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ABSTRACT

This document presents eight scholarly articles on the multicultural milieu in which children grow and develop. Readings address the following questions: (1) What is culture and how is it formed? (2) How do people develop their cultural orientation? (3) What are some major insights about culture that are critical to the early childhood educator's understanding of learning and development? (4) What roles are important for an effective leader in terms of supporting the development of a multicultural orientation in staff, children, and parents? (5) How can parents be guided toward becoming effective multicultural models for their children? (6) How can teachers improve their cultural sensitivity to the diverse needs of children and families? (7) What are some key multicultural considerations in the development of language and reading programs for young children? (8) What are some educationally and developmentally appropriate strategies for facilitating language development in culturally diverse children? and (9) How can play be used to foster multicultural attitudes and skills in children. Over 125 references are cited. (RH)

READINGS ON
MULTICULTURAL LEARNING IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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PREFACE

The purpose of the Southern Association on Children Under Six is to further the development of knowledge and understanding of young children and their families. One of the ways this purpose is pursued is through publications developed and written by individuals with expertise in selected areas of concern.

This document represents two years of effort on behalf of the SACUS Multiculture Committee under the leadership of Jimmie Battle (Virginia State University; Hakim Rashid (Howard University); and Kevin Swick (University of South Carolina, 1985-86 SACUS President. It is the fulfillment of a goal set by the multiculture committee during the 1985-86 SACUS year. In presenting the proposal for this book, the committee wrote:

> As major agents in the socialization of young children in this society, early childhood educators must have both a sensitivity to and a knowledge of cultural issues that bear most directly on child development and family life.

The reader will find in this document scholarly articles on varied topics relating to the multicultural milieu in which children grow and develop. In making it available, the Southern Association on Children Under Six hopes that professionals who work with children and families may hone their skills in teaching from a multicultural perspective and may grow in affirmation of the differences among us all.

As we become increasingly aware of the role of culture in family life and in human growth and development, it seems appropriate that, as professionals, we continue our probe into how best to serve the needs of young children in a richly diverse society. The Southern Association on Children Under Six is proud of its heritage of study and its effort on behalf of children and families of the South and is particularly pleased to present this document designed to enhance our awareness and give direction to our efforts.

Margaret B. Puckett, Ed.D.
SACUS President, 1986-87

INTRODUCTION

Culture is what each of us makes out of our experiences and what people construct through their common social experiences. It is ironic and unfortunate (if not tragic) that human cultural differences have more often than not prompted people to function in irrational and dysfunctional modes. Early childhood educators have a unique opportunity to help children and parents develop positive ways of constructing cultural orientations that capitalize on the strengths of each and every human being. This book is an attempt to support professionals working with children and families in their efforts to become more culturally sensitive to the many forces that influence the learning and development process. Specifically, the readings address the following questions: What is culture and how is it formed? How do people develop their cultural orientation? What are some major insights about culture that are critical to the early childhood educator's understanding of learning and development? What roles are important to being an effective leader in terms of supporting the development of a multicultural orientation in staff, children, and parents? How can parents be guided toward becoming effective multicultural models for their children? How can teachers improve their cultural sensitivity to the diverse needs of children and families? What are some key multicultural considerations to consider in the development of language/reading programs for young children? What are some educationally and developmentally appropriate strategies for facilitating language development in culturally diverse children? How can play be displayed to foster multicultural attitudes and skills in children? These and other questions form the core of the material presented in Readings on Multicultural Learning in Early Childhood Education.

CHAPTER I

CULTURE AND LEARNING: LESSONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

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Education remains the only long-term process by which individuals can acquire both the cognitive and affective tools for developing understandings regarding their culture, other cultures, the dynamics of the interface between cultures, and how to use cultural experiences as means for constructive growth—both socially and intellectually. Given the rapidity by which children learn social skills during the early childhood years, it is vital that their educational experience include multicultural content of a productive nature.

The Meaning of Culture

The term culture refers to the fact that groups of people have developed a system of shared meanings regarding the way they conduct their lives. The way people meet basic human needs, conduct the educational process, carry out daily rituals, organize and express their values, and act on various social issues combinc to make up their culture (Maehr and Stallings, 1975). Certainly there are individual and group deviations within a cultural system. Cultures allow for such diversity as long as it does not violate the basic premises upon which people function. Cultures are essential to human functioning and yet dependent upon the vitality of individuals to provide continual renewal to the system (Erikson, 1959).

Viewpoints about cultural systems range from narrowly defined systems (closed groups) to highly viable and complex arrangements existent in many of today's

technological societies. Beginning with the purpose of culture and extending to social activities, perceptions are shaped by the individual's unique experiences. For example, some people see the purpose of culture to be that of maintaining their current life style, while others see it as a means for continually improving society. Students of cultural functioning explain that both change and stability are characteristics of viable cultures (Maeher and Stallings, 1975). Without some continuity of events and beliefs, the foundation of social systems would be fragile; and without meaningful refinements of human behavior, cultures would lack the strength to remain functional. Hall (1984) observes that cultural functions, while varying from society to society, must have the confidence of people or major alterations will occur. This "dance of life" is what people are about as they both respond to their ecology and attempt to influence it for the better.

Formation of Cultural Patterns

Cultural behavior patterns do not necessarily emerge in a logical sequence. Rather, cultural patterns form through a dynamic, transactional process where historical belief systems, current needs and interests, and future visions interact with each other to create social living patterns (Salk, 1983). Individual behaviors influence cultural development in both cumulative and qualitative modes, gaining acceptance through group sharing where some behaviors are found functional and others dysfunctional.

One example of how this process works is evident in the evolution of child care practices in our society. Consider the "ideological revolution" that is happening as a result of the acceptance of the paradigm of early childhood education. Prior to 1900, the child was viewed as passive until he or she reached the age of seven, at which time the child's value increased in terms of being a "pool" of cheap labor. As a result of many progressive thinkers, the societal view of children has shifted to a perception that views the infant and young child as an active seeker of

knowledge—thus the need for early childhood education (Osborn, 1980). While this paradigm is not totally accepted, the direction of this cultural pattern is toward becoming the social norm. This ideological change helps to focus on the way by which ideas are entertained by people and eventually internalized as a cultural behavior pattern. First, the process is usually gradual, although technology has added a new dimension to the "time factor." Second, individuals both influence their culture and are influenced by it. Third, social groups select patterns of functioning that strengthen their identity (as they perceive their identity). Fourth, lasting cultural changes occur through social actions of people and not in what might be said about new ideas. Thus one must be able to discriminate between cultural noise and authentic cultural change (Salk, 1983).

Stability and change are key elements in all cultural interactions. Both are essential to the health of social groups. Once again, an example from the field of child development helps to make clear how important the stability and change process are to societal functions. From birth throughout the life cycle, the human organism must have some sense of stability in order to acquire an identity; yet without change, the individual will not grow but atrophy for lack of stimulation. As Erikson (1982) warns, "too much change (especially when the change carries no meaning) results in identity confusion." The desired balance between change and stability is accounted for in most cultures through rituals that help people cushion the new situation with some familiar experience. In the same context, however, people seek escape from the status quo by engaging in "play" with new ideas. The young child will wander from mother's side but not to the extent of losing his security.

People learn about various cultural paradigms by participating in the system itself. For example, adult views of how children learn and develop are acquired from their experiences in the cultural system. Cultural paradigms related to children are formed over many generations and reflect an evolving knowledge base and a continuum

of experiences with children. Thus all change in social groups is rooted in their culture's way of viewing and acting toward children. Ideological shifts in how children are viewed (such as the ideas put forth by Freud and Piaget) can lead to major new developments in every facet of the culture's fabric. For example, the notion of mother-infant bonding stimulated a complete analysis of all aspects of human emotional development and learning. Efforts to increase the quality of infant life have influenced our perceptions of how older people live too! (Osborn, 1980).

Influences on Children

Children seek out a social system which they can use to acquire human competence. Research indicates that children are desirous of positive, growth-oriented living patterns unless or until their culture distorts or reshapes this natural proclivity (Hall, 1984). Cultural influences on children are filtered through the dynamic systems of the family, neighborhood, media, child care center, and other human systems. Parents, for example, act as cultural agents for children. It is usually through parents that children acquire their initial vision of how people function and of what people value. Prosocial behaviors such as sharing, empathy, sensitivity to the needs of others, team work, and constructive problem solving are learned early in the humanization process. When parents model these proactive living skills and expect children to gradually acquire them, positive social behaviors are internalized by children (Grusac and Arnason, 1982). Parent behaviors that are counterproductive to children's cultural development include isolation from the community, rigidity toward new people and innovative ideas, negative "future views," and a lack of proactive life skills (Schaefer, 1983).

Additional "influencers" include day care centers, television, community-belief systems, and other socializing forces that surround the child. Two guiding principles that should permeate these cultural systems are: (1) children need to develop a sense

of pride and understanding of themselves as unique individuals and as significant members of a social group, and (2) children need to develop a positive understanding of people in various cultural settings. Thus the child's ecology should foster events and experiences where children can acquire these essential social skills (Swick, 1985).

Children have natural capacities to "tune in" to their surroundings. Utilizing their entire sensory system, children create a system by which they can gain a sense of harmony with their native culture. For example, through the senses of smell and touch they learn a great deal about the people caring for them in the early days of life. Later, through vision, hearing, and speech, they broaden their circle of learning to acquire more skills for cultural functioning. Observation is the skill children use most to determine what interpersonal patterns are most effective for being "in sync" with the ecology (Hall, 1984). The greater the consonance between the child's naturally proactive orientation to life and the complementary positive forces to support this direction in the culture, the greater the potential for both individual and group progress (Leonard, 1981).

Using Maslow's (1968) "needs hierarchy," it is possible to map out desirable cultural influences on children: basic health care, love and emotional nutrients, safety and protection from harm, stimulation through positive experiences in the environment, and continuous contact with sensitive, caring, developing adults. Cultures that support this dynamic process of growth and learning in children create the potential for positive intergenerational life cycles (Moore and Cooper, 1982). For example, Hall (1984) points out that in cultures where children and adults place priority on their human needs and their personal development, a cultural context evolves that, in turn, strengthens the community's life-control system. Where people value and cherish their diverse ways of living, their common interests are strengthened. In such social settings, children become sensitive and growth-oriented people (Swick, 1985).

The most significant thing a culture can do for children is to help them internalize

a set of skills they can use to continually refine and improve the social system in which they live. This process occurs as young children acquire experience in influencing their environment as well as having involvement with people from other cultures. In a proactive setting, children need little encouragement to ask questions about what they see, hear, touch, or sense in their environment. Their natural curiosity can be used to foster a sense of valuing the way different people function and to support their early attempts at becoming socially competent (Void, 1985).

Creating Culturally Rich Environments for Children

It is during the early years that human beings form their "cultural map" of how life works (Hall, 1984). This map serves as the framework people use to solve problems, interact with others, and to develop and refine their self-concepts. A major challenge for adults is to assure that children have a rich culture to draw from as they create their understanding of life. This richness should begin with emotional nutrients that surround the infants' early days and weeks and continue to occur throughout childhood. The caring process that parents employ to secure a positive home setting for the child provides the basis for social growth (Greenspan and Greenspan, 1985).

The extension of this emotional stimulation to parent-parent interactions and family-community relations further strengthens the ecology in which the child functions as an active participant. While the evidence is not final, recent ethnographic reports confirm that the context in which the child develops is very influential in suggesting to the child what is important in life (Goelman, Oberg, and Smith, 1984). Seeing adults care for and about each other is part of the context that Hall (1984) believes we use to form our perceptions and behaviors. When children see adults experiencing their culture in diverse and meaningful ways, they have access to good role models they can use in their cultural map making.

Beyond the home, there are many possibilities to explore in building culturally relevant situations. Child care centers, for example, can continue the work parents

started in terms of strengthening children's self-images as related to their culture. This requires a great deal of intimate interaction among care givers, children, and parents. Children can also be supported in their attempts to broaden the circle of culture through role playing the ways people function; visiting sites where societal affairs happen; and articulating their sense of culture through painting, music, and many other dimensions (Void, 1985).

The messages of many cultures come to children through television. Given the amount of time children and adults spend in front of this "teacher," it is imperative that programmers treat their function with the importance it has for the culture. The cultural wasteland of television can be transformed into a viable source of cultural literacy. Some television networks have produced excellent educational programs. Ultimately, a strong family/school/media team is needed to produce a realistic but appropriate global educational resource for all societal members.

As Bronfenbrenner (1979) notes, the most powerful school for learning is the ecology each person experiences. What people see and how they come to conceptualize it are processes that adults can influence by establishing cultural contexts that can carry viable messages. All cultural groups must critically examine the "substance" of their ecologies——the human actions seen by children—and determine if it is the kind of context that promotes the well-being of future generations.

Lessons for Early Childhood Educators

There are far too many lessons that emerge from cultural studies to discuss in one writing. In settling for a brief explication of the important lessons, some pertinent items are not dealt with here but are recognized. **The most important lesson** professionals in child development and early childhood education need to confront **is that far too little is known about how human beings function.** The capacity to be human has yet to be fully validated as a primary goal for societal functioning. As Hall (1984, p. 204-205) states:

> My point is that as humans learn more about their incredible sensitivity, their boundless talents, and manifold diversity, they should begin to appreciate not only themselves but also others. One hopes this will ultimately lead to lessening our tendency to subjugate or stamp out anything that is different. The human race is not nearly enough in awe of its own capabilities.

Clearly, the major function of early childhood education is not to prepare children for school but to involve them in coming to know themselves as growing, capable, and uniquely talented human beings. And children come to know themselves through their interactions with others. Thus, it is imperative that parents and caregivers spend large amounts of time with children in productive and emotionally rewarding experiences.

The second lesson is equally significant: that children learn about culture by being a part of that culture and not simply by following the verbal directives of adults. The more limiting the culture, the less potent the cultural context for children's learning. Children internalize their conceptions of culture through the use of all of their senses. The more positive a cultural context is, the more likely a child is to develop positive life-views regarding self and others. This idea of cultural immersion is supported by the work of Schieffelin and Cochran-Smith on the development of literacy in children (1984, p. 7).

> Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the literacy orientation of this community was the authority accorded print materials and books to verify and extend primary experiences and to legitimate oral information.

In other words, the use of print materials was a "way of life," a significant element of the culture. In a similar manner, inquiry-oriented behaviors become part of children's behavior when these behaviors are part of the social system. Even within communities there are multiple cultures that influence children's life-views in different modes.

The third lesson regarding children's learning about culture is that adults must recognize the importance of building and continually refining the cultural context in which children acquire their primary knowledge of how people function. Children observe where adults place their values (spend time, invest energy, and provide rewards)

and then act in correspondence with these values. Thus it should not be surprising that children who are sensitive to the needs of other people come from "contexts" that value human sensitivity to both individual and group needs. Adults who have a sense of the future as a reality that transcends their biological time clock and yet is significantly related to their cultural time clock will plan for culturally viable experiences. It is in families, neighborhoods, and communities where the quality of human living is given precedence over all other cultural tasks that children are most likely to receive a useful education.

CHAPTER II

THE ROLE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

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> We know, or ought to know, that the culture of any child should not be regarded as a deficit. Rather, it should be learning's chief asset. This is not to endorse as positive any cultural patterns—but no competent professional will fail to understand the critical role a learner's culture plays in the growth and development process.
>
> Asa G. Hilliard

The major role of an administrator in any school setting is to supervise and facilitate the provision of a quality program of education. Education is the process of developing self-awareness. Self-awareness and cultural awareness are inseparable. Thus, stated another way, the major role of an administrator in any school setting is to supervise and facilitate the development of self/cultural awareness.

We live in a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual world. Yet, the American educational system has traditionally perpetuated a monocultural, monoethnic, and monolingual society. Such notions as a "color-blind" school system in which "all students are treated the same" are intended to denote a lack of preferential treatment for any student. However, these notions actually reinforce a model which assumes that differences from a presumed "norm" are deviant and/or deficient. Culturally, ethnically, or linguistically different groups are expected to surrender their standards and rules and conform to the presumed norm. In addressing the estrangement of the school from the life of the working class immigrant family, Silberman (1970, p. 58) wrote:

> In their refusal to meet the immigrants' alien cultures halfway—in their refusal to adjust the school to the children as well as the children to the school—teachers and administrators. . . all said to the child and parent. . . 'You are vicious, immoral, shortsighted and thoroughly wrong about most things. We are right; we shall show you the truth.'

In recent years there has been a movement away from cultural chauvinism toward perceiving and appreciating cultural differences as simply cultural differences (McDavid and Garwood, 1978). While schools may have little direct impact on the larger society in increasing intercultural respect and exchange, they do affect students' development, as well as parental and school staff resocialization, such that ethnic and cultural insularity may be significantly diminished. Student socialization and parent and staff resocialization involve the development of multicultural social competence: sensitivity, literacy, and skill in conflict management. The administrator in a multicultural setting must supervise and facilitate the educational program toward these ends.

There is a growing literature on effective schools and the organizational and administrative characteristics that distinguish such schools (Hawley, Rosenholtz, Goodstein, and Hasselbring, 1984; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Rutter, 1983). This literature confirms that there are generic characteristics distinguishing schools which promote student achievement from schools which do not. Several of these generic characteristics are central to any discussion of the role of an administrator in multicultural programs; thus, we first discuss some of these. There are also specific tasks an administrator must address; we also discuss some of these.

Key Generic Tasks of the Administrator

In their review of research on effective schools, Hawley, et al., (1984) identified four basic functions that effective school administrators perform: they promote the competence of the teaching staff; attend to the goals of the school; create a work environment supportive of effective teaching; and motivate stellar performance in staff. Several key strategies crosscut these basic functions and distinguish effective schools. First, administrators and teachers attempt to maximize the amount of time

spent in learning and instruction rather than in transitions, routines, and paperwork. Second, the staff constructs a culture that values excellence, achievement, and discipline. Third, teacher exchange, collaboration, and collegiality are planned for and maximized. Fourth, administrators attend to and involve teachers in articulation, planning, and coordination of curriculum expreiences across levels and classrooms. Fifth, the administrators build linkages between the school and parents as well as the community. Sixth, administrators recruit and select highly competent teachers and promote their continuing staff development through systematic and continuous in-service training. In sum, effective schools are characterized by leadership; by the value of excellence; by continuous curriculum ferment; by exchange, planning, and evaluation; by commitment and attention to children's learning and development; and by integral, close relationships to parents and community.

It is clear that to achieve the important goals of multicultural education, administrators must use the above strategies. Instructional time must be devoted to multicultural education. The values of the early childhood program must reflect commitment to the development of cultural literacy, sensitivity, and skill. Opportunities for staff exchange and development will need to be provided. Strong, consistent linkages between the program and diverse segments of the different ethnic and cultural communities will need to be forged. Moreover, careful, thoughtful staff recruitment procedures which involve teachers and parents who represent different ethnic/cultural perspectives are essential.

Because the teacher is the most important variable in the child's learning environment, it is imperative that administrators select teachers who possess and project multicultural sensitivity: an unconditionally accepting attitude toward culturally different students. Teacher attitudes and expectations have a profound impact on students' perceptions, academic performances, self-concepts, self-esteems, and beliefs. Research suggests that teachers, second only to parents, are the most

significant others in children's lives. Thus, teachers play an important role in the formation of students' ethnic and cultural attitudes toward themselves and others. Culturally sensitive teacher attitudes can redirect feelings of hostility and alienation among culturally different students.

Let us now turn to more specific tasks of an administrator in a multicultural program. What goals might an administrator have as a multicultural emphasis is infused within a program? Why is it important to do so? What inherent problems or conflicts result when this is attempted?

Specific Tasks in Promoting Multicultural Education

We argue that an administrator has three basic goals for children, for staff, and for parents in planning a multicultural program. The three goals that are essential to promoting children's development and adult resocialization are the development of sensitivity, literacy, and skill in conflict management. We see these as the tripartite dimensions of multicultural social competence.

Multicultural sensitivity addresses the affective component of student, staff, and parental attitudes. Multicultural literacy addresses the cognitive/knowledge component of these attitudes. The goal of cultural literacy is to eliminate the barriers associated with lack of information, misinformation, and stereotyping. One way to achieve cultural literacy is to study the history and practices of the various cultural groups represented in the educational setting, through prescribed preservice and in-service training programs. Additionally, special parent-teacher association meetings can be devoted to increasing multicultural literacy. "Entering a culture," thereby gaining a knowledge of it, is perhaps most readily done by entering a dialogue with a more experienced member of it.

> There is a Russian proverb to the effect that one understands only after one has discussed. There are doubtless many ways in which a human being can serve as a vicar of the culture, helping a child to understand its points of view and the nature of its knowledge. . . . Few are so potentially powerful as participating in dialogue. (Bruner, 1971, p. 106)

To this end, parents play an essential role not only as multicultural learners but especially as experts. As parents, administrators, and staff increase their own awareness of varied histories and cultural practices, they encourage students to develop feelings of understanding and respect for themselves and for others. Parents' and staff members' enhanced sensitivity and literacy in turn serve as the foundation for the deft resolution of value conflicts which surface between a particular cultural framework and the culture of the school.

The Family: Our Window on Culture

It is our contention that understanding families is how early childhood educators can best understand cultures. For the family (including the extended family) is the unit through which a people's deep culture and surface structure are transmitted (Nobles, 1976). Nobles has proposed a tri-level model of culture. Level 3—the surface structure of culture—is composed of the common conceptions of culture: language, customs, dress, dance, music, and child-rearing practices, among others. Deep structure exists at Levels 2 and 3. Level 2 includes the ethos/world-view/belief system/ideology of a people. And finally at Level 1, there is a people's cosmology (the understanding of the essence of reality), epistemology (the methods used to understand reality), and axiology (the values which emerge from the understanding of reality). The family, then, is the primary social unit which transmits both the deep and surface culture of a people.

There is abundant evidence that substantial differences in the socialization goals, and child-rearing practices of various cultural groups exist (Hale, 1982; Harrison, Serafica, and McAdoo, 1984; McAdoo, 1978; Kitano, 1980; Shigaki, 1983; Shade, 1983). Moreover, studies of intergenerational similarity in child-rearing practices and attitudes suggest that there is transmission of knowledge about children, appropriate socialization goals, and child-rearing strategies between generations within a given culture (Frankel and Bornstein, 1982; Ricks, 1984; Stevens, 1984, 1986; Cohler and Grunebaum, 1982).

Unfortunately, the mechanisms of such social transmission of parenting, to borrow from Ricks (1984), is little understood. To illustrate, Harrison, Serafica, and McAdoo (1984) have argued that many traditional Japanese-American families are distinguished from Anglo families in their emphases on the following socialization goals for children: a collective/group sense of identity and a strong sense of dependence on and obligation to the family, as well as respect for, obedience to, and reverence for one's parents.

The point here is that parents who represent different cultural groups are the experts with whom the early childhood administrator can consult to promote the multicultural literacy, sensitivity, and skill in conflict management. It is through parents and families from different cultural backgrounds that we can come to know and understand different cultural perspectives. Discussion and study of those aspects of surface and deep culture are valid ways to enhance our own social competence—in a multicultural sense.

Multicultural social competence also denotes social skill in conflict management—the ability to interact with others productively and effectively to achieve individual and group goals. Socially competent individuals know how to select an appropriate behavior and time its emission such that it fits in the ongoing stream of behavior. Conflict management is one of the areas which distinguishes more from less socially competent individuals (Gottman, 1983; Gottman and Levenson, 1985; Patterson, 1980). When parents enroll their child in an educational program, professional early childhood educators assure them that the intrinsic value of each child and his beliefs, customs, and traditions will be respected. However, parental socialization goals and strategies—outgrowths of their specific cultural or subcultural norms—may conflict with those of the school. Two cases illustrate such conflict and the need for skill in such conflict management by school personnel.

Case 1: As a result of a not-so-friendly tug-of-war, a 26-month-old male preschooler falls backward. The child cries and the teacher picks him up just as the

child's father enters the classroom. The father, a non-American, observes the child-teacher interaction and requests that the teacher put the child down and allow him to cry. He explains that in his home country, male children learn at a a very early age that crying is unacceptable. The teacher faces a dilemma because she is asked to change a behavior that she perceives as both natural and correct.

Case 2: A mother requests that, because of religious beliefs, her second grader not participate in any school celebrations such as birthday or holiday parties. When these celebrations occur, she asks that her child be allowed to stay in another classroom.

Who would adjust their cultural expectations, the parents or the school? Are educators showing disrespect when parental requests and expectations are not completely honored? To what extent should educators be expected to meet culturally diverse, and often conflicting, expectations? What effect does a disregard of culturally diverse standards have upon the respective child?

These questions are predictable outgrowths of a multicultural educational setting. Specific strategies for resolving such dilemmas must consider the particular cultural and educational contexts. However, the administrator and staff are better equipped to reduce conflict when their strategies are informed by multicultural social competence. The recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity as an important, integral, and legitimate component of the educational program provides the initial basis for the development of the ideas, feelings, and behaviors that are necessary for healthy human growth in a multicultural world.

CHAPTER III

PARENTS AS MODELS IN CHILDREN'S CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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The involvement of parents in children's development and learning must include parental awareness of their influence on children in terms of cultural development. It is through the performance of various roles that parents introduce children to the basics of their culture. Initially, parents are about the process of supporting the child regarding the basic needs of love, food, health, and security. During the early part of life, the child needs a secure setting and contact with caring adults. As the child develops, parents act as educators of the child in many ways, including the introduction of the child to many cultural functions. The human behavior patterns children observe during the early childhood years strongly influence their development of (or lack of) social competence (Swick, 1985).

Roles Parents Perform Across Cultures

Regardless of cultural context, parents perform four roles: (1) nurturing, (2) guiding, (3) problem solving, and (4) modeling. Parental **nurturance** of the infant and young child is essential to every culture's survival. For example, the caring process as it is applied to infants acts as the initial involvement of adults in influencing the future generation. While parents from different cultures may carry out the nurturing role in different ways, the desired result of having a secure and growing child is common among all parents. It is generally unacceptable behavior to abnadon the infant; the exceptions being in cases where cultures are threatened by famine, war, or other perils (Swick, 1985).

In most cultures, parents are expected to **guide** the infant and young child toward an acceptable set of social behaviors. While one social group may use restrictive socialization techniques and another more flexible modes of acculturation, the goal is the same: to produce a citizen that can function effectively in the identified culture. For example, in some cultures the feeding of infants is rigidly scheduled, while in other human settings a more flexible approach to this task is encouraged. Even within cultures, there are variations on how the guidance function is carried out (Gordon, 1977).

Problem solving is an essential skill for human functioning and parents are expected to assist children in mastering this process. Initially, parents of all cultures use some form of accommodation to support the infants and young children in their attempts at becoming competent. As young children gain experience with acceptable problem-solving practice, they begin a process of internalizing these social skills that will be a part of them throughout their life spans. Initially, parents and infants carry out this process in a nonverbal manner using [illegible], and other sensory modes to create some human synchrony. Later, they will [illegible] "stuff" of everyday life as the contents of their problem-solving efforts. When infants and children fail to develop these instrumental skills, they have difficulty in finding a functional place in our society (Swick and Duff, 1982).

Modeling occurs in all cultures and is linked with the mastery of every phase of development and learning. Once a culture has established some desired social behaviors for people to follow, parents are admonished to "set an example" for children by being models of the desired person. The concept of "parent as educator" is based on the modeling of constructive social and intellectual behaviors. In one culture, constructive behaviors may mean rigid conformity to very limited social patterns of behavior. In other social systems, individuality and creativity are desired, and parents are encouraged to facilitate the development of these skills in their children

by encouraging their inquisitive behaviors and by guiding them toward seeing things from many different perspectives (Fantini, 1980).

Parents Across Cultural Boundaries: Some Common Goals

An examination of various cultures indicates that parents have some common goals regardless of their social-system context. These goals fall into two categories: (1) parent-centered goals, and (2) child-centered goals. These goals are, of course, interrelated and the dynamics of family and community life influence parent ability to achieve competence in them. Further, these goals serve as guiding forces for parents and children as they interact in their communities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

All parents (unless frozen in a pathological syndrome) want to be successful in carrying out their roles. However, this goal is achieved in many different ways depending upon the desired social arrangement. For example, in "high context" cultures, parenting is viewed as a team process and many adults are expected to act in parenting capacities. in "low context" cultures, a more individualistic approach predominates and fewer adults are directly involved in intimate ways with the child (Hall, 1984).

Another common goal of parents across cultures is to acquire the needed resources to carry out their functions. This goal usually involves parents in building a friendship network and linking up to the world of work to acquire needed goods and services. Parents who accomplish this goal are usually successful in their parenting skills. In simple cultures, the process is typically ingrained in the fabric of intergenerational living; however, highly complex social systems require that parents have rather sophisticated problem-solving skills to be successful in this process (Swick, 1984).

In terms of goals for their children, parents want similar things—at least at the beginning of family development. Only families in the depths of serious pathologies

disregard the security of the newborn. Most "healthy" parents, regardless of their cultural identity, want their children to survive and prosper in secure environments. Once this goal is achieved with some degree of confidence, parents formulate an advancing spiral of goals they want for their children. Some parents will establish minimal goals for children because of their limitations or because of the limiting ecology in which they function. Schaefer (1983) postulates that as parents increase their control skills and expand their world-view, they increase their expectations for their children. This appears to be a valid assumption as parents who have developed viable support systems and are effective in mobilizing these family resources have a positive influence on their children's perception of the world (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Diversity in Parenting Styles Across Cultures

Parents invest time, energy, and skills in attending to the child's development. Where parents spend their energy, how they use their "time chips," and their application of parenting skills are heavily influenced by their cultural setting (Gordon, 1975). The vitality of a culture (life span, health status of the population, future goals, etc.), for example, may dictate that parents expend their energies on survival functions and have a delimiting influence on their goals for children. Societies with plentiful life resources may stimulate more positive child views in parents, but this does not guarantee a more elaborate system of parenting. Cultural factors influencing parental styles are not linear nor necessarily causative of better parenting. The desired synchrony of positive life-views with sensitive parental behaviors toward children remains an ideal beyond any existing cultural system. This ideal parenting syndrome is most often approached when societies place a high value on parent-child relationships and support their valued behavior with the need resources (Stinnett, 1980).

Cultural context influences parenting styles, parent-parent, and parent-child interactions. For example, in a future-oriented ecology, parents usually are proactive

in planning significant structures that secure the child's health and position the child for taking advantage of various educational opportunities. Societies where "fate" is a predominant life-view are more existential in their functioning. Of course, most cultures are a mixture of positive future views and limiting situations that force a realistic approach to parenting.

Parenting style includes the following: (1) energy investments, (2) learning environment designs, (3) life-views, and (4) educational planning. In studying cultural systems regarding parent behaviors, the following are useful guides: How much contact time do parents spend with each other and with their children? What is the nature and substance of this time spent together? How do parents structure their child's learning ecology? Are parents actively engaged in controlling their future and their child's future? Are parents educators of their children as reflected in the kinds of experiences in which they involve their children (Hall, 1984)? These questions are reflective of "style issues" that parents consciously or unconsciously respond to as they internalize their parenting skills.

Parenting context often dictates how these style issues are dealt with by parents over their life span. In homogeneous cultures, for example, parents carry out an intergenerational parenting scheme that is tradition-bound and changes very little from one generation to another. While heterogeneous cultures may provide the opportunity for more diversity of parenting styles, they also contain the potential for offering few guidelines for parents. Ideally, cultural context provides parents with a functional tradition of parenting roles while nurturing a new generation of parents to experiment with new ideas and strategies (Hamner and Turner, 1985).

Parent-parent interactions often reflect the substance of the cultural orientation of a particular society. For example, in many progressive cultures, the move toward actualizing every person's talents has altered husband-wife relationships in the sense of both parties assuming roles once held by only the husband or the wife. The process

of role change in parent-parent relationships, while certainly desirable for social improvements, may influence the family system in a rather stressful manner until such change is integrated into a system of effective functioning. Too much change at one time may result in regression to former, more secure life patterns or result in pathological behavior patterns such as spouse abuse. When the informal synchrony of parent-parent relationships is destroyed by a nonsupportive cultural context, the family system is clearly weakened.

The importance of a harmonious parent-parent dyad is best realized in how parents relate to their children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Parents who lack a clear understanding of their identity within their cultural context will have difficulty in carrying out parental roles such as modeling. Ineffective parenting, then, has a ripple effect on children, the community, and eventually the entire social system. Parents are in need of cultural skills that enable them to relate proactively to their cultural system and to connect with other cultural systems in a productive manner.

Educating Parents for Cultural Competence

Initially, parents must come to know themselves as productive, significant, and growing persons. Parental self-image, regardless of cultural orientation, is a productive force in shaping children's views of how life works (Schaefer, 1983). Thus, parents can use the following four areas of parental functioning to determine their self-image status.

1. Goals parents have established for their personal and parental functioning.
2. Goals parents have established for their role in nurturing the child.
3. Roles parents have used to carry out the tasks they identified as desirable goals.
4. Strategies parents use to assess their status as parents in relationship to accomplishing their desired goals.

As parents respond to issues involved in these areas of parental functioning, they need to be guided toward an analysis of their cultural context in terms of how

it is influencing their behavior. In this way, parents can establish a process by which strengths and weaknesses of their culture can be identified and used to refine and improve their involvement with various cultural events. This "metal-parenting" process is the key to having a productive change process in place within the dynamics of any cultural system. One example of how this process works is found in the parent-sharing script that follows:

> Mrs. Raines, you were sharing that you had to make some major adjustments when you realized Jim was watching too much television.
>
> Yes, I realized that it wasn't Jim but the pattern of living all of us had adopted without much realization of how it was influencing our family. Most of our neighbors are big TV watchers and we had become very much like them. Jim and I spend very little time doing things together, and it showed in our lives. It was hard to change our patterns of living, but it has been a positive change—both of us are happier and more involved with things than ever.

The process of analyzing one's parenting style and parenting context can be used as a foundation for extending this scheme to the study of other parent cultures. As parents gain some confidence in their ability to carry out various parenting tasks, they are more amenable to interactions with people in differing cultures. Parents provide children with a model on how to relate to people from different cultures. For example, inquisitive parents who actively seek experiences that broaden their understanding of other cultures establish a positive framework for the child to use in his approach to life. In this way, parents can act as guides, supporting the child's interests in what is happening in the community and how people live in different ways, and in acting out the different life activities observed in the community.

The concept of diversity is appealing to children and stimulates them to use a variety of problem-solving approaches. When the validity of this diversity concept is encouraged by parental acceptance and use of it in their human relationships, children are strengthened in terms of seeing cultural divergence as a positive and natural part of life. In this effort to foster a multicultural perspective in children, parents need to respond to the many inquiries children have regarding their observations of

human behavior. Parents can use the following as guidelines for assessing their cultural competence regarding their role in introducing children to culturally diverse experiences in positive modes.

1. Am I a good role model for children to use in forming attitudes and behaviors toward culturally different people?
2. As a parent, do I initiate family activities that will involve my children in a cross section of community living patterns?
3. Do I encourage my children to explore how different people live and support their efforts through proper guidance?
4. Am I actively involved in making the community a productive place for people from all cultures?

Thinking about how we live, how others behave, and how these varying patterns of living strengthen the total community is an initial point of departure for developing a truly multicultural society.

Applications to Parent Education

Gordon's (1975) maxim that to educate the parent is to educate the child for a life span is never so true as it is with the development of children's conceptualization of culture. Three major tasks exist for parent educators in regard to educating parents for multicultural awareness: (1) their roles as cultural influences of children, (2) their status within the primary social system that makes up their world, and (3) their transactions with cultures beyond their ecology (Kendall, 1983).

Parents as cultural influencers of children's behavior is an awareness that all parents should retain as the function in the home and community. Basic awareness of what one is modeling for children can, at least, prompt parents to reflect on their attitudinal and behavioral orientation toward people from different cultures. Encourage parents to reflect on their actions toward different people and to take a proactive role in helping family members develop a positive sense of people from all cultural systems.

In order for parents to be effective in carrying out a multicultural paradigm with their children, they must be secure in their cultural identity. Knowledge of who one is (in the cultural sense), where one has come from, and toward what end one is trying to achieve are directions essential to having a workable cultural program. Parent educators, for example, might sponsor programs that foster a sense of pride in parents about their culture. If parents have inadequate feelings about their cultural context, it is unlikely they will reach out to understand each other.

Finally, parent educators can design learning situations where parents are encouraged to acquire a clear understanding of the positive features of people from different cultures. The stereotypic patterns of cultural divergence presented in the media often distort individual views regarding people who are different. This is especially so in a cultural system that encourages people to form their ideas of others in vicarious modes as opposed to having direct and sustaining experiences with other people. It is all the more significant then that parents actively seek many positive experiences in culturally diverse situations. To this end, parent educators should use all available means to engage parents in broadening their cultural skills.

CHAPTER IV

TEACHERS AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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Throughout the decade of the 1970's, the concepts and practices of multicultural education received increasing attention. As an outgrowth of criticisms of the variety of deficit hypotheses that attempted to explain underachievement among minority status children, and also as a way of recognizing that racism permeated both the society and its educational institutions, a number of educators argued that the Eurocentric curriculum needed to be abandoned in favor of a multicultural approach. By the end of the 1970's, a number of professional organizations had developed position statements and/or publications concerning the need for multicultural education. A 1977 position statement by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (p. 3) for example stated that:

> The essential goals of multicultural education embrace (a) recognizing and prizing diversity; (b) developing greater understanding of other cultural patterns; (c) respecting individuals of all cultures; (d) developing positive and productive interaction among people and among experiences of diverse cultural groups. . . . It is mandatory for quality education. . . .

In a similar vein, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in its Guidelines Toward Implementation of Multicultural Teacher Education (1979, p. 1) noted that:

> Multicultural education should not be viewed as a provincial process. Regardless of the clientele, it is absolutely indispensable to a teacher education program. Multiculturalism is not compensatory. Teacher education programs that are multicultural will give their clients—via exposure to diverse sociocultural systems, languages, world views, and philosophies of life—greater flexibility in personality and interethnic and international skills.

It is apparent, therefore, that a wide spectrum of the educational community recognized that multiculturalism was an essential component of quality education.

A multicultural perspective was slowly but surely being recognized as a "basic skill." One study (Mahan and Lacefield, 1982) even found that graduates of a program with a heavy multicultural focus were more likely to be employed as teachers, and also more likely to be employed in preferred settings.

The conservative climate that has permeated the first half of the 1980's has made it clear, however, that the concept of multicultural education is extremely low on any lists of educational priorities. The three R's are considered the only basic skills, and anything else is considered an unnecessary frill. As Geneva Gay (1983, p. 563) has noted, "Given its history of struggle for legitimacy and struggle. . . we can expect the 1980's to be unreceptive to multiethnic education."

The extent to which the multicultural perspective has permeated educational educational practice has received little empirical attention. It is therefore difficult to say with any degree of certainty how widespread multicultural education is within the "real world" of schools. The present study is an effort to provide some data on (1) teachers' perceptions of an attitude toward multicultural education in both preservice training and their current occupational settings and (2) the influence of race on these attitudes and perceptions.

Methods

The sample consisted of 107 teachers enrolled in a summer institute offering graduate credit in early childhood education at a large southeastern university. Most of the teachers (80 percent) taught in preschool through third grade and 92 percent were female. Seventy-three percent of the teachers were white and 25 percent were black.

The data source for the study was a thirty-item, Likert-type scale designed to examine teacher perceptions of and attitudes towards multicultural education in both preservice education and their current occupational settings. The items were based on statements in the literature on multicultural education and also modifications of items on a scale developed by James Banks (1981).

Results

The results of the survey suggest that teachers see a need for multicultural education but that this need often goes unmet. In terms of perception of the multicultural orientation of their preservice education, the following findings were revealed:

1. Thirty-nine percent felt unprepared to teach a variety of racial and ethnic groups.

2. Sixty-nine percent felt they should have been more exposed to information on the history, culture, and life styles of minority status groups.

3. Seventy-nine percent felt that exposure to a variety of groups should be a criterion for evaluating teacher education programs.

4. Eighty-eight percent felt that teacher educators should make more of an effort to integrate the writings of scholars from a variety of ethnic groups.

The findings concerning teacher perceptions of the multicultural orientation of their current occupational settings included the following:

1. Forty-six percent felt that their school's professional library did not have a good collection of multicultural materials.

2. Fifty-three percent felt that their school's language arts curriculum did not adequately integrate the works of a variety of ethnic groups.

3. Eighty-two percent felt that in-service training in multicultural education would help them provide a better educational program for a variety of reacial and cultural groups.

4. Eighty-nine percent said that their school had not offered in-service workshops in multicultural education in the last three years.

Race seems to have a major influence on teacher perceptions and attitudes. African-American and Caucasian teachers differed in the following areas:

1. While nearly half of the Caucasian teachers felt that their colleagues recognized the need for multiculture education, 88 percent of African-American teachers disagreed.

2. While 72 percent of Caucasian teachers felt that their colleagues recognized and attempted to overcome biases, only 23 percent of African-American teachers felt that this was the case.

3. While 85 percent of Caucasian teachers felt that their colleagues respected the cultural differences of students, only 35 percent of black teachers felt this was the case.

4. While 56 percent of Caucasian teachers agreed that their language arts curriculum integrated the works of a variety of ethnic groups, 80 percent of African-American teachers disagreed with this item.

5. While 63 percent of Caucasian teachers said their social studies curriculum had been revised to include contributions of various groups, 80 percent of African-American teachers disagreed.

6. While 71 percent of Caucasian teachers felt that textbooks were carefully selected for equitable treatment of minorities, 81 percent of African-American teachers disagreed.

Discussion

This survey clearly indicates that the overwhelming majority of the teachers sampled see multiculturalism as an important component of education. There continues, however, to be obstacles to its implementation at both the preservice and in-service levels. Most of the teachers surveyed here felt that their preservice education should have had more of a multlicultural orientation. They also saw little being done relative to multicultural education in the area of in-service training.

Race differences in teacher perceptions and attitudes are particularly disturbing in light of the numerous projections that the number of African-American teachers will significantly decrease over the next few years. African-American teachers consistently saw a greater need for multicultural education and consistently saw their current occupational settings as having much less of a multicultural orientation. It must be remembered that it was African-American educators who first began to articulate the need for education that is multicultural. African-American educators have continually been in the forefront of curriculum and advocacy efforts in this area. If African-American teachers are in fact an endangered species, then the concept of multicultural education may be losing its strongest group of supporters. Clearly, this is not a good omen for the future of multicultural education.

CHAPTER V

MULTICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS IN PLANNING READING INSTRUCTION

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In the preparation of reading instruction, teachers must consider an array of diversities that exist among children, including level of readiness; background experience; socioeconomic status; age; and, equally important and perhaps often neglected, a child's cultural identity.

The term culture is defined by Garcia (1982, p. 7) as a "system of beliefs, values, customs, and institutions that when combined serves as a cluster to provide a person meaningful ways for survival." Thus, all children belong to a cultural or ethnic group.

Greater awareness of differences as well as similarities among cultures has occurred as the result of complexities of economic, political, and social activity; and as these become more pronounced, the need to enhance understanding of others is increased (The ASCD Multicultural Education Commission, 1977).

Burns et al. (1984) state that culturally different children exist in all parts of the country and represent many ethnic heritages. Teachers and children should develop an understanding and appreciation of the various cultures, and curriculum should be designed to foster this understanding and appreciation. Several characteristics of families of culturally different children are identified: they live for long periods of time in poverty; their educational levels are low; many of their parents are illiterate; parents are employed in jobs that require little or no skills; they have linguistic differences or dialects or may be bilingual; parents are poorly paid for the jobs they perform; they live in substandard, often crowded, conditions; children are not exposed

to books or other reading materials; and they are likely to have low aspirations and poor self-concepts. In addition, many children who live in secure settings suffer from "cultural insensitivity" on the part of teachers and their peers. Teachers of reading need to be aware of these characteristics common to multicultural children and should also be cognizant of sources of interference that tend to impede the reading progress of multicultural reading groups.

Impediments in Teaching Reading to Multicultural Children

Most studies on learning to read and the reading process according to Feitelson (1978) have been conducted within a limited cultural context, a single language, and a single writing system. The insights gained from the modicum of existing research, however, have proved useful in ascertaining sources of interference in teaching children from diverse cultures how to read.

Burns et al. (1984) assert that first graders from culturally different homes are not usually prepared for traditional reading readiness programs because often their language is inadequate for communication, or their language pattern is radically different from expected school patterns. They do not know how to interact socially with other children; and they do not know how to control their behavior. Further, they may be unfamiliar with paraphernalia used with reading readiness such as pencils, scissors, paints, or books because they have not been exposed to them and have not been provided a variety of experiences. Such children may be found in rural or mountain areas such as Appalachia, urban areas such as inner-city ghettos, and rural areas where many migrant-worker families reside.

Similarly, Garcia (1973) postulates that culturally different children lack a basic background of information and do not grasp concepts typically treated in school texts. Usually, if they can read words, he posits, they cannot attach meaning to them. Additionally, these children experience great difficulty in reading printed material

because the language used in the books or materials differs from the dialect that the children use to communicate.

Language is an inescapable aspect of multicultural education. Multiple cultures entail multiple linguistic codes, and codes serve the essential function of transmitting cultural information and values from one generation to the next (Saville, 1977, p. 52). This postulation implies that if there is a mismatch between a child's language and the language of the teacher, texts, and other materials, reading can be impaired. Consequently, as Fisher (1973) suggests, more consideration to nonstandard language patterns should be given in planning reading instruction. "The more divergence there is between the dialect of the learner and dialect of the learning, the more difficult will be the task of learning to read" (Goodman, 1965). Children will not develop their potential ability until they can learn to speak, understand, read, and write the language that is used in school (Cohen and Manion, 1983).

Investigations on the sources of interference in teaching reading to multicultural children also indicate that the lower the socioeconomic status of the children, the less efficient their ability to read (Samuels and Dahl, 1973).

Sex differences also affect a child's ability to read. Kolzynski (1973) found that boys are treated differently by their teachers from girls, and that this affects their reading achievement. Consequently, girls show significantly higher proficiency in learning to read. He further suggests that attempts be made to ascertain methods of instruction that could minimize sexual differences in learning to read.

Curriculum Development in Reading Programs

Multicultural education should begin with a child's earliest experiences at school, with the total educational environment reflecting the pluralistic nature of society and not limited to the immediate school community or classroom (Baker, 1983). Students should be taught concepts of individual differences to enhance their awareness of the fact that "all people differ from one another."

Programs should be instituted which have positive influences on the child's voyage toward self-actualization. They should change the perspective of the culturally different from a pathological to a positive force which helps to create self-concepts and should build on linguistic and other cultural differences that children bring from their homes. Subject matter used for instruction should be filtered through the cultural perspective, thus strengthening the child's psyche when possible (Condo, 1973).

Baker (1983) describes a model for the development of curriculum with a multicultural emphasis. The model is presented in two phases indicating what should be taught and at what level of instruction. In Phase I, she suggests that content be limited and concerned with the exploration of diversities as related to individuals, family, and community generally, and be designed for the primary grades and the earliest grades of the intermediate level. The second phase, she explains, should begin with a study of ethnic and racial groups in the United States with emphasis on the participation of minorities in the development of the United States while building on concepts delineated in Phase I. Additionally, in Phase II, students should explore various cultural groups in the country according to religious beliefs, sex, and other categorical characteristics. This general approach, she posits, can assist teachers in planning content of curricula.

Because multicultural education aims toward the development of positive racial attitudes and the affirmation of differences, teachers should communicate its goals and purposes to parents and discuss parents' attitudes and feelings about race. Teachers should also examine their own racial attitudes and values in order to better assist in the enhancement of parents' and students' awareness of inequality, injustice, and discrimination (Kendall, 1983).

The entire classroom environment including wall pictures, books, and music used by teachers for instructional purposes reflect a teacher's commitment to multicultural education according to Kendall. Therefore, teachers should be selective in the adoption of curriculum texts and materials.

Selection of Texts and Materials

Many writers of basal textbooks have included stories with multiracial characters, multicultural settings, and characters representing multieconomic levels, not excluding the deprived; whereas in past years, basals particularly for lower grades were written "almost exclusively with Caucasian, middle-income suburban families (Dallman et al., 1982, p. 49)."

Kendall (1983, p. 49) states that "curriculum materials reflect the attitudes of the person or people who choose materials to be used in the classroom." He asserts that books and language-experience activities take up a major part of a child's school day, and that careful selection of the books and materials by the teacher can facilitate greater awareness and appreciation of differences among groups.

Reading quality books can also increase the social sensitivity of children and help them to extend their experiences to gain new insights, appreciations, and understanding of themselves and others (Rollins, 1967). The use of a variety of reading materials such as magazines that are devoted to the positive portrayal of ethnic groups and folk tales which tend to give insights about cultural heritage can be very helpful as well. Kendall (1983, p. 62) states that "the greater the cultural variety of prereading and listening experiences children have, the more likely the children are to be willing to share their own uniqueness." The same is true in the selection of music to listen to and games for children to play, even though—according to Kendall—culturally diverse music and games only contribute to learning differences in a small way.

Rodriguez (1983) suggests several questions that teachers can use as guides in the careful examination of materials for both content and multicultural sensitivity.

1. Do the materials include contributions and a variety of roles of both men and women of different ages, physical abilities, and ethnic groups?
2. Are a variety of socioeconomic levels and settings (urban, rural, suburban) included?
3. Is diversity in terms of religion, cultures, and family structure included?

Vick (1983, p. 19) identifies factors for consideration in selecting books and other materials. These include "standards of language; appropriate illustrations; universal needs; and interests of language for all children, themes, treatment of characters, and realistic human experience."

It is further suggested that materials be scrutinized for evidence of racism, classism, sexism, and realistic treatment of cultural pluralism in American society (ASCD, 1977).

Summary

In planning reading instruction, teachers must take into consideration the extent of cultural diversity among children in their classrooms. They should be able to recognize the characteristics of a milticultural group and accommodate the differences among them in order to ensure effective teaching and learning.

Teachers should also be aware that some characteristics of multicultural classrooms can impede success in learning to read. Knowledge of these impediments as identified by research can assist teachers in planning reading instruction, designing curricula, and selecting texts and materials to combat them.

Additionally, to foster greater awareness and appreciation of cultural differences among children, multicultural experiences should permeate all levels of reading curricula. This kind of filtering through curriculum will also help children to better understand, cope, and live in today's pluralistic society.

CHAPTER VI

FACILITATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN YOUNG CHILDREN: SOME MULTICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

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> As teachers in multicultural schools, our work is to educate children in our care, but not transform them. We must have the courage of our convictions to open up avenues leading into the English language and culture, so that the children of other traditions may enter and move forward in our society, but we must never lose the integrity which enables us to recognize and respect those individual qualities which should remain untouched and unchanged—the rightful heritage of each nationality (Brown, 1979, p. 167).

All classrooms have been and always will be multicultural. That is, each teacher and each child bring their particular family's cultural background and heritage with them when they enter the classroom door.

At certain times in the history of our country, many families have immigrated from other countries to escape political oppression and to make a better way of life. This decision to uproot and move was not an easy one as these families gave up familiar jobs, housing, food, weather, terrain, friends, and family—in many instances, forever.

In the past few years, there has been a new wave of immigration which extends from the coasts and border states to the heartland. Consequently, many early childhood classrooms have young children who have recently moved to the United States. These children, like all young children, have to make the adjustment of becoming a member of a group in the classroom context. In addition, they must adjust to a different culture and language.

Life for these young children and their families is very much like life was for each of our own ancestors. The new immigrants also face major tasks securing jobs, obtaining food and shelter, adapting to a new government and legal system, learning about the various modes of transportation, adjusting to a different educational system, and, in many instances, learning a new language. At times, the children are among the first in the family to learn the English language. Hudelson and Barrera (1984) refer to these children as "becoming-bilingual" because they are expected to learn the English language in spoken and written contexts within the classroom. These children, at times, are thrust into the role of being spokesperson for the adults and family. The acquisition of the English language is not an easy task.

In the beginning, the becoming-bilingual child may not even understand his teacher. Many becoming-bilingual children may not be able to express when they need to go to the bathroom; to communicate with other children; to ask questions; to express feelings or thoughts; to share in discussions, stories, rhymes, or songs; or to make known that they are ill or hurt.

Becoming-bilingual children are often silent from several weeks up to two years upon entering a classroom where a different language is spoken. During this silent period, becoming-bilingual children are absorbing the sounds and vocabulary of the new language. They are also adjusting to and taking in the new culture at large and also the culture of the classroom. These are monumental tasks for adults, even more so for young children. Derrick (1966) says that this listening, pre-speaking period is an essential attribute in the acquisition of a new language. However, teachers need to be aware of the subtle difference between the child who is actively listening to and absorbing new cultural and language patterns, feeling happy and secure, and the child who remains withdrawn because of the inability to cope with risks, environments, and expectations of those around him (Brown, 1979, pp. 9-10).

Listening to discussions which are not understood can be boring and cause becoming-bilingual children to seek activity which may be inappropriate. As these

children experiment with new words and sounds, they may shout or raise the volume of their speech. Some becoming-bilingual children's primary language may have louder intonations than English. Children from different language backgrounds often need additional or expanded explanations. Discussions involving future or past events can be confusing or frightening. For example, a discussion about going to the nurse's office for a routine eye examination may be understood by native children. Becoming-bilingual children may not comprehend this discussion. They may become upset upon entering the nurse's office thinking of past experiences in a doctor's office (Black and Puckett, 1986).

All these situations described above can be overwhelming for becoming-bilingual children. At times, they may express their frustration of not understanding or being understood by prolonged crying. They may even feel that other children and adults do not respond to them because they do not like or love them rather than because they cannot understand them (Brown, 1977). Some English-speaking children may become frustrated at not being able to understand or make the becoming-bilingual child understand. Very young children do not understand the concept of language and that there are different languages. All of this can prove to be very frustrating for the teacher also. It is the purpose of this chapter to provide support to teachers of becoming-bilingual children so that they may more effectively assist young children in their adjustment to a new culture and language. First, additional background information about becoming-bilingual children will be presented. Then ideas which teachers of young children can use in their classrooms to facilitate the acquisition of the English language in appropriate ways will be shared.

Linguistic and Cultural Considerations

1. **Within cultural groups, there are many variations.**

   Example: A teacher of five-year-olds was surprised to find out that children from Cambodia cannot communicate with children from Korea.

Implication: Teachers need to realize that there are often great variations in language (dialect and pronunciation), dress, food, and other behaviors even among people from the same country; e.g., think of the difference between people who live in the New England area and the South of our own country.

2. **There are great cultural variations in terms of patterns of adult-child interactions** (Heath, 1983; Miller, 1983; Philips, 1972; Schieffelin, 1979).

Example: Teacher: What is this story about?

Children: (silence)

Teacher: Uh. . . Let's see. . . who is it the story talks about?

Children: (silence)

In these particular children's cultural group and community, people ask questions about whole events or objects and their uses, causes, and effects. Often there are many answers and ways of answering. Answers frequently involve telling stories, describing a situation, or making comparisons between the events or objects being described and another known to the listener. Teachers, however, often ask questions about things, labels, attributes, and specialized features of objects and events at times removed from the immediate environment. Implication: The interactional patterns that children learn at home may not be the same as the classroom teacher or the school expects. Teachers need to be aware of these different interactional patterns. They need to realize that it takes time for many children, native as well as becoming-bilingual, to learn the interactional pattern of the classroom and school. It is helpful to the child's adjustment if the teacher can incorporate interactional patterns of the child's culture within the school setting.

3. **The child who does not speak English is not lacking in intelligence. The child has not yet learned the language used in the school setting to express thought.**

Example: Teacher: Consuelo, where's your lunch?

Consuelo: (silence)

Teacher: Consuelo, where's your lunch?

Consuelo: (silence)

Implication: Teachers should not expect children in the early stages of second language acquisition to verbalize in the second language to a great extent or in complex ways. Becoming-bilingual children go though one-word, two-word stages in language development. They learn to repeat certain phrases and words at appropriate times; for example, saying, "all gone," when the juice has been drunk or the blocks have been taken out of the container. One becoming-bilingual child had been in a kindergarten classroom for four months and had done little verbalization. One day he expressed himself quite loudly and clearly in several centers shouting, "That's mine! That's mine!" This behavior was repeated for the next several days.

4. **There are great individual differences in second language acquisition, both in the strategies used to acquire the second language and in the rates of acquisition** (Fillmore, 1976; Fillmore and Tripp, 1979; Strong, 1983).

Example: There were two Vietnamese children who came to the United States at about the same time. Both of these children enrolled in the same kindergarten classroom within a month of each other. One child acquired English at a more rapid pace. The second child's mother died on ship while en route to the United States. Perhaps this added emotional trauma is one reason for the second child's slower acquisition of English.

Implication: Teachers should not expect all becoming-bilingual children to acquire English at the same rate. Teachers need to provide a variety of learning experiences to meet individual differences just as they should for native speakers.

5. **Oral language development is not retarded in both languages because the child is learning a new language.**

Example: Tai, a four-year-old Cambodian child, is a fluent speaker in her first language. She speaks naturally and frequently at home. While at school, she seldom speaks. She senses that English is the more appropriate language to use. Gradually, she begins to use more and more English.

Implication: Teachers need to remember that while children are learning a second language, they are not necessarily retarded in their first language. A trusting classroom atmosphere is essential for children to feel comfortable in their attempts to use and learn the second language.

6. **Second language acquisition provides children with cognitive and linguistic advantages** (Ben Aeev, 1977).

Example: Som is learning a second language and a second culture. She is having the opportunity to learn to express thought in two language systems. She is also learning two cultures and that there are many ways of understanding and doing in our world.

Implication: Teachers who are helping children acquire a second language are providing them with the opportunity to know about an additional language system and to learn new ways of handling information. Native language children can also be encouraged to learn some of the language and culture of the becoming-bilingual children.

7. **Children learning to speak two languages initially mix them. However, they quickly learn which language is which and when to use each** (Fantini, 1974; Grosjean, 1983).

Example: Maria uses the Spanish word "gato" (cat) when talking about the cat in Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat book.

Implication: Teachers should expect some mixing of languages. This is a normal part of becoming bilingual.

8. **The development of the second language parallels the development of the first language. Second language development is also creative and interactive** (MacLaughlin, 1977; Fillmore, 1981).

   Example: "My feets are tired."

   "I gotted them at K Mart."

   Implication: Becoming-bilingual children use words that they have never heard adults use--"feets," "gotted," and so on. Native-speaking children, of course, also do this in their language development. Just as native-language children gradually learn that there are some exceptions to the general past tense rule of adding "ed" and the general rule of adding "s" to make plurals, so will becoming-bilingual children.

9. **Input is necessary to second language acquisition. This input should come from both adults and other children** (Krashen, 1982). This input in the beginning has many characteristics similar to the "baby talk" native speakers use when talking with very young children (Urzua, 1980).

   Example: Teacher: Pointing to her shoe and the becoming-bilingual child's shoe, "Put on your shoe. Shoe. Shoe. Put on your shoe."

   Implication: Teachers and native-language children need to talk with becoming-bilingual children. They will need to adjust their speech to becoming-bilingual children just as adults and older children do when the talk with young native-speaking children.

10. **Language activities based upon repeating or practicing sentences and phrases over and over again do not encourage second language acquisition.**

    Example: Teacher: "This is a red ball."

    Children: "This is a a red ball."

    Teacher: "This is a red ball."

    Children: "This is a red ball."

Implication: Teachers need to understand that second language development takes place when children have the opportunity to use the English language for real-life purposes as they interact with English speakers to carry out everyday tasks. This is how all children learn their first language. It is also how children best learn their second language.

Implications for the Early Childhood Classroom

- Use other adults (aides or volunteers) and children (older or peers who are native language children) to help with input and reaction to becoming-bilingual children.
- Present explanations and requests in simple form by demonstrations or visual aids. The use of gestures and body movements can be helpful.
- Establish regular routines as this provides security. Prepare a routine to keep becoming-bilingual children busy. Use routine phrases repeatedly with set routines.
- Explain (maybe a number of times) general basic school behavior: how to use the bathroom, how to care for or use equipment, moving from the classroom to the playground, and so on. These activities may need to be demonstrated over and over.
- Talk with second language children as they engage in daily activities and routines. Describe what they are doing. Try to have native and becoming-bilingual children work side-by-side.
- Insist that becoming-bilingual children help with classroom organization, clean-up, and so on. This provides them with a feeling of competency.
- Native-language speakers should repeat and recycle the English language. This focusing on key words accompanied by gestures and body movements helps with second language acquisition.
- Be demonstrative in terms of facial expression, tone of voice, movement of hands, and reassurances.
- Allow ample time for cleaning up, changing from one activity to another, and so on.

- Give becoming-bilingual children regular tasks they can accomplish; for example, passing out supplies or snacks.
- Provide concrete materials and experiences accompanied with the English language as much as possible.
- Provide opportunities for parallel (side-by-side) play. This can ease the pressure of the becoming-bilingual child to interact, and the child can observe and listen to other children verbalizing while playing.
- Provide the opportunity for the becoming-bilingual child to engage in free play in a variety of centers, including the social dramatic center. These activities should be the major focus of the child's day.
- Listen for English words, phonemes, and phrases to gradually appear in the child's speech.
- Provide becoming-bilingual children with the opportunity to converse in their first language.
- Notice what the becoming-bilingual child likes best as a classroom activity. Then encourage and develop it.
- Make allowances for the emotional and social needs of becoming-bilingual children. If they refuse to move, take equipment and activities to them.
- Establish and use links with the family as much as possible.
- Allow becoming-bilingual children to observe other children. This provides time to store information and knowledge.
- Use books with becoming-bilingual children which are predictable or patterned. Enlarging these books into a big book or purchasing some of the commercially available big books seems to be very helpful to becoming-bilingual children.
- Provide the opportunity for drama, action songs, simple action games, and fingerplays.
- Cooking and eating experiences promote language awareness and acquisition.

- Art experiences are good activities to encourage expression of thought. Drawing or painting can serve as a rehearsal process for oral and written language.
- Use print freely around the classroom—labels, messages, lists of needed supplies, and so on.
- Provide becoming-bilingual children with opportunities to see their language written for them and others to read.
- Provide opportunities for becoming-bilingual children to interact with familiar environmental print.
- Encourage becoming-bilingual children to experiment with writing in purposeful ways.
- Call roll at circle or sharing times. It is helpful for learning other children's names because it is repetitive.
- During extended discussion times, becoming-bilingual children should be involved in other activities—bead stringing, drawing, looking at books with illustrations, and so on. These activities provide the becoming-bilingual child with the opportunity to keep busy while also listening to the language used in discussion periods (Black and Puckett, 1986; Brown, 1977; Hudelson, 1985).

Developing empathy for children and their families from different language and cultural backgrounds, understanding linguistic and cultural considerations, and making appropriate classroom applications will facilitate a child's learning of the English language and culture while affirming the child's family and cultural heritage. In addition, native-speaking children will gain an awareness and appreciation of other languages and cultures. This sharing of cultures and languages enriches the lives of all young children both for the present and the future.

CHAPTER VII

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION THROUGH PLAY

> The great gift that members of the human race have for each other is not exotic experiences but an opportunity to achieve awareness of the structure of their **own** system, which can be accomplished only by interacting with others who do not share that system—members of the opposite sex, different age groups, different ethnic groups, and different cultures. . . . The rules governing behavior and structure of one's own cultural system can be discovered only in a specific context or real-life situation.
>
> Edward Hall
> Beyond Culture

> Play is universal, knowing no national or cultural boundaries, peculiar to all ages and all races, subject to description yet defying definition; essential to the development of thought and language, yet neither; central to the transmission of culture, yet transcending culture.
>
> Frost and Sunderlin
> When Children Play

Children arrive in our classrooms from a variety of different backgrounds, cultures, and heritages. Each child is a unique individual that somehow must cope, despite his background, with the new and often culturally different environment of the classroom. What methods can a teacher employ to meet best the learning needs of the various cultural backgrounds of **all** the children? How can teachers help culturally different children learn about themselves and others? How can teachers and the other children learn about cultures different than their own? The best answer to these questions may be in the almost instinctive, naturally occurring phenomenon of children's play. Perhaps, however, due to the academic constraints and diffident attitudes toward play in classrooms, the value and natural role of play in the transmission and perpetuation of cultural identity, the development of cultural awareness, and the intellectual development of young children have been neglected.

The Relationship of Play and Culture

Consider first what is play and what is culture. Finding acceptable, mutually agreed-upon definitions of either is a difficult task, for both are complex entities. Initially, many think culture is only the outward products of a given culture, when culture is actually much more than a group's art, music, and movement (Lubeck, 1985). One way to define culture is to say it consists of standards for deciding how to go about doing it (Goodenough, 1963). Or perhaps the following idea sums culture more aptly: "Culture is almost everything. It is emotions and works of art. It is behavior, beliefs, and institutions; it includes what people know, feel, think, make, and do (Spradley, 1972, pp. 6-7)."

Enculturation is a twofold process and refers to the means by which an individual becomes a part of the group and also the means by which the group is reproduced and perpetuated. It includes the acquisition of skills, habits, values, and attitudes of the given culture. In complex societies, enculturation is frequently blurred with the concept of socialization, and it is not uncommon for experts to assume that a minority child needs to be bicultural--encultured to the group of origin and socialized to the dominant society (Lubeck, 1985). There is not, however, one **normative** culture or process of growth and learning based on the dominant society which all people must follow. Rather, different cultural groups have developed different adaptive strategies, different systems of order and logic, and different modes of enculturation that form the practices of people who have lived under similar distinctive environments and cultural conditions (Lubeck, 1985).

Play serves an important role in the process of enculturation. Play is an expression and celebration of one's culture. Through play, children learn about their culture as well as practice adaptive and functional strategies for survival in the culture. Play actually reproduces the society and culture of the child. "Children's play is full of the content of their lives (Sutton-Smith and Sutton-Smith, 1974, p. 246)."

The relationship of culture with play is simply that we can be who we are through play (Hale-Benson, 1986). Hopi Indian children play by conducting pretend rabbit hunts and by modeling pottery (Garvey, 1977). Eskimo children play turn-taking skill games without competition that reflect the later skills necessary for floating on ice floes with a polar bear. Aborigine children play games that imitate tracking and hunting. In monarch-ruled societies, children play games in which one person tries to be king over all the others. American children play games that are based on individualism and competition (Sutton-Smith and Sutton-Smith, 1974).

Cultural play ultimately enhances children's self-confidence and optimism about their usual lives within the context of their everyday cultural world. Because the play of children is not product-oriented but rather fulfills the needs of the ego to establish mastery over self in a social, cultural world, play establishes emotional autonomy. Through emotional autonomy, children gain identity and cultural transmission. Therefore, as a child plays and reproduces the main themes of personal and cultural life, this leads to a regeneration of cultural purposes, or a revival of cultural confidence (Erikson, 1963).

Play also serves a therapeutic function or role in the transmission of culture. "Plainly, play with other children does have an important therapeutic role or, in any case, an important role in helping children to take their place more easily in the stressful social activities of later life (Erikson, 1983, p. 62)." Children who do not have ample opportunities to play may have later social deficits (Smilansky, 1968). Similarly, research studies of monkeys raised in isolation who were given just twenty minutes of daily play with other monkeys retain their ability to interact with other animals and do not show decrements in intelligence as compared to monkeys raised in total isolation. The social values of play cannot be underestimated.

Children learn and practice the rhythm of their culture during complex, sophisticated, dramatic play sequences. Individuals are dominated in their behavior by complex hierarchies of interlocking rhythms (Hall, 1984). As children play by

slipping in and out of various roles, trying out different rhythms, and finding the match that ignites a relationship in play, children are perfecting the rhythm of their culture. "Each culture, of course, was choreographed in its own way, with its own beat, tempo, and rhythm (Hall, 1984, p. 155)." For example, the timing and turn-taking of conversation is essential. In play, if one child dominates the conversation or dialogue, the play sequence ends.

Play also allows children to practice and repeat sequences which are necessary for learning the rhythm of culture. Children play over and over the same episode or theme as they integrate the social and cultural meaning of it into their systems. Interestingly, in our adult culture we are trained not to appreciate repetition. We typically view a single performance of literally everything, including television programs, performances, and outings. Perhaps due to the lack of adult repetition, the discovery of rhythm for adults is difficult (Hall, 1984). Since the underlying principle of rhythm is repetition, children can naturally discover the rhythm of culture in symbolic play.

Finally, the hypothesis proposed by the great Dutch historian Huizinga is that human culture actually emerged out of man's capacity to play and to adopt the ludicrous attitude (Bruner, 1983). This notion is supported by current studies of play that point out the increased ability of divergent thinking skills, the increase of self-esteem, the increased display of freedom and inventiveness in children who are players compared to those who are not (Fein, 1983). "Players" don't worry about looking "bad" in front of others; rather, they initiate and try different ideas and are happier (Erikson, 1983).

From an educational perspective, the link between culture and learning can be observed through play. A child's play is believed to reflect the degree to which the child can impose his own sense of structure and sequence (culturally based) on the external environment. Play, in turn, reflects not only the development of perceptual and cognitive structures but also the extent to which they have been

integrated and can be applied to new situations. Therefore, play can be viewed as an index to the level of the preschool child's overall cognitive competence (Hale-Benson, 1986). Due to the relationship of play and culture, however, the child's cognitive competence and learning style will reflect the child's culture as well. A pointed example of different learning styles and cognitive competence is demonstrated in this anecdote: "Remember that it might be the white kid who knows his address and phone number, but the black kid who can actually find his way home," said Dr. David Smith, Center for Urban Ethnography, University of Pennsylvania (Lubeck, 1985).

Interestingly, the study of child rearing is culturally an examination of what "goes in." The study of play behavior is the study of what "comes out" (Hale-Benson, 1986). For example, white child-rearing practices tend to be object-oriented." Children in play are typically provided with a great number of toys and manipulable materials and encouraged to discover properties and relationships. Consequently, the play of white children tends to be more solitary and demonstrates a more expressive use of materials. Black children, in contrast, tend to grow up within large family networks with a great deal of human interaction. Objects are considered less important and child-rearing practices are more people-oriented (Lubeck, 1985). The play of black children uses fewer objects, involves more people, and incorporates more interpersonal themes.

Cultural Awareness

Not all children from the same ethnic group are the same. Ethnic groups cannot be stereotyped (West, 1986). Not all black children sing beautifully, dance rhythmically, or talk in black dialect. While it is frequently stated that black children (particularly males) are very active in their home environments and consequently appear hyperactive in the schools (Hale-Benson, 1986), this is not true of all black children.

To first know your own culture is most helpful in understanding different cultures. American society is based upon individualism and competition. We glorify individualism and we glorify cooperation. This is a definite value conflict. Children do not know when we want which behavior pattern (West, 1986). A child from a truly communal subculture may have only experienced group ownership, so taking crayons or pencils from another is not considered stealing. A child from extreme poverty may share everything including what little food exists. This child cannot perceive taking another's lunch as stealing. Their play will reflect these cultural differences.

Interestingly, it is the structure of play that also instructs children, however subtly, in the values of their culture (Bruner, 1983). For example, competition and competitiveness are communicated to American children through play. Our children are taught to win at all costs in many cases. This is not true in other countries. In Tongu in New Guinea, children play games in which neither side "wins." The game terminates only when the two sides have achieved equality. "There is no question that the games of childhood reflect some of the ideals that exist in the adult society and that play is a kind of socialization in preparation for taking your place in that adult society (Bruner, 1983, p. 62)."

Children come from different locales and thus treat space and time differently. Hall (1984) considers time and culture synonymous. To know the timing of a given culture is to know the nonverbal language of that culture. In our technological society, precise timing is vital. "But middle class members are fanatics about promptness on everything--and we have ulcers to prove it (West, 1986)." Timing and promptness are not as important to the child who comes from poverty where there is no reason to "hurry up" and be hungry. Timing in children's play will also reflect their culture.

Above all, teachers' awareness and attitudes about culturally different children must be considered. Researchers have found social class to be the strongest variable in determining teachers' attitudes toward students. In general, many myths exist

about social class and should be considered as they relate to attitudes about culture. To begin with, there is really no middle class. Actually, there are six classes: Upper upper, lower upper, upper middle, lower middle, upper lower, and lower lower. The working class is actually the upper lower class. Interestingly, most teachers, because they have strived hard through education to do better than their parents, come from this class. In addition, every ethnic group, despite financial class, has its own stratification based on heritage and homeland traditions.

Five important facts to remember when dealing with cultures and American social classes are: (1) Most Americans are not middle class. (2) Most lower class Americans are white. (3) Most welfare recipients are white. (4) Working class and middle class are not synonymous. (5) Every cultural group has its own social hierarchy of classes (West, 1986).

The Role of the Teacher

Children from different language and cultural backgrounds may fail in school for various reasons. Changes are needed in educational practices to ensure success for these children and to bring about understanding of different cultures for all children (Saracho, 1983). Educational change can come from an understanding and an awareness of the various cultures, from having special skills necessary for the multilingual/multicultural classroom, and from understanding the role of play as it relates to culture and learning.

Since the quality of a multilingual/multicultural program depends initially on teachers' attitudes, teachers must become aware of their own competence in teaching children from different cultural backgrounds. They must investigate their relationship with the larger society, and their knowledge of and attitudes toward people who are different from them. "Teachers must be free from cultural ethnocentrism, accepting diverse cultures as valuable (Saracho, 1983, p. 101)."

The first step in this process to know and understand different cultures is for the teacher to understand his own culture. As Hall expressed in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, when given the opportunity to interact with others who do not share the same systems of belief, one is able to become aware of one's own system and beliefs. "If we want to be successful at teaching selected values unlike the cultural values children are used to, our best strategy is to understand where the children are coming from: Why they have such different values, habits, or attitudes. . . and why we have the ones we have (West. 1086)."

The second step is to examine classroom teaching skills. The skills and characteristics that are necessary to teach in the multicultural classroom are varied. The general characteristics usually associated with effective teaching are rich, extensive perceptions of the field and learning objectives; accurate interpersonal and intrapersonal perceptions; loving, sensitive, pleasant, and open-ended personalities; ability to select adequate curriculum materials; and enjoyment of work with children and parents. In addition to these characteristics, the teacher in multicultural classrooms should:

1. Know enough of the child's language to carry on a simple conversation.
2. Know and understand the bilingual/bicultural child's culture and, preferably, have experienced cultural immersion.
3. Understand the development of the child's self-concept.
4. Know how to plan effectively, considering individual differences including language and cultural features.
5. Have a commitment and dedication to bilingual/bicultural children, guiding them to achieve their maximum potential (Saracho, 1983).

Finally, knowledge about the benefits and correlates of play in cultural transmission and learning is essential. Play is an integral part of the development of the child. Through play, children learn physical and logical mathematical knowledge as well as important social knowledge. Symbolic or dramatic pretend play is of special value to the development of the child for another reason. Dramatic play is "a major

avenue for integrating cultural and social mores of the adult world (Frost and Klein, 1979, p. 14)."

Specific Activities for the Classroom

1. **Provide many opportunities for dramatic play.**

Children need daily opportunities to engage in dramatic play. Dramatic play in the multicultural classroom will serve two primary tasks. First, it will allow the multicultural child to join in an activity using nonverbal response when English is his second language. All cultures' "mother babydolls" cook dinners even if techniques and customs are different. The use of props and objects in the dramatic play center that are familiar to the child will encourage the child to join in dramatic play more quickly. Props such as a wok, bamboo steamer, kimonos, authentic games and toys, etc. (for an Oriental child) replicate items found in the child's home environment.

Secondly, dramatic play promotes peer acceptance more quickly. As the multicultural child engages in play on a common ground, peers are more likely to accept the child's unique contributions. Playing and interacting as equals, not just contact with other cultures, are important aspects for understanding cultures. If ethnically different children who frequently are in the lowest reading group are always grouped together for other activities, the teacher may in fact be reinforcing stereotypes that children have learned from television and the larger society (West, 1986). If provided frequent, informal play times, children can interact more readily with others of all ethnic backgrounds.

Some children in the multicultural classroom may need help in developing skills required during dramatic play. Initially, the teacher can provide support by participating in the action, using props and toys to stimulate cooperative play, and by showing the child how the play can be varied and extended.

2. **Use manipulatives from the child's environment.**

Children construct knowledge and learn when given the opportunity to manipulate, explore, and investigate their real world. Teachers capitalize on the vested interest

of students when they provide objects from the child's real world. For the Hispanic child, it makes sense to count pinto beans or to cut halves from tortillas. "When teachers use household objects from a specific child's background to teach number concepts, not only is the teacher helping to develop cognitive skills but also telling the children that objects from their cultures are useful and are valued by adults and children from different backgrounds (Void, 1985, p. 5)."

The process of "provisioning for learning" offers many opportunities to build reflections of the community into the learning environment. When a teacher uses the community as a source of non-catalog learning materials, the learning environment begins to resemble the community. These materials offer familiarity and positive associations with children's lives outside the school, and so can help children feel comfortable in the environment of the school (Laughlin and Suina, 1983, p. 5)."

3. **Use literature that reflects many cultural backgrounds.**

Reading aloud to children is crucial during the early years. This may be especially so for the child who comes from a home where books are scarce or nonexistent. The difference between children who read early and those who do not is found not in the children themselves or the different cultures but, rather, in the parents. Children who experience early reading success had parents who read regularly to them as young children (Butler and Clay, 1982). Teachers need to incorporate frequent and repetitious multicultural readings into the daily routine.

The use of multicultural literature for daily reading is beneficial for other reasons as well. Through multicultural literature, children discover that all cultural information stimulates their language and cognitive development. A well-balanced multicultural literature program includes literature that depicts people with a variety of aspirations, from different socioeconomic levels, with different occupations, and with a range of human characteristics (Norton, 1985).

4. **Encourage language in informal settings.**

Language development is naturally enhanced through informal play situations. So, frequently a teacher will complain that the bilingual child "has no language skills," but if one listens on the playground, it is clear that the child has language skills and can communicate quite well.

Bilingual peers serve as important language models. "Sometimes children can be heard using English during pleasant, unstressful activities such as singing or dramatic play but will continue to find it difficult to answer questions or initiate conversation (Dixon and Fraser, 1986, p. 274)." Teachers must guard against giving the impression that English is used only for instruction or for impersonal information. Encouraging children to share their emotions, e.g., during play or an art activity, can help them to overcome diffidence and begin to include more informal English words in their vocabulary (Dixon and Fraser, 1986).

5. **Celebrate many multicultural customs and games.**

Holidays are celebrated in different ways in various cultures. Teachers should include many of these different customs and games in their classrooms. For example, Christmas is celebrated in many ways around the world: In England, the tradition of the yule log is observed; in the Netherlands, Saint Nicholas fills the wooden shoes with gifts. in Mexico, children take turns trying to break the candy-filled pinata by striking it with a stick; and in the Philippines, children wear wreaths and chains made of tropical flowers.

In becoming aware of differences, remember that some cultures may not celebrate our holidays at all and likewise have their own holidays that can be celebrated in the classroom. Chanukah, Chinese New Year, Juneteenth, and Cinco De Mayo are just a few of the many possibilities. "In addition to understanding cultural differences, the teacher should stress similarities among children in the class while presenting differences in a respectful manner that enriches the knowledge and understanding of both groups (West, 1983, pp. 88-89)."

6. **Provide daily routines and activities for the entire group.**

Routines, circle time, and using organized games such as follow-the-leader and charades allows the multicultural child to familiarize himself quickly and to join in. Song, stories, and fingergames with motions or repeating refrains or actions invite participation for the same reason. Activities with a common goal such as shopping, cooking, feeding classroom pets, gardening, etc. allow the child to be part of the activity without having to take full responsibility for the outcome.

7. **Invite parents into the classroom as resources and models.**

Parents serve as important educators of their children in cultural functions (Swick, 1986). From birth, parents have been teaching their children habits, skills, beliefs, values, and customs based on the culture they know. It would be wasteful not to tap into the greatest cultural resource available; i.e., the parents of the children.

Parents can share in the classroom the games, foods, customs, traditions, and speech that are native to their culture. It is exciting for the whole class to be visited by a person from a different culture dressed in the native clothing. It is especially rewarding and ego boosting for the child to have his parent be that someone special.

8. **Special needs of the interracial child.**

The number of interracial children is rising due to an increase in interracial marriages (1983 census) and a freer attitude toward interracial sexual relationships. This creates a new challenge for early childhood educators (Wardle, 1987).

Since identity development is a critical element of overall early development, the interracial child needs special sensitivity on the part of the teacher. Research on race and culture identity shows that families teach children one of three beliefs: (1) that color is irrelevant and the child is human above all, (2) that the culture of the parent of color (e.g., black) is dominant, or (3) that both cultures are equally important. Contemporary families are more likely to teach the third option emphasizing the dual cultural heritage of their children (Wardle, 1987).

Teachers of interracial children must not go along with society's attempt to classify by the parent of color but must teach the children they are culturally members of both races. Access to the respective race's cultural customs and practices should be provided in the classroom. Therefore, parents of interracial children serve as very important role models. Since birth, the child has been exposed to both cultures' styles, speech patterns, mannerisms, and cultural norms. Support must also be given for the parent's struggle to develop a strong family unit so that a positive interracial identification can take place (Wardle, 1987).

Conclusion

Teachers must remember that young children learn through play. Culture is one thing that is learned through play. Culture is reflected through play. It would be impossible to eliminate culture in play. By utilizing the natural phenomenon of play in the classroom, the model we provide of respecting the culturally different child may be the most important thing we ever teach (West, 1986).

CHAPTER VIII

QUALITY PROGRAMS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS: FOCUSING ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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Introduction

Infant and toddler programs must move in the direction of affordable, high quality care which is relevant, culturally appropriate and diverse, holistic, and innovative. Serious concern must be given to the environments in which the babies live and the persons who share those environments. Quality programs for infants and toddlers from a multicultural perspective are being proposed as an approach to deal effectively with the mounting need for services by more than 6.5 million working mothers. A multicultural cadre of babies are represented in this group—Caucasians, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and others—which clearly illustrates a need for comprehensive services to them and to their families. A working definition of multicultural education is: "It seeks to help children understand and respect their cultures and the cultures of other people by making available to the children the necessary elements and contributions of cultural diversity (Rosemount Center, 1985)." This chapter will discuss factors essential to quality teaching and learning for **all** infants and toddlers, and will depict implications for fostering multicultural educational environments.

Factors Essential to Quality Programs

The factors associated with quality must be identified and advocated by competent child care professionals and must be representative of all disciplines concerned with infant and toddler care. These factors constitute the summation

of a major trend: innovative approaches to affordable, high quality infant and toddler care. Therefore, benefits derived from implementation of this trend consist of quality programming designed to provide a comprehensive, practical curriculum; provisions for cost-efficiency designed to aid **all** parents, especially low-income ones, in meeting the cost for care of their babies; and effective equality of services designed to provide relevant, culturally appropriate and diverse, and ample human and material resources to ensure excellence in teaching, learning, and administering programs.

Consideration must be given to creating an environment for babies that will enhance their growth and developmental processes—socially, physically, emotionally, intellectually, and in language—during out-of-home care situations. In so doing, an appraisal system can be used to make some judgments about the babies' individualities in patterns of growth and rates of development in the total learning process. Screening, assessment, and diagnosis constitute a systematic approach to making sure that babies are placed in environments that best provide for their sensory and preconceptual experiences. Future infant and toddler programs will impact upon a more diagnostic-prescriptive approach to teaching and learning. Methods will be employed to enhance learning concepts of space, time, objects, imitation, number, language symbols, and causality in out-of-home facilities. Each concept must be taught in view of its development with a certain sequence or phase of growth and development, age-wise and experience-oriented, as verified in the theories of Piaget and Erikson (Maier, 1978, and Thomas, 1979).

As programs undertake the responsibility for creating positive environments for learning, especially multicultural programs, provisions must be made for each baby in accord to the adaptability and potentiality for accommodating and assimilating. This means that the babies will be experiencing settings that will offer many things to see and to do, many objects to touch and to handle, and many activities to expose them to a variety of hands-on activities with many new challenges. The babies will then be provided with an environment for learning that contains ample and varied

experiences and objects to allow each to make countless discoveries about the world. These experiences must also provide for the infants and toddlers to receive stimulation with protection and elements for sustained comprehension and language development. An infant specialist summarized the essence of the sub-trend of planning, placing, and programming infants and toddlers along the lines of the theories of Piaget and Erikson. She contended that infants begin to interact with their environments at birth and need things and experiences, information about them, opportunities for action, and human relationships that are necessary to the development of interest and motivation which provides the "energizing" influence (Provence, 1967).

Formalizing training programs for teachers, staff, and parents will become apparent as a factor influencing quality infant and toddler programs. Comenius' conceptualizations of infant education (learning is absorbed, not forced) are very much alive in today's educational thought and will become even more popular as programs of study, minor areas of degree programs, in-service training programs, and retraining emphases for already-prepared early childhood educators (Davis, 1963). Caregivers that are responsible for the education of babies must be excellently trained. This holds true for staff in their specialized areas—social workers, parent coordinators, health care professionals, and so forth—as it does for teachers (caregivers). Better training of teaching staff and parents in the care of infants and toddlers will lead to better curriculum planning, implementing, and evaluating in accord with the needs of babies as depicted through research studies. Therefore, a research-oriented curriculum is needed to meet the needs and demands of a multicultural cadre of infants and toddlers.

It is not unusual today to find that many people do not really take seriously the concept of "infant education." A thought that is often reflected is: What can one do for a baby in actually training him/her? Having a written, comprehensive curriculum for infants and toddlers (Cataldo, 1982) is a rather new but necessary

concept since more people will be concerned with the idea that infants and toddlers who participate in out-of-home programs gain special educational enhancement. Not only does educational programming for babies sustain normal growth and development but can prevent and/or remediate developmental problems. There are many research studies on babies and their growth and developmental needs that must be considered in programming for them, as well as used in the homes with parents. Out of this research comes the purposes of infant and toddler education. One purpose of the curriculum, then, is to help the babies fully develop the sequences of specific skills and abilities thought to express and develop competence in growth and learning (Day and Parker, 1977; Caldwell and Stedman, 1977; Cohen, 1977; Fowler, 1980, and Cataldo, 1982). The studies showed that educational programming assures babies the opportunities of achieving certain behaviors and skills that will enable them to become increasingly competent in motor development, communication and expression, social development, and explorations and mastery of using objects and toys in the environments. Another purpose of the curriculum is to help babies develop a personal and social self (Cataldo, 1982). Research in these areas often use the work of Erik Erikson as a theoretical base. The curriculum would be planned to provide experiences for the infants and toddlers to learn to manage feelings, maintain relationships, and demonstrate individuality (Willis and Riccuiti, 1975; Gondalez-Mena and Eyer, 1980; and Jones, 1980). The curriculum strategies, then, would include: (1) identification of behaviors appropriate to age, health, and special needs of the babies; (2) planning activities and experiences congruent with behavioral levels and specifications of the babies in regard to race, culture, sex, interest of families, etc.; and (3) implementation of curriculum and teaching through a comprehensive process of basic growth and development skills and abilities; multicultural and bilingual experiences; exposure to a wide variety of materials for seeing, manipulating, and assimilation; and using parents and families in the teaching-learning environments—providing quality, equity, and excellence in education for babies.

Specific attention has been focused on accreditation criteria and procedures for infant and toddler programs recently. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), through the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, has developed a national, voluntary accreditation system. It will have a major impact on the quality of programs provided for young children and the public perception of the early childhood profession. The focus will serve to assure quality in programming, as a comprehensive assessment will be made of all aspects of the child care facility—organization and administration of the program; teachers, staff, and support personnel; curriculum principles and standards; evaluation of program components which include services to children and parents; and research, demonstration, dissemination, and outreach to the community—by the program's self-study. Validators, early childhood professionals, are responsible for verifying the accuracy of the program descriptions through an on-site visit. The impact of program accreditation for infant and toddler programs will be powerful as more people continue to use out-of-home care facilities and trained personnel to educate their babies. Information and materials about the quality of care will be magnified for the general public. Federal and state legislation is needed in order to ensure uniform criteria for programs in the United States and also for subsidizing costs for care, especially for poor families and minorities in the large urban environments.

A national, state, and local thrust toward improved child welfare and health care for infants and toddlers must be addressed in Congress, state legislatures, and city councils as a serious agenda item. The status of child welfare and health care for babies is very inadequate and must be carefully examined and implemented at a different pace and degree of concern, interest, and commitment. Infant mortality rates are much too high and must fall within the decade. States must place increased emphasis on giving free prenatal care to pregnant women. The State of Florida, for example, has begun to see the death rates of infants fall sharply. In 1982, nearly

13 infants died for every 1,000 live births recorded in the state for a total of 1,855 deaths; in 1985, 1,693 deaths were recorded. The national rate of infant mortality is 10.6 deaths per 1,000 babies according to Kleindienst (1985). This social ill is caused by many complexities of the child welfare system and health care in the United States. Quality care can be given if and when this system improves its services to the citizenry for proper health care and adequate provisions for diminishing child abuse and neglect.

The National Center for Health Services Research presented data revealing that children whose mothers work and place them in child care facilities are not neglected in health care. These children are no more likely to get sick and stay home from school than children whose mothers do not work (Rich, 1985). Attention is therefore focused on the state's authority in the regulation of children's out-of-home care (Costin, 1972) to accelerate efforts since the inception of the concept many years ago. Specific issues of detriment such as teen-age pregnancies, prenatal and postnatal care, hunger, diseases, immunizations, medical checkups, dental checkups, and child abuse and neglect must be given top priority in improving the system to ensure provisions of "quality" for infants and toddlers at home and at school.

Implications for Fostering Multicultural Educational Environments

The vision of quality and excellence in education for **all** infants and toddlers of diverse cultural backgrounds must be clearly illustrated as a comprehensive service to them and their families that supplements the care they receive at home. Parents can add much to the quality of programs as well as enhance the opportunities for cultural enrichment by providing objects, materials, and/or ideas that are representative of their ethnic groups. Infants and toddlers can develop appreciation of others who are different from themselves through exposure and exploration of art objects, special kinds of costumes and dress, customs, musical instruments, songs, stories, foods, recipes, and materials showing different groups in the educational environments (Martin, 1975).

There are some concepts of quality care for infants and toddlers that are inclusive of concern toward fostering appreciation of cultural differences and awareness of cultural biases. These concepts take into consideration the premise that effective teaching depends on self-knowledge, and that quality programs stimulate self-awareness and self-evaluation in the areas of cultural, racial, sex, and other biases. Quality care must be provided in a way to offer methods of dealing with prejudice and discrimination, and to instill understandings of dehumanizing effects of prejudice and bias for all groups of people. This concept must be considered in every program component: the physical environment, health and safety, nutrition and food service, administration, staff qualifications and development, interactions among staff and children, interaction between staff and parents, curriculum, staffing, and evaluation (Caldwell, 1985). Another professional vision of quality care along these same lines is that of providing a positive environment in which infants and toddlers are well-nourished; healthy; safe; have adequate space and ample equipment and materials for teaching and learning that are culturally diverse; have staff well-trained in child development and teaching methods, especially in infant and toddler care; good planning and organization; and strong links to parents and families of the babies (Hilliard, 1985). Quality care must foster cultural expressions in each group. It is a fact that there is no conflict between the design of culturally salient teaching and the development of academic excellence. "On the contrary," said Hilliard (1985, p. 21), "we are most excellent when we simultaneously teach technical skills and maintain a sensitivity to cultural variation."

Quality programs designed for infants and toddlers which focus on multicultural education must help them to understand and to respect their cultures as well as the cultures of others. Therefore, caregivers must provide the necessary elements and contributions of cultural diversity that may include: (1) creating an environment which enhances humanistic and cross-cultural values; (2) emphasizing acquisition

and usage of a bilingual approach to language and learning; (3) meeting developmental needs of babies through fostering a child-centered approach to teaching-learning; (4) providing opportunities for parents and families of the children to participate in the teaching-learning process to enhance a truer multicultural environment (learning a second language, learning about culture, tradition, values, etc.); and (5) implementing a curriculum that is culturally varied with activities and experiences relevant t· multicultural needs in the environment.

Suggestions for constructing quality multicultural environments include: (1) making cursory examinations of the history of black education (Huell, 1976) and education of other cultures in America, and analyzing the main goals of the educational system or program to determine how these goals affect the lives of babies (Hale-Benson, 1986; Valverde, 1978); (2) delineating an ideological base from which educational programs for these multicultural populations must move in order to give new purpose to the teaching-learning process (substantive principles, values, and attitudes which should permeate the entire education construct); (3) offering a brief overview of historical knowledge to serve as the plenary base for developing programs for all of the babies; and (4) illustrating graphically, the inter-intra dynamics of the "model" construct and of the implementation system. Information, again, is contained in this chapter to deal effectively with the latter suggestion.

Efforts must be accelerated and continued toward providing quality care which will foster the emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth and development of babies from the standpoint of advocating and serving the interest of families of diverse backgrounds, collectively. There must be continued emphasis in appreciating cross-cultural and humanitarian values, in maintaining active community ties, in conducting research, and in providing unlimited opportunities to facilitate the respect, understanding, and knowledge of each baby's culture and the cultures of each other in the educational environments. Much attention should be given to building racial

pride and interracial understanding to help develop personal and social awareness in infants and toddlers as well as caregivers (teachers, parents, and staff). A multicultural environment is composed of rich materials; multiethnic studies of understandings, attitudes, practices; and a variety of audiovisuals. For infant and toddler programs, caregivers play the principal role in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, a wealth of material and human resources needs to be available on a daily, continuous basis, including: **display materials**—large, bright interesting posters of people from many lands; multiethnic mobiles for cribs; and objects and items collected from parents portraying various cultural groups; **activity materials**—ethnic dolls; figures of ethnic families to be manipulated; read-along picture books about different cultural groups; teaching pictures for showing while communicating with babies; and dressing in native costumes and eating foods from many lands (snacks and lunch); **audiovisuals**—records and tapes of songs and music representing ethnic groups; cassettes of music and stories about people from different lands; filmstrips, pictures, films, and slides showing multicultural settings (people, places, and things); language tapes and records in different languages; and relevant printed materials (books, pamphlets); and **human resources**—use of parents and people from the community to share experiences, costumes, tools, musical instruments, foods, holidays, special celebrations, dances, games, and their physical presence.

Conclusion

The need for quality programs for infants and toddlers focusing on multicultural environments cannot be taken lightly. The teachings and learning must be true, appropriate, democratic, humane, and relevant for all populations in our programs and in our society. The multicultural populations—Caucasians, Afro-Americans, Native Americans, Euro-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans—are all populations of various countries yet all Americans; all alike yet all different; all retaining their

cultures yet all changing. Infant and toddler programs must recognize these populations on the basis of quality, equity, and excellence in planning, programming, organizing, implementing, and evaluating he teaching-learning process. These populations as a group are influential, and rapidly becoming a decisive force in shaping the character of American education (Frost, 1978).

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