with distinct causes nor cures. Suffice it to say, for the purpose of this paper, that causal relationships exist among: (1) diverse Mexican American subcultures and sub-societies; (2) school systems and the social climates they foster; and (3) community socioeconomic systems. All are interrelated and mutually supportive. The qualities and capabilities required of teachers for minority children are dependent on which orientation is taken by the public schools. It may well require one kind of teacher to "change the child," another to "change the institution," and still another to lead in changing the local society.

To those schoolmen who subscribe to the interpretation that the Mexican American home provides little of the experience deemed essential for school success, the solution appears clear. The "culturally deficient" Mexican American child must be artifically provided with those experiences that the middle class enjoys naturally. This is the very common, almost omnipresent, approach of compensatory education. These programs imply as objectives the reorientation and remodeling of the culturally different child in order to adjust him to the regular school—into standard school programs and curriculums. Indeed, the measure of success of these efforts is the degree the "disadvantaged" become like the middle class. These objectives are to be accomplished

by exposing the children to middle-class experiences and by providing remedial services when they fail to live up to the school (middle-class) norms. If this is possible the Mexican American can be expected to be as successful (or unsuccessful) in school as are present majority group children. Such programs entail few major institutional changes and only slight modifications in the quality or quantity of teachers. There is no clear evidence that the school can remake the ethnically distinct child into a facsimile of the "standard American child." Nor is there objective data that clearly establish that any specific compensatory or remedial program reaches its long-term objectives of sustained higher academic achievement or higher rates of participation in secondary or higher levels of schooling. Perhaps only time is lacking, and future longitudinal studies will clearly demonstrate that ESL, Head Start, remedial reading, "cultural enrichment," or what have you will produce the kind of Mexican American who will succeed in school and society.

The **training** of teachers for compensatory and remedial programs presents far fewer problems and necessitates much less curricular reorganization at the college level than would the **education** of individuals for other and more comprehensive approaches. Many of the skills necessary for a capable compensatory or remedial teacher are essentially technical. In-depth understanding of the total teacher-learner and school-community situation would be ideal; however, it is not absolutely essential for such tasks as being an acceptable remedial teacher, using a language lab, conducting a "culturally enriching" field trip, or using the most modern overhead projector. While the distinction between **training** (how to do something—perform some skill) and the broader concept **educating** is terribly oversimplified, it is made here to stress a crucial consideration. The minimum preparation of teachers to mesh with the overwhelming majority of existing school programs entails little more than technique acquisition; colleges and universities could with relative ease provide this training. In spite of this, observations in the field support the notion that very few teachers of Mexican Americans in regular, compensatory, or remedial classes have acquired even minimal quantities of the essential skills. Either the colleges have not provided the training, the teachers have not attended the programs, or if they did, the teachers have not learned what was taught. Something is amiss.

The second orientation or approach implies that conditions within schools inhibit academic achievement and encourage early dropout by Mexican Americans. Steps to remedy this situation require teaching personnel possessing comprehensive understandings not required in schools operating under the simpler compensatory education approach. It is extremely difficult to find programs that involve a conscious desire to substantially modify the school. This "adjust the school to fit the culturally different population" position finds even fewer practitioners than adherents. Quite a few educators agree that standard middle-class schools have failed many Mexican Americans. Regardless, few are able to institute programs to substantially modify curriculums, teacher attitudes, school social climates, home-school relationships, or other crucial areas. Unfortunately, most present school practices and programs are approaching the stage of self-justification and self-perpetuation. Very few schools are flexible enough to realistically adjust to local situations. Only a very limited number

have objectively investigated negative school social climates[2] sustained by such common conditions as cultural exclusion, fostering too rapid Americanization, rigid tracking, curricular rigidity, rote teaching, overly rigid behavioral standards, ethnic cleavage, de facto segregation, and biased and pessimistic staffs. The limited number of educators who recognize the causative relationship between such conditions, low achievement, and early mental and physical dropout is hard pressed to substantially improve the situation. It is far simpler and much less threatening to concentrate school efforts on "phasing in" the "out of phase" Mexican Americans than it is to seriously study and change institutional factors.

However, if a school system takes this more radical avenue, it requires teachers educated to a rather sophisticated level. These teachers must be able to comprehend and grapple with the often intangible, but multitudinous, aspects of their own and others' society, culture, language, learning styles, personality, and behavior. Additionally, such teachers must understand the role and function of the school as a social institution, especially as it relates to ethnic minorities. The problems created by cross-cultural schooling and possible remedies must be understood. In the course of the last five years, I have conducted hundreds of interviews with teachers of Mexican Americans and observed countless classrooms. Very few teachers with the comprehensive insights necessary to cope with culturally diverse students were encountered. Most manifested extremely shallow and biased appraisals of the situation—few recognized the importance of institutional factors. Of the exceptions, the majority were impotent, powerless to change institutional practices and conditions.

The education of teachers as described in the previous paragraph is a big order. Their preparation would demand substantial modifications in institutions of higher learning, a task perhaps even more difficult than that of changing lower level schools. Regardless, if educational leadership is essentially satisfied with present school conditions, practices, and curriculums, as well as with the compensatory education orientation, there is little need to educate such individuals. They would have few places to go—few school districts would employ such teachers. The teacher who is prepared to contribute to institutional self-analysis and change, if hired by districts with little desire to do either, would probably be seen as a troublemaker and a disruptive influence. He would not last long.

A third possible avenue to improve Mexican American school and societal achievement is that of using the school as an agent of directed or non-directed social change. Here the school would attempt by numerous means to change conditions in society. The present socioeconomic systems in much of the Southwest provide only limited numbers of social slots and roles for their subordinate Mexican American populations. The very common caste-like social structures inhibit upward mobility and the high aspirations of most minority members. School and community leaders profess that job, residential, social, and political discrimination do not exist and that the ideals of America are practiced locally. Regardless, Mexican Americans learn early that the inverse is often the case. With this recognition, many correctly perceive that "Mexicans" have little chance in local society and that school perseverance and high school graduation do not guarantee them the higher social and economic status they desire.

Local school boards and educators might lead the way to change these community conditions and belief patterns; however, it is very doubtful that they will, as educational leaders are too intermeshed with conservative community power elements. Further, it is doubtful that the school could accomplish much by acting independently of other institutions or counter to the mores of local society. If the teacher prepared to contribute to institutional change would find few schools desirous of his services, what of the teacher who actively attempts to change society? Very few districts would knowingly employ teachers who actively campaign for or promote the elimination of job discrimination, de facto school or residential segregation, or "five o'clock social segregation."

Needed: A New Breed of Teachers

Without a clear understanding of the interrelated causes and the possible solutions of Mexican American low achievement and attainment by both educators in the field and in the college, there is little hope of establishing realistic programs to prepare teachers. Both understanding of the problem by the two groups and cooperation between them are essential. Heedless of these two necessities, teacher preparation institutions blithely continue to certify teachers who will have life-long contact with the minority, but do little or nothing to specially prepare them. I know of few special courses, sequences, or tracks intended to provide future elementary or secondary teachers with either essential skills or understandings. While there are specific courses in some colleges that concern the disadvantaged, the poor, and the urban school crisis, few are required in the regular credential sequence—very few specifically treat of the Mexican American. Little is done by the institutions legally charged with the pre-service preparation of teachers; nevertheless, many of these same institutions sponsor in-service programs. Most are in the form of federally assisted summer institutes. Programs on the teaching of Mexican Americans are among these. The majority stress specialized, almost technical, aspects of teaching the minority. Understandably, the bulk are based on the compensatory approach so prevalent in public schools.

Teacher preparation institutions have done, and continue to do, little to aid their students in coping with the problems associated with cross-cultural schooling and the teaching of the ethnically different Mexican American. Public schools are attempting much more. Colleges and universities are not only failing to lead the way toward improved school opportunity for the minority, they also are failing to follow the lead of lower level institutions. The average teacher preparation program is as adequate for teachers in upstate New York in 1940 as it is for teachers of Mexican Americans in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas in 1969. This condition prevails in spite of the fact that most Southwestern education faculties are well aware that: (1) the vast majority of their students will teach some Mexican Americans; (2) a large percentage will teach in classes or schools with a majority of Mexican Americans; (3) most future teachers of Mexican descent will teach in schools where their own group predominates; (4) both minority group spokesmen and public school educators advocate special programs for teachers; and (5) the Federal Government promotes and could in numerous ways

support such programs. Yet little or nothing is done. My institution serves as a good example. The University of Texas at El Paso graduates about 450 students a year who are granted elementary, secondary, or "all-levels" credentials. Of these about 75 percent will teach in the immediate geographic area—an area composed of over 50 percent Mexican Americans. If our graduate is of Mexican descent, and about 35 percent are, he is almost inevitably assigned to **de facto** segregated minority schools by local school districts. In spite of this, there is no required course or course sequence within Education to acquaint our students with any aspect of the so-called "Mexican problem." However, as a stop-gap measure, student teachers are exposed to from three to six lectures on the subject—the only time in their entire college Education sequence that such content is introduced. What makes the situation even worse is that the required teacher preparation omits those courses in which content might logically apply to minorities, culture, or values. No sociology, history, or philosophy of education is required. The dean and the faculty know something should be done; we know it could be done; little is. Our situation is bad; however, we have made a token gesture toward teacher understanding. How different are other Southwestern teacher preparation institutions?

Changes in Teacher Preparation

The "state of the art" of teaching the culturally different Mexican American is at a low ebb. Improvements in the quality of teachers, as well as in all segments of the institution and general society, will hopefully enhance the minority's socioeconomic chances. Improvements in the teacher must be recognized as only an easy place to begin the needed chain of changes. However, the teacher is the one element in this chain over which control can be easily asserted. The present or future teacher can be helped to do a better job with minority children. Before any program to accomplish this is proposed, some further exposition of present teacher weaknesses is necessary. Regardless of the orientation taken by a school, two aggregates of teacher inadequacies are evident. One is the lack of technical skill in the "science of teaching" area; the other is a severe personal limitation in understanding culture, personality, and behavior.

Teacher inadequacies in the skill area should be obvious to any well-informed and careful observer. Administrators are usually quite vocal in describing teacher shortcomings of a more-or-less technical nature. Too many teachers are ill-prepared to effectively use the more modern approaches to teaching English as a second language. While most "direct methods," including the audio-lingual, are simple to use—few know how to use them. The technical equipment connected with these foreign language teaching techniques is rarely utilized to its full potential or even close to it. I have observed the most traditional sort of formal grammar being "taught" with a most sophisticated and expensive electronic language laboratory. Numbers of audio-visual aids likewise are not utilized maximally. This failure to best use such expensive equipment, and therefore waste the taxpayers' money, is legend. Teachers of remedial subjects usually are ill-prepared to measure, diagnose, or "treat" learning problems. The crucial need for well-trained remedial teachers was mentioned by almost every administrator I

interviewed. The more modern techniques for the teaching of reading seemed to have missed most teachers—"projective techniques" are rarely employed in many schools. The inability to validly interpret the measurements of achievement and I.Q. of ethnically different children is widespread. However, perhaps the biggest skill failing among teachers of Mexican Americans is their almost universal inability to communicate in Spanish. All factions seem to concur that this skill is essential for teachers of the minority. There is no valid reason, except institutional ineptitude and rigidity, why teachers cannot become relatively proficient in the language spoken by so many of their pupils. I could go on; however, I'm sure that at least in regard to skill deficiency among teachers, many would concur.

The severest weakness of teachers is their failure to understand a number of concepts concerning culture, society, personality, and behavior. Teachers almost universally have little understanding of the effects of the first two on the latter two, or of interrelationships among the four concepts. Specifically, three areas of teacher deficiency are evident; the great majority: (1) fail to recognize the overwhelming influence of culture on personality and behavior; (2) have extremely limited knowledge of, or contact with, Mexican Americans; and (3) do not grasp the role and function of the American school in general society, nor recognize its influence on the ethnically different child. Very briefly, the following common teacher behaviors, and many others, encourage the belief that most fail to fully comprehend the concepts mentioned above or their importance to learning. Teachers regularly are pessimistic concerning the minority's ability to learn, equate race (national origin) and intelligence, prohibit Spanish speaking, act negatively toward ethnic peer groups, misinterpret Mexican American behavior in school, stereotype the group, maintain extreme social distance with minority members, and take absolute ethical and moral stances. They obviously fail to recognize how all these affect the child growing up in two cultures.

The two preceding paragraphs have touched upon teacher inadequacies. Any program to specially prepare teachers for Mexican Americans must have as its prime objective the overcoming of the inadequacies described. Teachers must acquire both skill and knowledge. As no one can really know what someone else knows, changed teacher behavior must be the principal criterion of success or failure of programs. The existence of concepts and theories in the mind of the teacher can only be demonstrated by action. The appropriateness of this action is the important test. The teacher well-prepared to teach minority children must be able to constructively synthesize skills and knowledge into appropriate school practices and curriculums.

In order to better prepare teachers of Mexican American children, I suggest that some rather radical surgery be done upon present programs.[3] What is proposed is a clean removal of existing formats of teacher preparation. From the static colleges of education constantly receive from all their publics, one would suppose radical reorganizations were an everyday occurrence. As you know, they are not. Regardless, for teachers of the minority, three major changes are suggested. First, the content taught must be reorganized and presently slighted areas strengthened. Second, vastly increased student involvement with the minority must be arranged. Students must be forced to interact with the real world within the school, with the minority community, and in activities

such as P.T.A. that bridge the two. The field experiences should, as much as possible, be coordinated with the content presented in the classroom. Third, small group seminars, modeled after "T-group" or "sensitivity sessions," must become an integral part of the program. These seminars are catalysts; without adding any new ingredient, they should hasten the process of interaction between what is presented in class as reality (and the theories to explain it), and what is observed and coped with in the field. These seminars must force a reconciliation, or at least a constructive encounter, between content taught by more formal methods and content "taught" through experience. Content, seminars, and field experience are all essential to the preparation of quality teachers. One of the components without the others strikes me as little improvement over present emphasis on content. It is impossible to propose specific arrangements of these proposed program components. Whether they are utilized in a special track for teachers of Mexican Americans, a special course or two, an institute, or an in-service program depends on innumerable conditions. The three components can be modified to fit specific requirements as to time, money, faculty, and the nature of students. Even a one-day "pre-first-day-of-school" teacher institute could be organized along the recommended lines.

Much of the present content of teacher certification programs is applicable for our specially prepared teachers and should be retained. However, all should be carefully scrutinized and reorganized to eliminate repetition. It seems to me that the "knowledge," theory, and skills might be better arranged into three cores: (1) the sociocultural; (2) the psycho-personal; and (3) the professional-technical. However, other descriptive terms might be applied—what matters is that content be somehow interrelated. The psycho-personal core should stress psycho-linguistics, the effect of cultural marginality and value conflict on personality, and areas related to adolescent ethnic behavior. The professional-technical core includes those skills usually taught in methods courses: the how to teach, how to organize, and how to test areas of instruction. Teachers of the minority need additional skills. Four major aggregates of skills must be stressed. These include the skills associated with remedial teaching, the ability to use psychometric instruments and to correctly interpret them vis-a-vis the culturally different, the crucial ability to communicate in Spanish, and the techniques of modern foreign language teaching. Perhaps an ideal way to accomplish the last two would be to use the audio-lingual technique in teaching the future teacher Spanish. Thus the English speaker would gain the essential new language while learning techniques usable in teaching English. The student's ongoing experience in the school and community must provide ample opportunity to practice and demonstrate competence in these skills.

The so-called sociocultural content core is the most crucial for teachers of Mexican Americans and is also the area that is most slighted in regular teacher preparation sequences. Indeed, it is appalling how few teachers are objective in their views of society and culture or have any real grasp of culture's influence on themselves or their students. This core must bear the burden of providing an objective understanding of: (1) the concept of culture and society; (2) cultural evolution, social change, and the individual problems in coping with them; (3) the profound and perhaps all pervading influence of

culture in determining human personality and behavior; (4) the concepts of caste and subculture as they exist in the modern world, especially the Southwest; (5) the nature and history of the diverse Mexican American groups and their cultures; (6) the role played by the school in transmitting the "general national culture;" and (7) the theoretical and practical aspects of problems related to cross-cultural schooling, especially vis-a-vis language difference and normative conflict. The objective presentation of theories and concepts relative to the preceding may well induce a sense of shock in many, especially since the concurrent field experience forces the student to confront social reality. This real world so different, yet so similar, to the one in which he lives may produce "culture shock." It is intended to. No teacher can succeed with the culturally different and/or poverty community unless some rather personal things occur. The student's basic assumptions about himself, the world he lives in, and his explanations of both must be subjected to reappraisal. The "folk myth" explanations of such items as race, achievement, or poverty must be destroyed. Too often such unsound explanations deter an individual's ability to cope with the very real problems associated with such ideas. The sensitivity session experiences in the seminars must provide the emotional support essential to the individual as he reconstructs himself and his beliefs. This core hopes to demonstrate that culture, society, and human behavior are understandable, and that to understand them fully, one's own values, beliefs, and attitudes must be examined objectively.

Specific attention should be focused on the influence of culture on personality and behavior. Man's views of himself, others, and the world are all influenced by the social environment in which he is nurtured. Inherent in this is the idea that truth, beauty, and morality are socioculturally determined. Claremont Graduate School conducted a teacher "reeducation" project with content and objectives similar to most proposed here. This graduate level project dealt with the:

> . . .educator's great difficulties with pupils, parents, and communities of heterogeneous social or ethnic natures and high mobility by showing some of the social and cultural aspects in the relationships of all parties and in the abilities of pupils to learn at school. This meant showing educators what culture is, its particular manifestations in different traditions (whether the manifestations be different languages and religions or different modes of treating a mother), how one recognizes specific cultural factors influencing individual and group conduct, how families pass on their ancestral cultures, even when they seem assimilated to another, how a pupil might manifest his special heritage in the classroom, and how a teacher might unwittingly do the same.[4]

In this project participants were encouraged or "forced" to understand culture's influence on their own individual perceptions, attitudes, and behavior—to see culture as manifest within themselves. Teachers were aided in this process by participating in small group seminars not unlike those suggested here.

Teachers must become aware of the Mexican American culture characteristics. The world view, value orientations, family relationships, and roles of the group must be well

known. However, major problems exist that must discourage the teaching of any set list of distinctive characteristics. One problem is that we have very little objective information concerning Mexican American culture in general. Inversely, we have too much subjective information. Let me illustrate. No contemporary widespread empirical study indicates that a monolithic or static Mexican American culture exists. Every indication is that minority culture varies by geographic area, that even within the same geographic area differing kinds and rates of acculturation are evident, as well as that distinct adaptations to the dominant Anglo societies have been and are being made. Only two cultural items appear even close to universal--Mexican Americans tend to speak Spanish and to be Roman Catholics. The cultural diversity of the group is extreme; however, most of the literature describes one uniform and rather static culture.[5] Mexican Americans are usually pictured as being, among other things: fatalistic, present-time oriented, patriarchal, superstitious, personalistic, and generally carriers of a "folk culture." While such may describe certain isolated groups or be valid appraisals of older conditions, there is no reason to believe it characterizes present Mexican American culture in general. What we are constantly told about the culture does not appear to correspond with reality.

There are other reasons for not teaching the specifics of Mexican American culture. The characteristics ascribed to minority culture in most descriptions mesh all too perfectly with the almost universal Anglo stereotype of "Mexicans" in general.[6] To teach these might lend a certain measure of scientific validation to presently held but unsound overgeneralizations. It is also doubtful that descriptive statements foster the in-depth awareness of cultural differences teachers must acquire. Dr. Fred Romero's recent research on teacher knowledge of the influence of culture on school behavior points up the dangers of the casual treatment of culture. He found a:

> . . .general teacher sensitivity to, and awareness of, socio-cultural differences of the. . .Spanish-American and Anglo. This teacher awareness. . .could very well be superficial and not based on real knowledge of what constitutes a culture value system. In addition, cultural sensitivity may result from attitudes formed from operating stereotypes. Under these conditions a lack of real sensitivity could, in fact, exist.[7]

Too detailed, but superficial, descriptions of cultural characteristics or Anglo-Mexican cultural differences probably discourages in-depth understanding. For example, if teachers are taught that minority families teach their sons to be macho, this one characteristic (whether valid or not) may be used to describe or interpret wildly diverse male behavior. Such treatment of culture is entirely too simplistic. The objective of this core is not to describe Mexican American culture in general, but to provide teachers with the skills and insights necessary to determine the cultural characteristics of the group with which they are in contact. The teacher's knowledge of local cultural variations is essential to the ability to incorporate cultural items into the curriculum, and to the teacher's skill in coping with children's difficulties in "learning" two sets of norms. The combination of theory of culture and society, and the continual field

experience plus the seminars, should help the student to objectively describe and interpret any culture he encounters. No teacher should be told about Mexican American culture; instead, programs must be established to force him to "see and feel it."

I recently came across a statement in an education text that is the very antithesis of the kind of knowledge teachers must acquire. To illustrate the general lack of information rampant, let me quote the only paragraph in the book concerning America's second largest minority:

> In the Southwest, the Mexican-Americans continue to live in the slum atmospheres they have known for so long. The work they undertake is seasonal and they are finding that greater mobility is necessary. These migrants are working their way toward the East, and as they do they discover that both their skin color and their language are handicaps.[8]

This sort of misinformation must be countered. Teachers must understand the present socioeconomic status of this group as well as recognize the forces that led to the present situation. An objective history of this minority in the Southwest and the group's hispanic roots must be presented. Glorification and idealization of this tradition must be avoided. A "glorified heritage" is just another "folk myth" to be destroyed prior to gaining real understanding.

In summation, let me stress a number of points. Two major considerations are evident in planning teacher preparation programs or projects. What kind of teachers do the public schools want? This must be determined by a careful analysis of the orientation of a school and the nature of programs it undertakes to enhance Mexican American school performance. After arriving at the answers to these riddles, it is essential to cooperate with teacher preparation institutions to establish the kinds of programs necessary. Schools of education, it must be remembered, may be just as inflexible and rigid as the public schools. Thus, it may be necessary to prod them a little or to aid the "young turks" inside to do so. Both schools and teacher preparation institutions must change before any real benefit will trickle down to our ultimate clients—children. Perhaps steps to specially prepare teachers for minority children will encourage the needed changes.

Hopefully, some of the items suggested to specially equip teachers for minority children will be useful. The specific items in any program must be determined "on the spot." However, every program should include the crucial components—content and field experience and some arena where students can reconcile the two. What has been suggested is far from a perfect outline—it was not intended to be. I have omitted many considerations and slighted others. Regardless, let me emphasize in conclusion that teachers must be prepared to cope with the problems associated with cross-cultural schooling. To do so involves teacher awareness and understanding of social reality. Any program must force teachers to comprehend and deal with the real world of children, minorities, and poverty. As the function of all teachers is some sort of action, it behooves any program to destroy "folk myths," stereotypes, and idealized pictures of reality. If programs fail in this regard, we can expect teacher behavior to be less than

adequate, since it would be based on false premises. The school is charged with helping to solve grievous social problems. To do so requires a new breed of educator—one equipped to make objective appraisals of problems, and to take rational and appropriate steps to encourage their elimination. It's a big order—we must get on with it.

NOTES

1. George Z. F. Bereday, *Comparative Method in Education* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963), p. 5.

2. For additional information on conditions and practices in schools that promote negative social climates see:
   Thomas P. Carter, *The Mexican American In School* (tentative title). To be published in 1969 by the College Entrance Examination Board, New York.

   C. Wayne Gordon, *et. al., Educational Achievement and Aspirations of Mexican American Youth in a Metropolitan Context.* Mexican American Study Project Educational Sub-Study, Center for the Evaluation of Instructional Programs, Graduate School of Education, University of California at Los Angeles, March, 1968. (Mimeographed.)

   Theodore W. Parsons Jr., *Ethnic Cleavage in a California School.* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1965.

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3. It always concerns me at this point as to whether the proposed changes would not be equally appropriate for teachers of any category of children.

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5. For detailed contemporary description of these assumed characteristics see:
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6. See:
Ozzie G. Simmons, "The Mutual Images and Expectations of Anglo-Americans and Mexican Americans," *Daedalus,* Vol. 90, No. 2, 1961.

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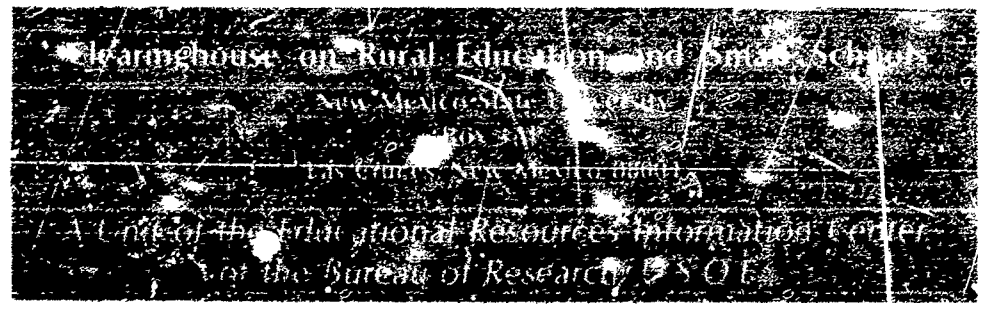
7. Fred E. Romero, "A Study of Anglo-American and Spanish-American Culture Value Concepts and Their Significance in Secondary Education." *A Research Contribution for Education in Colorado,* (Denver: Colorado State Department of Education, September 1966), Vol. III, No. 2, p. 7.

8. Helen E. Rees, *Deprivation and Compensatory Education: A Consideration* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968) p.13.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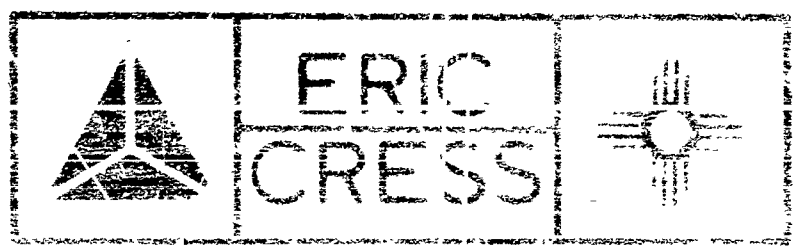
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