

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 413 038

PS 025 572

AUTHOR Singer, Judith Y.  
 TITLE Fighting for a Better World: Teaching in an Inner-City Day Care Center.  
 PUB DATE 1997-03-26  
 NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association (Chicago, IL, March 24-28, 1997).  
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
 DESCRIPTORS Community Influence; \*Cultural Differences; \*Day Care Centers; \*Diversity (Faculty); \*Diversity (Student); Early Childhood Education; Multicultural Education; \*Preschool Curriculum; Preschool Teachers; Social Discrimination; \*Urban Education  
 IDENTIFIERS Curriculum Implementation; \*Social Justice; Teaching Perspectives

ABSTRACT

Based on a participant-observer's 14-month experience in the day care setting, this paper describes the curriculum implementation in an inner-city day care center--called "Banza" for purposes of this paper--in which both students and teachers come from working class or poor, African American, Caribbean, or Latino families. Through its monthly theme calendar, the curriculum emphasizes cultural diversity, community responsibility, and speaking out when something is wrong or unfair. Themes include becoming a group, "trick-or-treating" for UNICEF, international harvest festivals, festivals celebrated by families from all over the world, U.S. Civil Rights Movement, Carnival, etc. The teachers play an important role in the curriculum development. Most themes come from experiences that teachers have in their lives and the stories they tell about their lives. The program tries to cover all cultures, but some teachers argue that they could focus more on specific cultures. Overall, both teachers and students see their day care setting as a family with emphasis on care, women's nurturing role, and learning to speak out in unfair situations. (AS)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
 \* from the original document. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

AERA 29.03 #12 March 26, 1997 Voice, Values, and Vision: Developing a Classroom Response to Inner-City Violence

Fighting for a Better World: Teaching in an Inner-City Day Care Center  
by Judith Y. Singer, New York University

EVERYTHING WE DO IS ABOUT TEACHING CHILDREN TO SPEAK OUT

This study looks at how teachers in an inner-city day care center respond to a curriculum which emphasizes community responsibility, affirmation of diversity, and speaking out for social justice, and at experiences the teachers bring with them which resonate with this curriculum. The day care center was established in 1973 by a local community center with a commitment to racial and ethnic integration extending back to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Currently, families in the day care center are working class and poor, African American, Caribbean and Latina/o. Teachers, mostly women, are African American, Caribbean and Latina as well.

I call this program "Banza" after a Haitian folktale about a little goat (Cabree) and a little tiger (Teegra) who become friends in spite of the well-known animosity between tigers and goats (Wolkstein, 1981). When they are separated, Teegra gives his new friend a banza, or banjo, and with the help of this banza, Cabree has the courage to stand up to a band of ten angry tigers.

Like Cabree's banjo, Banza's curriculum supports the ability of children to speak out when they believe something is wrong. The curriculum includes a social action emphasis which involves the children in speaking out to elected officials at hearings, rallies, and lobbying efforts. However, one participant in this study maintains, "Everything we do is about teaching children to speak out, to recognize that what they say matters, that they have a right to say it, and that other people will listen to them." Another participant affirms that "the different activities we have, like social action, encourage the children to speak and tell people how they feel and what they think is right." She goes on to include the staff, "Personally, I think we affect staff members more than we affect the children. . . I know I've learned a lot more since I've been here."

Over the course of fourteen months, I was a participant-observer in Banza at program events, in staff workshops and discussions, and with the staff social action committee. In addition, I conducted interviews with seventeen staff members out of a total program staff of twenty-five. This paper describes curriculum implementation in Banza, experiences teachers bring with them to the program, the impact the program has on staff, and implications staff experience at Banza has for developing

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND  
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL  
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

*Judith Y. Singer*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

liberatory, democratic, classroom practice among preservice and in-service teachers. Educational theorists relevant to Banza's curriculum include critical theorists and democratic educators (Freire, 1973; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Goodman, 1992; Greene, 1988; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Silin, 1995), critical feminists (Weiler, 1988; Schniedewind, 1993; Walkerdine, 1992), and multicultural theorists (Gay, 1995; Sleeter, 1996; Nieto, 1992; Banks, 1988).

### BANZA'S CURRICULUM

Banza's unique curriculum is expressed in a monthly theme calendar which evolved over its twenty-three year history in response to the needs of teachers to know what to do and the needs of administrators of the program to ensure that Banza's major program emphases of community, diversity and speaking out were consistently addressed. Regular staff discussions are part of a process which gives voice to the teachers and helps them to bridge the gap between staff experiences with traditional education and Banza's repeated insistence on community responsibility and respect for diversity.

The theme calendar builds from and reshapes traditional and popular events which have significance in the children's lives and in U. S. culture. A sense of schoolwide community within Banza is fostered by the expectation that all the groups, both preschool and school-age, will come together to share something they have learned for each event highlighted on the monthly theme calendar. September's theme emphasizes becoming a group and selecting group names. October involves children in developing a sense of global responsibility through "trick-or-treating" for UNICEF. November features an international harvest festival and emphasizes that all people in the world should share in the harvest. December acknowledges festivals of light celebrated by families in the program and those from other cultures around the world, including Kwanzaa, Loy Krathong, Diwali, Chanukah, and Nacimiento. January has a focus on the U. S. Civil Rights Movement and other struggles for human rights. Carnival in either February or March broadens the cultural diversity of an event valued by staff members as particularly their own. An all-center science fair serves to precipitate science exploration in the classrooms. Finally, the Celebration of Struggle at the end of the program year is Banza's own holiday which explicitly articulates a commitment to the the values of community, diversity, and speaking out for a fair and caring world.

### BANZA'S TEACHERS

Banza's curriculum themes of community responsibility, diversity and speaking out have their counterparts in the stories teachers in Banza tell about their lives. A

sense of community responsibility is embedded in descriptions of family expectations, church membership, and participation in neighborhood block and tenant associations. Neighborhood associations establish an atmosphere of collective accountability and collective responsibility for raising children similar to that attributed by Lubeck (1988) to African American teachers she describes. Children's educational accomplishments are acknowledged, and high expectations are supported by extended family and neighbors. Similar expectations are described by African-American women teachers interviewed by Casey (1993). Emphases on family, church, and education have been identified as sources of strength in African-American families by Billingsley (1992) and others (Stack, 1974; Hale, 1994; Ladner, 1971).

Speaking out for what is right is supported in church and in the activities of block and tenant associations. Cornel West (1982) argues that the appeal of the Baptist church to African-Americans lies in the emphasis on equality and personal access to God. This emphasis results in a sense of individual authority, free from hierarchical control.

Prior encounters with diversity depicted by these teachers provide a sharp contrast to the way diversity is engaged in Banza's curriculum. They were often occasions in which racial and ethnic identities were used to isolate and demean them or others who were identified as different. However, some experiences with discrimination become sources of strength for staff members, when they or members of their families speak out in response. In a defense of his eulogy of Malcom X, Ozzie Davis (Haley, 1966) makes an eloquent statement about the power of speaking out to win back self-respect in the face of discrimination. Davis asserts, "Malcolm. . . kept shouting the painful truth we whites and blacks did not want to hear. . . He would make you angry as hell, but he would also make you proud. It was impossible to remain defensive and apologetic about being a Negro in his presence. . . And you always left his presence with the sneaky suspicion that maybe, after all, you were a man (Haley, 1966, p. 458)."

Participants in this study were all African-American, Caribbean or Latina women. Almost all were either immigrants or migrants themselves, or they were the children of immigrants from the Caribbean and of people who migrated to New York from the South and from Puerto Rico. It is worth noting that all but two describe growing up in two-parent families. Parents and other adult family members are all described as working, either on the farm or in urban working-class jobs. Below are some

comments from participants which illustrate their experience with community, speaking out, and discrimination.

**Community Responsibility.** One participant comments that anything important she did as a child, good or bad, would become known to family members "from California, to Mississippi, to Texas, to New York." Another says being part of a large family taught her not to just think about herself. A third recalls that family gatherings with her sisters and their children kept the family together, even though they might have their differences. Others speak of strict parents and grand-parents who established high expectations of family responsibility.

Getting an education is understood as an important part of a child's family responsibility. If the teacher called, one participant's mother was up at school the next day. Another mother was still coming to open school night when her daughter was in high school. Family members of one participant sent little gifts when she did well in school. Another comments, "It was never accepted that a "C" was the best you can do. And if you need help, someone is there to help." For a participant who grew up on a tenant farm in the South, family survival had to take precedence over school attendance, but she "would cry to go to school," and her mother eventually found a way to put the youngest three children through high school.

Neighbors and other adults set standards for children as well. One participant remembers that a feeling of accountability was established by adults in her building. "There was always a tenant patrol, and everyone knew everyone in our building. . . . All the tenants would come out, if someone did something wrong, and clean the elevator themselves. They would take pride in where they lived." She comments, "If I see a child doing something wrong in my neighborhood, I say 'what are you doing?' And I think that has to do with my upbringing. But I be careful when I do it here, because there could be a parent ready to jump down my throat."

For some staff members, church membership supports a sense of responsibility to others. One remarks that "at church you usually try to help people." Another says her religion helps her have more compassion for people. For some, family and religion are inseparable. A participant comments that religion was with her before she was born. "Passed down, you could say. The experiences with my family were all basically religious. If we have a family reunion, we're going to church for the whole weekend." Another comments that her religion "has a lot of values, and that's what my family was raised off of. And it was incorporated in our household."

**Discrimination.** For each of the teachers described above, personal experiences with racial or ethnic discrimination have been etched into their sense of who they

Each of these Black teachers has a story of discrimination directed against herself or a family member because they are Black. Caribbean teachers have been subjected to ridicule and rejection by white people and also by African-Americans because of their accents and the way they dressed.

For several of these teachers, the South takes on oppressive overtones growing out of the legacy of slavery and segregation. Some have been told stories of travel in the South during segregation when there were no amenities for Black people, and they had to bring their own food in the car. Stories about the South made one participant afraid to talk to white people, "but only in the South." Another says, "It's not a place I look forward to visiting. I think a lot of times those people are oppressed down there." Her father tells a story about a little white girl who was instructed not to speak to him, the "nigger boy." An older woman describes her own experience growing up in the South:

I experienced the separation of Black and white people, which was very negative towards Black children in the South. Before they integrated, we weren't allowed to go to the same bathroom, same restaurants, and different things like that. . . . When I graduated high school in '57, we were still going to separate schools. . . . We got the books from the white children after they had used them. We didn't get books sent to our schools. We had to walk to school, instead of riding. And we knew that wasn't right. . . . Parents knew it wasn't right either, but it was a thing put upon them that they accepted. But still, it wasn't right.

While the South is permeated with an oppressive discrimination, experiences of discrimination in the North are greeted with indignation. Two participants have stories to tell of teachers who make derogatory remarks about Black people. Another encounters discrimination from a college professor who threatens her with an undesirable student teaching placement to get her to withdraw a complaint of discrimination made against the college.

Caribbean teachers report having been rejected and bothered by African-American classmates because they were Caribbean. At the same time, each of the these Caribbean teachers remembers learning that she is Black. One is followed when she shops in a store, "just like any other Black person." She comments, "If you're Black, you're Black." Another says she found out there is a difference between Black and white when her family returned home from vacation to find their lawn strewn with garbage. A third learns she is Black when she and a friend are unwelcome at a college recreational facility frequented by whites. For each of these women, becoming Black is associated with an experience of discriminatory treatment by white people.

**Speaking Out.** Speaking out is an obligation that attends community responsibility. Activities discussed by staff members included: speaking to neighborhood children about their behavior; participating in a youth campaign against smoking advertisements in the NAACP magazine; playing a leadership role in getting the City to remove abandoned cars from her block; participating in a church rally to get young people in her community to stop using drugs; and, accompanying family members to union rallies and actions for racial equality. A participant emphasized that her religion pushes people to stand up and speak about their beliefs.

For some, speaking out in response to discrimination reestablishes self-respect. The father of one participant went to school to speak to her teacher when she was being teased about her Caribbean accent, and the teasing stopped. Two participants expressed indignation about white teachers who made racially derogatory statements in class, and found themselves supported by both white faculty members and their parents. The mother of one participant vociferously took up for a store clerk who was being degraded by his employer, and influenced other customers not to shop in the store.

#### TEACHERS TALK ABOUT BANZA

Teachers describe Banza as being like a family, a place where they learn about all cultures of people, and a place where children learn to speak out. According to one teacher, "I just feel like we're a family. We work together to accomplish a goal. And we care about each other."

There is a regular recognition of life-cycle events among staff members in Banza, both on the premises, and in one another's homes. They celebrate weddings and bridal and baby showers together. Collections are taken up for gifts, to help with funeral expenses, and in response to personal emergencies, like an apartment burning down. A sense of family is enhanced by the fact that staff members include their own children in the program. During the study year, eight staff members in Banza and one community center staff member had children or grandchildren enrolled in Banza's program. Several also had relatives who worked at Banza as substitutes or volunteers, and two staff members were related to one another by marriage. A number of the staff brought their children to annual community and family events, including a street fair, an international dinner, and a march through the community to "stop AIDS and save lives."

A family atmosphere is supported in Banza by an emphasis on caring for the children and teaching children to care. One staff member talks about "taking time to let the children know you care and not just stand guard and make sure they don't do

anything wrong." She describes listening to the children talk about their day and helping them resolve conflicts with one another and learn to respect one another as human beings, "sort of as sister and brother." The eight year old children in her group tell one another, "We're a family here! We're supposed to stick together." This statement supports arguments by theorists that learning to care grows out of experiences with being cared-for and understanding how to express caring (Noddings, 1986; Damon, 1988; Eisenberg, 1992).

Other staff members describe conversations with the children in their classrooms about treating each other like family. Iris, a Puerto Rican woman in her thirties who had worked in the preschool program at Banza for four years, wrote a poem for her three and four year old children called, "I Am Special" to get them to stop fighting with one another. "I wanted them to understand that we're family, so we're all special, no matter what color we are, or how big or how small. No matter what shape we come in, we're all special . . . like a family. They still had their little conflicts, but they kept saying to each other, 'We're family; we can't fight. You're my brother.' And when another kid said that's not your brother, he said, 'Yes he is. In this classroom, he's my brother.'"

Natalie tells her children to "be mindful of the way we speak to each other. Millie (the classroom assistant teacher) and I are like your adopted mommies. And your classmates are almost like your brothers and sisters. Don't mistreat them." Natalie emphasizes the quality of care given to the children in Banza. "I think all the staff, whether teaching or support staff, really care about the kids. And I think the standard of care we give children is very high compared to other centers." On another occasion, she comments, "I think a teacher is almost like being a parent. . . you have to consciously think of this child, and put the child before yourself." Eva emphasizes the details of caring demanded from teachers of young children. Taking them to the bathroom, seeing that they wash their hands and faces, getting their shoelaces tied and sending home soiled clothing at the end of the day are all ways of letting them know you care.

Teachers see Banza's curriculum as helping children care for others. Karen maintains, "With UNICEF, we're teaching them that other people have needs besides them, and they can do something to help." Iris comments that when the two and three year olds see homeless people in the street, they understand that the money they collect for UNICEF is needed to help people. Michelle characterizes the UNICEF project as providing a global perspective, "helping people that aren't even here."



Gwen uses Harvest Festival as an opportunity to express caring by making a pledge to end hunger.

Eva expresses some misgivings about applying the concept of family in Banza, saying "I think it's great, but I can also see a lot of distance . . . how you set out to hurt each other. Most of the staff is Black, and you would think we would work together more." Nonetheless, Eva comments, "I think we try to get the job done. It's like, if I pull back and say I'm not going to do, you see so many other ones doing something, so I might as well come on in and do my job like I'm supposed to." Eva's description of the problems of working together in Banza recalls her description of her own extended family, where she struggles to overcome painful conflicts in order to keep the family together.

Describing her conflicts with another staff member, Gwen comments that sometimes you have to do what you don't like to do. She refers to Banza both as a community and as like a family. "We try to promote community life here. And sometimes, not forgetting how you feel, you have to go along with it so things can go forth. But at the same time everyone should respect what this person wants." Later she emphasizes "there's always conflicts within a family. You know everybody here. It's a very small building. But the fact that we sit down and have snack or lunch together? That's family-oriented. And working together in the same class, you begin to learn about each individual."

A number of teachers refer to personal growth and personal relationships which develop while they work at Banza. Gwen asserts, "I know I've made a lot of friends here. And we go through a lot. All in all, I've come to love people here." Natalie describes Banza as a second home to her. "I think I matured here. I came in as a young teenager. I grew up here." Pascal says Banza is like a home to her now. She sees herself learning things at Banza that other people learn in families: how to cook, take care of herself, become independent, set goals, push herself. She goes on to describe growing up in Banza. "First I was working here as a young lady. I didn't have no children. I had my first children here, I had my second children here. And it's like, going from one generation to the next. First it was me, now there's my sons. And my sons love the program." Pascal mentions other staff members with similar stories. "Me and Millie and Damaris, we all kind of start almost the same way? All three of us have got our kids here. All three of us have our first kids working here, in the day care center. It's not just a place that you work. It's not just a place that your children come to. It's part of me."

Life-cycle events are acknowledged both with colleagues and with the children. During this study, six staff members went on maternity leave, one long-term staff member retired, and a series of staff members moved on to new jobs. In each case, tradition in Banza required the ritual of an all-center sing where every group of children presented a group-made card or momento to the staff member who was departing. Teachers leaving for new jobs received declarations of affection and were urged to come back and visit. Those going on maternity leave typically received drawings of babies and baby paraphanelia, along with requests that they visit with their new offspring at the earliest possible moment.

Early in the study year, there was a farewell sing for a male staff member who had been at Banza for more than five years. In the most recent two or three years, he had precipitated some tension among the staff as a result of a series of union grievances he presented to the administrators. The farewell sing, however, indicated nothing but warm feelings as the children and staff members, including administrators, said their good-byes. When I asked the director how she reacted to this recognition of someone who had challenged her repeatedly, she responded, "He's a person. I was glad he understood that it was time for him to leave. . . He had his good points too, mind you. He worked with the children very well. He was kind to them, and the children liked him."

The ritual of group presentations is repeated in each of Banza's calender events. As they watch the other groups take their turns and then take their own, the children learn that participation is expected in Banza. Children are not called up alone, but they are all expected to be part of their group's presentation. An exceptionally shy child--usually a new two or three year old--may be supported by a teacher, and a crying child is sometimes taken aside until the next time. Eventually, teachers will tell stories about how self-confident these shy children have become. Millie, a Puerto Rican teacher in her early thirties who has been at Banza more than ten years, talks about an eight year old boy who was in her class when he was three. "Do you remember Darryl, how he used to cry? I mean, we put him at the end, so in case he would start crying, we would pull him off the stage! And now that boy was just all over the stage, saying his lines."

As the groups make their presentations, they become role models for one another. Those in the audience convey support and encouragement, and the older children often communicate a feeling of pride in the efforts of the younger children. Referring to the school-age children, the teacher of the two year olds comments

after one of her group's performances, "Some of the kids upstairs were saying, 'the play was good!' . . . After they did the play, they'll come and they'll hug them."

The family-like warmth and unconditional support conveyed to the children during Banza's monthly program events has a parallel in staff celebrations. When Louise, an African-American woman who had worked in Banza's kitchen for sixteen years retired, preparations for the staff recognition party were made with a care indicating respect and affection for this older woman.

*I FOUND THE PROGRAM TRIES TO INCLUDE EVERY CULTURE OF PEOPLE.*

Teachers speak approvingly about the emphasis on cultural diversity in Banza's curriculum. It is particularly important to them to find their own race or culture acknowledged in the program, and this affirmation of themselves makes them more receptive to cultures which were previously unknown to them or experienced as alien. Banza's holiday program, Festivals of Light, provides one opportunity to appreciate commonalities and differences among cultures.

Some educators argue that using holidays to learn about cultural diversity promotes superficial learning, a "tourist curriculum (Derman-Sparks, 1989)." My own experience and that of teachers in Banza argues an alternative view. Holidays can be deeply personal occasions in people's lives which have the potential either to drive people apart or to create pathways to one another. Some teachers at Banza with strong religious convictions have expressed a desire to have Christmas and Easter their way. Others have fought over who "gets to do Kwanzaa." However, exposure to conflicting views about what holidays are of value has also served to heighten staff awareness and appreciation of diversity. Holidays like Chanukah, often associated with distrusted strangers, begin to take on a new meaning when they are shared by coworkers and parents who celebrate them in their homes. For some of the teachers, sharing holidays from different cultures becomes a norm. Stephanie expresses surprise at seeing only Christmas decorations displayed when she visits another day care center.

Several teachers talk about what they learn from Banza's Festivals of Light program. Pascal comments, "I like Festivals of Light because it introduces you to different cultures that I didn't know before. It opened my eyes to see. It took me a long time! I remember my first year. I had a Christmas tree, I have Diwali, Chanukah, everything on that Christmas tree! . . . I think everybody celebrates Christmas and put everything on the Christmas tree. When I find out it's not true, it really enlightened me." Lakeisha, a young African-American teacher at Banza for over five years remarks, "I'm learning a lot. I learned to open my mind up to Loy

Krathong and Chanukah. Now I know more about the foods and the different meanings of Chanukah. And also Kwanzaa. I never knew much about Kwanzaa. . . I see Christmas in a different way now." Michelle remarks, "I couldn't tell you much about a Jewish holiday before I came here. I couldn't tell you much about an Indian holiday. I couldn't tell you much about my own holidays before I came here. Because it didn't become noticeable to me until I saw something else."

Learning new things, knowing, is an important part of being exposed to cultural diversity. Karen explains, "If I weren't here, I wouldn't have known that there's Diwali and different kind of holidays around this time. . . I like knowing that." She describes her three year old son's ability to recognize a menorah in the window of a local bank and his recognition of the different holidays on a Channel 13 program. "He could relate to that! You're not just sitting there and not knowing."

Some of the teachers describe the emphasis on diversity in Banza as exposing children to the larger world. Gwen comments, "I like the program because it tries to include every race and nationality, and I think that's important." Natalie explains that Banza's curriculum shows children "there's more to the world than what's around them, learning about different cultures that they don't really see here, as far as Loy Krathong and Diwali. . . And they feel so excited to begin to know about something that's different. Stephanie compares her experiences at Banza with her upbringing, when she was related to people based on family relationship and religious background. At Banza, she notes, "the commonalities were more related to global things. More emphasis on just living together, regardless of religious background or family." Eva describes learning some history about different groups, and how they lived. "And I thought that was important. . . because if you don't get a chance to learn something about other people, you kind of keep your distance."

While Eva values learning about other people, she also clarifies how important it is to see her own culture valued. She worries that although Banza has an annual Civil Rights program, "we don't do so much about African-Americans. It's like we do the other culture of people, the Islanders, the Spanish. But I think we could have a little more African-American." Gwen describes Banza's Civil Rights program as a high point in the year for her. "I love Civil Rights. Not only do the children learn, but the staff also learn. Last year, instead of just sticking to (laughs) African Americans, we did Native Americans, and we did women's rights and children's rights." Gwen laughs about not just sticking to African-Americans because she has come into conflict with Banza's administration over the necessity of acknowledging other than African-American culture in Banza. The comments made by both Eva and

Gwen underscore the relationship between appreciating other cultures and experiencing appreciation for one's own culture. Eva adds that Black people need more than having their culture appreciated. When you have been subjected to discrimination and prejudice, you need to learn to speak out. "Put yourself out there. Be positive about yourself. Sit up, speak, and say what you feel."

#### SPEAKING OUT AS COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Both children and teachers become people who speak out as a result of learning and working in Banza. Teachers maintain that Banza is different because of the way children learn to speak out. Natalie remarks, "I think with everything they experience here, they tend to be different people than the ordinary child. They're very quick to speak up to let you know what's wrong and what's right." She credits her experience working in Banza with her own willingness challenge a college professor who makes insulting remarks about Black people. Millie contrasts her own shyness when she first came to work at Banza with the outspokenness of the children she teaches. "You see how these kids, they go to public school, they're not afraid to speak up. It teaches them not to just lock themselves and not say what's bothering them." She also sees herself as someone who speaks up now. "Now I sit in groups, I'm able to speak out. Because of years passed. I've learned more. There's been a lot of meetings."

Ingrid, a Caribbean woman in her late twenties talks about the skits which the older children in Banza present. "I like the way they get across how they feel about things they want to do and can't do because of where we live and the resources we have. They're able to present, more or less, what they're feeling, what they're living." She acknowledges that when she was a child, she couldn't speak up when she didn't like something. "There was no saying, you don't want this vegetable. You could eat it and throw up." She notes that she often doesn't speak up because she prefers to avoid conflict, but she also says, "I think it's my turn. . . to say what I want to say when I want to say it."

Michelle asserts that what she likes about Banza is "it tries to teach people that you don't have to accept what comes your way. If it's not fair, then you need to say something and do something instead of just sitting back and complaining." She describes a conflict among children in a school-age group when the girls and boys were excluding one another from play. Two of the children expressed their outrage, saying "I didn't expect that here."

#### PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The socio-cultural experiences and understandings of the world expressed by the African-American, Caribbean, and Latina women at Banza both make them receptive to Banza's curriculum, and active agents in shaping it (Casey, 1993; Foster, 1996). In Banza, the attention to care associated with the nurturing role of women (Belenkey, 1986) is coupled with learning to speak out when something is unfair. As Broden Sacks (1988) finds in her study of women union organizers in a hospital, the traditional nurturing role becomes a tool in the struggle for social change.

### References

- Banks, J. (1988). *Multiethnic education: Theory and practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Belenkey, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R. & Tarule, J. M. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice and mind*. U.S.A.: Basic Books, Inc.
- Billingsley, A. (1992). *Climbing Jacob's ladder: The enduring legacy of African-American families*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Brodin Sacks, K. (1988). Gender and grassroots leadership. In A. Bookman & S. Morgen (Eds.), *Women and the politics of empowerment*. Phila.: Temple University Press.
- Casey, K. (1993). *I answer with my life: life histories of women teachers working for social change*. New York: Routledge.
- Damon, W. (1988). *The moral child: Nurturing children's natural moral growth*. New York: The Free Press.
- Davis, O. (1965). On Malcolm X. In A. Haley, *The autobiography of Malcolm X*, 457-460. New York: Grove Press, Inc.
- Derman-Sparks, L. & the A.B.C. Task Force. (1989). *Anti-bias curriculum: tools for empowering young children*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.
- Eisenberg, N. (1992). *The caring child*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Foster, M. (1996). *Black teachers on teaching*. New York: The New Press.
- Freire, P. (1973). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: The Seabury Press.
- Gay, G. (1995). Mirror images on common issues: Parallels between multicultural education and critical pedagogy. In C. E. Sleeter & P. L. McLaren (Eds.), *Multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and the politics of difference*, pp. 155-190. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Giroux, H., & McLaren, P. (1986). *Teacher education and the politics of engagement: The case for democratic schooling*. Harvard Ed. Review, 56 (3).
- Goodman, J. (1992). *Elementary schooling for critical democracy*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Greene, M. (1988). *The dialectic of freedom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hale, J. E. (1994). *Unbank the fire: Visions for the education of African American children*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ladner, J. A. (1971). *Tomorrow's tomorrow: The black woman*. New York: Doubleday & Company.
- Lubeck, S. (1988). Nested contexts. In L. Weis (Ed.), *Class, race, & gender in American education*, pp. 43-62. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. New York: Longman Publishing Company.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics & moral education*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schniedewind, N. (1993). *Teaching Feminist Process in the 1990's*. Women's Studies Quarterly, Fall/Winter, 1993.

- Silin, J. (1995). *Sex, death and the education of children: our passion for ignorance in the age of AIDS*. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Sleeter, C. (1996). *Multicultural education as social activism*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Stack, C. B. (1974). *All our kin: Strategies for survival in a Black community*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Walkerdine, V. (1992). Progressive pedagogy and political struggle. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy*. New York: Routledge.
- Weiler, K. (1988). *Women teaching for change: gender, class & power*. Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.
- West, C. (1982). *Prophesy Deliverance*. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia.
- Wolkstein, D. (1981). *The Banza: a Haitian story*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



**REPRODUCTION RELEASE**  
(Specific Document)

**I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:**

Title: <i>Fighting for a Better World: Teaching in an Inner-City Day Care Center</i>	
Author(s): <i>JUDITH Y. Singer</i>	
Corporate Source: <i>New York University</i>	Publication Date: <i>AREA 29.03 #12</i> <i>3/26/97</i>

**II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:**

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following options and sign the release below.



Sample sticker to be affixed to document

Sample sticker to be affixed to document



**Check here**

Permitting microfiche (4"x 6" film), paper copy, electronic, and optical media reproduction

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Sample*  
\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Level 1

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Sample*  
\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Level 2

**or here**

Permitting reproduction in other than paper copy.

**Sign Here, Please**

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Signature: *Judith Y. Singer*

Position: *Adjunct Instructor*

Printed Name: *JUDITH Y. Singer*

Organization: *New York University*

Address: *557 8th St. 2L  
Brooklyn NY 11215*

Telephone Number: *(718) 768-7235*

Date: *4/1/97*

2  
2  
5  
5  
0  
2  
0  
2  
2