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## ABSTRACT

Provided are selected proceedings from the Conference on Exceptional Children at which minority educators and educators from the dominant society discussed the special educational needs of culturally and linguistically different children. One speaker offers suggestions for ways in which a knowledge of linguistics can be used to assess the potential of minority children. Four sessions concerning the linguistic and cultural patterns of Asian, black, Indian, and Spanish persons are summarized. Another address focuses on ways in which the culturally different student comes into conflict with traditional curricula. Ethnic perspectives on cultural diversity are presented in six articles on the following topics: the language and cultural diversity of black Americans, the learning style of the Mexican American, learning styles and Asian culture, the conflict of values involved in the education of the Native American, the Asian American's search for identity, and the Puerto Rican in New York City schools. Participants' evaluations of the institute are included. Appendixes contain a copy of the institute evaluation form, a list of additional papers presented at the conference, excerpts from a 3-month followup report, and a list of tape cassettes on cultural diversity. (GW)

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# **cultural diversity and the exceptional child**

**Proceedings of an Institute and Conference Program  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
August 1973**

**editors LOUIS A. BRANSFORD  
LEONARD BACA  
KAREN LANE**

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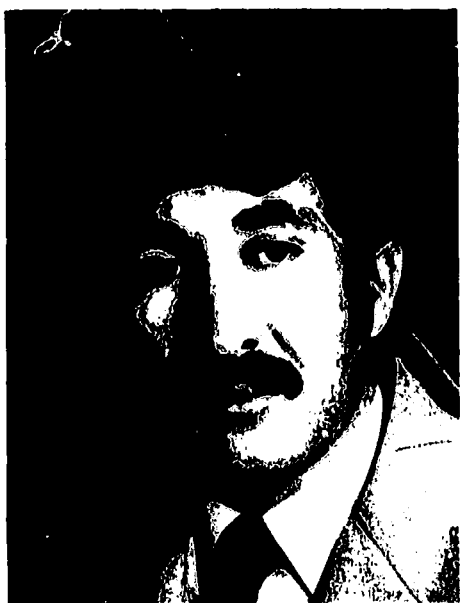
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# Introduction

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The Conference on Exceptional Children was initiated in response to growing concern about the education of the culturally and/or linguistically different minority group child. The Council for Exceptional Children established a committee on minority affairs which addressed itself to related issues. The form for the institute and conference program evolved from these discussions. The goal was not to find a panacea for all the problems of culturally and linguistically different children, but to provide a constructive contribution to the quality of their education through the combined efforts of minority educators.

A program planning and advisory committee was selected to ensure input from four cultural groups. After much debate, it was concluded that each group (Black, Spanish-speaking, Asian American, and Indian) should have the opportunity to spell out its own approach to the language and culture issue. Four mini-programs were scheduled for the institute sessions.

One of the main priorities established by the planning committee was minority group representation in all programs. Hence, all facilitator slots were filled by minority group educators. The 100 participants were selected to ensure representation from the following areas: multicultural groupings, geographic disparity, regular classroom teachers, special classroom teachers, administrators, clinicians, counselors, and other special educators. Utilizing information gained during the institute, these participants served as catalysts for discussions during the conference which immediately followed.

The 2½ day institute provided in depth treatment of the cultural and linguistic differences that exist among Spanish-speaking, Black, Indian, and Asian American ethnic groups. Instruction centered upon one or more of the following areas: survival language, Black English, bilingual education, and general linguistic approaches.

The Conference on Exceptional Children, attended by more than 500 participants, expanded the theme of cultural and linguistic diversity. Utilizing general sessions and workshops, the conference provided opportunities for interaction between minority educators and educators from the dominant society. It was hoped that this interaction would develop multicultural awareness, more effective communication skills, and insights into the ways teaching strategies and curricula can be made more relevant to the special needs of all culturally and linguistically different children. It was also hoped that through publication of conference proceedings, the flow of ideas and viewpoints stimulated by this interaction might generate further discussion, research, and development among special educators and general educators who did not attend.

Unfortunately, space will not permit the printing of all presentations. The following have been selected to highlight major concerns and viewpoints exchanged during the five day period. Copies of other presentations may be procured by contacting speakers directly. (see Appendix A.)

Acknowledgments are due to the CEC Minority Committee, the Planning and Advisory Committee, and the Local Arrangements Committee, as well as to the CEC staff for contributing to the success of the Institute and Conference on Cultural Diversity.

Special thanks to Carolyn Hill for secretarial assistance and to Chris Williams for editing.

Louis A. Bransford  
Leonard Baca  
Karen Lane

# I. Language, Culture, and Exceptional Children

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Gustavo Gonzalez is Co-Director, Bilingual-Multicultural Education, Center for Applied Linguistics, Arlington, Virginia.

My area of specialization is not the education of exceptional children; however, I believe that the science of linguistics can make a substantial contribution to the field, especially in the assessment of minority exceptional children. I would like to share with you some thoughts on the nature of language and linguistics can be of benefit in the education of minority exceptional children. I will offer for your consideration some concrete suggestions on how this information can be used to assess more accurately the potential of minority exceptional children.

We all differ from one another in various overt and covert ways. Some of us are tall, others not so tall; some are poor, others well to do. We have different intellectual capabilities and capacities. Our tastes differ with regard to food, cars, entertainment, and clothing. Our views differ widely when it comes to politics, pornography, education, and taxes. In areas too numerous to mention we as human beings have different viewpoints, tastes, inclinations, capacities, tolerances, and so on.

In the midst of all this diversity, there is one thing that we do have in common, one thing that enables us to coexist. That something is language.

The ability to learn language is specific to the species *Homo sapiens*. We know of no other species in the animal kingdom which possesses language, and no group of *Homo sapiens*, no matter how "primitive" has yet been found that does not possess language. Through this system of communication, the species is able to express its needs, aspirations, and frustrations. In addition, language enables the cultural group to transmit its beliefs, customs, and ways of life to future generations.

Language plays a crucial role in our increasingly complex everyday life; yet all too often we tend to take language for granted. Unless we deal with language consciously in our professions, we forget about the importance of language in carrying out even the most elementary transactions. Should you ever have any doubts about the central role of language in your own life, try communicating without it for an hour or a day. You will find before long that expressing anything but the simplest concepts is next to impossible.

Language is especially important to us as educators for language is our principal avenue for the transmission of knowledge to our students and it is, therefore, to our benefit to explore its nature. Such a venture will give us a better understanding of this exclusively human form of communication and perhaps will help us rectify some misconceptions regarding different aspects of language.

All languages are systems of vocal sounds by which a group of people communicate with each other. The term *vocal* should be emphasized here. While all languages consist of sounds, not all languages have a writing system. In fact, quite a few exist that do not have a written representation, some of them in the United States. I'm referring, of course, to the Native American languages and dialects. The fact that they do not have a writing system does not make them any less of a language than English or French. The medium of language is sound, not writing.

## **The Nature of Language**

*Language is a system of vocal sounds.*

That writing is of secondary importance in language is difficult for people in "civilized" societies to understand. We place so much importance on the printed word in our society that the vocal aspect of language is all but forgotten. Chronologically, speech appears long before writing in the growth and education of normal children. By the time a child begins to master the basics of reading and writing, he already has control over his native language.

Language is systematic.

Language consists of patterns, and we are indeed fortunate that such is the case. It is this aspect which makes it possible for us to learn our native language in a remarkably short time. Furthermore, the systematic nature of language enables us to create new words and incorporate them appropriately, using similar words from the language as models. For example, a few years ago, several new dances emerged on the scene. Among them were the *watusi*, the *frug*, and the *twist*. Using existing patterns as models, English speakers had no difficulty at all making verbs out of the names of the dances and even using them in different tenses. People *watusied*, *twisted*, and *frugged*, until the wee hours of the morning.

Research studies of children acquiring their first language clearly demonstrate that the child takes advantage of the systematic aspect of language. This is particularly evident when the child extends the regular pattern to items that are exceptions. Since the past tense forms are normally formed in English through the use of *-ed*, for example, the child is likely to extend this paradigm to the irregular past tense forms and create *bringed* for *brought*, *corred* for *came*, or *goed* for *went*. In the formation of plurals, it is not uncommon to hear children say *foots* for *feet*, *mouses* for *mice*, or *gooses* for *geese*.

Language is symbolic.

One of the most striking facts about human speech is that it does not bind its speakers to things that are present. Through the use of language, we can talk about the past and the future; we can discuss not only reality but hypothetical situations and even fantasy. We can talk about things that we have neither seen nor experienced. The symbolic character of language gives rise to expressions like "If I had a million dollars," "If I were President of the United States," "If I could only fly like a bird." We may be fully aware of the impossibility of such accomplishments, but we can still express them thanks to the symbolic nature of language.

Languages are constantly changing.

The needs and aspirations of a group that speaks a particular language are constantly changing, and the language reflects these changes. In some areas of the language, the changes are gradual and their net effect may be imperceptible for decades. In others, such as the vocabulary, changes are easily noted. In our lifetime, we have seen words and expressions go out of style, sometimes to be replaced by new ones. *Outta sight* and *far out* have replaced such expressions as *you're the most* and *tough* or *stud*. The *beatniks* of yesteryear have been transformed into the *hippies* of today. And the words *grass* and *pot*, once far removed semantically, are today synonymous. Just as the words and expressions of past generations reflected their societal needs, we can be sure that future expressions will likewise reflect the



needs of the generations that create them.

A child is born with an ability to learn language, not a language. A child will speak the language and language variety of those with whom he is reared; he is not preprogramed to learn a specific language. The fact that Indian children become fluent in their language, for example, is due to the environment in which they grow up and not to racial considerations. A blue eyed Anglo child reared by Russian-speaking people will become fluent in Russian and not English.

A person's dialect is likewise a reflection of the social circumstances under which he learned to speak. Thus a Spanish speaking Chicano child reared in the southwestern United States will speak the dialect that is characteristic of the area and not the standard dialect whose base is rooted in Spain. By the same token, a person reared in Seville, Spain, would not be expected to be fluent in the Chicano dialect of Spanish. A Black child reared with parents that do not speak the standard variety of English likewise should not be expected to speak the standard variety when he first enters school.

*Specific languages are not innate.*

There is no such thing, linguistically speaking, as a good language or a bad language, a superior language or an inferior language. Each language is appropriate for its time, place, and circumstance. All languages are equally capable of expressing any experience that its speakers may undergo. All languages are complete in this respect. True, not every language has a word for every concept, but this is because not every language has the need to express the same concepts. The Aztecs

*All languages are equally good.*

**Educational Assessment of the  
Culturally Different**

**Unfamiliar Language of  
Standard Tests**

of Mexico, for example, did not have a word for *horse* or *orange* since up until the Spanish conquest of Mexico these were not known to them. In the course of its contact with Spanish, English has followed a similar pattern. It has borrowed Spanish words to express concepts foreign to the Anglo culture, such as *piñata*, *tortilla*, and *taco*. The incorporation of borrowings does not make the receiving language corrupt; it merely reflects the changing needs of the language group.

Our preceding observation about language is applicable to varieties of the same language as well; namely, *all varieties of a language are equally good*. All varieties are equally adequate for their given time and place. Native speakers from a particular region quite naturally tend to feel that the variety of language that they speak is the best. Easterners will downgrade the speech of Southerners, criticizing their use of slow, extended vowels and *y'all*. Southerners retaliate by pointing out that Brooklyn residents, for example, seem to speak through their noses and use phrases such as *youse guys*. This type of chauvinism aside, the fact remains that the Eastern dialect of English is appropriate for that area of the country; the Southern dialect is appropriate for the South. Neither is better than the other; each is good in its time, place, and circumstance.

These characteristics of language have direct relevance in the assessment of exceptional Blacks, Chicanos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. If properly integrated into assessment instruments, these characteristics could help alleviate the bias that current instruments have against speakers of other languages or dialects of English considered nonstandard.

In classifying Blacks, Chicanos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans as mentally retarded, the favorite instrument has traditionally been the IQ test. Minority group members are expected to perform at the level of the white middle class population on whom the test was normed. Those who fail to do so are immediately and permanently labeled as mentally retarded. Little thought is given to why the child did so poorly.

Although most IQ tests rely heavily on language, normally no attempt is made to determine the minority child's level of proficiency in the language or dialect in which the test was administered. A Chicano child, for instance, may be capable of performing the tasks called for in an IQ test but may be unable to understand the English directions. Even if a Spanish translation were made available, it would have to be in the dialect that the child speaks, not a Spanish translation from South America or Chile. Using an unfamiliar dialect of Spanish in testing Spanish speaking Chicano children would be tantamount to administering the test in Russian or Chinese. The same would apply in the case of Blacks, Native Americans, or Asian Americans.

The Black experience with IQ tests parallels that of the Chicano. Though English is used in the tests and Blacks speak English natively, the results have been largely negative. The main reason is that the dialect used in the testing is not compatible with that spoken by Black children. Speech forms or sentence patterns used by Blacks are labeled

ungrammatical and inferior since they are different from the "standard" dialect of English. And, the reasoning goes, since the language is inferior (according to subjective standards), the person who speaks in that manner must also be mentally inferior.

William Labov (1972), in a recent article entitled "Academic Ignorance and Black Intelligence," pointed out that

Inner-city children do not necessarily have inferior mothers, language, or experience, but . . . the language, family style, and ways of living of inner-city children are significantly different from the standard culture of the classroom. . . . They [linguists] do not believe that the standard language is the only medium in which teaching and learning can take place [p. 59].

Labov strongly disagreed with the findings of Bereiter and Engelmann who concluded after interviewing a number of Black children that Blacks have no language, that their language consisted of little more than emotional groans. Labov attributed the failure of Bereiter and Engelmann to elicit speech not to the subjects' linguistic inability but to the fact that the subjects were placed in a threatening situation and therefore responded in the most minimal way possible. These minimal responses were interpreted by Bereiter and Engelmann as "groans."

This view of minority children language deficits is likewise evident in the case of Native American, Asian American, and Chicano children. Educators until recently tended to subscribe to the Bereiter and Engelmann position, characterizing minorities as linguistically deprived. In the case of the Chicanos, their dialect of Spanish was characterized as an abominable mixture of English and Spanish deservedly referred to as "Tex-Mex." Bilingual education programs designed by such educators never took the Chicano dialect of Spanish into consideration in the design of curriculum materials since it was considered inferior and therefore harmful to the Chicano children. Instead, only standard English and standard Spanish were recognized and taught. The children, in effect, were being taught in two foreign modes—the standard variety of English and Spanish.

In addition to being unfair on linguistic grounds, IQ tests are culturally Anglocentric. They encompass values, attitudes, and ideals important to the dominant society but not necessarily important to Asian Americans, Native Americans, Blacks, or Chicanos. There is a tendency to forget that what the Anglo culture values may not be held in high esteem by other cultural groups. With regard to any one belief, minority culture values may cover the entire range of the spectrum, from exact identity with the dominant culture to the opposite.

One can better appreciate IQ test bias by taking a "test" based on the cultural values of another ethnic group. Such an exam, based on Chicano beliefs, was constructed by Antonio Gómez in 1970. The instrument is composed of items directly relevant to the Chicano barrio experience and includes questions on childrearing practices and beliefs, traditional foods (such as *capirotada*), and other areas of a strictly Chicano nature.

*Educators . . . tended to characterize minorities as linguistically deprived.*

#### **Anglocentric Nature of Tests**



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A similar test was constructed for Blacks by Dr. Robert L. Williams (1973) of the Washington University (St. Louis) Black Studies Program. Called the BITCH (for *Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity*), the instrument is based on the urban Black American cultural experience. For this reason, Blacks have consistently scored better than whites on it. To my knowledge, no similar tests have been devised for and by Native Americans and Asian Americans.

Taking ethnic culture exams can be a sobering experience for a person not familiar with the cultural orientation of the group. It makes one suddenly realize how little we know about minority cultures and how culturally biased (against minorities) and Anglocentric traditional IQ tests have been. While I do not advocate the substitution of IQ tests by these minority culture tests, I am suggesting that both types of instruments be used in assessing the capabilities of minority children. I am suggesting that we be aware of the unfair bias of IQ tests and treat the resulting scores in light of this bias. We should not expect minority children reared in an environment other than the norming population to perform as well as that population, just as we would not expect middle class Anglo children to perform adequately on tests designed by and for minorities and based on the minority experience in America. Scores on traditional IQ tests should be one of many measures used in assessment, not the only and most important one.

#### Role of Adaptive Behavior

Another measure that should be considered in the case of minorities in addition to IQ scores, is what Jane R. Mercer (1971) has called adaptive behavior. In a pioneering study involving Blacks and Chicanos in Riverside, California, she found that 80 per cent of her subjects had graduated from high school, even though they had failed the IQ test. Sixty-five percent of these held white collar positions. The results of her

study suggest that minority IQ scores are poor indicators of clinical retardation or of success in a given social situation in later life.

She concluded with the caution that

... clinical procedures should not be labeling persons as abnormal who are regarded as "normal" by other persons in their social groups or persons who are filling the normal complement of social roles typical of persons of their age and sex. Only persons who are subnormal both on the intelligence tests and in adaptive behavior should be regarded as clinically retarded [p. 21].

Mercer's approach of using the minority community as a point of departure in setting expectations is classic in its simplicity and should serve as a model in our dealings with minority children.

Community acceptance as a criterion has applicability in language as well. A Chicano child's proficiency in English, for example, could be judged in part by how he compares with persons of his own ethnic and social group. If he exhibits traces of a Spanish accent in speaking English and his accent is comparable to that of his Chicano peers, he should not be penalized for it. We should not expect him to produce perfect English from the very beginning if Spanish in his first language.

Furthermore, certain social contexts may dictate that he use pronunciation and constructions that would be unacceptable to native English speakers in order to better identify with the linguistic-social group of which he is a part.

For instance, if a Chicano should pronounce *ship* as *cheap* or *prize* as *price*, he should not be regarded immediately as being mentally or linguistically retarded. Before drawing such a conclusion, we must take into account the sociolinguistic context in which he made the substitutions. It may be, especially at the later ages, that the child is fully aware of his substitution "mistakes"; that he has made them consciously in order to communicate in English more effectively with those members of his group who make similar substitution "mistakes."

The situation would be identical in the different minority language and dialect groups. All too often a child from a minority group, as a result of schooling in the Anglo school system, begins to speak English with fewer and fewer errors than the members of his community. Gradually, the other members of the linguistic community begin to feel that he is somehow better than they are because of his proficiency; the person becomes a linguistic outsider. Unless and until the person can learn the sociolinguistic contexts in which each variety of language is appropriate, the distance between him and the community will only widen, eventually reaching the point where he will disassociate himself from all vestiges of his former life style.

Minority children also suffer in the area of identification of giftedness. To begin with, the identification of gifted children in general has never been a top priority in this country, in spite of the tremendous potential contributions that could be made by these children. And when these children are tentatively identified, there is often resentment toward them; in fact, a report prepared in 1971 by the US Com-

#### Role of Community Acceptance

As a result of ... the Anglo school system ... the person becomes a linguistic outsider.

#### Identification of the Gifted

*Minority gifted children must overcome racial stereotypes.*

missioner of Education mentioned feelings of hostility or apathy toward the gifted as a major problem.

There is a widespread erroneous belief among public school officials and the general public that the gifted child will somehow excel in spite of any and all obstacles placed in his path. In addition, the gifted child faces pressures from his peers to mask his giftedness, to conform to the norm of his peer group. The psychological and emotional stress placed on such children is intense indeed. He is not allowed to be himself; he is discouraged from developing his potential to the fullest. That any gifted children manage to overcome the temptations and pressures to conform, that these children gradually see their talents as something to be proud of and treasured is nothing short of miraculous.

The treatment accorded minority gifted children is worse than that given to white gifted children. In addition to the preceding nightmarish situation, minority gifted children must overcome racial stereotypes foisted upon them by the majority culture. The US Commissioner's report states that gifted minority children are ignored, almost as if giftedness were innately white.

Ernest M. Bernal (1972), Director of the Bilingual-Early Elementary Program for the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in Austin, summarized the problem thus:

When children are culturally different from the majority group, are non-English speakers or speak with "non-standard" English, those who are gifted and talented among them may be placed at a disadvantage because of discriminatory practices [p. 2].

He went on to caution that "If talent potential is to be realized, better strategies must be found for recognizing language needs and the potential richness of cultural differences [p. 5]."

It is imperative that in dealing with minority children, we look beyond English language competency in classifying a child as retarded or gifted. Minority children gifted in one area may still not be proficient in standard English. This is especially true if the child has been reared in a language environment that is linguistically different from that of standard English.

Attempts to identify gifted minority children, which have taken into consideration the ways in which they differ from the majority culture, have unfortunately been few and far between. Little or nothing has been done specifically with the Asian American or Native American populations. The identification of gifted Black students aged 1 to 6 years has been investigated by Catherine E. Bruch (1971) of the University of Georgia using an abbreviated version of the Binet test (Abbreviated Binet for the Disadvantaged). Her study, though providing some encouraging findings, was limited to a rural Black population. Hopefully it can be expanded in the near future to include urban Black populations as well.

Chicano giftedness has only recently been investigated scientifically. Bernal (1972) has just completed an exploratory investigation involving more than 100 Chicano children, aged 5 to 8 years. The results of

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these explorations into minority giftedness should prove that giftedness is not exclusively white but dazzlingly technicolored.

Ostensibly many youngsters in the US grow up speaking languages other than English; yet there are those who would impose the same linguistic expectations on them in the early years as they would on native English speakers of the same age. Although we claim to live in a pluralistic society, there are those who would rob others of their native tongue or dialect, only to require its learning later as a prerequisite for graduation. Though all languages and dialects have been shown to be appropriate for their time, place, and circumstance, there are those who would relegate speakers of languages and dialects other than "standard" to an inferior or retarded status.

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## II. Highlights of the Institute on Language and Culture

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This 2½ day institute provided an in depth educational experience which focused on cultural and linguistic differences among Spanish-speaking, Black, Indian, and Asian American students in our schools. It was decided to emphasize the most significant aspect of culture, namely, the language and communication dimension of culture, in order to promote the cultural awareness necessary on the part of educators working with our culturally and linguistically different children.

The following four reports provide summaries or excerpts taken from the complete transcriptions of the individual language sessions.



## Asian component

*Asian groups are very diverse.*

Rather than focus on language in the discussion, the instructor for the Asian group, Dr. Harry Kitano, professor of social welfare and sociology at UCLA, decided it would be more practical and appropriate to discuss some of the sociological and philosophical differences within the Asian cultures. Kitano cautioned that it is difficult to generalize when referring to the many different Asian cultures.

I hope this meeting will be valuable to you in helping you to understand the Asian. When I say Asian, I hope it's not such a broad generalization that it becomes meaningless. Actually, the various Asian groups are very diverse. Historically, they have always fought each other. The generalizations that are made here should be taken within this context.

The Asian community in this country finds itself in what Kitano calls a middle-man position. The middle-man minority in a power structure is in a peculiar position. He is above the masses, but he is rarely part of the elite. And he knows that by maintaining ethnic cohesiveness, an ethnic language, and an ethnic style, he is also maintaining his middle-man position.

Part of an Asian's proper socialization is learning his place within a social system. He knows that if he does anything that disturbs traditional patterns, he runs the risk of being alienated from his own ethnic group. For this reason, the Asian doesn't do anything that would make him stand out from the group—such as wearing loud clothes or driving a fancy car. The Asian is thus encouraged by his social structure to become invisible.

The Asian culture utilizes a much more indirect or subtle means of communication than we usually find here in this country. In an Anglo home, for example, if a child is doing something he is not supposed to be doing, the parent is usually direct and says, "Stop that right now." But in the Asian home, the parent is much more indirect. He says, "Listen, wouldn't you rather go outside and play with your brother?" When this kind of indirect method is used, no one loses face.

The Asian family structure is based on the traditional agrarian family model; males are considered more desirable than females. The head of the family is the father, who, strong and generally silent, sets the tone for the whole family interaction. He is basically uncommunicative; he is not freely available, and the children interact with him in a formal manner. The family doesn't sit at the dinner table and have a free discussion. If the Asian child wants to talk to his father, he does so privately. And he doesn't use all of the common familiar phrases. He only speaks when spoken to. This is why Asians, in general, don't develop a free and easy communicative style.

Very few Asians engage in free participation in group discussions. Generally, they feel that if they say something, it must be profound and important. They feel that one should not waste other people's time



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with small talk. Sometimes Asians go to meetings and hear little or nothing of the discussion simply because they are so busy thinking about the question they are going to ask and worrying about whether it is important enough.

Those who teach Asian children should have an understanding of both the indirect and direct methods of disciplining children. The Asian approach is indirect. The direct method, as "shut up," represents a harshness that is frightening to many Asian children. And often Asian adults, if criticized directly, will fall apart. They will become defensive, anxiety stricken, and unable to cope with the situation. This no doubt stems from the indirect child-rearing practices.

Another cultural difference which was discussed is the Asian's outer-directedness. This has implications in terms of how Asian children might behave in school. If one is outer-directed, one's greatest fear is of making a fool of oneself in front of others. For this reason, Asian children tend to be quiet in a school setting. And, since modesty is one of the virtues in the Asian system, children don't "blow their own horn." Teachers can help by giving the praise and encouragement these children need.

One of the problems Asian children encounter in school is related to the grading system. They are overgraded at an early age mainly because they tend to be quiet, follow directions, do their homework, and conform to rules. Consequently, the parents as well as the children develop unrealistic expectations which create problems as the child progresses through school.

These are some of the major ideas discussed in the Asian group. There was a general consensus that not too much is known about Asian exceptional children. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that the Asian culture encourages "invisibility." Some type of followup activity was encouraged to promote further research and publications in this area.

The response of the group to the discussions was enthusiastic. It was felt that a great deal of cultural awareness was attained through the Institute, even though time limitations precluded discussing some issues in greater depth.

*The Asian approach to discipline is indirect.*

*Overgrading leads to unrealistic expectations.*

## Black component

### The Nature of Language

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*Languages . . . are socially stratified.*



Language cannot be considered without considering the culture in which it was generated and is presently used. If communication with Black children is to be achieved on an educational level, teachers must be aware of the nature of Black language in all its various forms, and the relationship of Black culture as it affects that language.—Gloria Smallwood

Dr. Orlando Taylor from the Center for Applied Linguistics and Dr. Gloria Smallwood, University of Colorado at Denver, utilized five major topics in conducting the Institute on Black language. These topics included: The Nature of Language, The Phenomenon of Language Variety, Myths and Attitudes about Language, Black Language, and Implications for Linguistically Diverse Black Children.

To highlight major points of concern, included are excerpts from the 2½ day language session.

There are four basic concepts that we need to keep in mind as we talk about language now. One, language is universal. Two, the type of languages in the world show overlap. Three, languages around the world reflect historical and social facts. Four, languages around the world are socially stratified.

We'll talk about the fact that all of the groups of the United States, particularly those who've had a particular degree of social isolation and economic isolation, tend to persist in certain linguistic and cognitive behavior styles which are ethnically predictable and must be taken into account when developing an effective educational strategy.

So language does change and it changes rapidly. There have been several books written that would be called dictionaries of Black language, vocabulary used in the Black experience. As soon as they're written, they're out of date because as soon as you learn the meanings of the words, we change them. As soon as you learn the form, we do something different. If you're having problems with kids, it's because kids need privacy and they take privacy in language.

Language is a result of our experiences. If our experiences are limited in terms of school related activities and performance, then people usually say that our language is ungrammatical, inferior, or inadequate, as opposed to different. Our experiences make us what we are now. Language develops from that experience. If you want to see verbal children, find some Black children someplace.

Do all Black people talk alike? The answer to that is "No," which means therefore that there are varieties of Black speech. And if the axiom is true that within every language there is stratification, then that obviously means that some dialects of Black speech to Black people are positive and some dialects are not positive.

One of the things that makes Black English effective is that lan-

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guage for communication must contain familiar concepts. Inasmuch as Black language revolves around the Black experience, many listeners have no conceptual base for interpreting what is being said by Black speakers.

I specified that the features of Black English that are of concern to us are the features that might cause communication conflict in the classroom. I want to raise a question as to what might explain the behavior. There are three main views on this. I'll indicate the first two incorrect views and the third view, which I think is correct.

The first and most conservative view is that it is simply sloppy speech. The second position is that Black English is a remnant of Southern white nonstandard English. If you think it's sloppy speech, the educational model is an eradication of it. If you buy the second model, the regional model, your educational model says, "Educate the kids to talk like everybody else in the region!"

The third and correct model is the Creolist model which in effect states that any language form is explained by the previous language of the speakers and the language groups with whom these peoples come in contact once they go to another location. The Creolist position would conclude, therefore, that Black speech forms are legitimate, are explained by history, are part of the culture, in no way can be eradicated, should not be eradicated, and to do so would be a form of cultural genocide. And obviously, the educational strategy to believe this at best is bidialectalism.

If I lock myself into a curriculum that says I'm going to teach my children Black history, Black English, Black math, Black everything, I've crippled my children. Just like I'll cripple my children if I teach them white English, white math, white whatever else. We're living in a dual society; in fact, we're living in more than a dual society. Because we've got to interact with all kinds of people, our kids have to be ready to interact with all kinds of people.

One of the mistakes we make is to say that children who have Black language cannot listen to mainstream English, which is erroneous. It's not true. The thing is that they can't produce it the same way in which it has been given to them because the linguistic foundations are different in many instances.

So many of our Black kids in the communities actually are almost perceptually deaf and perceptually blind to the problems of the mainstream culture, but have command of their immediate environmental problems. When the teacher comes along and the student doesn't respond, the teacher begins to think that he is mentally retarded. In other words, you get a negative self fulfilling prophecy.

Let's not attach a stigma to the children's language or to their circumstances. If you think that the child's not having a father in the home makes a difference, maybe you ought to reevaluate your system of judging what a child can do. If you think that every one of the basal readers that we give the children is going to relate to their community, to their environment, to their experience, then we may have to take another look at what we're using to teach children.

*Black language is effective for communication.*

### **Three Main Views of Black English**

*We're living in a dual society.*

## Indian component

### Bilingualism and the Education Process

The Indian component of the Institute conducted by John Kito and Bertha Lowe of Anchorage, Alaska, focused on two vital, interrelated issues in the education of minority students: language in relation to culture, and bilingualism and the education process.

To emphasize that one cannot separate language and culture, the Indian leaders demonstrated the specific skills which educators must acquire if they are to communicate effectively with children of diverse cultures. These skills included:

1. A knowledge of the individual's culture.
2. An awareness of situations which may be culturally sensitive and responses appropriate in such situations.
3. An awareness of expressions to which an individual may be culturally sensitive.
4. Familiarity with figures of speech peculiar to the cultural background of the individual.

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*John Kito is Director of Bilingual Education, Anchorage, Alaska.*

*Bertha Lowe is Coordinator of Native Language Studies, Anchorage, Alaska.*



The discussion participants saw clearly that to communicate effectively, educators must come to know and appreciate their students through an understanding of their culture and familiarity with their language.

To show the impact of linguistic and cultural diversity in a "real" classroom setting, Lowe and Kito related the discussion points to the rural school child of Alaska. During their first four years, Indian children acquire the sounds, grammar, and basic vocabulary (figures of speech, connotations, etc.) of their lingual environment. It should not be surprising then that a large percentage of all native children entering the first grade speak little or no English, or that they are soon lost in an environment where lessons, instructions, and questions are expressed in a "foreign language." These children cannot understand or make themselves understood in even the most basic situations, and thus they are asked to carry an impossible burden—those who can barely understand, cannot speak, let alone write the English language. And so, the native children are immediately behind or "retarded" in their school work.

The situation becomes hopeless for many native students and they drop out of school. Parents have learned from the humiliating experiences of others; they come to believe the school system offers no meaningful program, and may fail to send their children to school at all.

In light of the drastic mismatching of education and the native child, it seems remarkable that so few districts in bicultural areas hire teachers who can instruct in a language or dialect the native child could comprehend. It was agreed by all discussion participants that bilingual-bicultural education (survival language) must be the most important educational priority in bilingual communities today.

The aim of the bilingual-bicultural education program is to include children, not exclude them. It is neither a "remedial" program nor one which seeks to "compensate" children for their supposed "deficiencies." But rather it is one which views such children as advantaged, and seeks to develop bilingualism as a precious asset rather than a defect. The simple adoption of a program recognizing a child's language and culture may help to change the way the school views the child, and help educators and communities realize that diversity is to be enjoyed and valued rather than feared or suspected.

In the bilingual program, two languages are used as mediums of instruction; a child is thus able to study academic subjects in his own language at the same time he is learning English. Bilingual programs teach children to read their own language and to understand, speak, read, and write English—in that order. As language is oral, it is speech before it is reading and writing. When a child enters school already speaking and understanding a language, he is ready to learn to read and write it. A program that prematurely forces English on a child can guarantee his eventual illiteracy in that language.

Lowe and Kito closed the discussion expressing concern that many children in this affluent land are being denied their fundamental right to equal educational opportunity. Our society must respond to the needs of these American children—and now.

*A large percentage of all Native children . . . speak little or no English.*

*Bilingual bicultural education must be the most important educational priority in bilingual communities today.*

## Spanish-speaking component

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Differences in word meanings cause conflicts.



Since language is the primary carrier of culture, the Spanish language itself was utilized as the medium of instruction in this session. By actually teaching the basics of the language (referred to as "survival language"), ample opportunity was provided for commenting on and discussing various aspects of the culture.

These Spanish language sessions were conducted by professors Leon Marquez and Juan Aragon of the University of New Mexico. Their instruction covered the most basic components of the language including select vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. One of the first discussions focused on the many commonalities between English and Spanish. The participants learned that there are hundreds of cognates in both languages that are similar and require only minor changes in spelling and pronunciation. For example, words in English that end in *-tion*, such as *situation*, end in *-cion* in Spanish.

It was pointed out, however, that it is not as imperative to understand the commonalities between languages and cultures as it is to be aware of the major differences. It is the differences that cause the conflict, the problems, and the misunderstandings. Take the word, *family*, for example. The Spanish cognate is *familia*. The two words appear to be very similar, but their meaning is quite distinct. The English word refers to the nuclear family which includes father, mother, children, and maybe grandparents. *Familia*, on the other hand, refers to a much larger set of relationships including uncles, aunts, cousins, godparents and even close friends.

A story was told by Professor Marquez about a forest ranger in northern New Mexico demonstrating the misunderstandings even apparent similarities in language can cause. A certain Juan Martinez came to the ranger and asked permission for his family to graze their cows. The ranger asked him how many cows he had, and he answered, "Two." That afternoon, the ranger passed by and saw close to 40 cows grazing; he immediately went to see Juan. "You asked me if you could graze your cows," he said, "and you told me you only had two!" "Yes," replied Juan, "I only have two; the others belong to my familia, my uncles and compadres!"

A comparison of English *time* and Spanish *tiempo* provides insight into another way that language reflect differences in cultural orientation. When the concept of time is used in reference to a clock, the dissimilarity is striking. In English, the clock runs, but in Spanish, the clock walks. (In French, the clock marches and in German, the clock functions!) Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans are not incognizant or insouciant toward time. The present moment is important and should be enjoyed. Tomorrow will be important—tomorrow.

Another comparison reflects the way cognates become dissimilar in meaning through cultural connotations. Nepotism is negatively

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viewed since it represents the practice of hiring one's relatives even though they are not qualified for the job. The Spanish *nepotismo*, however, is a positive concept. One ends up hiring a member of their extended family, but only after carefully choosing the person who is most qualified and who can also be trusted to do a good job. When John F. Kennedy appointed his brother as the chief legal adviser to the President of the United States, people from extended families applauded the decision because they understood it. He was appointing someone he loved and trusted. Other people were astonished and shocked because they viewed nepotism negatively.

Misunderstandings of cultural diversities are apparent in stereotypes applied by one culture to another. This discussion used the concept of *mañana* as an example. According to Marquez,

Language reflects differences in cultural orientation.

The concept of *mañana* is like the concept of *machismo*; it is an Anglo concept that has been attributed to us.

In essence, *mañana* really means that what I'm doing today is more important than something I'm not doing today. What I'm going to do tomorrow will be important tomorrow—but that's *mañana*.

In teaching the child of Mexican American descent, it is most important to recognize that competition is almost nonexistent in the Mexican culture. These children are not taught to compete with one another, but rather to give a helping hand.

Competition is almost nonexistent in the Mexican culture.

In responding to the question of how teachers might best communicate with the parents of Chicano students, Aragon stressed the expression of a sincere concern for the child: "If one is sincere, the style used to communicate is of secondary importance." However, teachers should strive to become knowledgeable about various cultural expressions and practices.

Dr. Aragon concluded the session by expressing concern that all Americans become sensitive to cultural distinctions; that we overcome our "hangups about a second language. We're the only country in the world that takes pride in monolingualism." We need to begin to appreciate and capitalize on the multilingual abilities demonstrated by our cultural minorities—especially as this is the key to the harmony and enrichment of a pluralistic society.

Members of a language group are very flattered, extremely flattered by your attempt to know their language. And even though you speak it devastatingly poorly, that isn't really a concern; it's the fact that you're trying that becomes a paramount issue. People are flattered by that.

## Summary of institute

Placed in the hazardous position of having to summarize group discussions dealing with extremely diverse material, problems, and viewpoints, I feel compelled to qualify my remarks. This summary is based primarily on my own observations of key points and themes brought out in the various discussion groups I visited throughout the Conference and Institute sessions.

We gathered here three days ago to initiate a series of in depth sessions dealing with the nature of linguistic and cultural diversity, and how this diversity could be used as a positive force in the education of minority exceptional children. This goal, I feel, has been successfully obtained, thanks to our excellent teaching staff and participants who were so willing to share experiences, opinions, and yes, frustrations. The approaches and strategies used in the various groups were different, but their goal was always the same—a candid exchange of ideas and viewpoints concerning the different minority languages or dialects and cultures represented in our institute group.

*Learning the language  
can illuminate the culture.*

The various approaches were dictated by the needs of the particular group. The Spanish-speaking group focused on the way in which the learning of the Spanish language can illuminate certain aspects of culture. The Black group proceeded along similar lines with main discussion on Black English and Black culture. Because of the impossibility of including aspects of over 200 Indian languages, the Indian group discussions focused primarily on Indian cultural beliefs and practices and ways of bringing about changes in curricula, teaching methods, and the school structure, and related issues in general. The Asian groups also focused mainly on cultural background because of the great diversity in Asian languages.

Many participants expressed frustration. But it was "good" in the sense that it will lead to further research and to more specific, exhaustive discussion; and understandable, because of the great complexity of the topics and the limited amount of time the groups had to deal with each unique circumstance.

The absence of the phrase "exceptional children" in some sessions also bothered some participants. I would like to point out that we were treating language and culture as one of many dimensions to be considered in the education of minority children. We were not treating linguistic and cultural differences as exceptional, but rather, attempting to demonstrate that the majority view of these differences may be responsible for the mislabeling of many minority children.

For the future, I would like to suggest the following considerations. First, CEC should continue to hold this type of preconference institute, but, as has been proposed by several other speakers, the number of days or amount of time should be extended. I think that most participants would agree that two days is hardly enough to cover the basics of cultural and linguistic diversity, much less cover the specific problems faced by teachers in everyday situations. More interaction among and across ethnic groups should be encouraged and scheduled. Second, The Council for Exceptional Children should commission in depth studies on diverse learning styles of the different minority groups, as

well as research on the specific linguistic patterns used by minority exceptional children. Third, The Council for Exceptional Children should continue to provide a leadership role in the assessment of minority exceptional children and ensure that a child is not penalized for the economic or linguistic situation into which he is born.

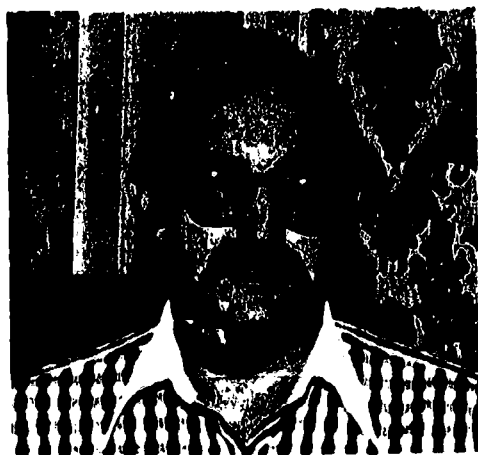
I urge those of you who participated in the Institute to spread the zeal and enthusiasm you have shown here and make others aware of the positive side of cultural and linguistic diversity. The real task lies ahead. An institute such as this one is only the very smallest beginning. We must maintain our momentum and use the force to effect changes in the attitudes of educators and in the direction and planning of curriculum. It will not be an easy task—far from it. The problems we are dealing with, as we realized in the group discussions, are extremely complex. We will experience a great deal of frustration should we decide to accept the challenge. But if we can improve the status quo, it will be well worth the effort. Now that the direction has been set, the next step is up to us. We must use the knowledge and skills we have gained.

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### III. Cultural Conflict and Cultural Diversity in Education

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I would like to share with you some notions about the culturally different child and how that child comes into conflict with the traditional curriculum in our school system. First of all, I want to commend The Council for Exceptional Children for having this particular conference. I hope, as recommendations have indicated, that it will be the first of many. I have become quite familiar with The Council for Exceptional Children. I have served on a number of national task forces dealing with mental retardation, and have been quite active at the state level with the Association for Retarded Children. And, since I am the father of a retarded daughter, I have been especially grateful for the opportunity to become actively involved on behalf of these children.

But today I am not going to speak for the Alicias as I have for many years. I appreciate the opportunity this conference affords me to speak on behalf of my other children who, unfortunately, have been termed exceptional for a very different reason. Children whose "exception" has nothing to do with brain damage, emotional disturbance, or physical handicaps of any kind—those children termed exceptional because of their cultural inheritance.

Not long ago four researchers, Maslow, Kelly, Coombs, and Rogers got together and addressed the notion of emotional crippling. The compendium of their findings was printed in a book called, *Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming*. I hope that many of you have read it. It was published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development as the Yearbook of 1962. What these four very intelligent scholars concluded was frighteningly simple. Now keep in mind that they were talking about all children—not just those who are culturally different. They concluded that children perceive themselves as they think others perceive them. Frightening, isn't it? That children perceive themselves as they think others perceive them. What they're saying is that children, in fact all human beings, more readily accept what other people think and say about them than what they think about themselves. The feedback that we give each other as we relate in different situations can determine who we are.

When children come to school, they receive many kinds of feedback. If they perceive that feedback as positive, they begin to feel that way about themselves and act positively; they become positive human beings. If, on the other hand, they get negative feedback, they begin to see themselves in a negative way. And this attitude creates a self fulfilling prophecy. They begin to behave negatively, and they become that kind of human being. Thus the title of the book: *Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming*. What a frighteningly simple notion!

What kind of perceptions do the culturally different children in our schools receive from us? (Please note that I say "us." I am assuming as much guilt and as much responsibility for the kinds of things to which I refer as I allude to anyone in this audience.) Let's take an example—a culturally different child who has been reared in a home in a Chicano community. (We could also be talking about a child from a Black, Puerto Rican, Asian, or Native American community.) From age zero to age five, this child is emotionally quite healthy; he daily gets

#### **Children Termed Exceptional Because of Cultural Inheritance**

#### **An Example**



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*He's under the spell of his first grade teacher... Here's where cultural conflict comes into play.*

#### **Definition of Culture**

*When a child's cultural orientation is different... we have a cultural conflict.*

positive reinforcement from the people who are immediately around him. Does it surprise you to know that most parents love their children? That may be difficult for us to understand when we have to deal with them all day, but these parents really care about their kids. So, by the time this child reaches five years old, he has gotten a lot of positive feedback. He has gotten so much positive feedback, he swaggers when he walks. Have you ever noticed? He is emotionally healthy.

And then this child becomes six years old. The people he has loved and trusted the most—his parents, are the first to betray him. They say to him, "Oyez, Juanito, you are going to go to school next month." And the child asks, "What's that?" "It's a nice place. You're going to learn lots of wonderful things and make lots of new friends." You see, ethnic parents do respect the institution of education and they usually tell that to their children in order to "con" them into going. What they don't tell the child is that we're committing him to six hours of imprisonment a day for the next 12 years of his life. At any rate, the child who trusts and loves his parents decides to go to school. He's made his first mistake.

One thing that characterizes first grade teachers more than anything is that they smile a lot. They're all very friendly people. And not only that, most of them are women—they're attractive and smell very nice. So the child falls helplessly and hopelessly in love with his teacher. Which is his second mistake. He's now in an institution that his parents told him was good and he's under the spell of his first grade teacher. He's in real trouble. Here's where the cultural conflict comes into play.

But before we discuss this conflict, it is important that we have a common definition of the word culture. After reviewing many sociological and anthropological concepts, we have come up with a definition that we feel is meaningful and can be applied to a group of people anywhere in the world. It is composed of five standards or criteria.

First is a common pattern of communication, sound system, or language which is unique to that group. Second is a common basic diet and method of preparing food. If the group adorns and protects their bodies with the same kinds of dress, or if the group has common costuming, they meet the third criterion of culture. And if the relationships within the group—woman-man, mother-child, uncle-niece—are predictable, or if there are common socialization patterns within the group, they have met the fourth. And finally, the group must subscribe to a common set of values and beliefs or have a common set of ethics.

Now when a child's cultural orientation is different in these five areas from the cultural standards his school accepts and teaches, we have a cultural conflict. And the child is going to lose. The child always loses when he comes into competition with institutions. So now what happens to our first grader: The first thing he is told because he happens to speak a language other than standard English, is something like, "Sonny, you're going to speak English here." Now he hasn't been degraded has he? He's simply been told that in the institution praised by his parents and under the judgment of a teacher he has come to respect, he must no longer speak his native tongue. And, as Maslow and

the other researchers predicted, the child concludes that this new sound system must be better than the one he's been using. You see how we have committed a sin of omission here? Inadvertently, we have already diminished one of the principal parts of this child's culture.

It wasn't too long ago that we beat children if they used a sound system other than that of standard English. If they spoke Navajo or Kiowa or Spanish, they were beaten. You can imagine what kind of feedback that gave them about their language. We don't do that anymore. We went from that kind of thing to making children write lines. I remember this from my first years: "I will not speak Spanish in class." And every time we Chicano kids spoke Spanish, we would have to write 500 lines and stay in during recess. This was the most motivating practice we ever had to finish our other work rapidly, because most of us used to spend every free moment we had writing "I will not speak Spanish in school. . . ." Then when we would speak it and the teacher would say, 500 lines or you don't go to recess—we'd pull out our papers and say here they are; I'm going!

But language isn't the only part of the culturally diverse child's way of life that we have been and are diminishing in the school. Let's assume that it's now diet time for our first grader. His teacher knows devastatingly well how to present this particular lesson. She's learned that especially for culturally different children, you must individualize instruction. So she's given 24 of the children seat work and has six others up with our first grader in a semicircle. She also has some of the excellent teaching aids we produce in this country to support her. And she says, "Children, today we are going to study diet. Our diet is made up of those things that we eat to build strong, healthy bodies." And with a rubber tipped pointer she taps the flip chart and says, "For example, a good breakfast consists of [pointing to a giant frosty glass of orange juice with a head of foam on the top] orange juice for Vitamin C." Then she flips to the next chart and points to a large bowl of whole grain cereals and a loaf of bread and says, "Whole grain cereal for Vitamin B. Toast, preferably whole wheat, children." She flips that chart and concludes with, "Sausage, bacon, or eggs for additional protein." No problem. That's not a bad breakfast. But our first grader is sitting in that semicircle and he's had *papas fritas con chile verde, una tasa de cafe con leche, y una tortilla*. You know what he says to himself? He says, "I understand. Those are the kinds of things I *should* eat. Those are the right things to eat. What I've been eating must not be too good." And the next time he comes to school with the sack lunch filled with the things he normally eats, he goes beneath the bleachers or behind the building to eat them in private so that his friends or the teacher won't perceive him as someone who does not eat the right things. Another sin of omission. I'm sure that teacher never intended to diminish the child's diet, but the result was exactly that.

I'll walk you through one more example. We're now in a language arts session and the teacher says to the children in the semicircle, "Children, today we're going to learn a new word. A word that is spelled f-a-t-h-e-r. It's a very special word—the name for a very impor-

*Language isn't the only part of the culturally diverse child's way of life we are diminishing.*

**One More Example**

**Things We Do to  
Diminish Cultural Diversity**

*Lessons are so often based on a one  
culture standard.*

*Nelson Naranjo discovered England.*

tant person." And the culturally different child watches as she opens the giant reader and points to a man who has just driven up in front of a house. He's got a briefcase in his right hand and he's wearing a blue serge suit and a fedora. This is father. Incidentally, he doesn't have a mustache. And coming out of the house to greet him are two children named Dick and Jane and that damn dog Spot. Our first grader says to himself, "Yeah, that man is the father to that house and those children and even that dog. That's it. I understand. . . . But my father doesn't look like that. . . . My father must be wrong." And as this child gets older, he asks his father to let him and his girl go to a dance and says, "Please don't come and get us. We'll get a ride and be home by 11:00." He doesn't want his father to show up there looking the way he does. And as he gets even older, he recognizes that his father understood all along why he didn't want him to come and get them. Boy, then it hurts.

There are some things we do to diminish the cultural diversity in our classrooms that are much more subtle than the above examples, but maybe even more devastating. In New Mexico, about 37 to 40 percent of the school population is Spanish-speaking. Ten to 11 percent are native Americans and about 3 percent are Black. The rest of the population is composed of those students who all "look alike." And yet, with this great diversity in the classrooms, the lessons are so often based on a one-culture standard.

I want to accept as much guilt as I place on others—I used to do this—but I suspect there are still teachers in New Mexico, in the fourth grade, teaching history and geography who are asking children in our state, "Who discovered America?" And are accepting only one correct answer. Suppose you are one of the 10 percent in the class who is Native American. What does an answer like Christopher Columbus do to your feeling about your heritage? Isn't it simply saying that we educators don't care about Indians or your people? That we choose to ignore the fact that you existed long and well here before the Anglos ever came to this country? And yet it would be so easy to change this question and ask, "Who was the first non-Indian to come to this country?" Why don't we do that?

Let me show you how really absurd that question is in such a setting. Joe Sando and I did some research and discovered that the first Pueblo Indian ever to go to Great Britain was a man named Nelson Naranjo from Santa Clara, New Mexico. Nelson went to the fog-shrouded island of England in 1903. He noticed that the indigenous people spoke English. So he called them Englishmen. Now suppose Joe and I wrote a new history series for England and told every child that the answer to who discovered Great Britain was Nelson Naranjo in 1903. Doesn't that make as much sense as expecting a Native American to answer Christopher Columbus?

If we could only change our curriculum to take into account the life style and heritage of all our students, how much more valid, how much richer our education in America would be. And the culturally diverse students could say, "Yeah, I know that. That's where I come from. I belong here. It's my school." They wouldn't have to hide any-

more—they'd be a part of the school and the school a part of them.

Lewis and Clark—dedicated, disciplined, altruistic men, mapped out the Pacific Northwest. I believe those things are true. But compare this treatment in history texts with the one given Francisco Coronado who mapped out an area of territory three times larger than the Northwest Territory—extending all the way from lower California to 18 miles east of the Mississippi. Coronado and his "achievements" are summed up in two paragraphs in the junior high series.

Coronado entered into the United States in what is now called Arizona. He wandered around looking for the 7 cities of Cebola. He didn't find them. He went back a dejected man, a failure; and on his way out of the country he fell off his horse and hurt his back.

Coronado was not only an inept explorer, but also a lousy horseman! Isn't that the only thing one could conclude from the way he's treated in the history books? Why don't we change that? Without diminishing the achievements of others, why don't we give Coronado the credit he deserves? Why don't we tell students what he actually did? And rather than representing him as a lousy horseman, which is conjecture at best, why don't we enrich our children's lives by describing how Coronado and his children gave us all the colorful terminology of horsemanship in the Southwest. Tell them that wild prairie horses were *mestinjoes* long before they were mispronounced, *mustangs*. And that *corral* was simply shortened from *corrale*. That they gave us *cincha* (cinch) and the word *chappas* which we mispronounce *chaps*. The Texas 10 gallon hat is a legacy from the broad-brimmed *sombreros* that protected the horsemen from sun and rain. They even gave us the word *cowboy*. They called them *vaqueros*. The Anglos tried to pronounce it everything from *baquero* to *buckaroo*. And then finally asked what it meant. They learned that it was a young man who works with cows and we've had cowboys ever since. Now why don't we teach so that all the children can relate to the history.

We deal extensively in our schools' literature courses with a dramatist named William Shakespeare—whose genius none of us doubt. But most of us who have admired Shakespeare for a great many years recognize that a contemporary who lived just across the channel and down a few miles was also great. His name was Cervantes. And characters as classic as the great comic and philosophic heroes that Shakespeare brought to life in England were brought to life almost at the same time by Cervantes in Spain. Why don't we also share Sancho Panza and Don Quixote with our students? How much richer their background in literature would be.

Without the cultural relevancy that I have described, the culturally different student who comes through our school system is bewildered and frustrated. By the time he finishes, he doesn't know what has "truth, beauty, or value"—whether it's those things he's learned in school or those things he's learned and practiced at home. And so he decides to reject those things to which he attributes his confusion and lack of success—his language, his "funny looking relatives," those bap-

*Coronado gave us words.*

*Why not Cervantes as well as Shakespeare?*

*Without the cultural relevancy . . . the culturally different student . . . is bewildered and frustrated.*

tisms, wakes, and weddings and tribal dances that took time from Key clubs and Hi Y school organizations. He ends up rejecting a large part, if not all, of his cultural background and heritage.

Most ethnic groups disappear in such a period of rejection. They never survive that stage. They enter into the mainstream with such force they become more Anglo than any Anglo ever dreamed of being.

Do we have anyone here of Italian background? Based on some of the things we have been able to discover about ethnic groups, we have come to believe that the Italian community might have been the last to have disappeared into the American mainstream as a group. There are still "hard pockets" of Italians here and there throughout the country, but as a sociological grouping, we think they might have left sometime in the early 1950s.

#### **The Italians' Dream**

The Italians, the parents of my age group in the Italian community, came to this country to fulfill the American dream of freedom and equality. But, as was true for most immigrants, they were greatly disillusioned. Eventually, they began to reject their cultural background in the hope that their children would not have to suffer the cultural obstacles that they faced. So now my age group in the Italian community, by and large, is in a stage of rejection.

#### *What is this thing Italian?*

But what about their children? Let's take a sixth grade class in a Denver School ten years ago. The teacher is taking roll and she calls out, "Johnny Gianini." And Johnny says "Here!" "Oh, you're an Italian, Johnny." And he answers, "No, ma'am. I'm an American." "Of course you are, but Gianini is a fine Italian name." "Oh yeah?" Now this young boy has come from two generations of relative social and economic security. He has the luxury to reflect on his Italian background. And when his mother, who has been in a state of rejection, assures him that he and his relatives are Italian, he begins to wonder. What is this thing Italian? My teacher said it was good. And as he gets older, he buys two Caruso records and begins listening to Verdi and reading about the glories of Rome. He begins to take pride in identifying with some very great people in his history. He's in the process of becoming pseudoacculturated. And when he gets married ten years later, 1973, the first thing he tells his new wife is, "Look, honey, you married an Italian. And in this house we eat ravioli every Tuesday, understand?" She goes to his grandmother to find out how one fixes ravioli and every Tuesday she prepares it because Johnny Gianini wants to feel Italian.

#### *He has identified the beauties of two cultures...*

There's a lot of hope in the Johnny Gianini's. We think that one day he is going to say, "Hey, there's an awful lot of beauty in that culture of mine; that's my Italian heritage. And there are a lot of great things in this other culture that I've been born into. I'm going to begin to enjoy the fruits of both cultures without apologies to anyone." And when he has identified the beauties of two cultures and has finally come to participate actively in keeping those things alive, he has moved from a state of pseudoacculturation to become bicultural.

I know many Chicanos who are now in this stage. They make it a point to listen at least twice a week to the Spanish language radio. They want to know what Reyes Tijerina is up to and Corky Gonzales and Jose



Angel Gutierrez. And they eat enchiladas every Friday, come hell or high water, because they want to feel Chicano. And they even go out to their patios and practice making gritos so they can do them spontaneously at the fiesta.

We now know enough about how children learn that we as educators can begin to meet the bicultural needs of our society and eliminate the trauma and tragedy of those first stages that culturally different people here in America have had to go through. We can allow boys and girls of different cultures to enjoy life in America without demanding that they strip themselves of all vestiges of diversity by coming through school filtration systems. And not only will we prevent the emotional crippling of some of our finest youths, but we will see a new and exciting dimension added to the human mosaic. All Americans, all sides, will come out winners.

Emotionally healthy human beings grow up to become good citizens. Good citizens have a tendency to build strong countries. I think that's what we all want. *Mill gracias.*

*We can now begin to meet the bicultural needs of our society.*

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## **IV. Ethnic Perspective on Cultural Diversity**

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**Language, Cultural Contrasts,  
and the Black American**

**Learning Style of the Mexican American**

**Asian Culture and Learning Styles**

**Educating the Native American:**

**Conflict in Values**

**The Asian American: A Search for Identity**

**The Puerto Rican in the New York City Schools**



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## Language, cultural contrasts, and the black american

### A Selective Contrastive Analysis

*This country has built an entire educational system based on assumptions.*

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Orlando Taylor

Although my primary professional activities are not in the area of exceptional children per se, my work in communication disorders and linguistics often brings me into contact with individuals who, for a variety of reasons, are perceived as having "exceptional" educational problems. I simply see them from another perspective—from my own professional vantage point.

Using language as my point of departure, I will attempt to conduct a selective contrastive analysis of Black Americans in relationship to the dominant culture. (As I make the case from the language point of view, I hope that it will be understood that it is possible for one to use other behaviors for contrasting cultures.)

But first, why do cross-cultural contrastive analyses of Black Americans or any other cultural group in the United States? I suggest that there are three reasons why we should contrast the various cultural groups in the country. First, these contrastive studies would enable us to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of our wide range of citizens (their life styles, family relationships, world views, etc.) and as a result help us avoid erroneous assumptions in assessing and providing educational opportunities for children from diverse cultures.

Second, contrastive analyses can help us improve other teaching strategies. Throughout the history of American education, the thrust has been toward teaching the "average" or "standard" child, who is largely nonexistent. Yet, by definition the notion of the exceptional child presumes an underlying assumption about what is "normal" since the exceptional child obviously deviates from some norm. This country has built an entire educational system based on assumptions—assumptions about language, about learning styles, about cognitive development, about aspirations, etc. However, we have a multicultural population. An understanding of cultural distinctions between a given population of children and so called average children is crucial if educators are to have a clearer perception of all their students.

The third reason for cross-cultural contrastive analyses is that they can help give educators insights into how they can assist young learners, especially those from cultural minorities, develop positive self concepts and a sense of pride about themselves and their cultures. Presumably, this development can occur by increasing the students' awareness of their culture.

In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in Black cultural awareness. However, when asked to define what it is, many people are only able to discuss some of the more common, more commercial aspects of the culture—corn rolls, dashikis, the blues, soul food, spirituals, jitterbugging, chitterlings, etc. To them, these topics represent the totality of Black culture. However, there is far more to Black culture than these overt aspects, and some elements which are thought to be uniquely Black may, in fact, be extensions of other cultures. Or, they may be amalgamations of an original African culture with the characteristics of the geographical regions where Blacks reside.

As stated, language is an excellent behavioral system to use for performing a contrastive analysis of a culture. After all, language is the



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vehicle through which most information is transmitted. The concepts, axioms, philosophies, etc., associated with the various disciplines taught in our schools are expressed through the medium of language. Further, students are required to recite orally and to write themes, term papers, and examinations in the language of these disciplines. Thus, language can be described as a behavior which permeates all of the academic disciplines and professions.

Language is also an expression of a culture. If one makes the case that language represents the underlying ideas and concepts of a culture, then as cultures vary so, of course, will languages. Now, as I suggested earlier, there are certain assumptions about culture on which our educational system is based. If you accept the claim that these assumptions are based largely on a monocultural standard, then one must conclude that the language used in education is also monocultural. Since there is obviously cultural and language diversity in the United States, it is possible to assert, therefore, that there is probably a great deal of language confusion in the American classroom. Yet, we use a "standard" language in the tests, materials, and strategies to teach and evaluate our children.

I think it is significant to note that there would not have been a conference of this type 10 years ago. We can easily recognize the legitimacy of language as an important topic in discussing cultural variation at this moment in time. But, this has not always been the case. For instance, large numbers of minority group children have been in the nation's schools for several decades, but they have generally not been considered important enough to be of major academic consideration and interest. What has caused this change? There are a lot of reasons; I'd like to mention four.

One of the major reasons for such interest and study is the civilian disorders or, more appropriately, the civilian rebellions that we have experienced recently throughout the United States, largely on the part of the nation's cultural minorities. These uprisings have helped to alert the country that these minorities are no longer willing to be ignored in any area, including language and culture.

A second reason is that the "war on poverty" developed during the Kennedy administration generated considerable interest—and funds—for a variety of programs for the so called "disadvantaged" members of our society. Since so little previous research had focused on the lan-

#### **Language as a Behavioral System**

*Language is an expression of a culture.*

*Minorities are no longer willing to be ignored.*

*... individuals from these cultures  
have begun to demand education on  
their own terms.*

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guage and cultural underpinnings for these populations, there was a sharp increase of scholarly and scientific interest in the language and culture of the culturally different.

Another reason for the upsurge of interest in the study of language and culture is the changing character of the population, particularly in the school populations of central cities, from predominantly white to predominately brown, black, yellow, and red. This change has given rise to the issue of busing. Also, an increasing number of Blacks and other minorities have been elected to state legislatures and school boards, and individuals from these cultures have begun to demand education on their own terms. These developments have generated increased concern about language and culture.

A fourth reason for the current rise in cultural studies is associated with pure academic interest, especially in the disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, and sociology. For example, one can become a specialist in cultural anthropology and, more recently, in urban anthropology.



Sociologists have begun to examine the various minority communities based on cultural considerations.

The current interest in the study of culture has included Black culture and language. Indeed, Blacks now represent the nation's largest minority and, as already implied, the majority in many places. But this interest in the study of Black culture is not new, even though the approach to the study is radically different.

For example, in the early history of Europeans' exposure to West Africans, there was a tendency on the part of the Europeans (mainly the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English) to look upon the Africans as being noncultured or highly primitive. Two writers, Jordan (1968) and Fanon (1964) have written major works on this subject. The brilliant piece by Jordan, *White over Black*, is an extensive analysis of whites' attitudes toward Blacks from the 16th through 19th centuries. Using such diverse sources as literature, seamen's diaries, and scholarly works, Jordan shows that from the earliest contacts, Europeans were both intrigued and negative toward Blackness. Specifically, Jordan shows how white came to connote purity, cleanliness, goodness, honesty, etc.:

... Whiteness, moreover, carried a special significance for Elizabethan Englishmen: it was, particularly when complemented by red, the color of perfect human beauty, especially female beauty. This ideal was already centuries old in Elizabeth's time, and their fair Queen was its very embodiment: her cheeks were "roses in a bed of lillies." (Elizabeth was naturally pale and like many ladies then and since she freshened her "lillies" at the cosmetic table.) [p. 8].

By contrast, blackness conjured up thoughts of evil, darkness, and ignorance and thus in the *Oxford English Dictionary* before the 16th century, "black" meant such things as soiled, dirty, foul, malignant, death, disastrous, sinister, iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, disgraceful, etc.

Fanon wrote that studies of Black culture undertaken during this period did little to enlighten Europe, and instead they justified slavery, exploitation, and colonialism on the basis of the proposed inferiority of African cultures. After all, "better to be slave in a civilized land than free in the jungle." Thus, virtually all African studies have been undertaken with the purpose of discrediting the legitimacy of African culture.

By the 20th century, a change in the attitude toward Africa had developed—at least in the United States. A Black culture was slowly, although reluctantly, being developed. Its possible existence, however, was frequently viewed as a threat by the dominant white society. This attitude played into the hands of those who supported "Jim Crowism"; hence, Black culture was still typically represented in negative terms.

Incidentally, Jim Crowism was a 19th century phenomenon in the United States. It did not appear until after the Reconstruction. (It will be recalled that the overwhelming number of Blacks in the United States lived in the slave South before this time. Free Blacks in the Northern states were too few in number to pose a major threat to the white population.) During Reconstruction, Blacks enjoyed a "golden era" of civil

### Historical European Attitudes

African studies have been undertaken with the purpose of discrediting African culture.

Jim Crowism was a 19th century phenomenon after Reconstruction.

rights, a sort of punishment of the Southern states for losing the Civil War. As will be recalled, for example, this was the period when Blacks held seats in numerous Southern legislatures for the first time in history. Indeed, the two US senators from the state of Mississippi were Black, as were senators from several other Southern states. Public accommodations for Blacks was a way of life and guaranteed by a Federal Civil Rights Law in the 1880's.

After Reconstruction, however, numerous anti-Black codes were passed throughout the Southern and Border States. Because of the rise of industrialization in the South (and the beginning decline of agrarianism) many Blacks moved from rural areas to the cities and thus came into direct competition with the white labor force. Many forms of formal segregation developed in the South and in other parts of the country. You will recall that this was the era of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 and the era in which the Ku Klux Klan was born.

#### Impact of "Talking Movies"

There was another significant development at this time that also had negative repercussions on the study of Black culture in the United States. It was the birth of the "talking movies." In 1915, D. W. Griffith produced one of the first talkies, *Birth of a Nation*. This well known and highly attended film focused on Black cultural inferiority and used language as a major indicator of cultural deficiency.

Many scholars of this period—Ambrose Gonzales, George Krapp, Guy L. Johnson, Henry Reed and others—also reflected prevailing white prejudices in their works, important among which was the widely held belief that Blacks were only capable of speaking a "substandard" language. For example, Reed Smith (1924) concluded his study of Black language by stating that what the Africans seemed to have done was to embed English sounds, grammar, tone, etc. into their native phonetic tendencies. Presumably, this "fact," coupled with the baby talk the slave masters presumably had to use in order to communicate with slaves, produced what one writer called "probably the worst English in the history of the world."

Racial goals are stated in terms of helping . . . minorities obtain experiences necessary . . . to be like white people.

The period from the late 1950's through the 1960's might appropriately be called the Cultural Deprivation Era, the period during which the urban rebellions really began to upset the status quo and marshaled in a new era of Black/white relations. There has been a marked increase in the study of Black culture after these rebellions. But implicit in many of these studies is the notion that, after all, the culture of the United States is really the white man's culture. Thus, the racial goals of the nation are frequently stated in terms of helping Blacks and other minorities obtain the experiences necessary to be like other Americans, i.e., to be like white people—not the inverse, mind you. Some Blacks are perceived as being "ready" for integration—those who are reasonably well assimilated or capable of being readily assimilated into the new culture. The "nonready" are the "culturally deprived Black people." They are seen as needing a special push and in some cases an early push to help them get rid of the contamination which has resulted from exposure to the deprived culture. Unfortunately, many Blacks have jumped on the bandwagon. Thus, in helping to prevent cultural

deprivation among Blacks, these same persons are also preventing Black culture from being developed and exposed in the United States.

We are now approaching a new era. It is the era of cultural pluralism. Different strokes for different folks! After extensive study, many scholars have come to the conclusion that the United States was never a single culture; it was not and is not a melting pot. In reality, it is a country which allows a wide variety of people an opportunity to live together in a common geographical space, maintain most of their native culture, and at certain moments in time, interact with individuals from other cultures according to economic, social, or educational needs. Thus in New York, the presumed capital of the melting pot, we see bastions of cultural enclaves--China Town, Little Italy, Brownsville, Harlem, Spanish Harlem, etc. In other words, we see individuals maintaining their cultural patterns even though they interact with the larger society in a variety of ways. However, this maintenance of cultural patterns rarely carries over into our school systems. If one is different in the typical school system, he is usually viewed as a special problem. And language, a major basis for cultural diversity, is a major basis for this "problem."

All groups of people on this planet have a language, all Black people have language. The language of Blacks around the world, like all languages, conform to a set of universal rules. But there is no such thing as one Black language. There is no such thing as one white language. And, there is no one way to speak English or any other language. In other words, there are varieties of English. There are varieties of American Black English (see Fasold & Wolfram, 1970; Taylor, 1974) and American White English. All of them overlap. Thus, there is no basis for linguistic stereotyping of the type made popular by *Amos and Andy*.

However, we could legitimately do a contrastive analysis of each variety. For instance, we could describe the sound patterns of the varieties of Black speech in this country or, for that matter, the vocabulary patterns and the grammatical patterns. But the critical questions are these. To what extent is language used to make inaccurate statements about cultures and miseducate children, Black children in particular? What is the mismatch between the language accepted by schools and the language that a substantial portion of Black children bring to schools? What is the impact of language diversity on the performance of Black children on standardized tests? How does language diversity affect the attitudes of teachers? Is an awareness of language diversity reflected in educational materials? What is the extent to which inaccurate diagnoses, particularly with respect to three areas--learning disabilities, mental retardation, and perceptual handicaps--are related to an ignorance of the unique linguistic features of large numbers of Blacks?

Let me give an example of the impact a simple pronunciation difference can have in some areas. Most Southern Americans do not make a distinction in pronouncing the words *pen* and *pin*. (I'm talking about both white and Black Southerners.) If they are given a perceptual test such as the *Wepman Auditory Discrimination Test*, where each item has

#### New Era of Cultural Pluralism

*If one is different . . . he is usually viewed as a special problem.*

*Is language used to make inaccurate statements about cultures and miseducate children?*

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#### **Pronunciation Differences and Test Bias**

approximately a four month acquisitional value, speakers of southern English, white or Black, are likely to score four months lower in perceptual skills than Northern kids of comparable ability if they are expected to hear the words *pen* and *pin* as being different. Now if that problem is multiplied by 5, the number of similarly biased items against speakers of Black English, we would expect a 20 month error in determining the perceptual abilities of certain Black children. Obviously, the problem is a linguistic test bias, not perceptual dysfunction.

Another example of linguistic bias can be found in the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test* (PPVT). Not only does it purport to evaluate aspects of the students' language skills; it provides an IQ equivalency. In virtually every research report in the literature which has used this test to assess the vocabulary development of Black children, the data have shown that they are approximately two years behind the average for white children. This presumed "fact" could lead one (and has lead many) to conclude that Black children are two years dumber than white children.

However, if one investigates the items that Black children fail disproportionately in comparison with white children, one discovers that the test contains numerous linguistic biases. For instance, one item which is disproportionately failed by Black children is the word, *wasp*, spelled w-a-s-p and referring to a stinging insect. At age level, Black children typically have a pass-fail ratio on this item of about 30 percent pass and 70 percent fail. The ratio ought to be something on the order of 70 percent pass and 30 percent fail. Anybody from the South, Black or white, knows that w-a-s-p is pronounced as though it were spelled w-a-l-t-z. Now, what's the big deal? It is simply that one might fail the *wasp* item and therefore lose 3 months of mental and vocabulary age growth for linguistic bias factors which are totally unrelated to language acquisition or intelligence.

Another disproportionately missed item on the PPVT is the word *ambulance*, typically pronounced by examiners with primary stress on the first syllable. Now why do Black children miss this word so frequently? It probably has something to do with the fact that Black children frequently pronounce the word with primary stress on the final syllable. Again, the failure and the subsequent loss of three months of score value is related to linguistic bias and not language deficiency.

All of the above examples show how simple pronunciation differences can influence scores obtained by certain Black children on tests of language, intelligence, and auditory perception. The problems are compounded when other linguistic factors are added, especially grammar. The results are unfair, cruel, and racist. Not only do they deflate children's scores in these important areas, but they help to establish a low achievement expectancy in their teachers and probably a low concept of themselves. The total phenomenon is institutionalized into a diagnostic label and a special "place" in the education system. Thus, the Black child is penalized by the teachers, the tests, and the very institutions which are supposed to help him develop his innate capabilities so that he can acquire the skills that are needed to make meaningful contributions to our pluralistic society.

It appears to me that The Council for Exceptional Children ought to be about the business of providing the resources (and that means money) and the administrative and research know-how to do a crash study on the problem of linguistic biases in tests, materials, and teachers, especially as they articulate with Black and other minority children. This goal cannot be accomplished by people with "good intentions" who get together and meet once a year. I am talking about turning around decades of test construction, history, and tradition. I am talking about the need to have paid professional people on your national office staff, like most other professional organizations, with a portfolio on Black and minority affairs. I am talking about a staff that can conduct in-house research, organize regional conferences, get study groups together, and publish documents and bibliographies on a variety of topics pertaining to language variety in the United States. Only an effort of this magnitude is likely to bring about the educational, attitudinal, and institutional changes necessary to remove language as a factor in the cultural annihilation and miseducation of Black and minority group children. The task is admittedly great, but I believe it to be necessary, possible, and morally correct.

*The test results [compounded by linguistic factors]... are unfair, cruel, and racist.*

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## Learning style of the mexican american

### Heterogeneity of the Mexican American Population

*Many Mexican American youngsters never even get to the first grade.*

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The Mexican American, or Chicano, is the second largest ethnic minority in the United States. This group constitutes three-fifths of the 10 million persons of Spanish origin in the United States. It is misleading to assume that this group constitutes a homogeneous cultural entity. In fact, if anything, the most significant aspect of the Mexican American population is its heterogeneity. It is diverse in its social, psychological, and emotional makeup. But at the same time, one cannot deny that this group has certain common values. The Mexican American group, as a culturally distinct group, would not have survived long if it had not had these strong common values. These values have served to orient the Mexican American individuals and group on the societal mores of their culture, and have served to generate the norms of proper conduct for the members of the group. These values or rules of conduct make up the common system which holds the Mexican American cultural group together, and which sets it apart.

Unfortunately, there are other aspects that mark the Mexican American population as distinct. Let me quote some educational statistics on this group. The average number of school years completed by the Chicano is 9.6, which is significantly below the national average of 12.1 (1971). In Texas nearly 50 percent of the Mexican American pupils drop out before they reach the twelfth grade. In California fewer than two out of every three Mexican American students ever graduate from the twelfth grade. Even more startling is the fact that many Mexican American youngsters never even get to the first grade. Four out of five of those who do get to first grade fall two grades behind their Anglo classmates by the time they reach the fifth grade. There are many more figures I could read off—the poor performance in achievement tests, below-grade reading levels, the high number of retentions, but I think I have made my point. It is obvious that the manner in which the schools have attempted to meet the needs of the Mexican American has been a dismal failure.

Stated another way, one could say that the schools have been able to teach effectively only children who have certain cultural and behavioral characteristics. There has been an attempt by some to convey the notion that children who do not learn in conformity to the schools' teaching are themselves responsible for their failure. There are those who hold the view that minority group children have certain deficits or innate deficiencies which prevent them from progressing or performing well in school. But if one stops to consider this, it does not seem logical to suppose that nature distributed intellectual abilities according to race or ethnic groups.

There are others who have chosen to broaden their consideration of other factors—the sociocultural environment, the linguistic aspect, the affective aspect, and recently there has been a great deal of interest shown in the idea of learning style. Learning style, as it will be used in

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this presentation, refers to those traits which serve to motivate or inhibit a child in an instructional situation. These traits develop in response to the socialization techniques employed in his home environment during his early years. By the time a child starts to school his values and manner of responding to his environment are already fairly well established. Furthermore, these will clearly bear the stamp of the cultural environment in which he spent his first five years. For our purposes, I would like to explore this notion of learning style a little further.

Let's begin with the case of Juanito, or Pablo, or Pedro, who is attending school for the first time. He comes to school with a language that has served him quite well for his first five years and with possibly some knowledge of English. He has grown up in a Mexican American family with traditional values unique to this culture and has been socialized in this culture. He goes to a school which reflects the values of the dominant society. This child comes in having a different language and a different culture from that of the school. He finds himself in a strange and threatening situation, not only with the need to master a new language, but to make immediate use of it in order to function as a student. Moreover, many of the social relationships and cultural attitudes on which the total school program is based are completely outside his experience since the schools have made no effort to use the wealth of experiences he brings with him. The erroneous presumption is made that this child has existed in a cultural vacuum prior to the time he entered school. As the child moves on through school, the misconception continues that when he leaves the school he goes out into his neighborhood and into another cultural vacuum. There is little or no acknowledgement of the cultural values, experiences, and background that the child already possesses.

At the same time, because the school has failed to match the methods and curriculum to the child's language, cultural background, and learning style this child comes to be regarded as deficient. Time and again situations occur in the classroom in which a child responds to a task in a manner that appears random or stupid. Yet, if we really stop to

#### **Learning Styles and Motivation**

*The erroneous assumption is made that this child has existed in a cultural vacuum before he entered school.*

*Behavior is never random.*

consider, behavior is never random. There always seems to be a reason for a child or an individual performing the way he does. But, the conclusion is made that the youngster lacks intellectual ability. Never is an attempt made to ask the question, What is this child doing? What makes him react to this particular learning situation in this manner? Is he using a different point of reference?

I realize that in most cases this is not a conscious or deliberate omission on the part of the adult who happens to be dealing with the child. Rather, it may be a lack of awareness that certain cultural forces influence the manner in which an individual perceives and responds in a school environment. Or it may even be a misinterpretation of how these recognized differences manifest themselves. As an example, let's take a closer look at the concept of present-time orientation.

#### **Present-Time Orientation**

Time and again (throughout this conference) it has been brought out that the Mexican American is present-time oriented. Many have inferred from this that the Mexican American person irresponsibly lives in the present and lets tomorrow take care of itself. This is how someone who is not familiar with the Mexican culture would see it. But it is not that way at all. Rather, it is a total absorption in the task at hand; that whatever one is doing here and now is important and deserves one's whole attention. When one task is finished with painstaking care, then the next task will be attended to. But what happens in our schools? A child who works well, but doesn't perform fast or doesn't value speed gets penalized. The rewards go to the child who does things well, but who also does them fast. Many times I have observed in the schools children who do fine work in numbers, in art, or in other activities but take time to do it well. Nonetheless, they are penalized because they never get an opportunity to finish.

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I don't mean to imply that all classroom activities should revolve around one child, but I do think that the teacher must provide opportunities where the child can succeed. He must create situations where speed is not the most important factor and where the child can perform at his own rate and give, instead, significance to the processes that the child uses to attain a goal. At the same time, the teacher can be creating situations in which the child is encouraged to work faster. I think that if you introduce a little of each, the child will have much to gain and no one will lose, and consequently, everyone in the classroom gains with this type of atmosphere.

The fifth report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1973) documents the fact that teachers fail to involve Mexican American children. This is due, in part, to the negative expectations that teachers hold for Mexican American children. A typical reaction seems to be that these children are dull and inept because they do not respond or participate in class. There is a failure to understand that the Mexican American child has a certain reluctance to compete or come up with the answer first. As a rule, a Chicano youngster is reticent in discussing in class even when he knows the answer. Unless he is praised and encouraged to participate he may not take part or contribute in class. Thus, this chain of events activates the cycle of frustration, lowered expectations, and poor performance that characterizes so many of the Mexican American students.

The term noncompetitive is often used to describe the Mexican American. This term needs to be qualified by considering the context in which it occurs. Perhaps the best way of doing this is to relate a study conducted by Kagan and Madsen (1971) in which groups of Anglo, Mexican, and Mexican American children were asked to respond to a task under conditions of cooperation and competition. They found that when rewards could only be achieved through cooperation, Mexican children were the most successful, with Mexican American and Anglo coming next in that order. It was also found that those Mexican American youngsters who could be characterized as middle class did just as poorly as the middle class Anglo child on these tests of cooperation versus competition. However, when these children were instructed to compete against each other, the Anglo children were the most competitive, followed by the Mexican American, and again the least competitive was the Mexican child. Apparently Anglo children are more often reinforced for achievement through competitive behavior, while the Mexican and Mexican American are typically reinforced for achievement through cooperation. Thus, a teacher might create situations in which the child is made to feel that the class is working as a group and also is allowed to give and receive help.

A cultural attribute of the Mexican American that has been given emphasis in most of the sessions of this conference is his strong family loyalty and great concern for interpersonal relationships. Research data supports this statement. Ramirez, Price-Williams, and Beman (in progress) have reported a study in which a comparison was made of socialization practices used by Mexican American and Anglo-American

*The Mexican American child has a certain reluctance to compete.*

*When rewards could only be achieved through cooperation, Mexican children were the most successful.*

#### **Family Loyalty**

*Mexican American children are encouraged to identify with and to achieve for the family.*

*A more personalized style of teaching . . . would be more effective.*

#### **Traditional Folktales**

mothers of the same socioeconomic class. The results indicated that Chicano mothers were more nurturing toward and protective of their children. Also, loyalty to the family and dependency on it was encouraged.

Another indication of the strong family ties is shown by the following results found in an extension of the same study. Mexican American and Anglo fourth grade children were asked to tell stories of pictures of education scenes. These stories were then analyzed in two different ways. One was with respect to the desire to achieve in school for benefit to the self, and the other was with respect to the desire to achieve so that the family would benefit. When the stories were analyzed for desire to achieve so that the achievement had benefit for the self, the Anglo children scored higher. However, when the stories were scored for desire to achieve so that the family would be proud, the Mexican American children scored higher than the Anglo children. One conclusion that can be drawn from this is that Mexican American children are encouraged to identify more with the family and to achieve for the family while Anglo children are encouraged to be individualists and to achieve for themselves. These findings have implications for the manner in which one might motivate a child to perform well on a given task.

The child from a traditional Mexican American family is reared in a structured family environment where the roles of dominance and submission are fairly well defined. This apparently influences the types of relationships that the child seeks with other adults. This is shown by an analysis made on the types of relationships that the children preferred to have with the authority figures such as teachers and parents. The findings showed that Mexican American children, more so than Anglo children, preferred relating with authority figures who took a personal interest in them and who were sincerely concerned for their welfare. This suggests that a more personalized style of teaching with substantial encouragement and support would be a more effective manner of dealing with these children.

Further analysis of data in the same study indicates that the storytelling tradition of the Mexican American has apparently resulted in an intellectual advantage for the Mexican American child. Stories told by Mexican American and Anglo children using stimulus cards were compared on the length and detail used in the story. It was found that the Chicano children had told longer stories and had included more characters than the Anglo children.

This brings to mind an incident which demonstrates the strong storytelling tradition and the implication it carries for utilizing the valuable resources that the culturally diverse child presents. Just recently a doctoral student was trying to obtain some Spanish language samples of children residing in northern New Mexico. The student had carefully selected magazine illustrations that he thought would elicit conversation from the children. He tried these with several of the children, receiving only minimal responses. However, when these children were asked to relate a story that they had heard their parents or grandparents



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tell, these children eagerly launched into stories of ghosts, folktales, and a variety of family episodes, inserting elaborate descriptions and detail. This occurrence is interesting, also, in view of the fact that many claim that Spanish speaking children not only have a limited facility in English, but in Spanish as well.

*Know a child's cognitive,  
motivational, and human relational  
styles.*

*Recognize that the style by which a  
person learns is very much a part of  
that person.*

I have tried to describe some ways in which the cultural orientation of the Mexican American child might manifest itself in his mode of presenting himself in the classroom.

Often in a presentation of this type, one goes away with the feeling that no specific solution has been offered, but merely a description of the problem has been given. But even this response has certain implications. Maybe it is a reflection of our feeling that a cultural difference is some kind of disease that needs to be treated with a specific drug. Perhaps we should stop laboring under the impression that we must create new intellectual structures and start concentrating on how to get the child to transfer skills he possesses to the new situation.

Or even better, how about structuring the new situation to fit the skills he already possesses? It is in this context that relevant materials become important. Relevant materials are those to which the child already applies skills which the teacher seeks to have applied to his own context. This requires more than a casual acquaintance with one's students. One would want to know all there is to know about a child's cognitive, motivational, and human relational styles. One approach becoming popular in the classroom is the inquiry method. The child is given a task and is encouraged to go it alone and discover on his own, but with the knowledge that a resource person is always available. But if a teacher knows that a child works better in a closer relationship with an authority figure, he wouldn't thrust him suddenly into this type of situation but would guide the child gradually into it.

Does he enjoy telling stories about his family and neighborhood? Then record some of these and use them as meaningful materials to instruct him in the reading skills. Is he highly motivated to achieve because of his desire to please his family? Then an approving note to his family regarding his work would be more meaningful than a gold star, or reward him with something he can share with his whole family. Does he learn better when the materials contain some human content? Then devise ways in which you can bring in this aspect, as was the case of the chemistry teacher who drew faces on the diagrams of the molecules to help a student better understand the processes in chemistry.

The point is, we must recognize that the style by which a person learns is very much a part of that person. If we seek to pull him away from this, then we are isolating him from the whole of his experience, his family, and his community since these are major determinants in his manner of perceiving and behaving. Until the schools learn to recognize the fact that people vary in their cognitive styles and plan different ways of teaching the requisite skills to all children they will not come close to providing equality of educational opportunity.

Our task then, as Cole, Gay, Glick, and Sharp (1971) state, is "to determine the conditions under which various cognitive processes are manifested and to develop techniques for seeing that these conditions occur in the appropriate educational setting."

In so doing, we can provide the culturally diverse child with the tools necessary to achieve success within his own community, and in the dominant society—should he so choose.



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## Asian culture and learning styles

Before discussing aspects of Asian learning styles and culture, I would first like to establish some underlying principles which have a direct bearing on where we as Asians have come from, where we are currently, and where we might go in the future.

All humans require time and energy for basic biological, physiological, and psychological needs. With the finite limits of available time and energy, increased attention to one area of human development cannot be accomplished without sacrificing needed time and energy for another.

It should also be noted that time and energy are fundamental building blocks for the development of what Erickson (1950) refers to as self-identity. Through interaction with meaningful others and the self exploratory process of such relationships, one can ultimately achieve a crystalization of "who am I." This maturational process usually takes an individual into his young adult years. Should an individual lag in his maturational process, the time and energy requirements are simply extended, but at the expense of delaying other forms of self development.

People of color raised in a society in which they constitute a minority in absolute numbers are referred to as racial minorities. Though valid, this definition leaves unstated the affective descriptions or stereotypic remarks which are most often used by the majority to identify dissimilar groups. These stereotypes basically reflect lack of knowledge, sensitivity, or appreciation of cultural group differences, except in those instances in which they meet the specific needs of the majority group. Examples of the latter include not only the acceptance, but also the institutionalization of Black athletes and musicians, Oriental and Mexican restaurants, the Chinese hand laundry, Indian jewelry and basket weaving. Such qualified acceptance of racial minorities carries with it innuendos of racial limitations and stereotyping which through the years have promoted concepts of racial inferiority, racial contamination, and labor markets to be exploited. Minority groups, obvious by their relatively fewer numbers and easily identifiable physical characteristics, exist "on-hand" to promote the concept of white elitism.

Under such circumstances, a minority individual must, as a prerequisite for realistic coexistence with the majority group, be cognizant of the value systems operant within the larger society. A failure to recognize and adopt these values carries with it the possibility of exclusion, isolation, and rejection. From the standpoint of psychological and physical survival, such circumstances force people of color to become sensitive and adaptive to the response of others and only secondarily aware of those feelings developing within themselves. Stated somewhat differently, the survival needs of the minority individual require that he constantly maintain a monitoring system which is outwardly directed. Although he is not always distrustful, his need for survival is basic and can quickly evoke suspicion regarding the majority group. Such a life-

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### Conditions for Coexistence

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*A minority individual must . . . be cognizant of the value systems operant within the larger society.*



style is best described as cultural paranoia and is an aspect of the acculturation process (Sata, 1973a). And the energy requirement necessary for maintaining an other-directed lifestyle is not without cost to the individual. This lifestyle takes away time and energy potentially available for increased appreciation and understanding of oneself, or for the crystallization of one's personal identity. For many people of color, self identity maturation is delayed due to the requirement for reappportioning a fixed amount of available energy in order to maintain an adaptive thinking, feeling, and behavioral response to others rather than to themselves.

It is true that similar circumstances also affect subsegments of the majority group, but it is the aspect of color that inescapably sets racial minorities apart from ready access to the mainstream of America and perpetuates the duality of the haves and the have-nots.

The white majority has greater potential energy available for inner-directed understanding and self development than the minority, and faces less conflict with existing values within the white society. The author recognizes that certain situations do exist within white American society in which various groups are deemed deviant and selected for less than egalitarian treatment. Such groups include the mentally ill, the mentally retarded, the criminal, and the tubercular patient. The singular difference separating and contrasting this group with people of color is that, through established societal methods, the former may lose their deviancy, become indistinguishable and assimilate after educational, medical, and social rehabilitation. Therefore, acceptance and inclusion are both quantitatively and qualitatively different for the minority segments of our society; the issues of color are inescapable for most racial minorities and consistently work to their disadvantage vis-a-vis the majority culture (Sata, 1973b).

There is a peculiar problem facing most Asian communities. As an Asian comes to understand his cultural roots and develops a sense of feeling, thinking, and behaving Asian, he begins to feel secure and accepted within his basic referent group. His lifestyle when congruent with his cultural roots and community norms is natural and anxiety-free, and time and energy are available for other self development priorities. Yet, even with a well crystallized self identity, the individual may find himself facing considerable conflict with the majority community, particularly when their values or their prioritization of values differ. In the presence of conflict, the individual invariably feels anxiety, and, in response to these feelings, he often becomes reactionary or defensive. The individual's lifestyle is usually so altered in the presence of value conflicts that he no longer functions in a natural manner. For example, most Asians behave quite differently when they are with cultural peers than when they are with non-Asians.

The conflicts experienced by Asians vis-a-vis whites and the subsequent behaviors resulting from such value conflicts become the basis upon which generalizations and stereotypes about Asians are developed. It is no wonder that Asians are frequently seen as formalistic, unspontaneous, relatively uncommunicative, inscrutable, etcetera. We

*For many people of color, self identity maturation is delayed due to the ... energy [needed] to maintain an adaptive thinking, feeling, and behavioral response to others.*

#### **Cultural Differences and Conflict**

*Demonstration and confrontation  
tend to be a less desirable option for  
the Asian. . .*

*Education becomes critically  
important as it is the key for entry  
into the mainstream of American  
society.*

Asians are indignant at being stereotyped by the dominant society, but we ignore the fact that by and large we are the individuals who provide the data upon which such stereotypes are based. In other words, given the proper climate, Asians might be as spontaneous and authentic within the larger society as they are in their own community.

The road to social change for Asians, for the most part, tends to be disassociated with those taken by other third world groups. We have been conspicuous in our lack of significant involvement in the civil rights movement—at Montgomery, Alcatraz, Wounded Knee, and in the vineyards and fields of California. In short, demonstration and confrontation tend to be a less desirable option for the Asian than other modalities of engagement such as legal or legislative actions, or negotiation.

I don't want to place a value judgment on our collective histories. I feel that such group activities (or lack of activities) are simply a manifestation of the cultural influences and teachings within our respective families. I have been struck, for instance, by the growing number of Asians in politics. Currently, there is in my community an Asian state legislator, a city council president, a superior court judge, as well as Asian candidates for mayor and several seats on the city council.

In effect, Asians model behavior through their collective actions, and influence their children on socially prescribed or unsanctioned behaviors. Our histories tend to communicate the value of overcoming disadvantages by working hard, staying out of trouble, tending to business and succeeding within the established system. To this end, education becomes critically important as it is the key for entry into the mainstream of American society. This has been true for a limited number of Asians; some have tasted the fruits of education.

If all individuals have the right and potential to enjoy the benefits of American life, what is the fate of those Asians who choose, voluntarily or involuntarily not to pursue education beyond the secondary level? Work and social relationships put them into direct contact with a socioeconomic cross section of the majority society, and with all of its attendant problems. Inasmuch as racial prejudice is correlated with inadequate knowledge, insensitivity, and an absence of interest in understanding dissimilar groups, the phenomena of blatant prejudice appears much more often within less than college-educated population. Employment opportunities may be restricted for a person of color, union membership may be difficult, and the incidences of unpleasanties are substantially increased. In effect, the American dream is less realizable for Asians who do not strive for professional careers through education.

An awareness of social class distinctions is critically important in understanding areas of polarization within the Asian community. Successful leaders within Asian communities no longer experience overt racism in their social and professional lives. As a consequence, they neither comprehend nor identify with the concerns of youth who may actually have a more realistic overview of the world and a greater understanding of the nature and extent of its racism.

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**Asian History**

*We have learned the necessity of  
paying heed to details, preciseness,  
and orderliness.*

We are the end products of historical development with a documented history that precedes Western civilization by 2,000 to 4,000 years. The length of our historical past and the relative geographic isolation from Western civilizations offer insights in understanding the emergence of a cultural style that differs significantly from Western ways and tends to heavily underscore socially prescribed behaviors governing interpersonal relationships. Perhaps as an outgrowth of the written and spoken Asiatic languages we have learned the necessity of paying heed to details, preciseness, and orderliness. The complicated nature of written and spoken Asian communication requires attention to detail if one is to comprehend what is being communicated.



Differing racial characteristics including physical appearance and stature also affect the adaptive capabilities of Asians. The continuation of a cultural style that does not encourage aggressive behavior coupled with small physical stature tends to make Asians relatively invisible and they do not receive appropriate attention as a cultural group with specific learning needs in the classroom setting.

Physical appearance and stature also affect employability and subtly communicate questions of competency based solely upon physical criteria. Height standards discriminate against Asians in such areas as law enforcement and fire fighting, and grossly ignore the fact that within Asian countries people of small stature have performed these functions quite adequately for many generations. While the existence of practices which deny entire racial groups certain employment opportunities appears as blatant discrimination, there is an unconscionable lack of attention given to the less obvious psychological damage to Asians' self image—to the fact that we are creating a socioculturally second-class citizen who is only accepted on a conditional basis in our pluralistic society.

Individuals who work within large systems such as public education must of necessity maintain a high commitment to a task orientation if teaching schedules are to be maintained. Interpersonal relationships and the learning process become relegated to a subordinate level of importance since schedules by and large determine the manner through which the educational process is maintained. In other words, terms such as educational sequencing and continuity which address the process of learning are again tied closely to building on a basic fund of information scheduled and acquired over time. Humanistic and interpersonal concerns, however viewed by a given teacher, are frequently overshadowed by preoccupations with lesson plans, curriculum development, etcetera. In the face of school/community confrontations, community members are less concerned with the what of public education than with the how of educating children. Stated somewhat differently, educators are primarily task oriented while community members are predominantly process oriented.

Although we Asians are changing and beginning to advocate educational programs relevant to the cultural backgrounds of our children, our life style is such that we, too, become preoccupied with protocol, procedures, and tasks. After all, in addition to our task orientation, we have been brought up to respect our elders, to be obedient to authority, to be conscientious, to persevere in the face of hardship, and thus, discourage overt acts of confrontation. In short, we are frequently perceived as being model students—conscientious, studious, nondisruptive—as we share for altogether different reasons a behavioral style which is consonant with the educational system. Unfortunately, the relative invisibility of Asian "change agents" also lessens the attention paid to these students by teachers, and their task oriented behavior is encouraged and reinforced. Rote learning is unknowingly promoted in the process, and interactional learning which exposes students to different perspectives and widens their horizons becomes less available to the Asian student.

*... practices ... deny entire racial groups certain employment opportunities.*

#### **Asian Culture and Educational Systems**

*We have been brought up to respect our elders, to be obedient to authority, to be conscientious. . . .*

*Rote learning is unknowingly promoted. . . .*

The greatest potential cost to Asian children is the severe diminution of their creative abilities.

If our Asian youth could increase and acquire new skills in communication . . . they might emerge as individuals rather than . . . a racial minority.

Because of conflicting differences in perception and values, interactional learning frequently evokes conflict avoidance behavior in Asian children, which diminishes their opportunities to engage with others and acquire interactional and communication skills. These and the above-mentioned factors tend to limit both qualitatively and quantitatively their level of interaction with non-Asians and, as a consequence, Asian children deny themselves opportunities to become competitive except as reflected in grade point averages. Perhaps the greatest potential cost to Asian children is the severe diminution of their creative abilities, not to mention the crystallization of a rigid adherence to rote learning in the absence of more appropriate models.

Assuming my observations are reasonably correct, what options are available to our people? In view of our historical past and our present, as it directly affects our children, I would conclude that collectively we are promoting neither isolationism nor coexistence, but moving more in the direction of assimilation and integration. Indicators include the gradual dissolution of discrete, identifiable Asian communities, the gradual loss of our native languages with each subsequent generation, and an increasing tendency toward the adoption of Western ways.

If our expectations as Asians include changes in the behavior of our youth, we should be willing to experiment with new forms of behavior. If we desire our youth to be outspoken, we must be outspoken. If we desire our youth to acquire the capacity to compete, we must be willing to develop such capacities. In short, we are the available models for the Asian American youth.

Let me say in a definitive way that those qualities that Asian youth have are admirable. Yet, without detracting from their positive aspects, I am continuing to encourage the examination of areas they have yet to explore. If our Asian youth could increase and acquire new skills in communication (including both formal and extemporaneous speaking) and were able further to acquire problem solving skills within diverse group settings, the world might see the beauty of the character underlying their stereotypic external features, and they might emerge as individuals rather than representatives of a racial minority.

Finally, in view of such speculations, I am uncertain of the future but encouraged by what is evolving both within my children and within my community. There is individuality, spontaneity, hope, and vitality among the young. They seem to be learning what we elders may have overlooked in our own struggle for acceptance.

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## Educating the native american: conflict in values

### A Mini-minority Group

The American Indian in contemporary American society is in a mini-minority group at the bottom of the educational, economic, and social ladder. The possibility of his attaining the cultural goals of the dominant group is consistent with his minority status. Yet, the Indian is very conscious of his identity as a Native American—even though this consciousness is being eroded by the impact of a dominant, alien culture.

Many cultural concepts natural to the Native American have been “weeded out” by our American educational system. In some areas of our country where our educational and social systems have attempted to assimilate Indians into the mainstream, young militants have been produced. These young people demand curricula that recognize and legitimize the contributions and heritage of their forebears. They demand an educational system that identifies and cooperates with their efforts to maintain a subculture and life style that is distinctly Native American Indian.

In order to avoid a repetition of the Native American tragedy, it would be well for educators and administrators to conform to one of the primary purposes of education—teaching or producing persons normal to their environment. Otherwise, we will perpetuate the production of “apple Indians”—red outside and white inside.

A truism observed over a thousand years ago could well be applied as a guideline for our teachers today. This two line mandate written by Marcus Aurelius reads:

Men exist for the sake of one another.  
Teach them then, or bear with them.

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*We Pueblo Indians . . . have been  
most fortunate in being able to  
maintain our culture.*

We Pueblo Indians of the Southwest are such a group who have been most fortunate in being able to maintain our culture—more than any other group that I am aware of. Consequently, we have had our problems in the classroom. Most of these problems are due to the school's inability to understand the Native child. Teachers are unaware, unsensitized, and unsympathetic to a Native student whose value system is different from their own. For example, there was a teacher in Nevada who told Native Indian students that they had no culture, but their unique values were merely idiosyncrasies.

The greater value placed on the tribal group, the extended family, or clan is one of the differences of Native Americans that the dominant culture valuing rugged individualism and the mobile nuclear family, cannot well understand. Teachers are puzzled when a Pueblo Indian student, because of this background, values cooperation over competition. Competitiveness is a difficult concept for some Native students to accept—mainly because they have been able to survive only as a group. Any excellence is thus considered a contribution to the group and not to the individual.



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Besides, a Native student's primary reason for going to school is to gain knowledge—not to compete for grades. It matters little if some other person gains more or less knowledge than he. So, when teachers unknowingly use competition to motivate students, the Native student is "turned off" rather than motivated. In some instances, excelling for fame is looked down upon by Native students.

It is important to remember, if we are to recognize the clash that often results as these children go to school, that Native children do not come to school from a vacuum. For better or worse, they have already been influenced by the aspirations, anxieties, taboos, mores, and behavior patterns of their culture. The foundation for their future, their fundamental habits of being have been structured by the family or the tribe they came from which observes a unique life style.

Their communications system is different. They have not yet experienced the dominant culture's systems; their values, their concepts, and their experiences have been different. When these youngsters begin school, the English language is entirely foreign. Often, they survive in class only through rote learning and thus actually perceive little.

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Two questions asked consistently by teachers of Native Americans reflect the need for greater understanding of the cultural differences of these students. The most popular is: How do you motivate Native students?

My answer is that teachers should make the students feel that they are part of the process; that the things they represent are included in the curriculum; that their gestalt is not upset by the educational system. They should discontinue using textbooks that discuss the "savage," or recognize only "heroes" who cannot be identified with by Native students. The easiest way to kill motivation is to glorify certain Americans as folk heroes who were directly responsible for hurting, damaging, or destroying Native American language, culture or people. (As sympathetic members of a Pan Indian Community, we have our own "10 most wanted"—those who would harm the Pan Indian Community. Many times, these are the heroes of the dominant society.) Andrew Jackson is not an Indian hero—especially not of the tribes from the Southeast. Neither is Nevada's Senator McCarron or Utah's Arthur V. Watkins, the father of the term, termination, our single most hated and suspected word.

The other question often asked is: Do Native children have a competitive spirit? Many teachers feel that Native students tend to lack this drive. I would answer that question like this: "Alright, you are my students and here is your homework [assignment given in the Native tongue]. Now what did you write down?"

In the class where the English language is the key to grading or judging, there will obviously be less competition. The Native students will get the C's, D's and F's. And once they have collected a few low grades, they become affected and the least obstacle will influence their decision to drop out; they will become a casualty, a push-out. Yet, these same students will do well in classes not requiring the English language as the sole yardstick for success or achievement: P.E. classes, band, athletics, art classes, etc.

When educators discuss the problems of the Native student, they generally focus on three values as sources of conflicts. They are so frequently suggested as explanations for the low achievement of Native children, I would like to consider them individually in detail.

The first is the Native's concept of time. The community or the society he grew up in has accepted that fact that time is present-oriented. Future security does not yet need attention. I might explain that by present time, I mean this year or one year's time. Most Pueblo people save for the year or before the next cycle; for example, food is saved before the next growing season and meat before the next hunting season. Educators have suggested that differences in time orientation such as these could affect Native American's school performance in at least four ways.

1. Attendance may be lowered, particularly where school bus schedules increase inflexibility.
2. It may be harder to command children's attention to teacher-designed schedules.

*Teachers should make students feel they are part of the process.*

### **Three Values as Sources of Conflicts**

*Present time ... [means] this year or one year's time.*

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*The Native student's disposition is to conform to nature rather than dominate it.*

*The third—social withdrawal—is the dominant society's interpretation.*

3. Differences in time orientation probably affect scores on any tests or test-like assignments which are timed. (This is due, I believe, to the extra time required to translate the test questions from English to Native concepts before a decision can be made in the test.)

4. Time orientation may be related to willingness to plan ahead and delay gratification. According to one non-Native researcher, planning ahead is considered unnecessary and possibly dangerous by some Natives.

The second conflict in value with the dominant culture is the Native students' disposition to conform to nature rather than dominate it. The science teacher may be puzzled by the values fashioned by his student's out-of-school life. Why dissect frogs in a biology class; they are part of nature and deserve to be left alone. Why dig an ant hill for the selfish, personal reason of studying and research, when the ants are just as entitled to the privacy and life we humans profess to offer to our fellow men.

The third so-called problem which is really the dominant society's judgment and interpretation is social withdrawal. This may happen for a variety of reasons: unfamiliarity with acceptable behavior, compliance versus aggression, self assertion versus anonymity, and again, inability to comprehend a different language. Teachers unaware of values, history, and culture perpetuate this "problem."

To emphasize the meaning of values to students and the apparent condition of schools in relation to cultural heterogeneity, let me quote from Nathaniel Hickerson's, *Education for Alienation* (1966).

The inability of affluent-oriented teachers in American society to understand or cope with the behavior of children from economically deprived families is often of paramount importance in alienating those children from the public schools. It is this clash of value commitments that, more than any other factor, drives our Black, Mexican, Indian, and economically deprived Caucasian children out of the school and to the streets. They have been attacked at the point of great vulnerability: their own value structure.

### **Differing Styles of Learning**

Another factor besides varying value systems which is often the cause of low school achievement and alienation of the Native student is differing styles of learning. The general consensus of various Indian educators is that Native American's style of learning is more visual than verbal, i.e., more learning by observation than learning through language. Many Native educators have suggested that the basic problem is that their children are taught to learn in two different ways. In school they learn "in the ways of the white men." In their homes, the children learn in the ways of their people—in traditional cultural patterns which have remained durable even after many years of life among Euro-Americans.

*First you listen to your elders. . . .  
When the time arrives, you can speak.*

This Native learning style reminds me of the Roman system. First you listen to your elders; you do not speak. You wait until years of experience have prepared you to be influential enough to attract listeners. When this time arrives, you can speak. In the old Indian way, you may likely be



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past 35 years old before you begin to be heard. Before that, the elders will say, "You are still too green to be opening your mouth."

During those listening years, Native Americans develop their listening and speech skills. You may be amazed how Indian leaders can suddenly recite prayers and advice, hour after hour without written notes. These abilities are developed during the listening years.

There is considerable evidence that Native children from various tribes excel in the kind of ability recorded by Goodenough's *Draw-a-Man Test* which is scored for accuracy in proportion and detail. In reference to this test, Havighurst, from the University of Chicago, states:

The children of Indian tribes which have kept close touch with the world of nature and with their indigenous cultures are specially stimulated to observe accurately, to organize their observations and express them aesthetically, and thus may be expected to do well on the Draw-a-Man test. White or other urban children have less chance to form concepts from first hand observations, but must rely more upon books and words.

Similarly, World War II training camps proved that the nonurban GI was more observant than his city bred counterpart. There are city youngsters who scarcely know East from West, North from South, because they have grown up to depend on street numbers and signs. Why is it that people often get lost in the woods even within view of the city limits? How many of you in this room know which direction West is? Or South? Which way did the sun come up? Some of these skills can best be acquired with learning styles suitable only to the open country like Indian reservations. But there is hardly a place in the classroom where such learning styles may be exhibited. (Maybe the open classroom does have some relevancy with this learning process.)

In conclusion, I would like to offer some "food for thought." Indian people have learned that schools serving their children mirror the configurations of larger society. While schools are supposedly committed to eradicating class barriers, in reality, they reinforce inequality in both social and economic life. The question then arises, Can contract schools overcome, not only the dysfunctional elements that seem to stifle them, but the stigma of racial separatism as well?

The Coleman report as reanalyzed by Mosteller, Moynihan, and Jencks addresses this crucial issue and makes some significant and thought-provoking arguments. Coleman first states that significant gain in academic achievement takes place when low achievers are integrated with high achievers regardless of race or funds available for compensating programs. He further concludes that a pupil's achievement is strongly related to the educational backgrounds and aspirations of other students in the school. The implication for Indian students, then, is that integration is a prerequisite for academic achievement. Thus, if Coleman's findings are true, segregated schooling will only perpetuate gross and misleading stereotypes, and, without allowing direct interracial experiences, these will become even more exaggerated.

*Schools . . . reinforce inequality in both social and economic life.*

*Integration is a prerequisite for academic achievement.*

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## The asian american: a search for identity

### Asian American Diversity

To the average white American, all Asians look basically alike, think alike, and therefore must be alike. Frequently, they are stereotyped as being sly, inscrutable, and cunning. Or perhaps they are viewed as passive, obedient, loyal, polite, success-striving individuals with remarkable achievement records. An Asian American may have all of these characteristics, or he may have none of them. The diversity among Asian Americans is so great in some areas that it would be foolhardy in most instances to make sweeping generalizations about Asians, or even Japanese or Chinese Americans, as a group.

For instance, there can be great differences among Japanese Americans depending on their particular generation. This "generation gap" is evident in other Asian groups, as well. The first generation Japanese, or *Issei*, born in Japan, have many traditional cultural ties to the land of their birth. The *Nisei*, or second generation, born in this country represent an entirely different group. They are often more assimilated and acculturated into the white world, but they are still heavily influenced by the cultural values of their parents. The *Sansei* are third generation Japanese. These individuals are even more assimilated and acculturated than their parents into the mainstream dominant culture. And finally the fourth generation, or *Yonsei*, represent the Japanese we educators are now seeing in the schools. They are usually so removed from their ethnic origins that they are unable to speak Japanese, and are often so "Americanized" in their dress, tastes, and habits that they would be indistinguishable from their white or Anglo peers except for their physical differences.

There are great differences within certain Asian groups even in language. A Chinese who speaks only Cantonese cannot communicate verbally with another who speaks only Mandarin. Filipinos have some 87 major dialects which often preclude adequate verbal communication among their own people (Cordova, 1973).

The dietary characteristics across ethnic lines also differ greatly. With the exception of rice as a staple, there are gross differences in culinary styles of the different Asian groups. Japanese, for instance, tend to use more fish and sugar in their cooking than the Chinese. Koreans make frequent use of hot peppers in their cooking. Mandarin and Cantonese food and diet may differ greatly even though both are Chinese.

Socioeconomic levels of Asian American groups can also differ for various reasons. One may be the time of the arrival of the group to America. The groups that immigrated earlier naturally gained an advantage. Another factor is the colonialization or exploitation of their homelands. The Filipinos, for example, experienced 400 years under Spanish rule. Cordova (1973) states that the Filipinos in their prostrate position have been through the years deprived and sterilized (economically and socially, etc.) by their colonial benefactors. He further states, "One only has to witness the low number of Filipinos going to college and even lower numbers in areas of prominence or excellence.

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Filipinos have some 87 major dialects.



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It is obvious that we have learned our role well." An analogy may be drawn to the Koreans and Okinawans who experienced repeated conquests by the Japanese and Chinese.

But although there are some basic differences across racial groups which preclude gross generalizations, the basic similarities among Asian ethnic minorities can make possible a general study of Asian culture. The following studies are more closely related to the two largest groups, the Japanese and the Chinese, but many aspects are basic to all Asian groups. (Unfortunately, except on the Japanese and Chinese, there is a paucity of Asian research and literature.)

In the traditional Chinese family, as described by Sue and Sue (1973), elders are viewed with great reverence. The primary family unit exerts great influence on the behavior of the individual members. One must exercise filial piety. An individual's purpose in life is to obtain a good education, and as prestigious and lucrative an occupation as possible and thus give the family a "good name." Deviant behavior brings shame upon the entire family.

**Development of Personality in  
Oriental Society**

Negative reinforcement is used in the Chinese family as the primary means of controlling behavior. Parents use guilt arousing techniques as punishment such as verbal censure, threats of disowning, or forcing the child into guilt and shame producing activities. Parents in traditional Chinese families have typically exhibited their disappointment by statements such as, "How could you have done this to us after all that we have sacrificed for you?" The sacrifices are often genuine, and the child is seldom allowed to forget them.

*Guilt arousing techniques are used as punishment.*

In the traditional family, children are seldom praised or stroked for their accomplishments. Since the accomplishments are expected, fanfare and praise are often considered unnecessary. Silence, instead, is often considered the sign of approval. The maintenance of a low profile or invisibility is often typical of the traditional family. The implications of this type of behavioral pattern are somewhat obvious. An Asian child finds himself in a state of confusion when he receives negative reinforcement at home from his parents and positive reinforcement at school from his white teacher. Asian children are very aware of the verbal and material reinforcements their white peers receive for their accomplishments, especially as they receive little but silent approval from their parents.

*Silence is often the sign of approval.*

Sue and Sue (1973) describe three basic personality patterns which Chinese Americans may follow. Again, some generalizations may be applied to other Asian groups, particularly the Japanese.

#### **Personality Patterns**

The traditionalist strongly internalizes his ethnic values. Being a good son or daughter is of primary importance. Allegiance to parents may even supercede obligations as a father and husband. A good son could be described as one who achieves well academically and economically, remains dutiful to his parents, and provides them with a good wife who is subservient to her in-laws.

The present-day traditionalist finds himself with many inner personal conflicts. While he must acquiesce to all parental demands, he may find many which are not in harmony with his own thinking, and therefore not palatable. Yielding to parental demands may require him to compromise his personal values. Defiance results in intensive inner feelings of guilt and shame. And since he is brought up to believe that success is possible for all who strive hard enough, failures are also internalized and he may engage in self blame and flagellation.

*The traditionalist son must place his family before himself.*

The traditionalist son must place his family before himself and his personal goals. If he is older, he may be faced with the responsibility of helping to finance the education of his younger siblings once he has completed his schooling.

The marginal man exists between the margin of two cultures: that of his parents and that of the dominant culture. It is obvious to him that the dominant group is the power group. He sees assimilation and acculturation as his only avenues to acceptance and success. As a result, he may reject his traditional Asian ways by becoming as Westernized as possible. He may even try to "out white" the whites with such maneuvers as perfecting his speech until his English is flawless and without trace of an accent. He may consciously or unconsciously refuse to learn or unlearn his parent's native language.

*The marginal man . . . may reject his Asian ways by becoming Westernized.*

A marginal man may develop a mental set to the point where he believes that only white is beautiful. He may look at girls or boys of his own race with contempt and refuse to associate with them or date them. In essence, he may have all the physical characteristics of an Asian, but internally be, for all practical purposes, white. He has become what is sometimes referred to as a "banana"—yellow on the outside, but white on the inside—an Asian counterpart to the "apple Indian."

Yet, the marginal man cannot assimilate in this way without suffering a great deal of inner conflict. He has rejected those who have loved him and sacrificed for him, and has opted to try and join those who in the final analysis may give him only token acceptance.

Let us examine some of the possible reasons why an Asian would opt for the marginal man position. We have already stated that he recognizes that the white culture maintains the dominance in the power structure; but he may also have been conditioned to believe that his culture and color are inferior. The word "yellow" has a negative connotation and is equated with cowardice. Some Japanese Americans during the Second World War and ensuing years were constantly trying to prove their loyalty to their country, divesting themselves of the culture of their family and Westernizing themselves as much as possible to emphasize their Americanization.

*Discrimination [in English schools] forced many Asian children to opt for a marginal man position.*

In the early decades, English Standard public schools were established in Hawaii with the primary purpose of segregating Caucasian from the nonwhite students. A few Asian students were admitted to these English Standard schools, but they were mainly attended by children whose parents held professional positions. While the educational opportunities for those attending the English schools or those within the select 10 percent quota were greatly enhanced, the discrimination forced many Asian children to opt for a marginal man position. It is not difficult for one to understand why these children would perceive the white world to be superior when they and their families were excluded from certain social clubs and residential areas. An Asian child could easily assume that his race was inferior if quotas were placed against Asians. Perhaps many Asians can attribute much of their educational and financial success to their assimilation and acculturation into the dominant society. Unfortunately, however, this was and is often paid for with the loss of a cultural identity.

*The Asian American . . . may seek unity with other Asians against the "common enemy" who he feels is racist.*

Finally, the Asian American is seeking to find his identity by integrating what he considers to be the best of his Asian culture with the best of the dominant culture. Like the traditionalist, he associates with other Asians without any embarrassment, and yet, like the marginal man, he rejects unquestioning obedience to his parents and their values because it limits self growth. He may also reject his parents' encouragement to achieve in the "acceptable professions" because he views this as too materialistic. Instead, he may find a sensitivity toward social issues such as poverty, unemployment, and ecology. He may seek unity with other Asians against the "common enemy" who he feels is racist against his people. He may become quite contemptuous of the marginal man whom he views as an "Uncle Tom," and he may even

resort to the militancy recently observed in the Black and Chicano movements.

In a sense, the Asian American is only now seeking or finding his identity—a process which other ethnic groups have already experienced. The Asian's reluctance or tardiness in developing his awareness is not without reason. He has not suffered discrimination in recent years to such the degree the Chicanos and Blacks have. He has often been marginally accepted by the white society as a model minority because his traditional family values are not unlike those of traditional Protestant values: obedience, loyalty, and achievement. It is no wonder that many in the dominant culture consider the Asian American as a model ethnic. He is passive and basically content with assuming a "middle man" or non-power-seeking position. He is thus often exploited by the dominant group. But, since he is above the level of other minorities, he passively accepts a second-best position and is hesitant to jeopardize it by any acts of defiance to the dominant group.

The more militant Asians view the middle man position as unacceptable. After working as hard or harder than their white peers and excelling educationally, they cannot settle for second best. They are well aware that Asians, though academically and "professionally qualified," seldom find themselves above second echelon positions. Their salaries are often lower than less able individuals from the dominant society, and they are well aware that only 6 percent of those individuals earning over \$15,000 a year (Steinem, 1973) are nonwhite males. This is unpalatable to the emerging Asian American group and they will become militant if the need arises.

It is interesting to note that Asian American girls (Sue & Sue, 1973) find Asian boys socially backward and unacceptable. These Asian males lack the aggressiveness that their white counterparts have and are less outgoing. Because many are more interested in developing their academic skills, they may fail to develop the social skills desired by the Asian American girls. Thus, they are often rejected for their Caucasian male counterparts. This emasculates the Asian male and further complicates his already complex search for identity.

Asians have frequently been viewed as a group which takes care of its own problems, and have few, if any, delinquency problems. There is some credence to this view, because Asians basically do try to take care of their own problems within the family unit, at least at the subcommunity level. Social deviancy, as previously mentioned, is handled by threats of disownment or treatment which develops guilt and shame on the part of the offender. But, although outward signs of deviancy are controlled, the above methods only intensify the existing problems, and emotional problems become more difficult to deal with. Unfortunately, parents will still often try to handle these problems on their own rather than seek professional therapy which is viewed as an open admission and brings shame and disgrace upon the family name. Thus, the Asian child may go without competent professional help until his problems have reached such proportions that they are beyond treatment. This may explain why the suicide rate in San Francisco's Chinatown is one of the highest in the nation (Wang, 1972).

*Many in the dominant culture consider the Asian American as a model ethnic.*

#### **The More Militant Asians**

#### **Problems of Parents**

Let us look, finally, into the role of the Asian American female. Many young Asian women are just now beginning to find their identity and new roles in an integrated, liberated society. For decades, the Asian attitude toward women has been male chauvinistic in nature. Thus, many Asian women find themselves an oppressed group within an oppressed minority. Their traditional role limits them to working hard at home, bearing male children, catering to their husband's needs as well as those of their in-laws. Oppressed Asian males often assert their masculinity and redeem the dignity lost in their daily dealings with the dominant culture by using their wives as scapegoats for their frustrations. Traditionally, Asian women have been denied the education their brothers are encouraged to pursue.

We have touched on a great number of issues in a short period of time. I would like to summarize by reiterating that (a) Asians, while possessing many similarities, are at times diversified in their attitudes and behavioral patterns; and (b) many Asian Americans, for a number of reasons, are just now undergoing the identity crises that Blacks and Chicanos have in many cases worked their way through in recent years.

Teachers of Asian American children can do much to help the Asians in their search for identity by accepting the child and his ethnic value system, by helping him through his identity crisis by reinforcing the fact that his culture has much to offer the great American society, and finally by helping children of the dominant culture to appreciate the cultures of all ethnic groups.

*Many Asian women find themselves an oppressed group within an oppressed minority.*

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## The puerto rican in the new york city schools

*Spanish-speaking children face difficulties in their search for equal educational opportunities.*

**New York City School System**

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*Like all parents, Puerto Ricans desire the best for their children.*



Acquiring language, for the non-English speaking person, can be an extremely difficult and arduous task. When schools, which should be the vehicles to facilitate the acquiring of knowledge, in fact create obstacles, the problems for the non-English speaking pupil become overwhelming.

It is safe to say that, of the estimated 10 million Spanish-speaking people in the United States, a substantial segment is of school age. The language abilities of these Spanish-speaking children vary all along the continuum from Spanish-English bilingualism to the multi- and unilingual abilities determined by specific cultural and subcultural backgrounds. Despite these differences, Spanish-speaking children face certain general difficulties in their search for equal educational opportunities.

In attempting to view the obstacles that educational institutions place in the path of non-English speaking students and specifically the Spanish-speaking student in the East, it is relevant to concentrate on the New York City school system and its approach to the solution of what can only be termed an enormous problem. It is estimated that there are 250,000 Puerto Rican school aged children enrolled in the New York City school system. According to the Fleischman report (1972), 94,800 have significant language difficulties. Jenkins calculated that approximately 4,418 were receiving services in 1970. The discrepancy between those needing services and those receiving services is all too graphically clear.

Other statistics are startling. A report from the Puerto Rican Forum (1969) states that 86 percent of all Puerto Rican students are below the normal reading level (Jenkins 1971). The drop out rate for Puerto Rican children is extremely high. It is estimated that 57 percent of these students drop out. Yet, this statistic does not reflect the high incidence of students who leave the New York City school system and migrate back to Puerto Rico (Glazer & Moynihan, 1963). In too many cases, the reason for these students' migration back to the Island is to escape the frustrating and demoralizing experiences of the school system.

It is indeed unfortunate that the search for equal educational opportunity sometimes forces Puerto Ricans to leave the city. Like all parents, Puerto Ricans desire the best for their children. They want their children to function as efficiently as possible in a complex urban society. That this desire remains unrealized for the majority of Puerto Rican children is a tragedy stemming from the inefficacy of school and is largely created by the institution which has the primary responsibility for preparing all students to function in our complex, pluralistic society.

The size of the problem appears to have overwhelmed those in authority to the point where it has greatly immobilized their efforts. One must keep in mind, however, that there are some excellent programs operating and being developed in New York City which are at-

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*Lack of attention to the problem of language acquisition leads to a high incidence of inappropriate labeling.*

## **Two Educational Approaches**

*Teach English as a second language.*

*Bilingual approach . . . proportions use of the student's primary language and his secondary language.*

tempting to resolve this situation (Jenkins, 1971). Unfortunately, these efforts are too few, too scattered, too uncoordinated, and too indicative of a severe lack of commitment on the part of the New York City Board of Education to solve this problem.

This lack of attention to the problem of language acquisition by the Spanish-speaking student leads to abuses of "special" programs, and a high incidence of inappropriate labeling. A great many students are classified as "mentally retarded" or "slow learner" simply because they do not perform well on standardized tests administered in a language which is not native to them and with which they have insufficient facility (Zirkel, 1972). Almost 30 percent of the students in special classes for children with retarded mental development are from Hispanic backgrounds (Fleischman, 1973). This fact calls into question the necessity and objective of testing. The author feels the real function of testing should be to improve instruction. The school psychologists should be diagnosticians of learning styles and facilitators of teaching strategies. We should all be more involved in preventative action rather than the labeling of children.

There is also evidence to indicate that those students who are assigned to classes which are exclusively English-speaking not only fail to learn to read English but, in some cases, lose or never even acquire the ability to read their native language.

Although this picture seems extremely dismal, and there is much ground for pessimism, some sound educational approaches to solving the problem have been developed. Two approaches which are being extensively used are the English as a second language approach (ESL) and the bilingual approach.

In the ESL approach, all instruction is conducted in English (generally in integrated classrooms), and special English language instruction is provided for those who need it. The difficulty with this approach surfaces when the number of students who need assistance far outnumber the personnel available to provide it. Thus, instruction in English for nonspeakers may be as limited in the ESL approach as it is in the regular class.

Under the bilingual approach, instruction is conducted in both English and Spanish. As the student's fluency in English increases, instruction time in the mother tongue is decreased. The bilingual approach has been highly successful at the Coral Way School in Miami, Florida (Gaardner, 1967). The program is a demonstration of the proportional use of the student's primary language and his secondary language. The former is gradually decreased until the student is able to function in a second language. Unfortunately, the New York City school system has not to date implemented this approach in any extensive manner. The ESL approach is by far the predominant choice.

To suggest that the needs of the New York City school system are great is to grossly understate and oversimplify a socioethnic problem that is manifested in our schools. Attempts to assess the determination with which the system approaches the solution of this problem reveal a lack of commitment and a surprising amount of administrative negligence in terms of hiring and training staff to carry out these programs.

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The parents of the Puerto Rican student are a source of advocacy which has not been mobilized to any large extent. Perhaps a more militant stance on the part of the parents is needed before the educational system can be changed. It would appear that before this occurs, the educational community would do well to lead rather than follow the lay group.

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## V. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

### *Preliminary evaluation of the institute*

The CEC sponsored institute program included 9½ hours of language instruction plus five general sessions. The institute participants were divided into four groups for the actual instruction. These four groups addressed themselves to the language and communication styles of the Asian, Black, Indian, and Spanish-speaking cultures. After the specific language sessions, all participants assembled as a group to discuss such topics as "Cultural Conflict Curriculum" and "Guidelines for Developing Programs and Materials for Minority Children." These general sessions served as a mechanism for highlighting common concerns, thereby providing minority educators with the opportunity to better understand and appreciate other minority cultures. There were 125 people in attendance at the Institute, representing every geographic area of the country as well as Canada.

### *Objectives of the Institute*

The specific objectives were:

1. To study culture and linguistic and communication skills related to one of the four minority groups considered.
2. To list criteria, suggestions, or guidelines considered important in:
  - a. developing special education programs for minority children,
  - b. developing materials for these programs, and
  - c. developing programs to prepare special educators to work more effectively with minority group children.
3. To use the skills and/or materials obtained from the Institute in group discussions in the following conference.
4. To use the skills, knowledge, and/or materials obtained from the Institute in helping other professionals at their institutions and children in special education programs.

The occupational representation of the Institute participants was:

	Number	Percent
Teachers	31	24.8
Students	9	7.2
University personnel	42	33.6
Ancillary personnel	8	6.4
Administration	35	28.0
Total	125	

The ethnic and cultural background of the Institute participants was:

	Number	Percent
Asian	12	9.6
Black	46	36.8
Indian	8	6.4
Spanish-speaking	14	11.2
Other	45	36.0
Total	125	

## Evaluation

The three evaluation instruments used at the conference were designed and developed with input from the program planning committee and the project staff. These instruments were (a) a pre-post inventory (Appendix A), (b) a language and communication evaluation instrument, and (c) an overall institute evaluation schedule. These instruments were subsequently validated and revised subsequent to a series of randomly selected telephone interviews which included representation from attendees of all four cultural backgrounds. This representation included 20 Asians, 44 Blacks, 24 Indians, 27 Spanish-speaking persons.

## Questions

During the planning phase of the Institute and Conference several questions emerged. It was anticipated that the evaluation data would help answer these questions. Included among these questions were the following:

1. What were the overall initial perceptions of the participants' understanding of culture?
2. What were the overall perceptions of the participants relative to the understanding of culture after the Institute and Conference?
3. Which minority group will be most knowledgeable about their own culture prior to the Institute and Conference?
4. Which minority culture will be the most widely understood among the participants on the whole prior to the Institute and Conference?
5. What will be the level of understanding in regard to the social issues in special education prior to the Institute and Conference?
6. What will be the level of understanding in regard to the social issues in special education after the Institute and Conference?
7. How advanced will the professional skills of the participants be prior to the Institute and Conference relative to the teaching of minority children?
8. How advanced will the professional skills of the participants be after the Institute and Conference relative to the teaching of minority children?
9. What will be the anticipated uses the participants plan to make of the information gained at the Institute and the Conference prior to the actual Institute and Conference?
10. What will be the anticipated uses the participants plan to make of the information gained at the Institute and the Conference after they have participated in the Institute and Conference?

## **Findings**

1. On a scale of 5, the overall initial perceptions of the participants' understanding of culture was rated at 2.76.
2. On a scale of 5, the overall perceptions of the participants relative to the understanding of culture after the Institute and Conference was rated at 2.88.
3. Before the Institute and Conference, the Black group was most knowledgeable about their culture with a rating of 3.99 on a 5 point scale, compared to a 3.30 for the Asian group, 3.22 for the Indian group, and 3.04 for the Spanish-speaking group.
4. After the Institute and Conference, the overall knowledge and appreciation of the Black culture was rated at 3.09, as compared to a rating of 2.36 for the other minority cultures. (Scale of 5.)
5. Before the Institute and Conference, the participants rated themselves 3.73 on their understanding of the social issues in special education. (Scale of 5.)
6. After the Institute and Conference, the participants rated themselves 3.89 on their understanding of the social issues in special education. (Scale of 5.)
7. Before the Institute and Conference the participants rated themselves at 3.39 relative to their professional skills of teaching minority children. (Scale of 5.)
8. After the Institute and Conference, the participants rated themselves at 3.62 relative to their professional skills of teaching minority children. (Scale of 5.)
9. The anticipated uses the participants planned to make of the information gained at the Institute and Conference prior to the actual Institute and Conference was rated at 3.95. (Scale of 5.)
10. The anticipated uses the participants planned to make of the information gained at the Institute and Conference after the Institute and Conference was rated at 3.86. (Scale of 5.)

# Appendixes

## Perceptions

There could be many explanations for the various findings that have been reported relative to the Institute and Conference on Cultural Diversity. It is not our intent to rule out alternate explanations but merely to share the observations that appear most likely to us.

1. The higher scores relative to the Black culture could be the result of the Black awareness movement in this country being much more intense than other minority movements.
2. The fact that the Spanish-speaking group had the lowest score relative to being knowledgeable about their own culture is probably due to the fact that this particular group had a disproportionately large number of non-Spanish-speaking persons in it.
3. The lower postscores on "anticipated uses" may reflect the unrealistic expectations of some conference attendees.
4. A possible explanation for the underrepresentation in the Indian and Spanish-speaking groups is that they are also underrepresented in the CEC membership from which the sample of institute invitees was taken.
5. The fact that the gains between pre- and postscores are relatively low could be due to the brevity of the institute. It is unrealistic to expect a 2½ day institute to make a greater impact.
6. Was the group of institute and conference attendees a representative sample or was there a significant self selection factor operating here? If so, are we really experiencing changes in attitudes by minority professionals?
7. Can we rely on the facts and data that we have collected in planning for future programs of this kind or should we heed the caution of Cervantes who said, "Facts are the greatest enemy of truth"?

## Recommendations

1. More conferences and institutes on the topic of cultural diversity should be promoted and sponsored by CEC on a national as well as on a regional basis.
2. Greater efforts should be made to recruit more minority members for CEC.
3. The development and dissemination of culturally relevant materials for handicapped children by and for minority persons should be encouraged and sponsored by CEC.
4. A section in *Exceptional Children* should be provided for articles on cultural diversity.
5. When feasible, conferences of a similar nature should be held in a barrio, ghetto area, or reservation.
6. In addition to language, other aspects of culture such as values or life styles should be studied in depth.

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## Appendix A

### INSTITUTE/CONFERENCE ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

#### PRE-POST CONFERENCE/INSTITUTE EVALUATION

Directions: Please check one category in Items A - D:

- A. ☐ Selected Member of Institute ☐ Invited Guest  
 B. Position: ☐ Teacher ☐ Teacher Trainer ☐ Administrator ☐ Support Personnel  
 C. Ethnic Background: ☐ Asian ☐ Black ☐ Indian ☐ Spanish-speaking ☐ Other  
 D. Specific Session Attending: ☐ Asian ☐ Black ☐ Indian ☐ Spanish-speaking

#### PART I. Understanding and Appreciation of Minority Cultures

Directions: Rate yourself on the items below by placing the numeral reflecting your status in the boxes at the right. Use the scale 1 - 5 as follows:

1 2 3 4 5  
 low medium high

Note: It is likely your responses will vary by ethnic group.

Example:

Knowledge of educational problems unique to

Blacks	Indians	Asians	Spanish-speaking persons
(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)

A. Knowledge of:

- |   |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Unique communication patterns of:          | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. Unique beliefs and value systems of:       | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Unique family structures and practices of: | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. Unique dress styles of:                    | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5. Unique dietary practices of:               | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

B. Appreciation of:

- |   |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Unique communication patterns of:          | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. Unique beliefs and value systems of:       | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Unique family structures and practices of: | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. Unique dress styles of:                    | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5. Unique dietary practices of:               | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

**PART II. Understanding of Issues in Special Education**

Directions: Please circle the numeral which indicates your level of understanding of the special education issues involved on the following topics:

		Low		Med.		High
	NA	1	2	3	4	5
1. Disproportionate placement of minority children in special education classes	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2. Civil rights and due process	NA	1	2	3	4	5
3. Special education and the law	NA	1	2	3	4	5
4. Cultural pluralism vs. melting pot	NA	1	2	3	4	5
5. Cultural differences vs cultural deprivation	NA	1	2	3	4	5
6. Isolationism vs. mainstreaming	NA	1	2	3	4	5
7. Deinstitutionalization	NA	1	2	3	4	5
8. Labeling	NA	1	2	3	4	5
9. Intelligence Testing	NA	1	2	3	4	5
10. Environment vs. heredity	NA	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: Please rate your skills in the following areas by circling the appropriate number at the right.

**PART III: Skills**

1. Selecting and evaluating curriculum instructional materials and/or methodology for use with or by minority populations.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2. Designing and developing curriculum and/or instructional materials and methodology for use with or by minority populations.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
3. Adapting and modifying curricula and/or methodology for use with minority populations.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
4. Communicating with members of minority groups.	NA	1	2	3	4	5
5. Communicating with members of the general population (students, parents, staff) on matters of importance to minority groups.	NA	1	2	3	4	5

**PART IV. Intended Uses**

**Directions:** Please circle the numeral which indicates the use you hope to make of institute and/or conference information. (your ratings should reflect the area(s) you wish to emphasize)

- |  |    |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Incorporate information on minority cultures in course curricula.       | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Incorporate new and/or existing techniques into methods of instruction. | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Acquiring and/or developing materials.                                  | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Communicating with:   |    |   |   |   |   |   |
| a. minority students   | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. minority parents  | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. representatives of minority community                                   | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. general audiences and/or professionals                                  | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Appendix B

### Additional Papers Presented at the Conference

#### *Service Models for the Severely Handicapped Ethnic Minority Child*

Facilitator: George Brantley, Executive Director, Hope Center for the Retarded, Denver, Colorado

#### *Learning Styles and Culture for Blacks*

Facilitator: Joyce Broome, State Plan Officer, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped

#### *Language and Culture for Asians*

Facilitator: Agnes Burger, Assistant Professor, Educational Psychology, New York University, New York, New York

#### *Teacher Training and Cultural Diversity*

Facilitator: Tony Carvajal, Assistant Professor of Special Education, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado

#### *Testing, Labeling, and Placement Issues as They Affect the Culturally Different*

Facilitator: Henry Casso, Executive Director, National Educational Task Force De La Raza

#### *Court Cases and the Culturally Different: Strategies for Correcting Misplacement and Nonplacement*

Facilitator: Henry Casso, Executive Director, National Educational Task Force De La Raza

#### *Assessment of the Culturally Different Child: A Neo-Piagetian Based Model for Assessment and Curriculum*

Facilitator: Eduardo DeAvila, Research Director, Bilingual Children's Television, Oakland, California

#### *Cultural Implications in Early Childhood*

Facilitator: Ruth Diggs, Professor and Chairman of Special Education, Norfolk State College, Norfolk, Virginia

#### *Cultural Diversity and the Community*

Facilitator: Regis Groff, Teacher, Afro-American History, Denver, Colorado

#### *The CEC Minority Committee: How It Works for You and How It Can Help You Promote Cultural Diversity*

Facilitator: Colonel Hawkins, Assistant Professor, Special Education, Coppin State College, Baltimore, Maryland

#### *Comparative Analysis of Cultures for Blacks*

Facilitator: Asa Hilliard, Dean, School of Education, California State University, San Francisco, California

#### *Legislation for the Handicapped: State and National Trends and Their Implications for the Culturally Different*

Facilitator: C. D. Jones, Research Associate, Handicapped Children's Education Program, Denver, Colorado

#### *Contrastive Analysis of Culture for Asians*

Facilitator: Harry Kitano, Professor of Social Welfare and Sociology, UCLA, Los Angeles, California

***Language and Culture for Indians***

**Facilitators:** John Kito, Director of Bilingual Education, Anchorage, Alaska; and Bertha Lowe, Coordinator of Native Language Studies, Anchorage, Alaska

***Contrastive Analysis of Cultures for Indians***

**Facilitator:** Pat Locke, Program Director for Planning Resources in Minority Education, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Boulder, Colorado

***Language and Culture for the Spanish Speaking***

**Facilitator:** Leon Marquez, Professor of Spanish Language and Culture, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico

***Current Research in the Area of Cultural Diversity: Implications of the Deprivation Model as Compared to the Difference Model***

**Facilitator:** Al McWilliams, Content Coordinator, Federation of Rocky Mountain States, Denver, Colorado

***Minorities and Revenue Sharing—Developing Strategies***

**Facilitator:** Robert Mondragon, Lieutenant Governor, Santa Fe, New Mexico

***The US Civil Rights Commission: How it Can Help You Promote Cultural Diversity***

**Facilitator:** Phil Montez, Director, Western Regional Office for the US Commission on Civil Rights, Los Angeles, California

***Migrant Education***

**Facilitator:** Oscar Quintero, Teacher, Bilingual-Bicultural Migrant Program, Logan, Utah

***Learning Styles and Culture for Indians***

**Facilitator:** Joe Sando, Staff Specialist, Cultural Awareness Center, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico

***Participatory Techniques in Intercultural Communications***

**Facilitator:** Lindbergh Sata, Executive Director, Harborview Community Mental Health Center, Seattle, Washington

***Language and Culture for Blacks***

**Facilitator:** Gloria Smallwood, Assistant Professor of Education, University of Colorado, Denver, Colorado

***Comparative Analysis of Cultures for Indians***

**Facilitator:** Jacquelyn Walker, BEH Project Director, Toppenish, Washington

***Technical Assistance Systems: An Avenue for Planned Change for Minorities***

**Facilitator:** Vernon Clark, Staff Associates, T.A.D.S., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

***A Keynote Panel on Cultural Differences and Exceptional Children***

**Facilitators:** Robert Fuchigami, Professor of Education, Dean of Graduate Studies, California State College, Sonoma, Rohnert Park, California; Floy Pepper, Coordinator, Emotionally Handicapped Programs, Multnomah County Intermediate Educational District, Portland, Oregon; William Robertson, Member, President's Committee on Mental Retardation, Special Assistant to the Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia;

Gilbert Sanchez, Bilingual-Bicultural Education, Center for Applied Linguistics, Arlington, Virginia; and James O. Smith, Coordinator of Research on Curriculum Materials, Experimental Education Unit, Child Development and Mental Retardation Center, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

*The Gifted Minority Child*

*Facilitators:* Irving Sato, Project Director, National State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented, Los Angeles, California; and Joe Sando, Staff Specialist, Native Culture—Cultural Awareness Center, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico

## Appendix C

### Excerpts from the Three Month Followup

As the final phase of evaluation, questionnaires which included such items as:

What have you done to promote cultural diversity within your employment setting, and

What topics would you recommend for future conferences of this nature,

were sent to participants three months after the institute. The following excerpts were taken from responses to the question regarding utilization of knowledge gained from the Institute and Conference.

Yes, we have incorporated information from this Institute and Conference into a training conference for directors of Special Education Instructional Materials Centers in the states of Alaska, Idaho, Washington and Oregon.

Larry Carlson  
Northwest Special Education  
Instructional Materials Center  
Eugene, Oregon

I feel that the understanding and appreciation gained at the Institute and Conference have helped me to be more effective in my job.

Seymour Wallach  
State Department of Education  
Denver, Colorado

Yes, it helped me with a position paper on Minority Issues that I presented to the Illinois Psychological Association.

Maryrose Evans  
Psychologist  
Chicago, Illinois

It has helped us in our plan for integrating special education into the regular classroom. We also invited Dr. Orlando Taylor, one of our Institute instructors, to conduct a workshop dealing with language arts and curriculum for black inner city children.

Lillie B. McDonald  
Director of Special Education  
Norfolk, Virginia

I have given presentations to speech and language consultants working throughout the state for the Illinois Crippled Children's Services. This included the topics of the historical views on Black language, the position of the speech pathologist in relation to Black language, and the language bias of various diagnostic tests.

Lorraine C. Jones  
Speech and Hearing Consultant  
Chicago, Illinois

As a crisis teacher I am now better able to communicate with classroom teachers about problems involving minority children.

Sadye R. Shaw  
Teacher  
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Yes, it has helped me a great deal in my work with the advisory committee for the Institutes on Appraisal, Placement and Educational Programming for ethnic minority group children in special education. These Institutes are being sponsored by the Texas Education Agency.

Maximino Plaza  
Chairman, Special Education  
University of Texas  
El Paso, Texas

Since I am a student, I have promoted cultural diversity in my classes. I have stressed that one of the high priorities in education today is the education of minority group children. I have also emphasized that the curriculum must be adapted to the child's needs for him to be successful academically as well as socially.

Angela Marese  
Student  
Nutley, New Jersey

Yes, it helped me with a presentation on cultural diversity given at the New York University alumni conference.

Agnes Burger  
Assistant Professor of Special Education  
New York University  
New York, New York

I teach a class on the Native American at the University of Montana. I have been able to use many of the ideas I picked up at the conference.

Marlene Salway  
Assistant Professor of Social Work  
University of Montana  
Missoula, Montana

Yes, we held a followup conference at the Northwest Special Education Instructional Materials Center to develop strategies to deliver services to Chicano and Indian children.

William Pellant  
Northwest Special Education  
Instructional Materials Center  
Eugene, Oregon

Yes, we reviewed with our staff some of the cultural practices and mores gleaned from the Institute and Conference. These appear to make a significant difference in attitudes of professional and attendant staff toward respect and understanding of various cultures.

Frances Jamieson  
Daly City, California

We sponsored our own followup conference on the Identification of and Provision for Multicultural and Physically Handicapped Gifted Children here at Norfolk State College.

Ruth Diggs  
Chairman, Special Education  
Norfolk, Virginia

Yes, I have been able to help our human relations teacher set up a teaching unit on minority cultures. I have also conducted an inservice workshop on the Mexican American Child in my high school.

Armando Ronquillo  
School Counselor  
Scottsdale, Arizona

## Appendix D

### Tape Cassettes on Cultural Diversity

The following is a cassette series selected from presentations at the CEC Conference and Institute on Cultural Diversity for Exceptional Children and Youth, Las Vegas, Nevada, 1973.

To order, write The Council for Exceptional Children, Publications Sales, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091.

*A Conflict of Values: Teaching Indian Children.* Floy Pepper discusses the diversity among native American groups resulting from differences in tribal practices, geographical location and relationship to the majority cultures' life style. Joe Sando provides concrete examples of how the values learned by children in their homes can conflict with those taught in school. Stock No. 70. 60 min. \$10.00.

*Indian Gifts of Culture and Diversity.* Pat Locke shares some of the culture and legends of her people. John Kito and Bertha Lowe reflect on the cultural patterns of Eskimo people and discuss some of the problems they encounter. Stock No. 71. 60 min. \$10.00.

*Cultural Diversity in Education: Teaching Spanish Speaking Children.* Juan Aragon illustrates how easy it is to build a curriculum that recognizes the contributions of all cultural groups. Viola Sierra describes some unique aspects of the Chicano child's approach to learning. She provides information on learning styles, motivation, and social values. Stock No. 72. 60 min. \$10.00.

*Spanish American—Language and Culture.* Juan Aragon and Leon Marquez contrast American and Spanish cultural traditions. They show how the aspirations, attitudes and values of the Spanish people are reflected by the language. Stock No. 73. 60 min. \$10.00.

*Barriers to Learning: Teaching Asian American Children.* Lindbergh Sata discusses some of the barriers to learning that exist for children from minority cultures. Examples are drawn primarily from the Asian American population. Robert Fuchigami emphasizes the need for teachers to understand behavior norms of Asian cultures which influence perception, action, and attitudes. Stock No. 74. 60 min. \$10.00.

*Asian Americans: Cultural Contrasts.* Harry Kitano provides an in depth description of Asian cultural patterns, especially the Japanese culture. He reveals some of the conflicts that arise when Asians are confronted with the American lifestyle. Stock No. 75. 60 min. \$10.00.

*Educational Perspectives: Teaching Black Children.* Asa Hilliard discusses Black American Culture within the context of the majority's cultural patterns. Gloria Smallwood concentrates on classroom and curriculum practices, demonstrating how white experiences, white values, and standard English can lack relevance for Black children. Stock No. 76. 60 min. \$10.00.

*Black Language—Black Culture.* Orlando Taylor and Gloria Smallwood describe the linguistic and cultural patterns of Black Americans. The tape media is most appropriate for the presentation of this material since it is possible to examine how intonation affects meaning in Black language. Stock No. 77. 60 min. \$10.00.

*They Shall Create: Gifted Minority Children.* E. Paul Torrance reads and comments on some of the poetry and prose written by Black and Mexican American youth. Ernest Bernal explores how the Mexican American community perceives and identifies their exceptional children. Irving Sato presents an

overview of the dimensions of talent and giftedness. Stock No. 78. 60 min. \$10.00.

Other cassettes on cultural diversity:

*Education: Special for the Mexican American.* The presentations focus on bilingual education and assessment of bilingual children. Also examined is the factor of cultural diversity as a component in teacher training. Of special value to teachers, psychologists, administrators, teacher educators, and others working in a bilingual setting. Stock No. 67. 60 min. \$7.00.

*The Quiet Minority—The Oriental American.* Americans of Chinese, Japanese and Hawaiian ancestry discuss the historical perspective of their own culture's place in the American scene. They share some insights they have gained into their own self awareness. A non-oriental teacher presents problems she encountered while working for the first time with children of Asian backgrounds. Material could act as a catalyst for discussion of "minority experiences" in any type group. Stock No. 68. 35 min. \$7.00.

*If You Knew Us Better.* Cassette album includes 8 tapes (see page 91, Stock Nos. 70-77); conference proceedings, *Cultural Diversity and the Exceptional Child*; special topical issue on cultural diversity, *Exceptional Children*, May 1974; album brochure with specially prepared bibliography. Stock No. 94. \$70.00.