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ABSTRACT

Articles in this issue of "Equity Coalition" are intended to encourage all to broaden horizons and improve knowledge about the wide range of cultures that make up diverse school communities. The following are included: (1) "Building an Equitable School Culture" (Percy Bates); (2) "The Social Context of Schooling" (Bob Croninger); (3) "From 'A Dialogue with Society' (Poem)" (Piri Thomas); (4) "Changing the Culture of American Schools: Creating a New Social Paradigm" (Norma Barquet); (5) "Cultural Communication Styles in School Settings" (Ted Wilson and Judith L. Greenbaum); (6) "As Our Youth Soar in the Spirit of Life (Poem)" (Stan Webster); (7) "Intergroup Relations and School Discipline" (Marta Larson); (8) "How Equitable Is Your School Culture? (checklist)" (Eleanor Linn); (9) "A Note on Equitable Crisis Intervention" (Judith L. Greenbaum); (10) "Matching Effective Instructional Techniques to Culturally Appropriate Teaching/Learning Styles" (Martha A. Adler); and (11) "Model Programs for Intergroup Communication" (Tasha Lebow). References follow the articles. (Contains one figure.) (SLD)

EQUITY COALITION

For Race, Gender, and National Origin

Building an Equitable School Culture

Metropolitan School District of Wayne Township (Indianapolis, Indiana) Martin Luther King Day mural contest 1987-88. Fulton Junior High 7th grade art class (Diane Green, teacher)

Percy Bates, Ph.D., Director

OUR schools are responsible for the growth and development of our nation's children. To promote this growth and development, we must build a school environment, a school culture, that is caring, safe, and secure. We hear a great deal today about curriculums that are multicultural and gender fair, but to be truly equitable for a diverse population, a school environment must begin with good cross-cultural communication, understanding, and respect between groups.

Communication on a one-to-one basis with close associates whose background is like our own is often a difficult task, where meaning and intent are often misunderstood. This problem increases tenfold when communication and learning must cross cultural boundaries. How many of our problems between races, genders, and ethnic groups in and outside of school can be attributed to breakdowns in communication? How often have we conveyed feelings and meaning that differed from our intent? Whenever this occurs it is not just a problem for ourselves; it often has direct consequences for others. Good communication is perhaps more crucial in some situations than others but nowhere more crucial than in our schools.

Cross-cultural communication and understanding is more than what one says to or about one cultural group or another; it also encompasses a wide range of educational interactions, verbal and nonverbal, that convey our total meaning to our students. If we tend to communicate not only what we intend to say but what we feel and think as well, then we must also expand our efforts to

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An Equitable School Culture

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change what we feel and think about other cultures. To achieve this change of heart, we must understand our own culture and the culture of others and the impact of these cultures on our life-space.

Most importantly, children from different cultures may learn in different ways. To be effective educationally with all children, we must understand their learning styles and vary our instructional techniques to accommodate these differences. Effective cross-cultural communication must also take into account the nature and process of discipline and the overall context of schooling. Acceptable social behavior often differs from one group to another. This must be considered when intervention is deemed necessary.

Problems in cross-cultural communication may be caused by our lack of knowledge about other cultures and the subtleties of cultural issues. Problems may also be caused by our inability or unwillingness to apply what we know about intergroup relations. The articles in this issue of *Equity Coalition* are intended to encourage us all to broaden our horizons and improve our knowledge about the wide range of cultures that make up our diverse school communities. They are also intended to strengthen our resolve to be more successful with diverse school populations than we have been in the past.

We will certainly live in a more diverse society in the future, so it is absolutely necessary to increase our knowledge about cultures other than our own and to improve our ability to communicate cross-culturally. Our future is inextricably bound to improving our ability to communicate with each other across cultures. ❖

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The Social Context of Schooling: What Research and Theory Can Tell Us

by Bob Crominger, Associate Director for Race Equity

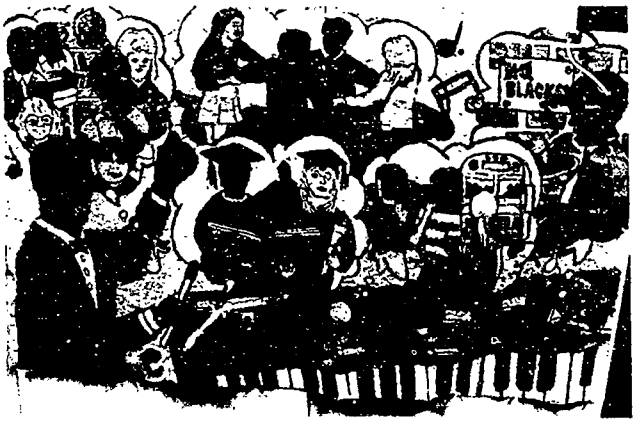
WHO succeeds in school? Who fails? Years and years of research have given us clear answers to these questions. We know, for example, that children from poor families are more likely to fail than children from economically advantaged homes. We also know that non-white students, especially African-Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians, are more likely to fail in the classroom and that girls are more likely to become disinterested in critical subjects, like math and science, during adolescence. What we know with less certainty is why.

What makes this question especially troublesome is that many of these students are quite capable and intelligent. They start school with high expectations and a strong desire to do well. But something happens along the way to dampen their interests. Some become withdrawn and detached; some become rebellious and defiant. Outside of the classroom, in a different context, these same students may be bright, active, even precocious, but in the classroom they fail to learn or keep up with the other students. Why?

One possible answer deals with the social context that schools construct for learning. The social context, in the sense that I am using it here, refers to the understandings and expectations that teachers and students use to make sense of each other's behavior. That

> Outside of the classroom . . . these same students may be bright, active, even precocious, but in the classroom they fail to learn or keep up with the other students. Why?

context is formed over time as teachers and students interact with each other, accumulate experiences, attribute meaning, and develop expectations about future behaviors. Some students fail, in other words, because learning, at least learning as it is presented by some teachers, just doesn't make sense to them. In a different context, a



Metropolitan School District of Wayne Township (Indianapolis, Indiana) Martin Luther King Day mural contest 1987-88. Westlake Elementary School grade 5 (Mrs. Hollingshead, teacher)

context that makes more sense, the same students may be exceptional learners.

In this article I describe some of what research and theory can tell us about the social context in which public schooling takes place and how that context affects learning. I use current research and educational theory to support five propositions about the importance of the social context in which instruction occurs, emphasizing especially the effects of that context on the achievement of female students and students of color. Although I emphasize student and teacher interactions, much of what I say can be applied to interactions between other groups of people in the school community as well.

1. The social context in which instruction takes place dramatically affects individual learning.

Robert McDermott refers to the social context of schooling as working agreements about who teachers and students are and what is going on between them. They are agreements that teachers and students form from their accumulated experiences in schools. "In the classroom," McDermott writes (1977, p. 199), "these issues translate into how the teacher and children can understand each other's behavior as directed to the best interests of what they are trying to do together and how they can hold each

other accountable for any breach of the formulated consensus." It is precisely this social context that makes classroom learning and management intelligible.

McDermott also argues that the agreements formed by teachers and students are of a special nature. They are not simply utilitarian agreements based on mutual interest; they are cooperative agreements based on trust. Students in particular must trust their teachers, trust that what they are doing with them is meaningful, desirable, and beneficial. If a teacher's instructional style is alien to students or the content of instruction is incompatible with norms and values that students learn elsewhere, misunderstandings are more likely and trust is more difficult to establish. Without trust, teachers are forced to rely on coercion to justify their authority in the classroom.

What McDermott and others emphasize is that classroom learning is essentially a social process, something that is done together and that requires considerable communication, coordination, and understanding. When students don't learn, the barriers may not reside in the student or even the teacher; the problem may actually reside in their understandings of each other and what they are to accomplish in the classroom. McDermott (1974) argues that even minor differences in how students and teachers construct this context can have disastrous effects on classroom learning, even when students are bright and capable and teachers are skilled and well-intentioned.

2. Teachers and students from different ethnic groups bring to the classroom diverse cultural expectations about school, what is to be accomplished, and how it is to be done.

Most children come to school with high expectations for learning. There is even some evidence suggesting that students of color come to school with higher expectations than average. But these expectations can become dampened by misunderstanding and confusion when teachers and students fail to arrive at workable agreements in the classroom. Sometimes this failure occurs because teachers are unaware of their own expectations and how they may conflict with those of their students. These conflicts, as Ted Wilson and Judith Greenbaum argue in their article, often occur when teachers are locked into their own cultural expectations and fail to recognize alternative ways of understanding student behavior.

Shirley Brice Heath (1983, p. 280), for example, notes that white middle-class teachers often use indirect commands to manage student behavior. They say things like, "Is this where your scissors belong?" or "It's time to put our paints away now." These statements obscure the source of the command and tend to confuse children who come from homes in which direct commands are used, such as "Put those scissors in the drawer now" or "Put the paints back where you got them." Heath argues that indirect commands are used to communicate a wide range of important rules to students, including expectations for appropriate behaviors at given times of the day, in specific areas of the school, when interacting with adults, and when disagreements occur. Many students, however, never grasp these expectations because of the form in which they are presented.

A similar argument is made by Carlos Diaz (1989) in a review article about Hispanic cultures and cognitive styles. He notes that most teachers use teaching styles that emphasize competitive learning and the intrinsic appeal that they presume learning has for students. Hispanic students, however, learn better in settings that encourage cooperative learning, and they are strongly motivated by extrinsic values, especially those associated with family. Diaz points out that teachers and students who share a similar cognitive style tend to see each other more positively; those who are mismatched see each other more negatively. Given what we know about the social context for learning, it is easy to understand why.

These difficulties are likely to increase if teachers are not better prepared to deal with cultural differences. The number of immigrants who entered this country during the last decade was as great as the number who entered during the height of immigration during the early 1900s. Moreover, this new wave of immigrants tends to come from non-European countries in which English is not the native language. As many as four-fifths of these immigrants came from Mexico or countries in Asia (First et al., 1988). Educating these children will require a much greater sensitivity to cultures that are dramatically different from those that currently dominate our schools.

3. Class and gender also create cultural expectations that vary within and across ethnic groups.

Most of what I have said thus far has emphasized misunderstandings that reflect ethnic differences. Misunderstandings also occur, however, because of class and gender differences. These factors affect learning in and of themselves, but they also affect learning between and within ethnic groups. As James Banks (1988, p. 453) points out, "there are enormous within-group differences caused by factors such as region, gender, and social class." Differ-

ences in class and gender, both between and within ethnic groups, also need to be examined when considering the social context in which schooling takes place.

Understanding those differences is made complicated by the paucity of research that deals with the relationships between ethnicity, gender, and class. Nonetheless, some studies suggest a number of interesting hypotheses. Class, for example, may have a less powerful effect in shaping the educational expectations and behaviors of non-white groups than it does the expectations of whites. Banks argues that the non-white middle class is still a relatively new phenomenon, particularly among African Americans and Mexican Americans. He also suggests that the effects of class on cognitive style and motivation are counter-balanced by ethnic values that underscore the importance of extended families, families that most often have their roots in poor communities. These factors may explain why several research studies have failed to document class effects on cognitive styles and motivation within specific ethnic groups (Banks, 1988).

Some studies also suggest that female students may be more responsive to non-competitive learning that is positively associated with group goals, regardless of the student's ethnicity (Banks, 1988). One study of urban and suburban students, for example, found that white students and African-American students differ significantly on this dimension, the former being more likely to respond positively to a competitive setting, the latter a cooperative setting. The study also found, however, that much of this difference was directly attributable to the learning preferences of the African-American girls in the study compared to the white boys. Overall, girls were more similar to each other in this regard, whatever their ethnicity.

Finally, some studies suggest that attitudes about gender may be more difficult to change than attitudes about race or class. Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant (1985) did an ethnographic study of a relatively integrated junior high school located in an urban area in the Midwest. They found that most of the students in the school rejected racial prejudices and class biases, that the students were tolerant of racial and class differences, and that many students had close friendships that crossed racial and class lines. Nonetheless, most of the students also had traditional expectations about gender, especially in their interactions with each other, and few questioned the gender roles that they displayed at home or school. Attitudes about gender were relatively rigid and traditional, regardless of the students' race or class.

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from "A Dialogue with Society"

For while you are smiling and living well,
black children, brown children, red children,
yellow children, white children, multi-colored
children, children, children, because of your hypocrisy,
are dying, physically, mentally, spiritually, and secretly
in broad daylight.

I speak for myself as my mind rushes
back into time when I held in my hands
a beauty that was truly mine.

I was a child
running through dark ghetto streets
I let the seas of hate wash over me.

I was too young to know.
Momma had filled my eyes with the wondrous
city and its pearly gates.

If I could have the power, I'd wipe out all bad
memories.
But, since I don't, I'll give you a piece of advice,
cool-breeze, cut like a piece of ice.

Share! Let our children share.
Stop teaching them the petty stinking hates.
Children know love from the git-go.
And you who are without love have taught
them hate up to the very ending.

We are tired of demi-gods and tyrants
bred by a mother and father who leave
their marks on earth, a death-chant, a
mountain of sufferings, a dirge.

It is time for new bells to toll.
It is time for new trumpets to blare.
It is time for a new language to be heard.
From the very beginning of time to
this time, we should have learned by now,
we should have learned how,
We should have learned to love.

— Piri Thomas, author of
Down These Mean Streets

4. Power and status outside of school affect the social context for learning, often with disastrous results for students.

Teachers and students do not construct the social context of schooling on a blank slate; they construct it from their experiences and expectations, many of which are defined by power and status relationships that exist outside of the school. Many theorists and researchers believe, in other words, that the behavior of students and teachers are profoundly influenced by lessons that they learn outside of school. These lessons, which portray certain groups as more successful than others, are often acted out inside classrooms and the school.

John Ogbu (1986), for example, argues that this principle can be clearly understood by looking at the educational performance of caste-like groups in this country—African Americans, American Indians, and Mexican Americans. He believes that these children do not do as well as other children in school because years of discrimination and oppression teach them that working hard in school is futile. Instead, they develop survival strategies to help them cope with the cultural demands and expectations that dominate most schools. These strategies, as Jonathan Buffalo notes (McDonald, 1989), are profound compromises between economic realities, spiritual needs, and cultural values.

Minimally, these strategies insulate students from the demands of the classroom, but they may also overtly protest expectations that students find discriminatory or unfairly demeaning. Some strategies, for example, emphasize a semblance of compliance while nurturing an alternative value structure. Mary Field Belenky and her colleagues (1986) argue that many girls adopt this strategy toward the male value structure that dominates formal education in this country. Other strategies, however, accentuate cultural differences as a form of resistance and protest (Erickson, 1987). Students who openly display their lack of interest in school, who seem to take pride in their "failures," or behave in ways that are considered inappropriate by teachers may actually be protesting cultural expectations fostered by the school that they feel are arbitrary and discriminatory.

Members of dominant groups, of course, are also influenced by experiences and expectations that are formed outside of schools. Elizabeth Cohen (1988) notes that white students tend to dominate classroom interactions with African-American students, even when both groups have similar abilities, family characteristics, and are placed in an instructional setting that formally attributes to them equal status. She believes that white students read the status expectations of the broader culture into classroom situations. This leads them to "dominate" interactions that they have with students of color. Similar explanations have been offered about the manner in which adolescent boys dominate in-school interactions with girls.

So far I have emphasized the manner in which power and status relationships affect the interactions between students and teachers. Lisa Delpit (1988), however, suggests that these relationships also become embedded in instructional philosophies that dominate teacher training and values. African-American teachers, for example, are often criticized for being overly directive and authoritarian in the classroom. Their behavior is sometimes criticized as unprofessional or unskilled, largely because authoritarian approaches to instruction run counter to mainstream pedagogical values that emphasize creativity, imagination, internal motivation, and independent thinking. Yet these values do not accurately reflect beliefs about authority that are held by many African-American students and their parents.

According to Delpit (1988), African-Americans believe that authority must be earned, and their children respond more positively to teachers that exhibit characteristics that African-American culture associates with personal power and ability. Many African-American students, for example, describe unassertive teachers as boring, weak, and ineffectual, in part because these teachers do not act with authority. Teachers whom they describe positively, on the other hand, tend to be more assertive and forceful. One young African-American man described a favorite teacher this way: "We had fun in her class, but she was mean. She pushed, she used to get on me and push me to know. She made me learn" (Delpit, 1988, p. 290). Like this young man, many African-American teachers fondly remember adults who persistently and forcefully demanded that they learn and succeed in school. Their intuitive sense of what worked for them may run counter to the instructional values that dominated their teacher training.

5. Teachers can shape the social context of their classrooms in six ways.

First, and perhaps most importantly, teachers can acknowledge the effects of cultural expectations on learning. They can become more aware of how their own behavior is strongly influenced by ethnicity, gender, class, and professional training, and they can consider more fully how those expectations may be different from those held by

specific groups of students in their classrooms.

Second, as Martha Adler suggests in her article, teachers can use cooperative learning techniques that give female students and students of color an opportunity to be instructional leaders in the classroom. One way of doing this is to develop lesson plans that require students to cooperate, employ multiple abilities, and share information with each other (Cohen, 1986). Teachers can help students develop a greater awareness of their own abilities and those of their peers if they carefully consider how to share those resources in the classroom.

Third, teachers can work more cooperatively with adults who share the cultural heritage of their students (Delpit, 1988). That means that teachers must listen carefully to what adults think is educationally appropriate for their children, and it means that teachers must incorporate these ideas into their own instructional goals and strategies. They may need to rely on parents and colleagues who share the culture of their students to establish a level of trust and mutual understanding that will allow them to do so. They, like their students, will have to learn how to rely on the resources of others to succeed in culturally diverse classrooms.

Fourth, teachers can explicitly teach students the cultural rules that define success and the basis for those rules. Lisa Delpit (1988) refers to these rules as the "culture of power." By teaching students that these rules exist, as well as that they are based on power and status relationships within and outside of school, teachers can help girls and students of color better understand the values by which they are likely to be judged. They can also better prepare students to challenge the culture of power and the way in which it imposes limits that are arbitrary, discriminatory, or oppressive.

Fifth, teachers can insist that all of their students, not just those who are female or non-white, become bicultural or multicultural. This means teaching students the cultural rules of other groups and helping them to understand the cultural logic and wisdom behind them. One obvious example is to advocate bilingualism for all students. Other possibilities are helping students recognize alternative ways of resolving conflict, making decisions, expressing personal values or beliefs, and interacting with others.

Finally, teachers can prevent information about cultural expectations from becoming yet another set of stereotypes by which to label students. There is a great diversity within groups, a diversity that is overly simplified by generalizations and research findings that report mean differences between groups of people (Cox and Ramirez, 1981). Some boys may do extremely well in cooperative settings. Some Hispanic students may be highly motivated by the intrinsic appeal of a particular task. Some African-American students may be "turned off" by an assertive and authoritarian teacher. Some students from poor households may respond without question to indirect commands or instructions. Not everyone in a group is the same. Teachers need to recognize this and use the kind of information that we present in this issue not to catalogue students but to develop strategies for teaching them more effectively.

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Changing the Culture of American Schools: Creating A New Social Paradigm

by Norma Barquet, Associate Director for National Origin Equity

MANY of the recent attempts to improve, reform, or restructure schools are failing because little attention is being given to the culture of the schools. The intricate nature of culture and its usefulness in explaining human and organizational behaviors has made it a subject of much interest, discussion, and debate, especially amongst reformers and advocates for change.

Human culture has been described as "a set of ideals, values, and standards of behavior; . . . the common denominator that makes the actions of individuals intelligible to the group" (Haviland, p. 17). Similarly, organizational culture "consists of many elements, but the primary element is the unique pattern of norms — standards or rules of conduct — to which members conform" (Burke, p. 9).

We also know that culture, and the values and patterns of behaviors that it promotes, is passed on from generation to generation primarily by the parents and the educational systems of a given society (Haviland, p. 17). This process, often referred to as "enculturation," is a necessary means by which societies transmit the values, norms, standards of behaviors, rituals, and legacies that make it unique.

Enculturation, however, can also result in the suppression and devaluation of the individual, particularly if he or she comes from a cultural background different from that of the main cultural group. For a country such as ours, rich in cultural diversity, this issue has significant implications.

The culture of American schools, in general, continues to both reflect and transmit the values, power relations, and behavioral norms of the groups for whom schools were originally intended: middle class Europeans. As a result, students whose cultures do not match that of the school often feel alienated and devalued as they go through the educational system.

Writing about the historical role of schools in Western societies, James Banks notes that assimilation was their major goal: "The students were expected to acquire the dominant culture of the school and society, but the school neither legitimized nor assimilated parts of the student's culture" (1986, p. 14).

This reluctance or inability of schools to value and incorporate elements of the non-Anglo students' cultures in the process and content of education is at the heart of their failure to educate the racially and culturally different children of this country. At the same time there is the growing ethnocentrism, racism, prejudice, and discrimination among our citizenry that pose a real threat to our society.

Learning and teaching are processes that entail the social, physical, emotional, and psychological involvement of human beings. This is why the role of schools as mediators of culture between the individual, the group, and the larger society has critical implications for us as educators.

If our aim as educators is to improve the quality of life of children in particular, and society in general, then we must radically change the culture of our schools. We must alter the way educators see, understand, and value themselves and the world around them. We must expand teachers' knowledge base to include people and cultures from every continent. We must also humanize the process of education to make it more responsive to individual needs and more affirming of the intrinsic value of human diversity.

So, how do we change the culture of our schools? Meaningful change in schools takes time, and, just as with individuals, it is not easily accomplished. Change requires those involved to feel the need to change, and to have ownership of the process. Real and lasting change in schools can only come from within the school community, through a collective process involving all those who have most to gain or lose from the change, particularly students, teachers, and parents.

Seymour Sarason (1982) sees community building as a major strategy for achieving organizational change in schools. In *The Culture of Schools and the Problem of Change*, he notes that "it is in the self-interests of the proponents of change, first, to recognize the importance of constituencies, second, to view power as an opportunity to develop constituencies, and, third, to realistically confront the time demands of constituency building." In fact, he goes on to say, the intent of this process is for the constituents to "become the implementers as much as the objects of change" (Sarason, p. 293).

The goal of the change of which I write is to develop a school culture that truly acknowledges and values human diversity, that is not monocultural but multicultural. In such schools, all children are valued and experience social recognition and academic success.

Such educational settings, while in the minority, do exist. They are characterized by a culture that promotes: 1) shared goals, 2) shared power, 3) respect for human dignity, and 4) cooperation. In these schools teachers, administrators, students, and parents perceive themselves as interdependent members of a school community where:

- *Students are the primary focus.* Therefore, teachers and other school personnel continuously look for ways to enhance the cognitive-academic and social behaviors of children. They promote and sustain social, teaching, and learning structures in which all children experience success regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or other human characteristics or conditions.
- *Cooperation and team building prevail.* Students and staff are encouraged to support each other and work in groups to improve the educational and professional experiences and outcomes for all members of the school community. These cooperative settings are often deliberately structured to promote cross-cultural communication and understanding among students, parents, and school staff.
- *The culture of these schools reflects and values the students' culture.* The history, contributions, values and perspectives of the cultural groups to which students belong are legitimized and affirmed by being integrated into the school curriculum. Teachers try to become aware of their own learning and teaching styles and try to accommodate the learning styles of their students by using a variety of teaching methods and strategies
- *Parents and community are seen as partners with the school.* Activities that meaningfully and actively involve them are carefully planned and nurtured as their participation is perceived to be in the best interest of the students, their families, and the school community in general.

By thus transforming schools we can empower children through education and our example with sound, humanistic principles and values. Perhaps then we will have taught our children to differentiate between those values that improve the human condition of all people and values that are self-centered and materialistic. In a very powerful and significant way they will have become critical thinkers, and we will have increased their chances to live in peace and harmony with each other, to respect and value each other regardless of their human or social differences.

Future generations will live in an increasingly pluralistic society, not in isolation but as a part of a diverse, complex, and interdependent world. By valuing and promoting a more humanistic, harmonious, multicultural, and therefore more complete view of reality, schools can prepare children to live in this world.

Schools play a significant role in the education and enculturation of the future citizens of our society. It follows, then, that by changing the culture of schools to reflect and legitimize our human and cultural diversity, we can ultimately achieve meaningful and lasting changes in the social paradigms of our nation and the world community to which we belong.

Within the context of this new and much needed social paradigm our children will become adults who can see themselves not as independent but as interdependent and equal parts of a complex and diverse world.

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"If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place."

Margaret Mead

Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (1935)

Cultural Communication Styles in School Settings

by Ted Wilson, Research Associate, and Judith L. Greenbaum, Ph.D., Research Associate

COMMUNICATION style is an important part of the distinctive cultural identity of every ethnic, racial, and gender group. Yet in school misunderstanding between a teacher and student about which communication style is appropriate, can make a child feel devalued, deficient, or deviant. Moreover, different communication styles can cause misunderstandings between students to such an extent that anger, frustration, and resentment overflow into disruption and fighting.

A growing body of research by sociolinguists and language ethnologists shows that if teachers and students become more aware of their distinctive language and nonverbal communication styles, they can bridge the cultural boundaries between them (Burling, Gates, Heath, Cooke, Kochman, Labov, and Smitherman). It helps this process if teachers and students can openly discuss the distinctive styles of communication that they bring to the classroom as members of particular cultural communities.

Respect for Cultural Identity

The first step toward cross-cultural communication is establishing mutual trust based on respect for the communication styles of everyone present in the classroom, students as well as teachers. Linguist David Crystal describes the general process of linguistic accommodation or convergence which reduces the differences between people and facilitates interaction (p. 51). As people experience novel vocabulary, pronunciation, facial expressions, postures, and styles of discourse, they unconsciously begin to borrow from each other. By understanding this process, teachers and students can appreciate the subtle ways in which they converge and accommodate to each other linguistically.

However, Crystal says speech divergence occurs when people's cultural identity is threatened. They react by emphasizing their own personal, social, religious, or other identity. These perceived threats result in such divergent responses as the deliberate use of minority language or ethnically distinct dialect. The goal of such divergent speech is to express solidarity within one's own cultural group and to mystify and confuse non-group members (Gates, p. 240-241). Hence, refusal to accommodate to the language and social context of the school is often one of the first outward signs of cross-cultural tension. Teachers should look closely at divergent or challenging behavior and ask whether students perceive a threat to their cultural and personal identity.

Cross-cultural misunderstandings are predictable when only one communication style is acceptable in school. Smitherman eloquently defends the right of children to use Black English in the classroom. She urges teachers to ask, "How can I use what the kids *already* know to move them to what they *need* to know?" She says teachers should "genuinely accept as viable the language and culture the child has acquired by the time he or she comes to school . . . and allow the child to use that language to express himself or herself" (1977, p. 219).

Smitherman's perspective was affirmed by the courts in the so-called Black English or *King* case in 1979 in which Black parents sued the Ann Arbor schools because their children were not learning (Smitherman, 1982, pp. 336-356). The elementary school that was the setting for the Black English case is located in one of the more prosperous, mostly white neighborhoods in Ann Arbor, but the student body included about 15 Black children who lived in a low-income housing project. At the time the suit was filed, the poor Black children were having a great deal of difficulty in the school. Several of them were considered emotionally disturbed and some were considered slow, retarded, or learning disabled. Parents and advocates for the children denied they were retarded or disturbed and charged that the teachers considered them deficient because the children spoke a different dialect of English.

The judge's ruling said, in effect, that their teachers, by considering Black English an inferior form of speech, had made the children themselves feel inferior and turned them off to the learning process. His decision suggested that if teachers were more aware of differences in culture, and if teachers viewed Black English as a language in its own right, the resulting change in their attitudes, expectations, and teaching strategies might be more conducive to learning.

A Multicultural Perspective

The *King* case is only part of a much larger movement by educators in the United States to open schools to a multicultural perspective. The changing demographics of public school enrollment require that we abandon the traditional monocultural perspective which viewed schools as a melting pot for socializing all students into a dominant white European cultural tradition.

In a multicultural school it is clear that one's own particular cultural heritage is not universal and traditional school customs and observances may not have the same meaning for everyone. For example, Thanksgiving and Columbus Day have very different meanings for American Indians and other people of color than they do for European Americans. A new multicultural awareness is challenging these traditions (Bigelow).

Nor should only one style of communication be acceptable when school's cultural communication styles are diverse. We offer some tentative generalizations and descriptions of communication problems that may occur when teachers and students with different cultural identities share a school setting.

Expressiveness

Some cultures are more expressive than others. In Greek, Italian, and Israeli cultures arguing is a sign of intimacy. People argue loudly and verbally challenge each other for the fun of it. On the other hand, some Hispanic and Asian cultures discourage expressing anger and show disagreement by refusing to speak or smile, by making general comments, or by changing the subject. Such differences in expressiveness can be a source of misunderstanding among students, and between teacher and student. What some students consider fun can be very threatening to others or may be seen as insubordination by teachers.

On the other hand, shyness and self-effacement seem to be traits valued by American Indians and Southeast Asians. The child who never volunteers an answer and refuses to speak in front of the class even when called upon can make the teacher wonder: Does he know the answer? Does she have a language problem? Sometimes a private dialogue is a first step toward class participation. Caring teachers can end the silences of immigrant students by patiently building trust and encouraging them to speak privately or write about their experiences. Some schools have featured the writings of immigrant students in multicultural publications (First & Carrera, p. 91).

Identifying and understanding such contrasting styles, both of which have their time and place, can be an opportunity to increase cross-cultural communication. Teachers might assign students to engage in a debate in what sociolinguist Deborah Tannen (p. 196) calls "high involvement" style, going nose to nose and matching wits rather than backing off. A teacher might follow this exercise with a "high consideration" debate with scrupulous turn-taking and no interrupting.

Cultural differences in expressiveness can affect parent involvement as well as student behavior. The cultural norms of American society today ask parents to participate in parent-teacher conferences and in setting educational policy. Many cultures outside the United States, however, regard teachers and schools with high esteem, and parents feel that education of their children is the school's responsibility and that, due to their relative lack of knowledge, parents should not be involved. Parents holding these cultural values are puzzled when a school tries to involve them in parent-teacher conferences and advisory councils. Teachers, on the other hand, may think the parents are uncaring or unconcerned. If the parents speak little or no English and the teacher cannot speak the language of the parents, communication is still more difficult.

Cultural differences in expressiveness may illumine conflicts that occur in multicultural neighborhoods. The cultural differences between Koreans and Blacks may have aggravated the conflict at a grocery store

As Our Youth Soar in the Spirit of Life

In order for our children to live a good life,
We must first begin to live as a family.
In doing so,
We share our spirit with one another.
In this manner, we carry on the sacred teachings,
That gave so much strength to our grandfathers.
Together we learn: How to listen,
How to feel,
How to see,
How to respect,
How to relate.
When we do these things together, we know,
The fire of life still burns, in the cycle of life.
Life is hard, but the joy is great,
When we can watch our youth soar in the Spirit of Life!

Wisconsin Indian Resource Council
Stevens Point, WI

in Brooklyn, New York. A Black resident said, "Koreans are very rude. They don't realize you have to smile." But many Koreans don't smile at Koreans in a casual fashion and instead cultivate what may be perceived as lack of expression (Kang, 1990).

Gender Differences

Is there a culture for each gender in school? Deborah Tannen says the dominance of men in our society stems from our social norms which encourage boys to be openly competitive and girls to be openly cooperative. Boys talk with boys with the goal of increasing their status; girls talk with girls to increase their connectedness and intimacy. It is easy to see how this might affect the relative achievement of boys and girls. Gender differences in communication style may determine who speaks out in class, who gets in trouble, and who gets elected class president.

Lee Anne Bell argues that girls are "a gender at risk" in a "chilly" school culture, but that this can be changed. "Girls can be helped to develop some of the skills and strengths that have been traditionally encouraged in boys. Such skills as self-assertion, risk-taking in academic realms, taking credit for success, and embracing failure as a learning opportunity can reduce the internal barriers to achievement that girls experience. Concurrently, boys can learn to develop skills traditionally encouraged in girls such as other-directedness, cooperation, and risk-taking in emotional realms" (Bell, p. 21).

Awareness of the culture of gender can help teachers engage both boys and girls in learning. Structured group activities with clearly designated roles may neutralize the tendency either to dominate or to hold back in discussion and work groups. For example, teachers might occasionally announce that, for a particular lesson, if a girl speaks then a boy must speak next, and so on. Martha Adler in this issue describes how teachers can engage all students by including experiential and cooperative learning as well as traditional experiences.

Profanity and Challenging Behavior

What about profanity? For some children and adults, profanity is the common language of neighborhood interaction, the language of cultural identity, of verbal dueling, of self-protection. Children eventually learn that such language is not acceptable in school where the social context requires a degree of self censorship. However, children may challenge the rules of "school culture out of a sense of not belonging to the dominant group who made the rules and to emphasize their own cultural identity.

Teachers need not assume that a child intends an insult or challenge to authority when he or she uses profanity. Perhaps the child has not perfected the expected "code switching" from neighborhood to school context or feels a threat to his or her cultural identity. Punishing profanity may be more harmful and less effective than simply ignoring it.

Some challenging behavior, however, can become counterproductive and self-defeating. Students may taunt highly motivated members of their group by name calling ("brain") or by threatening social exclusion ("Let's not talk to her. She thinks she's too good for us"). If many members a group see achievement as selling out to a system that has rejected them, perhaps the school should review the equity of its policies and procedures.

Guided Cross-Cultural Communication

An awareness of one's own cultural background and its place among other cultures is the beginning of cross-cultural communication. The current school environment challenges everyone's identity. Teachers might begin to help students cope with these challenge by exploring cultural differences that are distant from differences in the classroom. For example, the educational game *BaFá BaFá* explores universal feelings about being different and helps players understand the meaning of the term 'culture' by simulating the experience of traveling to another culture. Tasha Lebow describes *BaFá BaFá* in this issue.

Students may need more support from the teacher as they move from the general concept of cross-cultural communication and begin to discuss their own cultural differences. One exercise that both students and adults enjoy is drawing a map of the neighborhood where they grew up and describing whether it was urban, suburban, or rural and where their friends and family lived. They may also be able to describe its social profile in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and social class and how neighbors dealt with "outsiders." Another useful exercise is to have students trace their family's "migration," whether that is around the corner or around the world.

Shirley Brice Heath describes techniques for engaging students as ethnographers of the language used in their own communities and then reporting their findings. "This helped students learn to see their daily actions in new terms: as the recording of events, discovering of patterns and figuring out of options in making decisions." Teachers then helped students transfer these ways of investigating and analyzing information to the unfamiliar content information of the classroom (p. 339).

Elsewhere in this issue Bob Croninger writes that teachers and students create the "social context" of

the classroom as they interact with each other and seek to make sense of each other's behavior. We believe that understanding different communication styles is an important part of this process. Bridging cultural differences is an endeavor that engages everyone in learning. By helping students see the patterns that characterize their different communication styles, and by helping them bridge their cultural differences, teachers can create a social context that engages all students in learning.

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Intergroup Relations and School Discipline

by Marta Larson, Field Services Specialist

DISCIPLINARY referral and suspension records in public schools often display startling disparities by gender, race, and national origin. Quite often referrals for male students and/or racial/ethnic/language minority group members exceed those for females and whites by ratios as high as three to one. Students who are *both* male *and* members of racial/ethnic/language minority groups encounter the highest disproportionality in the discipline stream.

There are numerous hypotheses about the potential causes for these disparities, including those that cite the white middle class culture of schools, the gender culture of schools, sex role socialization, stereotyped expectations, and teacher reinforcement patterns. Many of the articles in this issue of *Equity Coalition* deal with the underlying causes of disciplinary disproportionality. Some of these issues are examined here to determine how disciplinary disproportionality might be alleviated.

Furtwengler and Konnert (1982, p. 38), in examining the aims of discipline, conclude that "historically, the aim of school discipline was the control of the behavior of students through the use of force." They go on to quote Willower (p. 38) who says that "there will

Photo by Maria S. Forras, Lerner Publications, Minneapolis, Minn.

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The Checklist: How Equitable Is Your School Culture?

by Eleanor Linn, Associate Director for Gender Equity

Directions: Record YES or NO responses to each of the questions. Where possible, collect information to substantiate your answers. *Work with a multicultural, gender representative team of people* that includes administrators, teachers, parents and students. Pay special attention to areas in which the team does not reach consensus. The section on scoring the checklist contains advice about next steps.

Before you begin, *decide which cultural or status groups are most important* for your school to include. For example, you may need to look at urban/rural distinctions and people with disabilities as well as differences of race, gender, and national origin.

Complete the last section by yourself.

Staff Attitudes

YES NO

❑ ❑ 1. Do staff members use language that is free from racial, ethnic, and sexual slurs at all times?

❑ ❑ 2. Is it acceptable for staff to talk about the use of inclusive language, stereotypic attitudes, or ethnocentric assumptions?

❑ ❑ 3. Do staff members communicate frequently with colleagues and community members who are of different genders and racial and ethnic backgrounds? Can these contacts be initiated by either person? Are these contacts mutually comfortable?

❑ ❑ 4. Can staff accurately name the major demographic groups in the school and identify traditional modes of learning that are valued within each of these groups?

Policy

❑ ❑ 5. Does your school or district have a policy that explicitly condemns racially, sexually, and ethnically biased behavior?

❑ ❑ 6. Does that policy have clear complaint reporting, fact finding, and appeal procedures?

❑ ❑ 7. Are consequences clearly stated and regularly publicized?

❑ ❑ 8. Is the policy enforced consistently?

Organizational Framework

YES NO

❑ ❑ 9. Does an ombudsperson hear complaints and respond to problems before they get out of hand?

❑ ❑ 10. Is the student government integrated? Do a range of clubs include the active participation of students from all racial, gender, and ethnic groups?

❑ ❑ 11. Does the parent/community advisory board represent the diversity of the entire community? Is it used as a forum for creating dialogue and consensus?

❑ ❑ 12. Has student tracking and in-class homogeneous grouping been replaced with heterogeneous placement and instruction? Is there a long-range plan for alternative assessment?

Data Collection and Monitoring

❑ ❑ 13. Does the school routinely collect data on incidents of cross-cultural friction such as graffiti, harassment, and slurs?

❑ ❑ 14. Is this data analyzed by race, gender, ethnicity in order to identify specific cultural tensions and to develop equitable school strategies to help resolve them?

❑ ❑ 15. Have special programs or policies been put in place as a result of such data analysis?

❑ ❑ 16. Does the school routinely collect achievement data by race, gender, and ethnicity?

❑ ❑ 17. Is this data analyzed with the purpose of identifying needs and successful learning strategies?

❑ ❑ 18. Have curriculum objectives and instructional strategies been modified as a result of this achievement data analysis?

❑ ❑ 19. Have parents and community members from all groups been involved in the development and implementation of corrective plans?

School Events and Symbols

YES NO

❑ ❑ 20. Does the planning for all school events, awards, and programs reflect the diversity of people in the school by race, gender, and ethnicity?

❑ ❑ 21. Does attendance at school events also reflect the diversity of the school community?

❑ ❑ 22. Are mascots, emblems, team names, and trophies free from racial, gender and ethnic bias? Do all people feel those symbols belong to them?

❑ ❑ 23. Are there important events and celebrations in the school that emphasize human unity and diversity? Some examples are Earth Day, World Peace Day, United Nations Day.

❑ ❑ 24. Do important events and celebrations reflect the heritage of people other than male European Americans? Some examples are Martin Luther King Day, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Pacific Heritage Month, and Indian Law Day.

❑ ❑ 25. Do pictures, decorations, and ornaments in the school reflect the diversity of its population and emphasize the message of unity and diversity?

Skills and Information

❑ ❑ 26. Do all students and staff understand the meaning of the term *culture*? Do they know that all people are unique individuals and members of cultural groups?

❑ ❑ 27. Can all students and staff identify key elements of the school culture?

❑ ❑ 28. Has there been culturally sensitive and inclusively planned staff development about diverse cultural norms, communications and learning styles?

❑ ❑ 29. Does the curriculum include specific objectives on cultural diversity, cross cultural communication, and conflict resolution at all grades, and in all types of programs?

❑ ❑ 30. Have staff and students been taught specific strategies for conflict resolution, violence prevention and crisis intervention?

School Plan

❑ ❑ 31. Does your school have a plan for improving intergroup relations?

❑ ❑ 32. Is there a multiracial, multi-ethnic, gender-representative advisory committee to oversee this plan?

❑ ❑ 33. Do they have clearly stated goals and realistic timetables?

❑ ❑ 34. Is there adequate funding and administrative support to carry out a successful plan?

❑ ❑ 35. Does the plan include provisions for both long-term change and short-term crisis management?

❑ ❑ 36. Has there been recognition and support for the formal and informal leaders of the school community who promote positive intergroup relations?

Self Awareness (to do by yourself)

YES NO

❑ ❑ 37. Have you thought about your own gender, racial, ethnic and social class identity and the various ways in which you are similar to, yet different from, the demographic groups to which you belong?

❑ ❑ 38. Have you thought about how your own gender, race, ethnicity and social class have influenced how you learn and how you teach?

❑ ❑ 39. Have you talked about cultural influences on teaching and learning with colleagues who are of a different race, gender,and/or ethnicity?

❑ ❑ 40. Have any people who are different from you by race, gender, and/or ethnicity shared with you how they think these factors influenced how they learn and teach?

❑ ❑ 41. Have you thought about how your own culturally influenced teaching and learning styles are perceived by colleagues and peers who are of a different gender, racial or ethnic group?

o o 42. Do you honestly believe that all students are capable of succeeding, regardless of their racial or ethnic group, and gender?

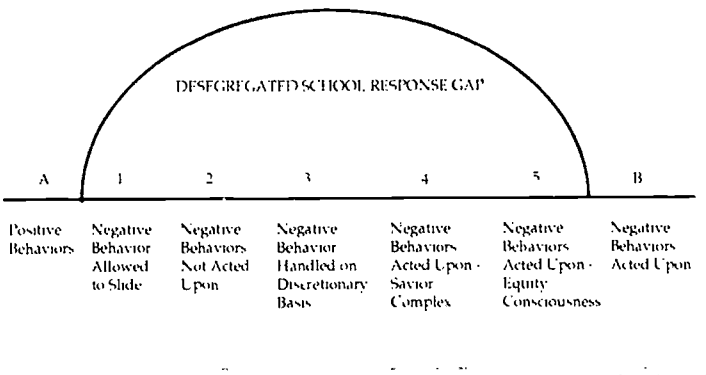
❑ ❑ 43. Are you honestly willing to change your behavior from ways that are comfortable to you, to ways that may be more helpful to students who are different from you?

Directions for scoring the Checklist appear on page 23.

Discipline

Continued from page 13

always be a conflict between custodial aims that focus on learning to respond to another's authority and the humanistic aim of learning to direct one's own behavior."



Gardner - 1989 Reprinted with author's permission from Gardner, Trevor G. *Rational Approaches to Practical School Discipline* page 36. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Pedagogic Press, 1989

Indeed, Alschuler (1980, p. 27) refers to the struggle to maintain school and classroom discipline as "war games," referring to the tension between teachers and administrators trying to oppress the students, while the students try to resist the oppression. This battle becomes particularly highly pitched in desegregated environments, where there is a larger variety of behavior and interactional styles.

Acceptable Behavior

For most schools, rules reflect the expectation that children will stay in their seats, work quietly and alone, not touch other children, and do what the teacher tells them to do. Discipline programs often set out to teach (force) students to submit to authority, falsely equating obedience with self motivation or self discipline.

According to Sabatino, Sabatino and Mann (1983, p. 4), punishable behaviors in the 1800s were "tardiness, hyperactivity, short attention span, profanity, and immorality." This has not changed much in the intervening years, as schools still seek to overcome these disciplinary problems.

In many schools, there is a great deal of room for interpretation when it comes to prohibited behaviors in the discipline code. For example, many schools prohibit "insubordination" which is open to a great variety in teacher and student interpretation, as the definition of insubordination is not the same in all cultures.

Even apparently more specific terms for prohibited behaviors (i.e. "fighting") open the door for variety of interpretation, as was seen in one district where fighting was a suspendable offense. These definitions ranged from "must have body contact" to "blows must be thrown by both participants" to "blood must be drawn, otherwise it's only a scuffle since this is just an elementary school." This lack of clarity in definition not only confuses students, but opens the door to more cross-cultural misunderstandings, and, therefore, disproportionality in the discipline system.

In most discipline codes there are indications that the school or district is trying to teach "respect for others" whether that is spelled out as "keep your hands to yourself" or in a specific item of the code, such as the prohibition of sexual harassment. However, few discipline codes go so far as to prohibit both racial and sexual harassment, and fewer yet identify racial/ethnic/sexist slurs as unacceptable behavior. In many cases, harassment and slurs are a beginning point to a conflict that eventually becomes physical. Since fighting, in most districts, results in suspension, root causes and precursors of fighting should be prohibited, particularly as the result can be disproportionality in referrals and suspensions.

Disproportional Impact of Student Codes

Vergon (1989, p. IV-B-16) says enforcing student codes can result in disproportional minority referrals because "codes commonly fail to recognize the contemporary cultural, communication, and behavioral patterns of minority students which, while different from those of whites, do not interfere with the normal educational functioning of the school. Codes with such provisions are quite common, not as a result of intentionally discriminatory motives, but largely because responsibility for code development has historically fallen on secondary building administrators, who . . . are predominantly white [and male]."

He also discusses differential enforcement of student codes, and teacher indecision about the level of response to disruptive conduct: "Failure to respond consistently and uniformly to disruptive behavior, irrespective of the race of the students involved, may contribute to the perception that dual standards of discipline are operating in the building and give rise to students seeing their school as unjust and a hostile environment for their racial group. This in turn may lead to actual negative and inappropriate behavior on their part" (p. IV-B-16).

In schools with immigrant or refugee populations, "tensions among groups naturally increase....Each cultural group has its own standards and rites of passage. Different actions challenge pride and dignity for each group" (Curwin and Mendler, p. 196). What may be ac-

ceptable rules or methods for discipline with one group may be outrageously culturally insensitive for another group. This is also true for inner city schools, where "the culture of the students is very different from the culture of the teachers and administrators. Even city schools with a high percentage of minority teachers suffer from cultural clashes" (Curwin and Mendler, p. 197).

Many teachers hold inaccurate stereotypes regarding inner-city children. They wrongly believe that, "the inner-city child . . . reacts to that environment by becoming psychologically tough and resilient. He [she] is unlikely to admit to fears and concerns about his daily existence, indeed he is unlikely to have such concerns. He doesn't care as much as his middle class peer does about getting ahead in life or school, his parents haven't trained him to care or be concerned about doing well in school, he doesn't mind being scolded by his teachers, he is not as likely as his middle class peer to worry, and he is unlikely to manifest symptoms of anxiety" (Hawkes and Furst, 1973). These inaccurate stereotypes are thoroughly debunked by the research done by Hawkes and Furst, who found, among other things, that "teachers significantly underestimate the anxiety levels of inner-city students and exaggerate the anxiety of upper middle class students."

In regard to disciplinary disproportionality, Gardner (1989) proposes a theory entitled "The Desegregated School Response Gap: A Teacher Response Typology" (see graphic). This typology is derived from *Freedom and Beyond* (Holt, 1972), but it adds a number of responses to negative behaviors that are typically experienced in desegregated schools. Gardner cites examples of differential teacher response along the continuum, such as assuming that "minority students need time to adjust to their school routines" (p. 37) and allowing their negative behaviors to either slide, or not acting on them at all. He indicates that "when teacher discretion is highest the degree of negative consequences for minority students increases proportionate to the latitude of discretion."(p. 38) He also discusses the "'savior complex' of some minority teachers...a significant number of minority teachers say that they 'come down harder on minority students' because they want them to do well."(p. 39) Finally, Gardner lists a number of findings that are related to this theory, stating that "the response gap can be reduced or eliminated only as administrators and teachers act consistently and decisively on all negative behaviors" (p. 40).

From early childhood, males in our society are primarily taught physical methods of solving problems (building and wrecking things, moving about, playing with trucks, etc.). This tends to limit their problem-solving options primarily to the physical realm when they respond to aggression from other students and results in many more male entries into the discipline stream than might otherwise be the case.

Proponents of theories about the gender culture of schools argue that schools are mainly staffed by [white] women (at least in the teacher ranks), and tend to reflect female work ethics, values, work styles, and norms. Boys must choose between being "masculine," and pleasing their peers, or being "feminine," which causes problems with their peers but pleases their teachers.

Kent (1972) describes a study by Levitin and Chananie showing that teachers react negatively to male students who behave too "femininely." They found that teachers "reported less approval for the dependent male than the dependent female, evaluated aggression as typical for males and dependency as typical for females, and indicated greater liking for achieving boys and dependent girls than for dependent boys." This teacher reaction to out-of-role behavior by gender extends to all coeducational schools, and constitutes as much if not more of an encouragement to disciplinary disproportionality than race or national origin. However, there is an equal or stronger reaction to in-role behavior of male students, also resulting in many more male referrals than female referrals. Indeed, in schools where the majority or all of the students are Black or Hispanic, disproportionality by gender still flourishes.

Remediating Disproportionality

Educators may find it difficult to discuss causes or remedies for disproportionality in discipline if they do not recognize cultural differences or perceive the extent of the disparities in their school. Documentation of the number of disciplinary referrals and suspensions by race, gender, and national origin is a necessary first step.

A discipline information system is the backbone of this documentation effort. The school should have a written format for documenting discipline cases, particularly in the event of referral from the classroom for discipline problems, suspension or expulsion. The referral forms should, at the minimum, contain information regarding student demographics (name, grade, race, sex, national origin, etc.), name of referring adult, behavioral description of offense, and disposition of the case.

A system should be maintained for recording data from the referral forms. Minimally, the system should be capable of generating data regarding number of referrals and suspensions by national origin, race and gender, and

number of referrals and suspensions by type of offense by race and gender. The extent of disparity in disciplinary referrals should be calculated by comparing the number of suspensions or referrals for each group, divided by the number of students comprising that group.

Once the data have been collected, it is instructive to graph that data. The graphs should show the actual population of the school or district, and the referrals or suspensions for each population group. These graphs should be prepared, disseminated, and discussed within the school staff at regular intervals. Reviewing the data tends to eliminate discussions that begin with "We don't have this problem here," and focus the discussion in a more proactive direction.

Currently, most school districts collect data on their student suspensions by race, gender, and national origin. However, once a student has reached the level of suspension, the administrator is often facing a rather cut and dried situation, where suspension is virtually the only option. It is imperative that school districts examine their data on student referrals, as well as for suspensions, because the person making a referral has a wider number of alternatives, and disproportionality is more likely to occur at this point. In districts and schools where there is a concerted effort to study referral data and develop remedies for patterns discovered, disproportionality has often been reduced by that effort alone.

Following a study of the discipline statistics, the school staff may want to examine their policies and procedures to determine whether there are ways in which specific population groups are being differentially affected. Differential impact is more likely to be found in application of policy rather than in policy itself. The staff should work together to identify ways in which different staff members are applying policies and to examine ways in which those policy applications may affect individual population groups differently.

An examination of policy enforcement may turn up such differential practices as closer supervision of boy's bathrooms and locker rooms than girl's bathrooms and locker rooms, harsher rules or consequences for minority group members as opposed to whites, treating overt rule-breaking behavior or open defiance more seriously than covert rule-breaking behavior or passive defiance, pressing all students to behave in the same (compliant) way, failing to allow for different styles of learning, affirming rigid stereotypical expectations for behavior (self-fulfilling prophesies), and varying the type and intensity of feedback to students based on their race, national origin or gender. An action plan should be prepared to remediate areas of concern. A strong staff development program should be an integral part of this plan, with areas for training closely tied to areas of concern uncovered by the discipline data and policy analyses.

Closely allied with the above process of institutional self-examination should be the further study of issues in intergroup relations as brought forth in this publication. These issues should be examined at the personal level as well as at the institutional level. Staff members can assist each other with increasing their self-awareness regarding their own behavior and expectations and their interpretation of their students' behavior.

Finally, as we advocate throughout this publication, we need to approach equity in school discipline by creating a climate that is conducive to the intellectual and psychological growth of all children, and creates an environment in which both children and adults can excel.

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A Note on Equitable Crisis Intervention

By Judith L. Greenbaum, Ph.D., Research Associate

MANY school crises have their roots in cultural dissonance. Any school disruption involving culturally identifiable groups of students should be investigated for possible underlying race, gender, or national origin issues. In addition, things that appear to be individual student problems such as fighting, carrying weapons to school, low achievement and absenteeism may have underlying causes: teaching methods and activities which are not sensitive to cultural differences, a curriculum which is foreign to the life experiences of some students, or language and cultural differences in the community exacerbated by poverty and unemployment. If, despite our best efforts, crises do occur, we must be ready to meet the challenge in an equitable manner.

I would define a crisis as an immediate and serious threat to the health or safety of students or staff or an immediate and serious threat to property. Situations which do not have these elements should not be considered crises. When a problem situation escalates into a crisis, the initial intervention by school staff must be focused on defusing the threat of violence. Since a crisis situation is extremely unstable, any action by the schools must be immediate, appropriate, and fair.

Planning

Every school should have a clear definition of what constitutes a crisis and criteria for differentiating a crisis from a non-crisis situation. Schools should have clear policies and procedures for crisis intervention, and all school personnel should be trained in equitable crisis management. Resources needed for crisis intervention should be identified and located in advance. Equitable crisis intervention is dependent on advance planning.

Community Involvement

Different cultural groups in the community should be contacted for their help and support in both crisis prevention and crisis intervention activities. Community groups can furnish advocates or spokespersons, if needed, for their members who are involved in school conflicts, and community leaders can help defuse crisis situations by counseling those who are involved to de-escalate their behavior. A list of community leaders who have volunteered to help in a crisis situation, should be maintained by the school.

Representatives of the school should meet at the beginning of each year with representatives of the police to discuss equitable crisis intervention strategies and come to an agreement about the role of the police, if any, in the schools during crises. Local media should be asked to cooperate in reporting disturbances responsibly.

Mediation

Although mediation begins after the acute phase of a crisis is over, mediators should be selected and trained, in advance, to negotiate equitable solutions. An effective mediator must be trusted and respected by all members of the school community. He or she must listen, ask questions, investigate, help clarify problems, and negotiate solutions and must be willing to deal with the opinions, feelings, and perceptions of both sides, as well as the facts. After the mediator has negotiated a resolution to the problem that precipitated the crisis, the mediator should write a report of the incident, describing the problem, enumerating the solutions, and suggesting any changes in the current operations of the school which could prevent a recurrence of the problem.

Crisis Intervention Tips:

- determine if the situation is a crisis
- be prepared to act immediately, appropriately, and fairly
- follow a crisis intervention plan
- call for appropriate help from other staff, police, community leaders and coordinate efforts
- stop the threat to persons and property
- physically separate antagonists within the school setting
- isolate the incident and remove onlookers
- maintain self-control at all times
- don't be distracted by less important issues, e.g. cursing or shouting
- don't punish or threaten on the spot
- listen without comment; this is not a time for argument
- plan meetings for the following day with the groups involved and their community leaders and
- arrange for mediation.

The immediate goal of crisis intervention is defusing and de-escalating the threat of violence. However, the ultimate goal of equitable crisis intervention is to translate what is learned during the crisis into a school climate that encourages positive intergroup relations and in which each student feels valued and successful. ❖

Matching Effective Instructional Techniques to Culturally Appropriate Teaching/Learning Styles

by Martha A. Adler, Field Service Specialist

WHEN it comes to teacher-student interactions in the classroom, culturally appropriate instructional techniques can have a significant impact on who is successful in school and who is not. Given the diversity within the student population in our public schools, it is appropriate to expect that we would find a variety of learning styles among our children and teachers. If our purpose as educators is only to have children learn a body of knowledge, such as the parts of a plant or the dates of specific events in the second world war, then we can stop the discussion right here. With such a narrow view of learning, there would be very little need to consider how students/teachers vary in their learning/teaching styles. However, if we accept the challenge not only to teach children content, but also to help *all* children become better problem solvers in order to be productive members in a diverse society, then we need to take a serious look at instructional practices within the classroom.

In spite of the fact that we all function in similar fashions biologically and cognitively (we digest food and learn to walk and talk), we do come to school with different personal, cultural, gender, racial, socioeconomic, linguistic, and psychological backgrounds, which affect who we are and how we learn. Studies have shown that changing instructional techniques can have a positive impact on populations who historically have been at educational risk. Kathryn Au's work in the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) has demonstrated how changing reading instruction to be compatible with the talk story style of discourse that Hawaiian children are familiar with can have a positive effect on the achievement of the students. Methodologies designed in response to research on the uses of language outside school are good examples of how we can improve learning for students who do not respond to traditional methods of instruction. We are fortunate to be involved with education at a time when there is such a rich body of information available on diverse learning styles (Beane, 1985; Best, 1983; Delpit, 1988; Heath, 1983; Sadker and Sadker, 1982).

Not only are there differences across groups of people, but also ranges within groups. In fact, this phenomenon can be viewed within any nuclear family. How often have we said to ourselves or heard parents say things like, he's my talker; she's my athlete; I don't know where he gets it from; she's not like anyone else in the family, and so on. If such diversity can exist within one family, then how much more so with the children in our classroom.

However, we must be careful not to label children because they claim membership in a particular group. It would be a terrible disservice to our students if we were to attribute learning characteristics to an individual child because of characteristics of a larger group.

Learning Styles

One of the most important distinctions in learning style seems to be that of the field dependent learner and the field independent learner (Ramirez and Castenada, 1974). These two categories are like the color spectrum. There is not only one shade of blue but rather a range going from one extreme to another.

Field dependent students are best described as people who need to learn in a context that is connected to their lives in a real way. Learning is facilitated by cooperative groups and helping others learn. They are affected by the feelings and opinions of others, in general, and by the teacher, in particular. Thus, for this learner,

> . . . changing instructional techniques can have a positive impact on populations who historically have been at educational risk.

concepts are best presented when the objectives are clearly explained and are related to personal interests and experiences. These learners need to know the why of something and what the results of an action will be.

At the other end of the spectrum is the *field independent student* who does not rely on context to make the learning meaningful. The field independent person prefers to work alone, is energized by competition, and is task oriented. They are not concerned about their social

environment during the learning process. These students do not seek the attention of the teacher; their interaction with the teacher is "on-task."

Teaching Styles

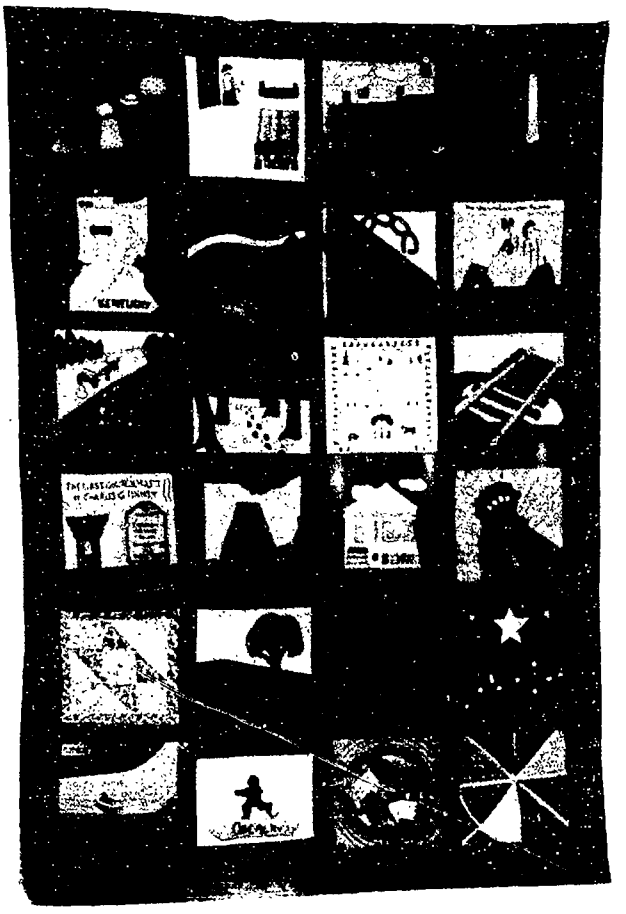
As the field dependent learner is concerned with the social and connected aspects of learning, so too is the *field dependent teacher*. Consequently, a field dependent teacher reaches out to the child as a person, by displays of approval and warmth in an attempt to strengthen relationships. This teacher tunes in to the child's confidence or lack there of and adjusts teaching methods to meet the student's need. He/she gives guidance to students, making the purposes of the lesson clear, encouraging children to imitate their actions. This teacher encourages children to develop a group feeling by working together in solving a problem. Before launching into a new topic they will set the stage for their students, and personalize the lesson, seeking out the students' prior knowledge on the topic to be taught. The human aspects of the curriculum are emphasized, and he/she uses teaching materials that will elicit expressions of feelings and opinions.

The *field independent teacher*, on the other hand, uses a lecture style, starting with abstractions and moving to examples. This teacher is task oriented, preferring a trial and error approach to learning, while centering attention on instructional objectives, making social concerns secondary. He/she encourages independence and competition while being a consultant/informant—encouraging children to solve problems on their own. Learning facts, principles, and problem solving skills is the focus.

Matching Learning and Teaching Styles

"Researchers . . . [have found] that teachers tend to teach in the same style in which they prefer to learn, and that *not all children can easily accommodate themselves to learn well in a teacher's preferred style*. Consequently in many classrooms there is a serious discrepancy between what is being taught and what is being learned" (Beane, p. 11). The child who needs to feel connected to his/her teacher and have the subject personalized in order to learn, is going to be frustrated by the teacher who instructs the child to "figure it out yourself."

Recognizing the influence of assessment and curriculum guides on instructional techniques, the following is written for the teacher who tends to teach in a singular mode in which traditional, independent learning is the expected style. Most classrooms today still rely on the teacher and the book as the sole source of learning. We know that many girls and ethnic and racial minorities do not learn well in such traditional settings. It, therefore, becomes essential that teachers learn to recognize their teaching styles and the diverse learning styles of their students in order to adapt and vary lessons so that each child has an equal chance to learn and be successful in school.



Oberlin Senior Citizens **Underground Railroad,** *1982 appliqué, embroidery, cross stitch, and metallic ribbon on cotton blend and synthetic fabrics, 133 X 69 3/4."* Collection Oberlin Seniors, Inc.

This quilt is part of a traveling exhibition "Stitching Memories" organized by the Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts in honor of the Gaius Charles Bolin Centennial. The exhibition is made possible in part by the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Remedies for Classroom Instruction

Step One: Learning About the Learner

Getting to know our students beyond their school records takes more time and effort, but the payoff is worth it. We should be curious about each child as a person who is formed by his/her socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, linguistic, family, gender, psychological background and environment. For example: How is the child perceived by his/her

peers? Does religion play an important role in the child's family? If foreign born, why did the family come here? If they are from the U.S., where and what does that mean? Are you familiar with that community and their patterns of socializing, of story telling, of problem solving? What interests does the child have outside of school that can be tapped? What makes the child feel comfortable or anxious?

Step Two: Adjusting Classroom Materials and Instruction

Once a teacher recognizes that the students represent a wide range of learning styles, he/she is presented with the seemingly impossible challenge of managing to reach everyone. Therefore, without giving up on the curricula or the textbooks, teachers should find ways to vary their instructive techniques in order to assure that all children have the best opportunities for learning. As educators, we need to get away from the classroom, be reflective, and willing to try new techniques.

This implies, therefore, that there is no one perfect method in which to teach. *We must rely on the diversity of our students to guide us, by acknowledging each student's way of knowing the world as valid.* The following is a brief summary of some instructive techniques in order to balance out the textbook/curricular bound side of classroom instruction.

Activity Based/Experiential

The concept of activity-centered classrooms is one in which the physical involvement of the child is an integral part of the learning process. It is characterized by concrete objects and real situations, for example, using beans to learn place value in mathematics, visiting a local open market in social studies, or using an aquarium and plants for an experiment on acid rain. Not only does this kind of instruction benefit the child who is by nature a field dependent learner, but it has also been shown to benefit all children.

Sheer (1985) described a junior high school math teacher frustrated because his students had "forgotten everything they had learned over the summer" (p. 115). When manipulatives were suggested, the teacher cringed saying that his students were too sophisticated for such a "baby" approach. However, knowing that something had to be done, the teacher was willing to allow the researcher to reteach place value with the use of concrete objects. Within a week of working with manipulatives, the students not only knew what place value was, but they actually understood it and were able to teach it to others. "Students who see and manipulate a variety of objects have clear mental images and can represent abstract ideas more completely than those whose experiences are meager" (Kennedy, 1986, p.6).

Cooperative Learning

Much has been written with regard to cooperative learning (Erickson, 1989; Johnson and Johnson, 1987; Kagan, 1989; Slavin, 1983). It is another way to break the traditional set of the ways things get done in the classroom. Cooperative learning when carefully structured by the teacher can become a vital means of helping children learn from one another, build a positive social context, and build self-confidence in field dependent learners. However, cooperative learning must be carefully monitored for individual personalities within groups, different abilities, different language backgrounds and so on, making sure that each contributes to the group. By working in groups, children who might otherwise not be able to demonstrate their ability to understand a problem because of their reliance on the teacher to always give input, are given the chance to develop and demonstrate their own thinking skills. Cooperative learning opens the door to less teacher directed and more student directed activities.

Stations

Classroom activities that are focused on specific learning outcomes but without time constraints can be set out at stations, which are placed strategically in a classroom. These activities may be done by an individual student or small groups of students and are intended for students to work independently of the teacher. Stations could be left up and modified over long periods of time "in order to introduce or reinforce a concept, to foster discussion of different problem solving strategies, to help build student vocabulary and to build intrinsic motivation in . . . [other] related activities" (Linn, 1986). Such open-ended activities not only allow students to explore a topic in depth, but also allow for variations in work habits. Many students need more time to learn and explore.

Career Awareness Activities

For the student who needs to see the relevance of school work, it is essential that connections be made to the real world. This can be accomplished by bringing role models to the classroom for students to learn for themselves first hand, not only about careers but also about the usefulness of what they learn in school. The parents and other relatives of the students themselves and recent high school graduates, or young adults are the best models for young adolescents. Children need to see people who look like them, speak like them, and are of their same culture in order for connections to the real world to be made.

Conclusion

We as educators need to become learners. We need to be reflective about our teaching and become observers of what is around us. We need to know about the cultures of the children in our classrooms and avoid making assumptions about a child's way of knowing just because of his/her skin color, gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic class.

Thus, I encourage every one who is responsible for teaching children to make it your responsibility to

- be aware that despite basic similarities many of the children in your classroom will be different from you and from each other in how they come to know their world;
- get to know as much as possible about the children in your class;
- most important, be flexible and incorporate a variety of techniques into your classroom instruction.

It's not enough to recognize the diversity of learning styles our children have; it is essential that we act upon that knowledge.

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Scoring the Checklist

(See pages 12-13)

Record ONE POINT for each YES answer that you have recorded. Then calculate your Self Awareness Score and your School Culture Score.

School Culture Score: Count one point for each YES answer on questions 1 through 36.

30-35 points. *Adelante!* Your district has many of the components that contribute to a positive pluralistic culture. Recognize your successes and identify those areas that still need work. It's likely that you need better coordination and institutionalization of your efforts.

15-29 points. You have some of the elements that are needed to create a positive pluralistic school culture, but you still have a long way to go. Focus specifically on any area in which you have no YES answers. Working with a culturally diverse group, identify the barriers you will need to overcome and set your priorities.

0-14 points. You have a great deal of work to do. Focus first on staff attitudes, school policy, and the development of a school plan. You may want to start with discussion of the self awareness questions and selected articles from this publication.

Self Awareness Score: Count one point for each YES answer on questions 1 through 7.

6-7 points. *A Pat on the Back!* You have thought a good deal about this issue and are actively involved with talking to others about it too.

4-5 points. Your honesty with yourself is an asset. Think about the areas that you have not thought about before. What insights do they help you discover? Now try talking about these insights with people who are different from you.

0-3 points. Give yourself some time for introspection. You may find that it's easier to talk this over with someone whose background is similar to yours first. Without meaning to harm others, you may be unconsciously perpetuating some culturally biased behaviors.

Model Programs for Intergroup Communications

by Tasha Lebow, Field Services Specialist

THE pool of available resources to improve intergroup relations in schools has become as wide and varied as the social context of the school experience. Whether through the curriculum content or through programs that directly address the processes of student interactions, many resources are available to promote positive intergroup attitudes and behaviors.

This list of resources is by no means comprehensive, but it represents the materials with which the staff at Programs for Educational Opportunity are most familiar. Many of the models or materials described are widely adaptable for a variety of audiences or formats, so the categories should not be considered rigid or exclusive. If you know of comparable models, please let us know about them.

I. Prejudice Reduction Programs

A. It is often assumed that early childhood should be free of the stress and discomfort that comes from openly confronting issues of racism, sexism, physical disability, prejudice and bias. But in a sensitive and effective model, *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*, Louise Derman-Sparks makes a powerful case for confronting these issues directly with very young children. Even two-year olds notice individual and group differences and often make inappropriate evaluative categories based on extraneous characteristics. The anti-bias approach confronts the reality of differences related to race, gender, culture, or ability in a developmentally appropriate manner that will facilitate positive identity and attitude formation. It affirms that we are united in our common human experience and share many more similarities than differences. It empowers children by providing information to replace assumptions and by teaching them to recognize and confront ideas and behaviors that are biased.

While specific developmental information and activities are detailed for children aged 2-5, many of the activities, strategies, and approaches are very appropriate for older children who have not had the chance to investigate the nature of differences between people. The book contains many insightful quotes, anecdotes, and small vignettes to illustrate points made by the authors. It suggests adaptations for homogeneous groups or where only a few children are of different backgrounds.

It includes a chapter devoted to working with parents around the anti-bias approach and general curriculum development. An extensive resource list includes recommended children's books on diversity issues related to race, disability, gender, culture, family structure, stereotypes, and prejudice.

B. The Anti-Defamation League has been active in human relations program development to increase racial, cultural, and ecumenical understanding since the early years of this century. They have developed many models worthy of review, but perhaps the most promising is their comprehensive prejudice reduction training model for schools, *A World of Difference*. A successful collaboration between corporations, educators and the media produced the initial work in Boston in 1985. Its major components are extensive teacher training and curriculum resources, television documentaries about specific ethnic groups, and a variety of projects designed to increase public involvement and awareness.

The curriculum materials cover historical overviews, aspects of prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, racism and scapegoating. The activities involve readings, discussions, and problem-solving activities that assist students' understanding of how we have tainted our history with misconceptions and misunderstandings about people we perceive to be different.

One major strength is the local focus of both the content and the process of the model. It has brought together collaborative teams of local corporate and civic leaders, educators, and media to build a foundation for

making the appreciation of diversity a community strength. This allows the model to take on the personality of the locality in which it is implemented. The model has been adapted in other urban centers, each involving local planners and developing content specific to the geographical region.

In the past 5 years, over 50,000 educators have been trained in the model nationally.Within the Great Lakes Region Detroit, Flint, Dayton, Cleveland, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Chicago have participated, producing components that include, for example, local historical information on the settlement and growth of ethnic neighborhoods and the contributions of people of color to the area's development. Coupled with the powerful component of local media commitment, *A World of Difference* is a significant tool in bridging historic barriers between ethnic, racial or cultural factions within our communities.

C. The link between attitudes and behavior has long been recognized as a "chicken-and-egg" relationship. It is easier to affect change in one by first causing change in the other. The simulation game, *BaFá BaFá* , gives participants an experientially-based opportunity to explore their own feelings and reactions to being a stranger in a new culture, and to meeting visitors who are "different" from their own culture. *BaFá BaFá* assists people examine subtle and overt aspects of culture and issues of tolerance to differences between cultures. A modified and adapted version called *RaFá RaFá* is also available for young children, kindergarten through eighth grade.

To play *BaFá BaFá* a group of 20-40 people would be divided in two groups and moved to separate rooms. Each group is taught its own artificial culture, complete with language, values, and conduct. The cultures then exchange visitors repeatedly. Without asking direct questions about the new culture's values and behaviors, each group tries to discover the underlying operations of the other culture.

The critical part of the experience is the debriefing discussion after the visitations. Led by a facilitator, many critical issues surface as players reflect on their reactions to being immersed in a foreign culture and to interacting with those perceived as different. Aspects of culture that can interfere with interpersonal or institutional relationships also arise. The direct experience of *BaFá BaFá* elicits strong reactions and sensitive insights, as the experience strikes deeply and relates to many aspects of human interaction.

II. Conflict Resolution Models

A. Once differences of opinion create divisions within any community, techniques for creating dialogue are necessary to move towards resolution. Luvern L. Cunningham of the Mershon Center at Ohio State University has developed a model based on American Indian processes and structures for conflict resolution. His *KIVA Model* provides a structure for constructive interaction between groups who hold conflicting positions. It is a group process technique that moves participants towards resolution of the conflict.

A "kiva" is the circular structure that Hopi, Navajo, and Pueblo Indians traditionally use for religious, political and social ceremonies. In Dr. Cunningham's approach, the speaker's podium occupies the middle of the kiva, with participants organized in homogeneous role or interest groups that sit in an octagonal pattern around the podium. Each role group receives its turn at the podium to present its perspective on the issue and to respond to the same questions posed by the facilitators, who also record the discussion on flip chart paper. Members of the other groups cannot interrupt or speak out of turn. Often for the first time members of each group really listen and understand the other groups' point of view. Commonalities between different groups' commitment and positions also become apparent. The entire group can then move on to the brainstorming and development of action steps.

Dr. Cunningham describes the process as "remarkable in its ability to condense political and social space." This direct and elegant approach to intergroup communications has wide implications for educators. It could be adapted for classroom discussions or debates, as well as assist in community-based problem-solving efforts on very complex issues.

B. On the bus, on the playground, or in the hall disagreements between students occur and sometimes erupt into situations that require formal intervention from school personnel. In a school with a *Conflict Managers Program* in place, the disagreeing students could ask (or be referred to) a peer conflict manager to help them resolve their disagreement before there is an escalation. The widely recognized *Conflict Managers Model* trains students to act as mediators in student-to-student disputes. It has produced broad based success from upper elementary to secondary students. Empowering students not only adds a resource to maintaining a peaceful and safe climate on the school grounds. It also emphasizes leadership skills and students' abilities and responsibilities for settling their own disagreements non-violently.

When a school undertakes the program, students nominate peers from each class who possess good interpersonal skills, leadership potential, and a commitment to peaceful resolution of conflict. The most effective programs include nontradtional, as well as traditional student leaders. The peer mediators receive training in communication skills and the mediation process and continued support from a faculty advisor. Role-playing, simulations, and vignettes are used to practice the techniques and familiarize students with the subtle aspects of their role. In addition to affecting the school climate, teachers and parents of student mediators report the experience clearly improves the communication and problem solving skills of these students.

Through the curriculum components (with appropriate content for upper elementary, middle, or high school), all students improve their skills in listening, expressing themselves, reading nonverbal cues, and other fundamental communication skills that often go untaught or unnamed. The curriculum also covers theories about conflict and resolution techniques that help all students become more effective communicators.

C. Upset by the high incidence of teen-on-teen violence being treated in the emergency room of Boston City Hospital, Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith developed the *Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents*. The model's intent is to change students' attitudes and behaviors relative to violence by studying aspects of interpersonal conflict that often escalate into violence, and by providing conflict resolution alternatives. The ten-session curriculum can be infused into school health, sociology, or psychology courses at the middle or high school level.

Students are often shocked to learn they are at high risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence, as homicide is the leading cause of death for adolescents. Role-playing and trigger videotapes help students become expert analysts of behavior and developers of strategies to de-escalate explosive situations. The model has also included strategies and resources to reinforce the curriculum throughout the community. In Boston local businesses, media, and institutions (like the YMCA) have sponsored workshops, mass media campaigns, poster contests, and other strategies to emphasize the *Violence Prevention* message and technique. The designers have also begun developing components for peer leadership and parent support groups. The program has also been adopted by community mental health programs in Chicago, and through criminal justice programs in Dayton, Ohio.

III. Curriculum Components

A. *Reducing Adolescent Prejudice*, one of the earliest works of its kind, remains one of the most effective tools for helping secondary students understand and break the historical pattern of bias and discrimination. This model's strength is its instructional focus on critical thinking and moral reasoning. Students analyze primary resource material and historical or sociological documents. The teaching strategy for each moves through the analytical processes of recall, inference, interpretation, and hypothesis to synthesis and evaluation. Helping students become critical, independent thinkers makes them less likely to accept status quo stereotypes and biases. They become more effective at analysis and evaluation of attitudes and behavior. Organized in a lesson-plan format, with instructional strategies, handouts, and structured discussion questions the model is a fundamental resource for teachers of history, sociology, psychology, economics and those concerned with critical thinking skills.

B. *Fair Play: Developing Self-Concept and Decision-Making Skills in the Middle School* is an effective tool for helping students unravel some of the external forces that shape our self-concept, such as cultural values, historical stereotypes, and group pressure It examines the sophisticated mysteries behind role stereotypes, exclusionary language, gender-based differences in communication styles, and the power of group norms. The model focuses primarily on aspects of gender role identity but the content also pertains to cultural and historical norms. Developed through the Women's Educational Equity Act Program, it is a diverse middle school curriculum resource appropriate for guidance programs, language arts, social studies, math or science classrooms.

Three of the six components are of special interest to people working on issues of group dynamics and personal empowerment. The preliminary manual, *Decisions and You*, is a 12-lesson unit that explores and helps develop personal and group decision-making skills. The manual *Decisions about Roles* helps students understand that roles are not static and can change over time or in various situations. It emphasizes that we can choose and define our own roles and that we can actively avoid the limitations of historical stereotypes and peer pressure if we learn to recognize them. The *Decisions about Language* unit has students compare and analyze spoken and written language for bias, and examines the subtle ways in which stereotypes and historical biases are communicated. The other manuals, entitled *Decisions about Physical Ability*, *Decisions about Math*, and *Decisions about Science*, give

specific skill-building activities while building students' self-confidence in each of the areas.

C. *Open Minds to Equality: A Sourcebook of Learning Activities to Promote Race, Sex, Class, and Age Equity* contains many useful lesson plans and activities for elementary and middle school classes that are learning about equality. The lessons include role plays, case studies, dilemma stories, creative, and expository writing to examine aspects of communication and social process. They provide effective definitions and examinations of the "isms" in both historical and interpersonal contexts. The book provides experiences in cooperative groups and alternative problem-solving techniques. The final chapter, "We Can Make Changes," gives students skills in evaluating and strategizing for positive change in their own world—the popular media, textbooks, their schools, etc. Easily integrated into the standard curriculum, the lessons are keyed to various content areas. An comprehensive annotated bibliography extends the usefulness of this excellent resource.

D. When done effectively cooperative instructional techniques can have a profound effect school climate and group dynamics. There are now many excellent resources to help teachers successfully implement cooperative learning strategies. While space does not permit describing all these ressources, Martha Adler cites several good ones in her article in this issue. *TRIBES: A Process for Social Development and Cooperative Learning* is especially valuable for those organizing groups for instructional or other purposes. *TRIBES* offers some of the best activities for introducing the approach to a group. It aids formation of cohesive groups with activities and exercises that help students understand the advantages and processes of cooperative group dynamics. These activities promote inclusion, good communication skills, and self-awareness and a healthy interdependence of group members.

References

Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children. Contact the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC, 20009; (800) 424-2460.

A World of Difference. Contact regional offices of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. The national office is at 834 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017; (212) 490-2525.

BaFá BaFá/RaFá RaFá. Contact R. Garry Shirts, Simile II, P.O. Box 910, Del Mar, CA 92014; (619) 755-0272.

Conflict Manager Model. Contact the School Initiatives Program, Community Board Center for Policy and Training, 149 Ninth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-1250.

Fair Play: Developing Self-Concept and Decision-Making Skills in the Middle School. Contact Byron Massialas, Florida State Univ., Tallahassee, FL. Or contact Educational Development Center, (800) 225-4276.

KIVA Model Contact Dr. Luvern Cunningham, Mershon Center, The Ohio State University, 199 West Tenth Ave., Columbus, OH 43201; (614) 292-1681.

Open Minds to Equality: A Sourcebook of Learning Activities to Promote Race, Sex, Class, and Age Equity, by Nancy Schmedewind and Ellen Davidson, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1983.

Reducing Adolescent Prejudice: A Handbook, by Nina Hersch Gabelko and John U. Michaelis, New York: Teachers College Press, 1981.

TRIBES: A Process for Social Development and Cooperative Learning, by Jeanne Gibbs. Contact Center Source Publications, P.O. Box 436, Santa Rosa, CA 95402.

Violence Prevention Project. Contact: Ms. Joanne Taupier, 1010 Massachusetts Ave., Second Floor, Boston, MA 02118; (617) 534-5196. Or contact the Educational Development Center, (800) 225-4276. ❖

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