THE DIVERSITY KIT

An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education



PART I:

Human Development

THE DIVERSITY KIT

An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education

Introduction

The Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory

a program of The Education Alliance at Brown University

The LAB, a program of The Education Alliance at Brown University, is one of ten educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Our goals are to improve teaching and learning, advance school improvement, build capacity for reform, and develop strategic alliances with key members of the region's education and policymaking community.

The LAB develops educational products and services for school administrators, policymakers, teachers, and parents in New England, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Central to our efforts is a commitment to equity and excellence. Information about LAB programs and services is available by contacting:



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Members of the LAB's National Leadership Advisory Panel contributed to the review of this document. Their recommendations help assure that the LAB's work concerning equity and diversity is appropriate, effective, and useful in the field, particularly in improving educational outcomes for students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

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Contents

The Diversity Kit: An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education 1

Introduction 2

Background and Rationale 3

A Tool for Professional Development 4

Scope and Organization of The Diversity Kit 6

Theoretical Framework 6

Organization 8

Diversity Kit Outline 11

Diversity Kit Activity Chart 16

References 19

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This is a time of newly acknowledged diversity in U.S. culture. Voices are becoming audible; faces are becoming visible; and we are realizing, some of us for the first time, how many silences there have been in the past, how many blank spaces in our history… We are discovering the range of perspectives that must be taken into account as we work to remake community, as we strive to achieve a common ground. (Greene, 1993, pp. 1-2).

Introduction

Every student that sets foot in our schools has the potential to succeed, yet many groups of students get left behind—not because they can't succeed, but because school practices prevent students with different learning styles from being able to demonstrate their talents. Current demographic trends and projections regarding the cultural and linguistic diversity of the U.S. indicate the importance of improving the educational experience of underserved student populations. A quality public education system is one that accepts the challenge of serving its diverse student populations. To meet this challenge, public education needs to integrate science and social science research on human development and diversity with current education reform initiatives and practice (Berman et al., 1997; Williams, 1996).

The Diversity Kit: An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education strives to address this challenge. It is an invitation to educators at all levels, policymakers, and communities to examine their beliefs, perceptions, behaviors, and educational practices with respect to diversity in education. It is meant to be a springboard or starting point for further discussions that we hope will take place in classrooms, teachers' lounges, schools, state and district offices of education, colleges of education, and communities at large.

We believe that *The Diversity Kit* is needed now more than ever. In the past, the task of teaching was less complicated; schools had their ways of delivering instruction, and students were expected to adapt to them in order to get as much as they could from their education. Today, teachers face a variety of new challenges. Society's expectations for achievement in education, changing community demographics, and school reform initiatives place new demands on teachers–demands for versatility, flexibility, and creativity (González & Darling-Hammond, 1997). If students in the past were expected to change to fit the school, there is now an understanding that schools and teachers must change to meet the needs of students.



We caution that the content of this kit is emotion-laden. As opposed to other content

areas that can be examined using more impersonal and dispassionate scientific approaches, culture and language go to the very heart of who we are–they permeate our lives and the way we live them. Thus, this kit—which prompts readers to question their assumptions about culture, language, and human development—will most likely generate lively discussions, heated debates, and lengthy discourse. This kit is designed to engage readers both personally and professionally. Our highest hope is that *The Diversity Kit* will contribute to reflective social action that will transform the face of education—action that will make schools more just and equity-driven institutions in which all children have an abundance of opportunities to succeed to the best of their abilities.

Background and Rationale

> Building a system of schools that can educate people for contemporary society requires two things U.S. schools have never before been called upon to do: To teach for understanding. That is, to teach all students, not just a few, to understand ideas deeply and perform proficiently. To teach for diversity. That is, to teach in ways that help different kinds of learners find productive paths to knowledge as they also learn to live constructively together. (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p.5)

The history of the United States is characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity. In the early 1900s, immigrant children comprised the majority in many urban schools, and African American, Mexican American, and Native American children were heavily concentrated in southern and western states. Since then, perceptions of diversity have changed. Whereas the cultural diversity distinguishing European American immigrant groups has diminished as they merged into the "melting pot," those groups distinguished by race have mostly continued to be perceived as "different" in the eyes of the white majority. Corresponding social changes, including shifts in population demographics, have modified societal perceptions of diversity.

The "problem" of diversity in education intensifies when we consider that American society has equated difference (based on race, ethnicity, language, religion, disabilities, etc.) with inherent intellectual inferiority (Banks, 1995). These perceptions of inherent inferiority–referred to as deficit assumptions–continue to negatively influence our society and the expectations and practices of schools across the nation.

Overrepresentation of racial and language minorities in low academic tracks and in remedial and special education programs is the result of these assumptions. There is little current evidence that major reform efforts are adequately addressing these issues (August & Hakuta, 1997; Berman et al., 1997; Villegas, 1991; Williams, 1996).

As the population of the United States is changing to become increasingly diverse, our perception of what diversity means to our culture is also changing. For example, in terms of linguistic diversity, data obtained from the recent 2000 Census revealed that the number of children between the ages of 5 and 17 who speak a language other than English has increased by over 54% from the previous 1990 Census (Crawford, 2001). This increase in linguistic diversity forces us to rethink the purposes of American public education and to figure out how best to educate an increasingly diverse student population. One positive aspect of American culture presently is that we have been able to combine a more humanistic view of what education should offer to learners with an increasing openness to diversity. The result is that, although many schools are not fully prepared for the complexities of educating linguistically and culturally diverse populations, there is growing openness to the idea that all students deserve an education that helps them learn to high standards.

The time is ripe for all educators to begin incorporating diversity into their thinking and teaching. Diversity plays a central role in the work of all educators, not just those who work with particular cultural or language populations and not just those who work in the classroom. Because we believe that diversity is at the heart of public education in this country, we have created a kit that all educators can use to stimulate their thinking, their observation, and their conversation on this issue.

A Tool for Professional Development

Because the goal of *The Diversity Kit* is to stimulate personal and professional development, we have aimed to make the kit useful to educators as well as those who train them. We have not detailed a series of classroom activities, but rather have presented recent research on human development, culture, and language in a variety of forms– summaries of research studies, descriptions of activities to stimulate individual and group inquiry, and descriptions of vignettes designed to provide educators with examples for discussion and reflection. Numerous examples of many different cultural groups and the kinds of experiences they have in America's schools show the limited, as well as the creative, approaches schools sometimes employ. While these examples explore interactions between diversity and education, they do not represent



all possible population subgroups in America's schools. Our hope is that users of *The Diversity Kit* will find here the materials they need to begin a rich conversation about issues of teaching and diversity that affect their specific learning community.

An effective professional development model for teachers of diverse learners affords teachers opportunities for personal and professional growth relating to human development, language, and culture. *The Diversity Kit* gives professional development staff, teachers, and other educators an opportunity to enhance their knowledge about and skill in teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students. Professional development must help teachers see the connections between culture, language, and learning. As the Holmes Group (1990) states:

> Much of the basic knowledge necessary for better teaching and learning in classrooms with widely diverse students is not yet part of the essential core of education studies. Along with their subject matter, teachers need to become students of their students–their cultural metaphors, languages and linguistic understandings, learning styles–to recognize them as resources for learning. Similarly, teachers need to study themselves. To revisit their own experiences as learners and to gain greater understanding of the cultural assumptions they bring to their students. (p. 41)

Therefore, a goal of *The Diversity Kit* is to stimulate educators to engage in ongoing inquiry, problem solving, and innovation with their colleagues. It is our hope that such activities will achieve the following results: bring about necessary and appropriate changes in teachers' beliefs, ideas, and instructional strategies surrounding the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students; dispel myths in education regarding human development, culture, and language; and advance work toward reflective, social action that views cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource to be tapped in the education of all children.

Scope and Organization of The Diversity Kit

The Diversity Kit addresses the needs of educators, aiming to provide them with information and activities that stimulate personal and professional growth. This kit is grounded on some key assumptions about what the concerns of public education should be. Schooling must

- prepare all students to engage in meaningful work
- train students to become flexible thinkers
- focus high standards of accountability on the goal of student learning
- promote equity and excellence

With these assumptions in mind, we believe three key principles should guide public education in America. American public education must

- value and promote diversity
- teach humanistically as well as rigorously
- become a model for other aspects of American society

These are ambitious principles, but they represent the values underlying this kit. We recognize that the challenges of increasing population diversity in education are not simply pedagogical. There are also complicating cultural issues that go to the heart of American beliefs and attitudes. However, we believe that when educators have an opportunity to work together in a stimulating professional development environment where reflection and inquiry are supported, they can not only increase their effectiveness in serving a wide range of students but can lead social change that connects the humanistic valuing of diversity to high aspirations for all students.

Theoretical Framework

The Diversity Kit is grounded on the sociocultural theory of Lev Vygotsky, who suggested (1) that human development and learning occur as a result of an individual's interaction with society and (2) that this interaction takes place in and is informed by a particular cultural context. Vygotsky's work emphasized that individuals make sense of their world through discourse and interaction with others. Thus, knowledge is socially constructed and situated in culture.

Vygotsky further posited that learning occurs when students are effectively "scaffolded" to acquire new knowledge; this happens as a result of classroom interactions. In

scaffolding, teachers or more capable peers identify the knowledge that students already have and bridge that knowledge to acquire new knowledge. Scaffolding occurs in a space referred to as the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Moll (1989) describes the ZPD as "specific ways that adults (or peers) socially mediate or interactionally create circumstances for learning." The ZPD can be thought of spatially as a place where students engage in learning through interaction with teachers, artifacts, or more capable peers. More recently, scholars have extended the notion of ZPD to a "third space," that is, a hybrid space created when students interact with teachers or peers while engaged in learning (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejada, 1999; Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995). These scholars conceptualize this as a "space in which alternative and competing discourses and positionings transform conflict and difference into rich zones of collaboration and learning" (Gutiérrez et al., 1999, p. 286).

The Diversity Kit is also grounded in the theory of constructivism, or the theory of the social construction of knowledge. Constructivism maintains that knowledge is not fixed and objective, but rather is fluid and subjective, constructed by an individual through discourse and interaction with teachers and peers or through experience with objects. A constructivist theory of learning posits that students are active agents in their learning, not passive receptacles into which information is deposited. In the constructivist perspective, the role of the teacher becomes one of facilitator; teachers facilitate students' learning through the discourse, interaction, and personalized projects that take place in the classroom. Students are at the center of the learning process, and the role of teachers is to facilitate that learning through guided instruction.



Vygotsky's theories of teaching and learning bear upon issues of diversity. Vygotsky's work was founded on the assumption that "in order to understand the individual, one must first understand the social relations in which the individual exists" (Wertsch, 1985, p. 58). In order to effectively scaffold students to acquire new knowledge, create a ZPD, or enter the third space, educators must not only identify the social influences and cultural world of the individual; they must also value students' knowledge and

perspectives on the world as resources to be tapped rather than a problem to be solved (Ruiz, 1984). Further, students learn most effectively when they are active co-constructors of their learning. *The Diversity Kit* uses sociocultural theory and constructivism to provide frameworks within which this kind of teaching and learning can be imagined and implemented.

Organization

The Diversity Kit: An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education synthesizes the new findings of researchers and theorists studying applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology, neuroscience and the brain, cultural anthropology, and sociology. *The Diversity Kit* provides the most current information, research, and thinking on three areas of great importance to the health and well-being of the ever-diversifying U.S. population:

- *Human Development* and learning as they are understood by many different scientific and social disciplines
- *Culture*, including material and visible aspects as well as structures of belief and thinking
- *Language* learning and language use within social, economic, and political contexts

The Diversity Kit is organized around each of the three sections of Human Development, Culture, and Language. Each of the three sections is preceded by an Executive Summary, which details the scope and objectives of the section that follows. In addition, each section includes a set of guiding questions, activities and vignettes, and suggested resources for further inquiry. The activities and vignettes are intended to provoke discussion, planning, and actions that will lead educators to revise their practices. The content for each of these sections does not include an exhaustive review of literature and research. To do so would go beyond the purpose and intent of this document. Instead, each section includes the most important and current information and provides guiding activities that can stimulate reflection, conversation, and inquiry.

Below we provide a general overview of what you will find in the kit. A more detailed overview can be found in the Executive Summary that precedes each section.

- ***Human Development.*** In this section of *The Diversity Kit*, we have outlined research and theory on human development and diversity. Drawing upon several disciplines—biology and neuroscience, cognitive psychology, cultural anthropology, sociolinguistics, and sociology—the human development section provides educators with insight about ways to think about human development with culture and language in mind. We introduce the notion of human development as an ongoing, lifelong process. We also discuss the concept of multiple intelligences theory and its implications for classroom teaching.

- ***Culture.*** This section of *The Diversity Kit* challenges mistaken perceptions and assumptions about culture. The goal of this section is for educators to gain an appreciation for variations within cultural groups and knowledge of individuals within their cultural contexts. These topics lead to a discussion on how culturally informed supports for learning at home, in the community, and in school can influence student success. By redefining family involvement and describing strategies for linking schools to community resources and services, this section provides an overview of how the many elements of cultural context can play a vital role in student success.

- ***Language.*** Because language is the primary means of transmitting culture across generations and of transacting learning in school, this section explores how distinct cultural groups use language in different ways and how language use is perceived differently by members of distinct cultural groups. This section contrasts views of language proficiency that focus on acquisition of forms (vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) with views that focus on the ways in which students use language to accomplish various tasks. A close look is taken at language development, dialects, and the process of learning a new language. We also pay special attention to the timely and heated topics of literacy and assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Because language, culture, and human development are challenging and inherently emotion-laden topics that generate heated discussion, we strongly suggest that this kit be used in conjunction with a facilitator who is knowledgeable about issues of diversity in education. In addition, while the format of *The Diversity Kit* lends itself to being used as three individual sections, we suggest using *The Diversity Kit* in its entirety in order to gain a more thorough understanding of human development, culture, and language, and how these three areas intersect in their educational application.

The Diversity Kit introduces teachers to many of the most important ideas about diversity and learning. However, it is just a beginning for schools committed to helping all students learn and achieve to the highest standards. Exploring issues of human development, culture, and language is a reflective process that continues over a long period of time. We hope that using *The Diversity Kit* will transform educational practice in classrooms throughout America to ensure equity and excellence for diverse students everywhere.

DIVERSITY KIT OUTLINE

The Diversity Kit: An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education

INTRODUCTION

Part I: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Executive Summary

Human Development: A Multidisciplinary Approach

I. **Guiding Questions**
II. **Rethinking Learning and Development**
    a. *New Understandings Lead to New Possibilities*
    b. *Changing Conceptions and New Educational Approaches*
        i. ACTIVITY: Exploring the Philosophy of Education
    c. *What Is Intelligence?*
        i. ACTIVITY: Exploring Your Learning Experiences
        ii. ACTIVITY: Exploring Teaching and Learning
III. **Biology and Neuroscience**
    a. *Critical Periods*
    b. *Enriched Environments*
    c. *Hemisphere Differences*
IV. **Cognitive Psychology**
        i. ACTIVITY: Multiple Intelligences
        ii. VIGNETTE: Rethinking Assumptions and Expectations
        iii. ACTIVITY: Multiple Intelligences and School Restructuring
V. **Cultural Anthropology and Cultural Psychology**
        i. ACTIVITY: Community and Group Cultural Styles
        ii. VIGNETTE: Home and Community Contexts: Uncovering Students' Funds of Knowledge

VI. Sociolinguistics
- i. VIGNETTE: Confronting Language Differences

VII. Sociology
- i. ACTIVITY: Resilience and Student Learning
- ii. ACTIVITY: Rethinking Learning Deficits

VIII. References

Resources, Further Reading, Web Sites, and Online Resources

Part II: CULTURE

Executive Summary

Overview: Culture, Identity, and Development

I. Guiding Questions

II. What Is Cultural Identity?
- i. ACTIVITY: Exploring Cultural Identity

a. *Definitions of Culture and the Invisibility of One's Own Culture*
- i. ACTIVITY: Exploring Values, Beliefs, and Ideas

b. *Individual Differences Within Cultures and the Dynamic Nature of Culture*
- i. ACTIVITY: Personal Cultural History Exercise

c. *Minority Cultural Identity Development*
- i. VIGNETTE: Supporting Students' Ethnic Identity in School

d. *How Is Learning Both Social and Cultural?*
- i. ACTIVITY: Culture and Learning
- ii. VIGNETTE: Conducting a Critical Ethnography
- iii. VIGNETTE: Making Connections through Dialogue

III. How Does Valuing Students' Cultures Support Their Development in Schools?

a. *Cultural Value Orientations: Collectivism and Individualism*
- i. ACTIVITY: Valuing Culture
- ii. VIGNETTE: Mismatches in Cultural Expectations
- iii. ACTIVITY: Exploring Individualist and Collectivist Orientations

b. *Historical Power Relations and Their Impact on Development and Learning*
- i. ACTIVITY: Letter from Kai James (1998)

Culture, Teaching, and Learning

I. **Guiding Questions**
II. **How Are High Expectations Especially Critical for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners?**
    i. ACTIVITY: Honoring Cultural Identity
    ii. VIGNETTE: Challenging Cultural Assumptions: Mr. Stivale
    iii. VIGNETTE: Constructing a Community of Learners: Mr. Diaz
III. **How Can Teachers Learn about Students' Home Cultures?**
    i. VIGNETTE: Funds of Knowledge—Learning about the Community
    ii. VIGNETTE: From Martha Floyd-Tenery, Bilingual Resource Teacher
IV. **How Can Teachers Use Their Understanding of Students' Home Cultures to Teach in Culturally Relevant Ways?**
    i. VIGNETTE: Exposing Inequities through Education

Culture, Family, and Community

I. **Guiding Questions**
II. **Building on Family Strengths**
    i. VIGNETTE: Bringing Schools and Communities Together
III. **Impact of Culture on Learning**
    i. ACTIVITY: Shade et al.'s Social Process of Writing
IV. **Cultural Knowledge, Curriculum, and Learning**
    i. ACTIVITY: Examining Curriculum for Culture and Language
V. **Overcoming Challenges to Involving Families and Communities**
    i. ACTIVITY: Challenging Cultural Assumptions of Parental Involvement
    ii. ACTIVITY: Overcoming Barriers to Involvement

Resources, Further Reading, Web Sites, Online Resources, and Videos

Part III: LANGUAGE

Executive Summary

Language, Culture, and Schooling

I. **Guiding Questions**
II. **The Ability of Language to Shape Life Chances**
III. **Cultural Differences in Communication Style and Language Use**
    i. ACTIVITY: Exploring Storytelling
    a. *Direct and Indirect Speech*
        i. VIGNETTE: Communicating Bad News
        ii. VIGNETTE: The Field Trip
    b. *Language Attitudes*
    c. *Language Varieties—Dialects, Pidgins, and Creoles*
        i. ACTIVITY: Exploring Language Variation
        ii. CASE STUDY: African American Vernacular English (Black Language)

Learning a Second Language

I. **Guiding Questions**
II. **Theories of Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition**
    i. ACTIVITY: Interview with a Second Language Learner
    a. *Environmentalist Theory*
        i. ACTIVITY: Schumann's Social and Psychological Distance
    b. *Nativist Theories*
        i. ACTIVITY: Krashen's Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis
III. **Developmental Stages of Sequence of Language Acquisition**
    i. VIGNETTE: Silent Period: Marta and Esteban
    ii. ACTIVITY: Language Experience Approach
IV. **Models of Bilingual Education**

Language and Literacy

I. Guiding Questions

II. Cultural Approaches to Literacy

- i. VIGNETTE: Class Books

a. *Oral Language as the Basis for Written Language*

b. *Elements of Literacy Proficiency*

- i. Phonological Awareness
- ii. Print-Based Skills
- iii. Vocabulary and Prior Knowledge
  1. ACTIVITY: Semantic Mapping
- iv. Knowledge of Discourse Structures
- v. Knowledge of Appropriate Literary Styles
- vi. Purposes for Reading

c. *Second Language Issues in Acquiring Literacy*

1. VIGNETTE: Disproportionate Representation of English Language Learners

- i. Knowledge of Morphology
- ii. Knowledge of Syntax
  1. ACTIVITY: Critical Literacy
  2. ACTIVITY: Exploring Literacy for English Language Learners

d. *Different Orthographies*

Language and Assessment

I. Guiding Questions

II. Assessing Language Proficiency

III. Language Factors, Content Mastery, and Assessment

IV. Assessment as a Cultural Event

- i. VIGNETTE: Hermana May Understand, but I Can't Tell

V. Authentic Assessment and Second Language Learners

- i. ACTIVITY: Assessment Design Self-Assessment Checklist

VI. A Note on Grading

- i. ACTIVITY: Grading the Work of English Language Learners

VII. Language Differences, Language Deficits, and Learning Problems

Resources, Further Reading, Web Sites, Online Resources, and Videos

The Diversity Kit: A Resource for Social Change in Education

Diversity Kit Activity Chart

PART I: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Activity	Title	Page #
ACTIVITY	Exploring the Philosophy of Education	30
ACTIVITY	Exploring Your Learning Experiences	36
ACTIVITY	Exploring Teaching and Learning	38
ACTIVITY	Multiple Intelligences	46
VIGNETTE	Rethinking Assumptions and Expectations	48
ACTIVITY	Multiple Intelligences and School Restructuring	50
ACTIVITY	Community and Group Cultural Styles	53
VIGNETTE	Home and Community Contexts: Uncovering Students' Funds of Knowledge	55
VIGNETTE	Confronting Language Differences	58
ACTIVITY	Resilience and Student Learning	61
ACTIVITY	Rethinking Learning Deficits	64

PART II: CULTURE

Activity	Title	Page #
ACTIVITY	Exploring Cultural Identity	4
ACTIVITY	Exploring Values, Beliefs, and Ideas	6
ACTIVITY	Personal Cultural History Exercise	10
VIGNETTE	Supporting Students' Ethnic Identity in School	14
ACTIVITY	Culture and Learning	16
VIGNETTE	Conducting a Critical Ethnography	19
VIGNETTE	Making Connections through Dialogue	20
ACTIVITY	Valuing Culture	22
VIGNETTE	Mismatches in Cultural Expectations	24
ACTIVITY	Exploring Individualist and Collectivist Orientations	26
ACTIVITY	Letter from Kai James (1998)	28
ACTIVITY	Honoring Cultural Identity	34
VIGNETTE	Challenging Cultural Assumptions: Mr. Stivale	35
VIGNETTE	Constructing a Community of Learners: Mr. Diaz	38
VIGNETTE	Funds of Knowledge: Learning about the Community	43
VIGNETTE	From Martha Floyd-Tenery, Bilingual Resource Teacher	45
VIGNETTE	Exposing Inequities through Education	47
VIGNETTE	Bringing Schools and Communities Together	61
ACTIVITY	Shade et al.'s Social Process of Writing	63
ACTIVITY	Examining Curriculum for Culture and Language	66
ACTIVITY	Challenging Cultural Assumptions of Parental Involvement	70
ACTIVITY	Overcoming Barriers to Involvement	71

PART III: LANGUAGE

Activity	Title	Page #
ACTIVITY	Exploring Storytelling	8
VIGNETTE	Communicating Bad News	10
VIGNETTE	The Field Trip	12
ACTIVITY	Exploring Language Variation	16
CASE STUDY	African American Vernacular English (Black Language)	20
ACTIVITY	Interview with a Second Language Learner	30
ACTIVITY	Schumann's Social and Psychological Distance	32
ACTIVITY	Krashen's Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis	35
VIGNETTE	Silent Period: Marta and Esteban	42
ACTIVITY	Language Experience Approach	46
VIGNETTE	Class Books	56
ACTIVITY	Semantic Mapping	62
VIGNETTE	Disproportionate Representation of English Language Learners	67
ACTIVITY	Critical Literacy	71
ACTIVITY	Exploring Literacy for English Language Learners	72
VIGNETTE	Hermana May Understand, but I Can't Tell	86
ACTIVITY	Assessment Design Self-Assessment Checklist	93
ACTIVITY	Grading the Work of English Language Learners	94

References

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THE DIVERSITY KIT

An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education

PART I: Human Development

Contents

Executive Summary **24**
Human Development: A Multidisciplinary Approach **25**
Guiding Questions **25**
Rethinking Learning and Development **26**
New Understandings Lead to New Possibilities *27*
Changing Conceptions and New Educational Approaches *28*
ACTIVITY: Exploring the Philosophy of Education *30*
What Is Intelligence? *32*
ACTIVITY: Exploring Your Learning Experiences *36*
ACTIVITY: Exploring Teaching and Learning *38*
Biology and Neuroscience **39**
Critical Periods *39*
Enriched Environments *40*
Hemisphere Differences *41*
Cognitive Psychology **43**
ACTIVITY: Multiple Intelligences *46*
VIGNETTE: Rethinking Assumptions and Expectations *48*
ACTIVITY: Multiple Intelligences and School Restructuring .. *50*
Cultural Anthropology and Cultural Psychology **51**
ACTIVITY: Community and Group Cultural Styles *53*
VIGNETTE: Home and Community Contexts: Uncovering Students' Funds of Knowledge *55*
Sociolinguistics **57**
VIGNETTE: Confronting Language Differences *58*
Sociology **59**
ACTIVITY: Resilience and Student Learning *61*
ACTIVITY: Rethinking Learning Deficits *64*
References **67**
Resources and Further Reading **73**
Web Sites and Online Resources **75**

Executive Summary

What is intelligence? How is human development affected by culture? How can our knowledge of human development inform our work as educators working with an increasingly diverse student population? In this section of *The Diversity Kit* we tackle these questions and more. We begin with an introduction of the topic of human development and we review some of the current literature on that topic. The goal of the section is to underscore that human development is a lifelong process undertaken by young children, adolescents, and adults alike. We also highlight the social dimension of human development. That is, human development is not merely a mixture of biological, neurological, and cognitive functioning; it is a process largely mediated by and situated in culture. For that reason, in this section of *The Diversity Kit*, we expand our discussion to include the areas of cultural anthropology, sociolinguistics, and sociology.

There are four major tenets on which we base this chapter:

1. Human development is a dynamic, ongoing process rather than a static product. As with the brain itself, intelligence is malleable and largely shaped by experience and learning.
2. While we know that certain similarities in development can occur among groups of individuals, the stages and rates of human development are particular to an individual. In that sense, human development is an individual process.
3. There are multiple types of intelligences; formal education can draw upon only a fraction of an individual's intelligence.
4. Education and human development have a sociocultural basis. Learning is not only an individual, psychological process, it is also a social process.

Ideally, information presented in this section of *The Diversity Kit* will assist educators in their knowledge of human development and will bridge information on human development with the education of diverse learners. The information and research is presented to inform educators' choices of instructional strategies and curricular materials used in the classroom. From the information presented in this section of *The Diversity Kit*, educators will gain broad understanding of human development, how learning occurs, and how student learning can be most effectively facilitated.

Human Development: A Multidisciplinary Approach

GUIDING QUESTIONS

? *What do we know about human development? How is human development situated in culture?*

? *How can we use students' own theories, ideas, and interests as a basis for developing and applying new skills, knowledge, and habits of mind?*

? *How can we understand and value students' ways of thinking and communicating their ideas? How does knowing this inform our work as educators?*

Rethinking Learning and Development

"Human development" refers to the way that people change over time (Thomas, 2001). We no longer speak strictly of "child development," as if it were only in childhood that human beings developed intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally. We know that development in all of these areas continues throughout a person's life, hence the term human development. In this section of *The Diversity Kit,* we explore how different fields of study perceive human development and learning. Subsequent sections of the kit focus more specifically on the role of schools and formal classroom instruction in fostering development, especially in relation to culture and language.

Many of us learned a supposedly universal theory of development that was actually based on Western European and North American values and child-rearing methods; we now know that "normal" development varies from culture to culture, depending on how children are socialized by their parents and community (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978). The fact that parents from different cultures may have very different goals for their children (and therefore different ideas about how children or adults think and learn) allows us to understand why not all children learn the same skills and behaviors on the same schedule or in the same ways. One of the most important changes in views of human development is the recognition that culture plays a key role; for that reason, we have devoted an entire component of this kit to the topic of culture.

All learning is contextual (Jensen, 1998). Learners must make connections between their own understandings and the new ideas and information from the classroom—material that represents a cultural point of view that may not parallel their own. This means that students must do the work of establishing the relationship between curriculum and meaning in their daily lives. Even when students are learning by observing expert models (as in an apprenticeship approach) or participating in traditional teacher-directed instructional programs they are actively constructing their own meanings (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Cobb, 1994;



Perkins, 1999; von Glasersfeld, 1992). Acknowledging the learner's active role does not diminish the important role of the teacher, but rather suggests that he or she must understand the student's point of view and prior knowledge in order to cultivate the most powerful learning experiences (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Gardner, 1991).

In addition, we now understand that learning is a social process rather than strictly a function of individual effort and intelligence. In effect, learners co-construct meaning in dialogue with parents, peers, and teachers (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Tejeda, 1999; Perkins, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978). People learn in families, playgroups, and workgroups. According to Darling-Hammond (1997), "Social learning lends multiple methods to the process of making meaning.... Interactions with peers or more advanced 'teachers' provide an audience for trying out ideas, thinking out loud, and getting feedback" (p. 130). Teaching and grouping strategies that give students opportunities to observe, verbalize, interact, and learn from each other in the process of completing academic tasks result in powerful learning outcomes (Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Anderson & Pavan, 1993; Cohen, 1994; Oakes & Lipton, 1999; Slavin, 1995). Collaborative and cooperative group instruction are effective techniques that foster cognitive and social development.

Robert Sternberg, a cognitive psychologist at Yale University, suggests that educators must revise their assumptions about cognitive ability development—namely, the assumption that intelligence (IQ) scores reflect some largely inborn, relatively fixed ability construct. Instead, he suggests a construct of developing expertise. Developing expertise reflects the idea that expertise is not an end state, but rather a process of continual development (Sternberg, 1998).

New Understandings Lead to New Possibilities

If we combine what the past two decades have taught us about how students learn with a more inclusive philosophy—the belief that all students, not just a few, deserve a top-notch education—we can make great strides towards meeting the needs of all students and towards establishing a truly democratic society. Research in the fields of cognitive, developmental, and cultural psychology; biology and neuroscience; cultural anthropology; sociolinguistics; and sociology has provided valuable information to educators, families, and communities. We have learned at least three important and interrelated things from this body of research:

- Intelligence is malleable, molded by cultural expectations, experience, and opportunity (Brislin, 1993; Feuerstein, 1980; Resnick & Resnick, 1989). This means that educational opportunities can build any student's actual intelligence.

- Intelligence is not a single entity, but takes many forms; most schooling tends to draw upon only a fraction of students' intelligences (Armstrong, 1994; Gardner, 1988; Sternberg,1985,1997). This means that to teach more students successfully, we need to expand our repertoire of teaching methods.

- Both human development and schooling have a sociocultural basis. Cultural values influence both human development (including language, values, perceptions, motivation, emotions, and interpersonal behavior) and schooling (how we teach and learn) (Greenfield, 1994; Heath, 1983; Lustig & Koester, 1999; Wilkinson, 1990).

- Learning is not only an individual, psychological process but a social process involving a student's interaction with others directly or indirectly (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Therefore, we need to become more conscious of values held by students and their families and of the cultural values implicit in schooling. In short, we need to understand the nature of the social contexts in which learning takes place at home and in school.

Unfortunately, most current reform efforts have not offered strategies for meeting students' learning needs based on their life contexts and ways of learning. In actuality, culture is often considered an external factor that interferes with formal schooling. By understanding learning as a sociocultural process, we can figure out how to organize schools and instruction to meet the needs of students from many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Greeno et al., 1996; Sylwester, 1993; Wozniak & Fischer, 1993; Zeichner, 1996).

Changing Conceptions and New Educational Approaches

Historically, the ***apprenticeship*** model—that is, learning from people who know more—has dominated education. This model worked well for the agricultural societies of previous centuries and remains valid today, having been investigated cross-culturally by researchers in recent years (Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The industrial revolution altered this process of education, however, and introduced what has been characterized as the factory model of education—a one-size-fits-all approach that aims to provide widespread and cost-effective education to large numbers of citizens.

apprenticeship

Learning from people who know more.

behaviorist

In the behaviorist view, learning is understood strictly with reference to people's behavior, which is shaped by external rewards or reinforcement.

The factory model of education operates much like the ***behaviorist*** approach to learning. During the 1950s and 1960s behaviorist theories of human learning, influenced by psychologists John Watson and B.F. Skinner, dominated educational thinking. In the behaviorist view, learning is understood strictly with reference to people's behavior, which is shaped by external rewards or reinforcement. Internal cognitive processes are considered unknowable or unimportant, and the concept of "mind" is rejected. For example, the complex accomplishment of acquiring language is seen simply as a set of behaviors that are the result of environmental feedback. In contrast, current theories of language acquisition posit a strong biological basis for language that interacts with environmental input and resulting internal structures that organize components of language. The behaviorist approach to learning is more compatible with the "training" or "factory" model of education in which children and adults learn skills in small increments and apply them with little imagination.

ACTIVITY: Exploring the Philosophy of Education

Table 1 below shows contrasts between the view of education in the industrial age and in the current information age. Note how educational goals have changed and, along with them, conceptions of who should be educated, how, and for what purposes. Refer to this table as you answer the questions that follow it.

TABLE 1

Characteristics of Education in the Industrial and Information Ages

	INDUSTRIAL AGE	INFORMATION AGE
PEDAGOGY	Knowledge transmission from expert to learner	Knowledge building
PRIME MODE OF LEARNING	Individual	Collaborative
EDUCATIONAL GOALS	Conceptual grasp for the elite few, basic skills for the many	Conceptual grasp and intentional knowledge building for all; "thinking curriculum" for every student
NATURE OF DIVERSITY	Inherent, categorical (i.e., determined by birth and non-negotiable)	Transactional, historical (i.e., socially-negotiated, changing over time)
DEALING WITH DIVERSITY	Selection of elites (ensuring continuing dominant status for dominant social/ethnic/ racial groups), relegation of broad population to basics	Development model of lifelong learning for whole population
ANTICIPATED WORKPLACES	Factory-modeled workplaces, vertical bureaucracies	Collaborative learning organizations

Source: Keating, D. P. (1996). Adapted from *Habits of Mind for a Learning Society: Educating for Human Development*. In D.R. Olson & N. Torrance (Eds.). *The Handbook of Education and Human Development*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

In small groups, discuss your philosophy of education and what it is based on.

- *Should all students have access to a high-level, formal education? Why or why not?*
- *What is your view of the purpose of education? Of formal schooling?*
- *What is your vision for schooling?*
- *How does your practice reflect your vision?*
- *What is between you and the accomplishment of your vision?*
- *What can be done to overcome the barriers you have identified?*

Current conceptions of human development could be characterized as ***cognitivist***. Cognitivists view learners as active constructors of meaning. As Shuell (1986) suggests, "Cognitive conceptions of learning…. focus on the acquisition of knowledge and knowledge structures rather than on behavior per se.… Cognitive approaches to learning stress that learning is an active, constructive, and goal-oriented process that is dependent upon the mental activities of the learner" (pp. 413-415). Human beings seem to have an inborn motivation to learn, so development is not simply dependent on an external system of reinforcement (Piaget, 1970; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Combined with educational approaches that integrate multiple disciplines, these conceptions have led to richer perspectives on teaching and learning, perspectives that are well-suited to help educators respond to the needs of increasingly global and information-based societies and increasingly diverse student populations.

cognitivist

In the cognitivist view, learners are seen as active constructors of meaning.

Greeno, Collins, and Resnick (1996) alert us to this shift toward a broader understanding of human development. They invite us to incorporate knowledge gained from many disciplines and then consider these new theories of human development when we weigh reform proposals that aim to improve practice and educational outcomes for all students. Similarly, Caine and Caine (1994) suggest that "What is needed is a framework for a more complex form of learning that makes it possible for us to organize and make sense of what we already know…" (p. viii). These scholars point to the need to integrate the physiological and emotional bases of learning into our thinking about how best to educate students.

What Is Intelligence?

The view of intelligence as a single construct that can be measured by verbal and mathematical items on a paper-and-pencil test has been deeply questioned in the past few decades (Gardner, 1983, 1988, 1991; Sternberg, 1985, 1997). Schooling places an inordinately high value on verbal and mathematical knowledge and skills; it relies on these capabilities to sort and select students, some for instruction that will give them access to broad opportunities (for higher education and employment) and others for instruction that is an endless cycle of basic skills. Even within the scope of verbal and mathematical knowledge and skills, schooling focuses on a very narrow band of tasks. In the verbal area, for example, schooling typically focuses primarily on reading and writing, paying only slight attention to oral expression. As a conse-

quence, teachers perceive many students to be deficient in verbal ability, when in fact they may have good oral skills—as teachers soon learn when they devise ways to connect popular forms of oral performance (rap or spoken poetry slams) to school activities. In addition, reading and writing can be more successfully connected to students' knowledge and interests by expanding the topics and purposes for writing activities and by expanding the range of authors read. Some teachers are, of course, developing programs that address these very issues [see, for example, Freedman, Simons, Kalnin, Casareno, and The M-CLASS Teams (1999)].

Learning depends on the degree to which classrooms foster students' belief in their own competence and their willingness to work hard.

In the area of mathematics, schools tend to value, develop, and assess computation skills, rote memorization of facts and formulas, and the ability to follow algorithms. Often, less attention is given to reasoning, problem posing, or problem solving in their broader senses. Children may be evaluated as lacking in mathematical ability even though they are good at inductive and deductive reasoning and can use logic to solve a wide variety of real-world problems. The consequences of evaluations like this are not innocuous. "[Teachers'] beliefs about students' capability have enormous power. Learning depends on the degree to which classrooms foster students' belief in their own competence and their willingness to work hard" (Oakes & Lipton, 1999, p. 228).

The view that intelligence is inborn and fixed rather than developing leads to inaccurate perceptions of students' skills and keeps many educators from fostering children's full capabilities. Too often students get tracked early on the basis of perceived ability and never have opportunities to move into new tracks (Oakes, 1990). When given opportunities to engage in challenging curriculum later on, students often show that they can perform at high levels (Sheets & Hollins, 1999). While some programs and instructional approaches incorporate thinking skills and mediated learning[1] in order to develop a broad range of cognitive abilities, these programs and approaches are

[1] Mediated learning refers to learning in which the teacher guides students strategically, thereby enhancing a discovery learning process and leading them to think about their own learning (Feuerstein, 1980; Fogarty, 1999).

often add-ons or isolated efforts, minimizing their power to develop students' abilities. To recognize existing student abilities and realize their potential, schools must sustain efforts to develop learning capacities throughout a child's school experience (Ceci, 1996). Students from poor families and communities, from homes in which English is not the first language, or who belong to an ethnic minority group are often characterized as simply lacking what it takes to learn (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994). Current theories of multiple intelligences and new theories of cognitive psychology refute the view that such students cannot learn and perform at high levels in school.

The work of Howard Gardner, David Perkins, and Robert Sternberg has expanded the concept of intelligence. Their work suggests that rather than the concept of general intelligence, denoted by the letter "g," individuals have multiple intelligences, or "MI." These intelligences, depicted on **Table 2** below, appear to be much more explanatory of students' abilities and learning. Gardner, whose work is perhaps best known to teachers, recently expanded multiple intelligence areas to include up to nine distinct areas that can be developed (Gardner, 1999).

TABLE 2

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

linguistic	**intrapersonal**	**interpersonal**
spatial	**logical-mathematical**	**musical**
bodily-kinesthetic	**naturalistic**	**spiritual**

Multiple intelligence theory suggests that individuals possess each of the nine intelligences to some degree, but that some of the intelligences are more highly developed than others. Perkins (1999), Sternberg (1985), and Sternberg & Williams (1998) emphasize the existence of multiple intelligences (MI), but conceptualize the varieties of human intelligence differently from Gardner. Sternberg includes metacognition as one component, and Perkins includes reflective intelligence. Wilson & Jan (1999) offer the following definitions of reflection and metacognition:

- **Reflection** involves analyzing and making judgments about what has happened; it is integral to every aspect of learning. It precedes, is a part of, and occurs after learning.
- **Metacognition** refers to the knowledge individuals have of their own thinking processes and strategies, and their ability to monitor and regulate these processes. This requires learners to analyze, reflect upon, and monitor their own learning. Metacognition—i.e. knowledge, awareness, and control of cognition—is an outcome of conscious reflection (p.vii).

Each of these researchers holds the view that measuring or developing intelligence as a single capacity is incompatible with new understandings of human cognition.

ACTIVITY: Exploring Your Learning Experiences

- *Think about your own "multiple" intelligences. How did you develop them inside and outside of school?*

- *Sometimes we learn things alone, but more often we develop our knowledge, ability, and skills with the help of others. Think about someone who helped you learn. What did he or she do that was helpful?*

- *Think about a time when how you felt affected your learning — when you were confident, unsure, comfortable, uneasy, strong, or intimidated. Think about how you bring students' feelings into learning.*

- *We often learn things without understanding their relevance to our lives until later. Think about an "aha" you had when something you had learned connected with a new situation.*

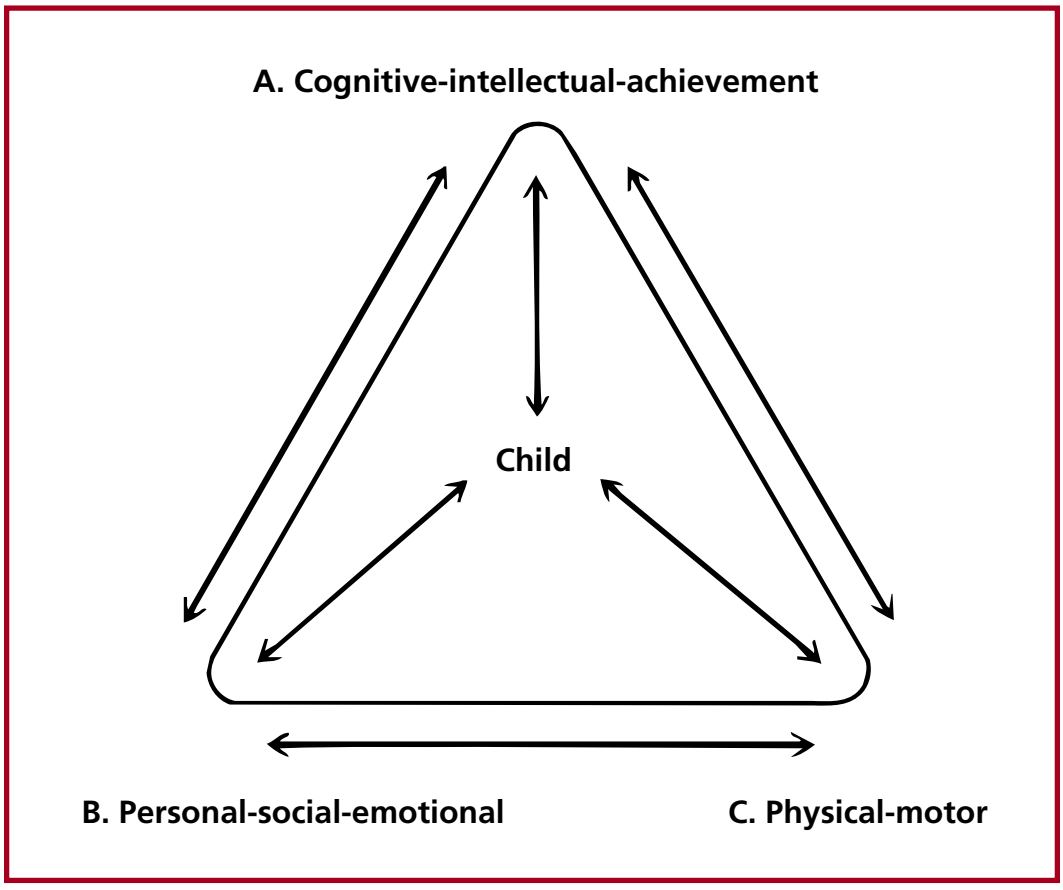
- *Talk with colleagues or friends about their experiences at times when they were "ahead" of the group, and times when they were "behind." How did it feel? How did they cope?*

- *Share stories with others about challenging learning experiences. What obstacles did you encounter? How did you come to understand?*

More recent theories of learning represent cognitive development as social and cultural in nature. Contributing to this change from a psychological to a social understanding of learning are the disciplines of biology/neuroscience, cultural anthropology and cultural psychology, sociology, and sociolinguistics (August and Hakuta, 1997; Caine and Caine, 1994; Gardner, 1983; Resnick, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978). We are confident that when educators have access to the findings from these disciplines, they too will be convinced that it is possible to develop strategies that give each student a successful educational experience.

The rounded-triangle schema with three different corners depicts the areas A-B-C (**Figure 1**). Area A represents the cognitive-intellectual-achievement dimension, area B represents the personal-social-emotional dimension, and area C represents the physical-motor dimension. The arrows indicate interactions.

FIGURE 1



Source: McCandless B.R. & Evans E.D. (1973). *Children and Youth: Psychosocial Development*. Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press.

ACTIVITY: Exploring Teaching and Learning

In small groups, using the schema presented on page 37, discuss the role each of the areas plays in the thinking and learning process.

- *Which is the area that you, as a teacher, concentrate on? Why?*
- *When do you concentrate on the others (if at all)?*
- *How could the instructional strategies you use address all three areas?*



Biology and Neuroscience

The study of the brain in relation to learning has given us a deeper appreciation of the roles of experience, motivation, emotions, and memory. These elements interact in learning. While research in biology, neurology, and neuropsychology (the study of brain-learning-behavior relationships) has burgeoned in recent decades, the educational implications of such research remain largely undiscovered. Despite our fascination with the brain and best intentions to make use of new information from brain research, we must be very cautious in interpreting this research. Bruer (1997, 1999) cautions us to avoid simplistic conclusions and applications as we attempt to assess and interpret brain research. Many neuroscientists believe that their science may one day provide solutions for real-world educational problems but it is premature to look for such applications now (Bruer, 1999). Bruer further cautions that the prestigious field of neuroscience is seductive for educators. For example, enriched experiences and environments during so-called "critical periods" in the development of rats apparently lead to more complex sets of connections and neural branching in the brain (Diamond & Hopson, 1998). Most people assume that the same would be true of children and that it would be a good thing. We need to be cautious about assuming what constitutes a lack of "enriched environment," what is meant by "critical periods," and whether knowing about critical periods can help us make appropriate educational decisions.

Critical Periods

A critical period is a limited time during which key experiences are necessary for certain skills or faculties to develop properly (Bruer, 1999). The notion of critical periods suggests that there are times when the brain is ripe for certain kinds of development. One might think that it would be a simple matter for teachers and parents to capitalize on critical periods, or developmental spurts, to maximize children's learning. However, these critical periods apply to only a few basic abilities, such as seeing, hearing, acquiring a first language, and perhaps developing certain social and emotional skills. As it turns out, the notion of critical periods is most

useful in explaining the effects of extreme deprivation rather than variations in normal experience. For example, children who are not exposed to language prior to puberty are not likely to develop normal language. Or children who spend early childhood in an environment (such as an overcrowded orphanage) where there is little cuddling and holding may not form normal attachments or develop normally emotionally and intellectually (Ainsworth, 1973). In both cases, deprivation during a critical period led to developmental problems.

It is not correct to think that particular instruction can be pinpointed to optimize a child's learning during a critical period or to think that if that period is missed, the child is doomed (or nearly so).

We must remember that the human brain is also tremendously capable of adapting and compensating. Even with serious damage, the brain can often compensate and function normally. We would surely do best as teachers to err on the side of expecting ongoing learning and ongoing capacity to build connections, both physiological and educational. So, it is not correct to think that particular instruction can be pinpointed to optimize a child's learning during a critical period or to think that if that period is missed, the child is doomed (or nearly so). The critical periods research is not particularly useful to teachers; it is merely part of a larger misperception that persists among educators (Bruer, 1999).

Enriched Environments

The second issue, enriching environments to increase neural connections, proves to be equally inconclusive in what it suggests for education. Setting aside the issue of how we would actually know when we are increasing connections and neural branching within the brain, we turn to the issue of defining an enriched environment. Fogarty (1999) suggests that practitioners interpret an enriched environment to include vast amounts of printed posters, writings, mobiles, and student artwork; classrooms overflowing with beanbag chairs, rugs and pillows, and print materials; science corners replete with greenery, animals, and rock collections; and listening stations containing an array of musical selections. Even if we assume that research proves that enriched environments support brain growth, we are left with a serious problem: This characterization is based on a set of culturally-based assumptions

about what is enriching. Parents and children from different backgrounds would most certainly be stimulated by different environmental input. There is no universal formula for deciding what pictures or posters, music, or other visual, verbal, or tactile input is most desirable to stimulate development.

Lack of knowledge regarding what constitutes an enriched environment can result in the tendency to blame families for children's poor performance in school. Often these are families with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or families from less privileged classes. Teachers erroneously believe that students from diverse backgrounds don't get the early stimulation they need to develop complex brain patterns. By relying on inadequate assumptions and explanations like this one, we pass on to others the responsibility for certain students' educational failure. The fact is, we might be more able than we acknowledge to address the needs of diverse students throughout their education.

Hemisphere Differences

Another area of neurological inquiry has been concerned with how the brain hemispheres work and, in particular, how the hemispheres have specialized in function over the course of evolution. Most teachers have learned that the left hemisphere (in most right-handed people) is dedicated to analytic, sequential, linear processing (including language) and that the right hemisphere is more concerned with holistic processing, the emotions, and visual-spatial and musical skills. In truth, even though the brain hemispheres are somewhat specialized, they work together; no complex intellectual act is exclusively left- or right-brained (D'Arcangelo, 1998). For example, certain aspects of language—the more emotional elements and intonation—seem to be controlled by the right hemisphere. Musical skill can require both hemispheres, depending on how natural or learned the person is. In addition, specialization of hemispheres varies from person to person, with females and left-handers tending to be more "whole-brained."

Even though the brain hemispheres are somewhat specialized, they work together.

As interesting as the biological function of the brain may be, we must be cautious of oversimplifying its educational applications. We do not know, for example, that we are teaching to one hemisphere or the other by choosing a specific activity. Nevertheless, the left/right brain distinction is useful as a metaphor for how schooling is structured—i.e.,

the left brain as a metaphor for linear/analytical/linguistic/logico-mathematical thinking and the right brain as a metaphor for holistic/visual/artistic thinking—and as such can be used to help us think about balancing our instructional approach. We clearly would not want to draw upon only a limited range of students' intellectual abilities; nor would we want to exclude some students from classroom participation that could have academic and personal benefits.

Brain research has provided support for multiple intelligence theories and (indirectly) for personalized education that makes connections between each student's life, developing abilities, and learning in the classroom.

Neuroscience research has contributed to new conceptions of intelligence. It suggests that there are somewhat separable components of intellect that can be selectively damaged or developed. Stroke or injury can cause loss of language, visual-spatial abilities, motor skills, mathematical skills, interpersonal skills, and ability to plan complex acts. One of the pieces of evidence for multiple intelligences is the very fact that people can lose one set of skills (or an intelligence) without serious loss to another capacity. Within the healthy, normal population there is considerable variation in the development of the different intelligences. We all know people who are extremely linguistic but not terribly mathematical. We may also know people who are very advanced in what Gardner (1988) refers to as "bodily-kinesthetic" intelligence (such as fine athletes or dancers) but are not particularly verbal. So, brain research has provided support for multiple intelligence theories and (indirectly) for personalized education that makes connections between each student's life, developing abilities, and learning in the classroom (Guild, 1997).

Currently, much instruction in school is presented in the form of separate disciplines. To a learner, these subjects may seem unrelated and disconnected from everyday life. A large-scale study conducted by Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull (1995) revealed that instruction that helps students perceive the relationship of parts to wholes provides students with the tools to make connections between academic tasks and the world in which they live. The research further revealed that instruction that makes explicit connections between one subject and the next, and between what is learned in school and in children's home lives, yields results superior to those of conventional practice. Caine and Caine (1994), who have analyzed the multiple complex and concrete experiences essential for meaningful learning and teaching, suggest that the brain has

infinite capacity to make connections. They suggest further that excellent teachers make connections between subject material and the students' backgrounds and experiences. Teachers who integrate disciplines and draw upon not only intellectual but emotional resources help students recognize the connections among subject material, real-world issues, and the deeper meanings of their students' personal lives. These teachers understand the "plasticity" of the brain—how it changes and develops with experience and how "meaning making" affects intrinsic, or personally meaningful, motivation. Many educators and psychologists argue that successful education practice must operate under the assumption that the affective components of learning—emotions—are linked to thinking and learning (Caine and Caine, 1994; Goleman, 1995; Jensen, 1998; Sosa, 1995).

While schools might not always practice what is known about how students learn, students themselves do seem to understand how they learn best. Nieto (1996) reports that students identify caring as the most important characteristic they look for in a teacher. Students make decisions about whether the teacher cares about them by observing whether the teacher makes educational experiences meaningful and relevant and takes time to establish personal connections with them. The teacher who asks students to work cooperatively to translate a meaningful passage from Shakespeare into their own dialects and languages understands the importance of integrating high expectations and making relevant connections with the lives and interests of students.

Students identify caring as the most important characteristic they look for in a teacher.

Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology might be defined as "the study of how the brain processes information and makes meaning and of how intelligence is structured." Again, it is impossible to discuss cognitive development meaningfully without acknowledging that it is affected by cultural context. How intelligence is structured is highly dependent upon what a child is exposed to and interacts with. As Rogoff (1995) notes, even Piaget was forced to reconsider the universality of his developmental stages in the face of research showing that achievement of "formal operations" was tied to children's experiences (particularly with specific kinds of schooling). He suggests that we can no longer assume that the results of a cognitive test are indicative of a general

ability unrelated to individual experience. Research in this discipline has helped us understand the importance of introducing complex and conceptually challenging educational experiences early on in children's schooling (Ceci, 1996; Gardner, 1983; Neisser, 1998). The explanation of a cognitivist approach to learning discussed earlier shows how very different this approach is from a view of learning as behavior. In a previous section, we discussed how views of intelligence as unitary, fixed, and unchangeable have been challenged by ground-breaking research and theory initiated by Howard Gardner and David Perkins at Harvard University, Robert Sternberg at Yale, and other researchers.



On page 45, we present a graphic (**Table 3**) that suggests ways to build upon students' many different kinds of intelligence. Each of the cells in **Table 3** presents examples of activities, materials, or strategies that tap a particular intelligence. Of course, this table is only a sampling and somewhat simplifies what occurs; in the classroom (as in the real world) many activities will integrate demands on several intelligences. Even activities that are primarily visuo-spatial, such as using a map, are likely to require some language usage. However, as with the left/right hemisphere metaphor, it is useful to use the construct of multiple intelligences to analyze the mix of ways students may participate in the classroom.

Classrooms that provide opportunities to use all of these intelligences in various ways give students a chance to exhibit and build upon their strengths. They also challenge students to use skills that may not come so easily to them. For instance, the student who usually shines at tasks that rely on linguistic and mathematical strengths may find himself stretched intellectually when asked to pantomime or draw. Complex activities, such as thematic projects (which may be multidisciplinary), are excellent vehicles for developing and using multiple intelligences and are particularly appropriate for classrooms of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. When these projects are conducted cooperatively, they allow students to recognize each other's forms of intelligence—something a teacher can promote by commenting on students' work.

TABLE 3

Summary of the "Eight Ways of Teaching"

INTELLIGENCE	TEACHING ACTIVITIES	TEACHING MATERIALS	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
LINGUISTIC	lectures, word games, discussions, storytelling, choral reading, journal writing, independent reading in many genres	books, tape recorders, stamp sets, typewriters, books on tape	read about it, write about it, talk about it, listen to it
LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL	brain teasers, problem solving, science experiments, mental calculation, number games, critical thinking	calculators, math manipulatives, science equipment, math games	quantify it, think critically about it, conceptualize it
SPATIAL	visual presentations, metaphor, art activities, mapping, imagination games, mind visualization	graphs, maps, videos, LEGO sets, art materials, optical illusions, cameras, picture library	see it, draw it, color it, mind-map it
BODILY-KINESTHETIC	hands-on learning, drama, dance, sports that teach, tactile activities, relaxation exercises	building tools, clay, sport equipment, manipulatives, tactile learning resources	build it, act it out, touch it, get a "gut feeling" of it, dance it
MUSICAL	rapping, songs that teach	tape recorder, tape collection, musical instruments	sing it, rap it, listen to it
INTERPERSONAL	cooperative learning, peer tutoring, community involvement, social gatherings, simulations	board games, party supplies, props for role-plays	teach it, collaborate on it, interact with respect to it
INTRAPERSONAL	individualized instruction, independent study, options in course of study, self-esteem building	self-checking materials, journal, materials for projects	connect it to your personal life, make choices with regard to it
NATURALISTIC	outdoor explorations, observations, experiments, tours of particular environments	notebooks, binoculars, tape recorders, books about nature and environments, photographs and films	observe it, explore it, listen to it, describe it, gather data or impressions about it

Adapted from Armstrong, T. (1994). *Multiple Intelligence in the Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

ACTIVITY: Multiple Intelligences

- *Think of a typical day in your classroom. Jot down the activities associated with each subject-area block or whatever blocks your day falls into. Using* Table 4*, on page 47, map your activities in terms of the intelligences they call upon. If something calls upon more than one intelligence, put it in all appropriate cells.*

- *Talk with colleagues about their understanding of intelligence. What is "intelligent behavior"? How do they know what their own intelligence is? How do they use it?*

- *Examine the multiple intelligence summary and discuss with colleagues the strategies you have used with your students. Do you use all sensory modes—visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic—when teaching concepts and skills?*

- *Think of a specific skill or objective that some of your English language learners are encountering. Review and discuss what teaching activities, teaching materials, and instructional strategies you would use in planning a lesson for a group of English language learners.*

TABLE 4

"Eight Ways of Teaching"

INTELLIGENCE	TEACHING ACTIVITIES	TEACHING MATERIALS	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
LINGUISTIC			
LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL			
SPATIAL			
BODILY-KINESTHETIC			
MUSICAL			
INTERPERSONAL			
INTRAPERSONAL			
NATURALISTIC			

Adapted from Armstrong, T. (1994). *Multiple Intelligence in the Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

VIGNETTE: Rethinking Assumptions and Expectations

DILEMMA:

While monitoring the implementation of a multiyear cognitive development project, the director of research and development observed first-grade teachers substituting coloring and comic books for the sophisticated volume of fairy tales selected for instruction by the district committee. The Cognitive Instruction Project (CIP) was specifically designed to enhance the problem-solving (cognitive) abilities of kindergarten and first-grade students (mostly of African American and Puerto Rican backgrounds) in a large, urban district in the Northeast. When the director inquired about the instructional substitution, the teachers explained, "The volume of fairy tales is too sophisticated for these children . . . they don't have sufficient vocabulary to understand the story . . . they really love the coloring and comic book versions." The teachers had not taken into account that the requirements for developing and strengthening problem-solving abilities include increased vocabulary, language skills, and comprehension.

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

- **What assumptions did the teachers make regarding developed and developing cognitive abilities?**

RESOLUTION:

To help teachers understand the importance of vocabulary development for culturally diverse students, the director asked teachers, "Do you limit conversation or reading good literature to your own newborn or young children because they have not learned vocabulary words?" The director further inquired, "If you limit conversation with your students and the literature you expose them to, when and where will children who haven't been exposed to extensive conversation and vocabulary have the opportunity to learn?" The teachers realized that they had not considered the implications of their assumptions about their students in their decision making.

The director, a cognitive psychologist, was able to help teachers understand the importance of identifying unfamiliar vocabulary in literature and defining the vocabulary in words or language the children could understand. The teachers came to understand that if they continued the practice of substituting easier or more enjoyable material for challenging material, the children would fall further and further behind as they continued across grade levels. Indeed, they came to understand how their low expectations and deficit assumptions contributed to the widening achievement gap between culturally diverse students and their more advantaged peers. The fact that some urban children have not experienced more sophisticated vocabulary does not mean they cannot learn.

DISCUSSION EXTENSION:

- **What instructional decisions have you made which might reflect your assumptions about the cognitive abilities of groups of students in your classroom?**
- **With colleagues, discuss similar instructional decisions. What alternative instructional activities can you use to further develop the problem-solving abilities of your students?**

ACTIVITY: Multiple Intelligences and School Restructuring

A study conducted by Campbell & Campbell (1999) of the success of six schools that claim to have implemented Gardner's multiple intelligence (MI) theory concluded:

> Perhaps the most surprising finding from our study of MI schools is that restructuring is not necessarily achieved through external programs, resources, facilities, or district or state mandates. Indeed, meaningful restructuring first takes place within the minds of teachers and their beliefs about the nature and possibilities of their students. From there, all else follows. (p. 97)

- *Have the teachers and administrators in your school defined restructuring? If so, what restructuring activities have been implemented?*

- *What are the implications of the above quote for restructuring that is designed to improve the achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students in your school (i.e., professional development, standards, reduced class size, etc.)?*

Cultural Anthropology and Cultural Psychology

The field of cultural anthropology investigates how cultures conceptualize, develop, and transmit knowledge, skills, and values. As a discipline, it provides insight into the ways cultural beliefs and practices interact with thinking and learning. Cultural psychology examines how culture influences cognitive development. For anthropologists, the term culture refers to the complex processes of communication and human social interaction. These interactions and forms of communication include behaviors, values, and ideals shared among the members of a group. Culture reflects a group's shared understanding and meaning; it also guides the group's struggle for survival and goals for the future.

In many schools, awareness of culture leads to multicultural education that emphasizes varied cultural content in teaching material. But this is only one level of culture. There is a more deeply embedded cultural awareness that can inform teaching and learning; this level of culture includes how a group adapts to its environment in an effort to survive as a cohesive social unit. Guided by this latter, more profound understanding of culture and cultural awareness, the aim of multicultural education would be to teach about many social groups and their different designs for living and surviving in a pluralist society.

It is this deeper level of culture, the "design to strategies," along with the essential values of a culture that are most important to understanding how students from different cultural backgrounds experience schooling. A great body of research from the related field of cultural psychology strongly suggests that cognition is intrinsically cultural (Cole & Scribner, 1977; Harkness, Raeff, & Super, 2000; Rogoff, 1995; Wertsch, 1991). If we are to be more successful in educating students from a wide variety of backgrounds, cultures, and languages, we must first understand how learning occurs for human beings in different contexts. The cultural values that guide child rearing affect (1) how children are expected to interact with each other and with adults, (2) how language is used by children and adults, (3) how knowledge is



acquired and displayed, and (4) what counts as knowledge or as an intelligent or educated person. We must also remember that to speak of culture is to speak of communities of people; and learning—whether in or out of school—is also a social enterprise (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Not only do we learn from and with other people, but we apply that learning within social settings.

For teaching to be effective, schools must engage the cultural minds of diverse learners.

The distinction between surface-level cultural content and the deeper function of culture helps us reconsider how awareness of culture might play an important role in understanding human development. For teaching to be effective, schools must engage the cultural minds of diverse learners. To do so, a teacher needs to develop the knowledge and skills that will allow him/her to teach cross-culturally (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001). Villegas (1991) suggests that teachers can build cultural bridges between home and school by selecting meaningful instructional materials, using examples and analogies to clarify new concepts, and using varied teaching strategies that connect cultural experiences and academic content. Cultural differences in approaches to formal learning can be accommodated in the classroom as well. Teachers who are able to distinguish individualistic cultural values and independence from collectivistic cultural values and interdependence can be more deliberate in providing flexible instructional activities that allow students from varied cultural backgrounds to work both in groups and on independent tasks (Greenfield, 1994; Trumbull et al., 2001).

For example, if strong collectivistic values in students' home cultures are to help peers succeed, a teacher can capitalize on this by encouraging students to help each other with classroom tasks as often as possible. When the same groups of students are required to work independently (reflecting an individualistic value), as on a test, the teacher can make that explicit so that there are no misunderstandings.

ACTIVITY: Community and Group Cultural Styles

- *Consider a group in which you participate. How does the group work together? How do members deal with the diversity within the group? How do they signal appreciation for different viewpoints, cultural understandings, or abilities?*

- *How do people who consider themselves part of a community treat each other? How do they conceive of each other? How does "insider" or "outsider" status get conferred?*

- *How do students help each other in a group? What is the role of listening? How do students speak with each other? How do they accomplish their individual goals?*

- *How do students feel about themselves in relation to different tasks? Are they confident? Do they feel helpless? Are they afraid to try?*

- *How do you encourage or discourage joint productive activity among your students? How are seats arranged in your classroom to accommodate students' individual and group needs to communicate and work jointly? How do you plan with students for work in groups and for movement from one activity to another (such as movement from large-group introduction to small-group activity or transition to clean-up or dismissal)?*

- *How have you helped parents and communities identify, build upon, and connect the knowledge and strengths that contribute to learning?*

- *How do your students' parents envision a "good student"? A "good child"?*

To design effective instruction, the cultural background and context of the learner must be understood. This understanding benefits from the application of ethnographic methods. Ethnography focuses on studying and describing social interactions in context. Anthropologists use ethnography to describe cultures or to understand a particular phenomenon. When used in education, it generally is associated with the goal of understanding a phenomenon such as improving instruction (Zaharlick, 1992). For example, Luis Moll, professor of education at the University of Arizona, has teachers visit students' homes as if they were anthropologists. The purpose of the assignment is to acquire an understanding of students' cultural backgrounds and family life and to identify "funds of knowledge" to which they can make instructional connections (Moll & Greenberg, 1991).

VIGNETTE: Home and Community Contexts:

Uncovering Students' Funds of Knowledge

Like many teachers across the country, the teachers in an elementary school in the Midwest do not live in the neighborhoods of the students they teach. Recognizing the opportunity to introduce the teachers to the wealth of knowledge in the neighborhoods and lives of students, the principal of the school scheduled a bus trip for the entire professional staff to tour the students' neighborhoods. The teachers left the bus and walked through the neighborhoods to observe and record the architecture of the homes, the names of the streets, the businesses, the churches, and the community activities. They listed the types of trees, the locations of brooks, ponds, lakes, and bridges. They identified community agencies and services. They interviewed business owners to get a sense of the history and life experiences of residents.

When teachers returned to the school, the principal scheduled a meeting to provide an opportunity for them to discuss their observations and data-collection experiences. He challenged the staff to identify themes and instructional projects and assignments that would get students to connect curriculum standards to community experiences, history, ecology, businesses, structures, and individuals. The teachers developed rich lessons and instructional units that actively engaged the students. (For example, the students created a mural on the cement wall outside the school to illustrate the history of the neighborhood and community. The students were given research and writing assignments to tell the story and history of the community depicted on the mural.)

DISCUSSION

- **Imagine and discuss with a colleague the instructional activities these teachers developed.**
- **Tour the neighborhoods of students in your school with colleagues or students. What do you learn?**
- **With your colleagues, discuss other activities that could be designed to build on the history, cultures, and experiences of students in their neighborhoods, communities, and cities.**
- **With your grade-level colleagues or across grade levels, plan instructional activities that build on the observed knowledge and themes.**
- **Develop lessons that build on the knowledge gained on the tour (for example, a language arts lesson, a research project, an art lesson, or a science activity).**
- **What have you learned that could help you further involve parents and other community members in learning experiences, projects, and assignments?**

Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of language as it is used in social contexts to communicate meaning (Au, 1980; August & Hakuta, 1997; Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979; Villegas, 1991; Wilkinson, 1990). While acknowledging the importance of the psychological aspects of language learning, sociolinguists understand language learning as a social and cultural process. They are concerned with how language is used and how language forms and language use vary depending on a person's social background or ethnic group membership. Classroom studies from a sociolinguistic perspective have examined how students' backgrounds affect how they participate in discussions, in other kinds of classroom talk, in language-based assessments, and the like. These studies (e.g., Heath, 1983) reveal that in order to understand what is happening between teacher and student and among students, one must understand how the students have been socialized to use language. If a student does not respond to questions, for example, this does not mean they do not understand the questions or do not know the answers. Rather, the ways they have learned to converse with adults or peers may be vastly different from what is expected in the classroom—so different that they do not know how to proceed. Wilkinson (1990) suggests, "To be able to participate in all classroom activities, students must develop a special competence; this involves both the production and the interpretation of language and nonverbal communicative behaviors" (p. 186).

sociolinguistics
The study of language as it is used in social contexts to communicate meaning.

From sociolinguistics, we know that the study of dialects and the learning of second languages must be embedded in a cultural context. It is not enough to simply study the forms of language that people use if we want to understand what language means to people. Noting the educational needs of students from multiple linguistic backgrounds, August and Hakuta (1997) suggest that the "key issue is not finding a program that works for all children…but rather finding a set of program components that work for the children in the community given that community's goals, demographics, and resources." The authors stress the importance of context in issues related to language and education.

VIGNETTE: Confronting Language Differences

The monthly parent meeting is being held today. Most of the parents who attend this meeting are non-English speakers, but there are a few parents who have mastered some English. These limited- and non-English proficient parents faithfully attend nearly all meetings. The dominant[2] language parents don't appreciate the presence of these other parents. In their view, they slow down the meeting because information always has to be explained to them.

At one meeting, the experienced principal (of Filipino descent) of this school asks the ESL coordinator from the district office to speak to the group. The invited guest, observing several parents speaking Tagalog, begins to address the group in Tagalog. The native English-speaking parents at the meeting become frustrated and threaten to leave the meeting.

The school's principal addresses the comments of the complaining parents: "Most of the time we use English language at these meetings." The principal then explains his reasoning for inviting the ESL coordinator to the meeting. "I thought it was a good idea to see how it would feel to be an outsider."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- **Do you think the principal's strategy was effective?**
- **How would native English-speaking parents be likely to react to such a strategy in your setting or in a school you know of that has families from more than one language group?**
- **How do you imagine the Filipino parents reacted to the strategy?**
- **Could this situation have been handled differently? If so, how?**

[2] We use the term "dominant" to refer to that group whose norms prevail in school and throughout U.S. society.

Sociology

Sociology can be defined as the "study of the development and history of the social organization of groups in context." Sociologists study group structures and relationships, examining the influence of social and economic conditions and considering such factors as status, power, poverty, racism, and politics (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Werner, 1990). For educators, sociology provides an important point of reference for understanding the contexts that profoundly affect how students approach schooling.

A major underlying cause of social problems in poor communities is the gradual destruction of naturally occurring social networks. Social, economic, and technological changes since the late 1940s have contributed to a fragmentation of community life, resulting in breaks in the networks between individuals, families, schools, and the like—in other words, disruption of the social systems that are necessary for healthy human development.

For example, it is well-documented that children in high-income households with highly educated parents tend to score higher on tests. Other predictors of achievement scores are smaller family size, age of mother at time of birth of children, and school and community characteristics (Neisser, 1998). These correlations reveal how various social factors can influence human development, learning, and achievement patterns. Berman et al. (1997) report that

> Nearly all LEP and other language minority students are members of ethnic and racial minority groups, and most are poor. Their neighborhoods are likely to be segregated and beset with multiple problems—inadequate health, social, cultural services; insufficient employment opportunities; crime, drugs, and gang activity. Their families are likely to suffer the stresses of poverty and to worry about their children's safety and about their future. (p. 1)

Of course, these correlations are not absolute determiners of student outcomes in school. Schools can and have succeeded in educating students from backgrounds like these. For schools and districts, awareness of social influences on student learning can be a starting point for addressing inequitable educational outcomes. Elizabeth Cohen, a research sociologist, and her colleagues at Stanford University have developed a successful approach to instruction in heterogeneous classrooms—one that recognizes the multiple abilities and strengths students are developing. Cohen

coaches teachers to observe the behaviors of students working in cooperative learning groups and to identify their developing abilities and contributions to the group (Cohen, 1994). Teachers then offer positive feedback and strategies to the students and the group to connect the students' abilities to the academic learning task. For example, a student who exhibits exceptional observational, graphic, or spatial relations abilities would be asked to offer those skills to complete the group task. Cohen reported that this approach is particularly effective in promoting equal access to learning opportunities in heterogeneous classrooms. A key element of success is the teacher's intervention at strategic times—pointing out student strengths and helping all students see how they can be used to the group's benefit.

A body of research on student resilience is emerging; this research extends our understanding of the role and influence of sociocultural environments (in and out of school) on the development and relationships among self-concept, motivation, and learning (Greeno et al., 1996; Werner & Smith, 1992). Werner & Smith (1992) cite Rutter:

> If we want to help vulnerable youngsters, we need to focus on the protective processes that bring about changes in life trajectories from risk to adaptation…. among them (1) those that reduce the risk impact, (2) those that reduce the likelihood of negative chain reactions, (3) those that promote self-esteem and self-efficacy, and (4) those that open up opportunities. We have seen these processes at work among the resilient children in our study and among those youths who recovered from serious coping problems in young adulthood. They represent the essence of any effective intervention program, whether by professionals or volunteers. (p. 204)

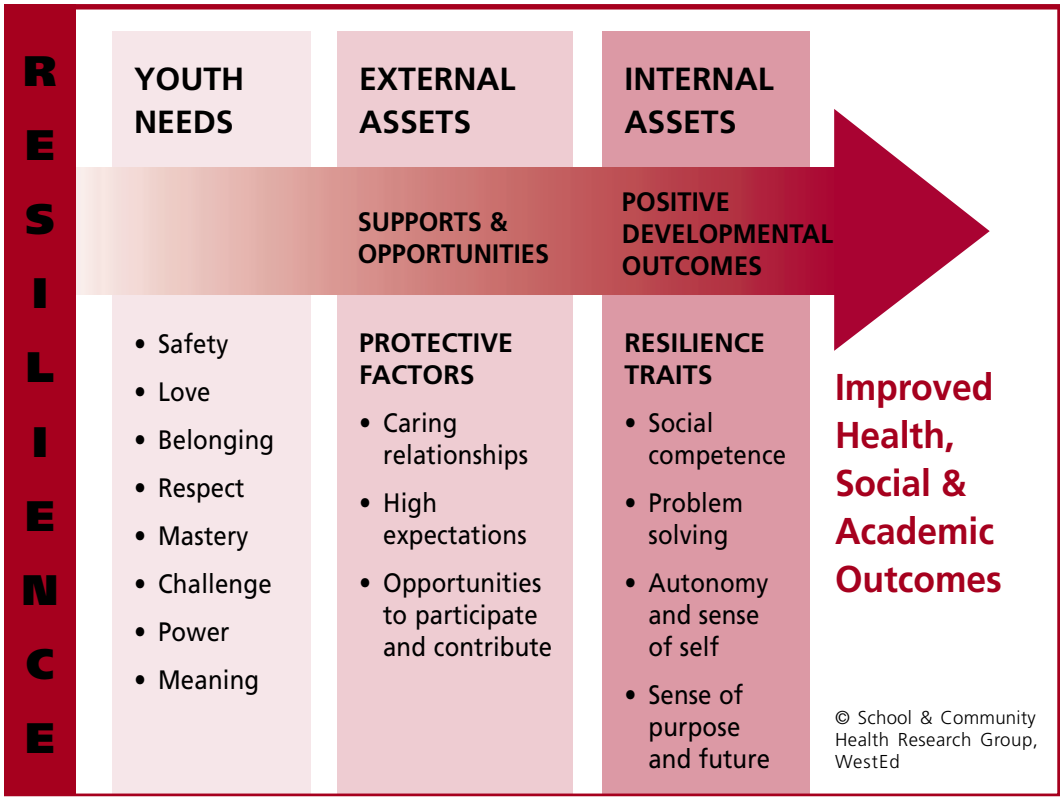
Benard (1996) identifies four traits demonstrated by resilient individuals:

- ***Social competence***, which consists of the ability to establish positive relationships and the flexibility to successfully function within and between the primary and dominant cultures
- ***Problem-solving skills***, which include the ability to plan and think critically, creatively, and reflectively about solutions to cognitive and social problems
- ***Autonomy***, or the sense of one's own identity and independence
- ***A sense of purpose and future***, including having goals, educational aspirations, achievement motivation, persistence, optimism, and spiritual connectedness

ACTIVITY: Resilience and Student Learning

Consider the following graphic representation of student resilience and the discussion that follows:

Youth Development Process: Resiliency in Action



The major tenet of this youth development framework is that resilience is a capacity for healthy development and successful learning innate to all people. It is an inborn developmental wisdom that naturally motivates individuals to meet their human needs for love, belonging, respect, identity, power, mastery, challenge, and meaning. When young people experience home, school, and community environments rich in the developmental supports (also called external assets or protective factors) of caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution, they meet these developmental needs. In turn, youth naturally develop the individual characteristics (internal assets, or resilience traits) that define healthy development and successful learning. These include social competence, problem solving, autonomy and identity, and sense of purpose and future.

These individual strengths are the natural developmental outcomes for youth who experience homes, schools, communities, and peer groups rich in the three basic developmental supports and opportunities. Moreover, these individual characteristics promote successful learning and protect against involvement in health-risk behaviors such as alcohol, tobacco, other drug abuse, and violence. Research on human development, brain and cognition, school effectiveness, family and community, and medicine clearly indicates the benefits of an environmental approach over an individual, skill-building approach, commonly referred to as a deficit or "fix-the-kid" model.

Education and prevention practices that do not pay attention to external assets—the quality of relationships, messages, and opportunities for participation—do not improve learning or behavior in the long term. Such practices are in contrast to environmental change approaches like cooperative learning, small group process, adventure learning, arts experience, peer helping, mentoring, and service learning. These latter approaches create opportunities in the context of relationships for young people; they allow them to achieve academically and learn positive life skills and attitudes through direct and ongoing experiences that meet their developmental needs for love, belonging, respect, identity, power, mastery, challenge, and meaning.

- *What evidence of student resilience have you seen in your classroom? Which parts of the description above apply to what you have noticed?*
- *Discuss with colleagues the positive effects student resilience has on learning.*
- *How might your teaching and school programs best take advantage of the benefits of student resilience?*

Rutter (1987) reminds us that for students coping with situations that place them at risk of school failure, effective intervention promotes positive self-concepts by providing caring and supportive environments, communicating high expectations, and connecting learning to future opportunities. Prevention efforts need to focus on building networks and intersystem linkages. Educators must build social bonds within families, schools, and communities by providing and identifying resources (for example, with agencies and community organizations) to ensure that all individuals experience caring and support. Educators can further strengthen social bonds by relating to students and families with respect and high expectations and by giving them opportunities to be active participants in their family, school, and community life (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1998). Again, knowledge of students' cultures will allow educators to interact more knowledgeably with parents and students.

Deficit theories about the abilities and academic achievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students suggest they do poorly in school because they lack intelligence (Jensen, 1969; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) or the "right" kind of background. When teachers and administrators evaluate through the lens of the dominant culture, they often cannot recognize the abilities and potential of certain groups of children. The knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that these children bring to school are often in conflict with those valued by the school. In other words, what they know, what they can do, their world view, and their priorities do not match what the school wants them to do, how it wants them to view the world, and what its priorities are. What is, in fact, the result of a mismatch is often explained by schools as the limited ability of the children, who end up being categorized as incapable, unintelligent, and lacking potential. In this way, resilient children who are very capable in other settings are often rendered ineffective. Numerous researchers have identified the negative influence of deficit assumptions on teachers' perceptions of students and their expectations for student success (August & Hakuta, 1997; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Oakes & Lipton, 1999; Villegas, 1991).

When teachers and administrators evaluate through the lens of the dominant culture, they often cannot recognize the abilities and potential of certain groups of children.

ACTIVITY: Rethinking Learning Deficits

The "deficit hypothesis" suggests that some people cannot learn because of something they are lacking.

- *Think about a talent or ability that you originally felt you lacked but went on to develop later. What did you do to develop that latent ability? What made you try to develop it? Why did you think you could?*

- *Think about a time when someone treated you as if you could not do something. How did you feel about that person and yourself? How did you behave around him or her?*

- *Discuss with your colleagues times when your stereotypes about deficits and about who can and cannot learn have been challenged. What are some strategies for challenging negative generalizations about intelligence?*

Although in *The Diversity Kit* we have separated human development, culture, and language in order to focus on each in turn, these three areas are interrelated in educational practice today. We cannot advance our knowledge of human development without considering the interaction of culture and language. Further, because language is the principal medium for the cultivation of learning, it is at the heart of cultural transmission and education. Even though we have discussed human development explicitly in this section, we urge readers to consider this section as integral to and integrated with culture and language. We will explore culture and language more explicitly in the following two sections of *The Diversity Kit*.

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RESOURCES and FURTHER READING

Greenfield, P.M. & Cocking, R.R. (Eds.). (1994). Cross-Cultural Roots of Minority Child Development. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

This seminal volume contains 19 essays, written by researchers in the fields of anthropology, sociology, and cultural psychology that address questions regarding the development and socialization of minority children and the interaction between ancestral cultures and dominant cultures in the United States and other countries. This is an excellent resource for educators who wish to explore the complexities of cognitive socialization of minority children.

Moll, L.C. (Ed.). (1990). Vygotsky and Education: Instructional Implications and Applications of Sociohistorical Psychology. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

This edited volume devoted to Vygotskian theory and applications is divided into three major sections: Historical and Theoretical Issues, Educational Implications, and Educational Applications. It offers a thorough grounding in sociohistorical psychology balanced with research related to classroom applications of Vygotskian principles. This is a valuable resource for educators who wish to explore sociohistorical psychology on both a theoretical and a practical level.

Rogoff, B. (1990). Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive Development in Social Context. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff's engaging and well-researched book offers a sociocultural framework that considers children as apprentices in thinking who learn by observation and participation with peers and skilled adults, and develop resources to manage culturally defined problems and approach them in innovative ways. Rogoff's work builds on the work of Vygotsky, Bruner, Piaget, and Cole, among others.

Sheets, R.H. & Hollins, E.R. (1999). Racial and Ethnic Identity in School Practices: Aspects of Human Development. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

The essays in this edited volume are divided into three major sections: Racial and Ethnic Identity Theory and Human Development, Research on Racial and Ethnic Identity Theory and Human Development, and Challenges and Strategies for Multicultural Practices. The primary purpose of the volume is to feature the work of practitioners and researchers who demonstrate the connection between racial and ethnic identity and human development in order to promote successful pedagogical practices in schools.

WEB SITES and ONLINE RESOURCES

http://www.resiliency.com/

The Resiliency in Action Web site, founded by Bonnie Benard and Nan Henderson, disseminates resiliency research, offers concrete information about how to facilitate the application and evaluation of the resiliency paradigm, and is engaged in building a network of practitioners in different states. The site includes an interactive forum, training information, product information, and additional resources.

http://info.med.yale.edu/comer

The Yale Child Study Center School Development Program Web site describes educational reformer James Comer's school change model, which is grounded in the idea that healthy child development is the key to academic achievement and life success. Comer's framework identifies six developmental pathways: physical, cognitive, psychological, language, social, and ethical.

http://pzweb.harvard.edu/Default.htm

Project Zero, a research group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, investigates the development of learning processes in children, adults, and organizations. Project Zero builds on this research to initiate communities of reflective, independent learners; to contribute to deep understanding within academic disciplines; and to promote critical and creative thinking. Project Zero's mission is "to understand and enhance learning, thinking, and creativity in the arts and other disciplines for individuals and institutions." Of particular interest to educators are the current and recent research projects conducted by Project Zero staff, which include the seminal work on multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner.



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THE DIVERSITY KIT

An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education



PART II:

Culture

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The Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory

a program of The Education Alliance at Brown University

The LAB, a program of The Education Alliance at Brown University, is one of ten educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Our goals are to improve teaching and learning, advance school improvement, build capacity for reform, and develop strategic alliances with key members of the region's education and policymaking community.

The LAB develops educational products and services for school administrators, policymakers, teachers, and parents in New England, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Central to our efforts is a commitment to equity and excellence. Information about LAB programs and services is available by contacting:



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Contents

Executive Summary **1**

Overview: Culture, Identity, and Development **3**

Guiding Questions **3**

What Is Cultural Identity? **4**

ACTIVITY: Exploring Cultural Identity *4*

Definitions of Culture and the Invisibility of One's Own Culture *5*

ACTIVITY: Exploring Values, Beliefs, and Ideas *6*

Individual Differences Within Cultures and the Dynamic Nature of Culture *8*

ACTIVITY: Personal Cultural History Exercise *10*

Minority Cultural Identity Development *13*

VIGNETTE: Supporting Students' Ethnic Identity in School ... *14*

How Is Learning Both Social and Cultural? *16*

ACTIVITY: Culture and Learning *16*

VIGNETTE: Conducting a Critical Ethnography *19*

VIGNETTE: Making Connections through Dialogue *20*

How Does Valuing Students' Cultures Support Their Development in Schools? **22**

Cultural Value Orientations: Collectivism and Individualism *22*

ACTIVITY: Valuing Culture *22*

VIGNETTE: Mismatches in Cultural Expectations *24*

ACTIVITY: Exploring Individualist and Collectivist Orientations .. *26*

Historical Power Relations and Their Impact on Development and Learning *27*

ACTIVITY: Letter from Kai James (1998) *28*

Culture, Teaching, and Learning **31**

Guiding Questions **31**

How are High Expectations Especially Critical for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners? 32
ACTIVITY: Honoring Cultural Identity *34*
VIGNETTE: Challenging Cultural Assumptions: Mr. Stivale *35*
VIGNETTE: Constructing a Community of Learners: Mr. Diaz ... *38*
How Can Teachers Learn about Students' Home Cultures? 41
VIGNETTE: Funds of Knowledge: Learning about the .....
Community *43*
VIGNETTE: From Martha Floyd-Tenery, Bilingual Resource .....
Teacher *45*
How Can Teachers Use Their Understanding of Students' Home Cultures to Teach in Culturally Relevant Ways? 46
VIGNETTE: Exposing Inequities through Education *47*
Culture, Family, and Community 57
Guiding Questions 57
Building on Family Strengths 60
VIGNETTE: Bringing Schools and Communities Together *61*
Impact of Culture on Learning 62
ACTIVITY: Shade et al.'s Social Process of Writing *63*
Cultural Knowledge, Curriculum, and Learning 64
ACTIVITY: Examining Curriculum for Culture and Language ... *66*
Overcoming Challenges to Involving Families and Communities 67
ACTIVITY: Challenging Cultural Assumptions of Parental .....
Involvement *70*
ACTIVITY: Overcoming Barriers to Involvement *71*
References 75
Resources and Further Reading 81
Web Sites and Online Resources 83
Videos 84

PART II: *CULTURE*

Activity	Title	Page #
ACTIVITY	Exploring Cultural Identity	4
ACTIVITY	Exploring Values, Beliefs, and Ideas	6
ACTIVITY	Personal Cultural History Exercise	10
VIGNETTE	Supporting Students' Ethnic Identity in School	14
ACTIVITY	Culture and Learning	16
VIGNETTE	Conducting a Critical Ethnography	19
VIGNETTE	Making Connections through Dialogue	20
ACTIVITY	Valuing Culture	22
VIGNETTE	Mismatches in Cultural Expectations	24
ACTIVITY	Exploring Individualist and Collectivist Orientations	26
ACTIVITY	Letter from Kai James (1998)	28
ACTIVITY	Honoring Cultural Identity	34
VIGNETTE	Challenging Cultural Assumptions: Mr. Stivale	35
VIGNETTE	Constructing a Community of Learners: Mr. Diaz	38
VIGNETTE	Funds of Knowledge: Learning about the Community	43
VIGNETTE	From Martha Floyd-Tenery, Bilingual Resource Teacher	45
VIGNETTE	Exposing Inequities through Education	47
VIGNETTE	Bringing Schools and Communities Together	61
ACTIVITY	Shade et al.'s Social Process of Writing	63
ACTIVITY	Examining Curriculum for Culture and Language	66
ACTIVITY	Challenging Cultural Assumptions of Parental Involvement	70
ACTIVITY	Overcoming Barriers to Involvement	71

Executive Summary

What is culture? How does culture shape identity? What is culturally responsive teaching? How can teachers effectively build upon students' cultural identities to facilitate learning? These are just some of the questions that we address in three separate chapters on culture.

We base these chapters on several principles of culture and learning:

- Students come to school with specific cultural knowledge or "cultural capital," including their particular experiences and prior knowledge.
- Valuing students' cultural knowledge and building upon it is a key component of culturally responsive teaching.
- Culture is largely mediated by language, as manifested in metaphor, storytelling, songs, and greetings.
- A group's culture reflects its shared traditions, which can include a common history, language, religion, customs, and literary traditions.
- Culture is dynamic and ever changing; a group's culture includes the goals, ideals, and beliefs that will ensure the group's survival. However, there are variations among individual members of a cultural group in terms of their beliefs and values.

In the first chapter of this section of *The Diversity Kit,* we focus principally on defining culture and cultural identity. We argue that culture is dynamic and that exploring, valuing, and promoting students' cultures in the classroom will support their personal and academic development. In this first chapter, we explore the notions of collectivism and individualism as cultural orientations, and we examine the power relations that have historically existed between certain societal groups.

In the second chapter we focus our lens more specifically on the area of culture as it impacts teaching and learning among diverse student populations. We ask the readers to participate in activities and the accompanying vignette discussions that encourage them to explore the concept of a learning community. We also challenge educators to explore the funds of knowledge found in students' home communities. Through these exercises we underscore the importance of knowing the students' home cultures and using that knowledge as a resource to enhance student learning.

In the third chapter, we explore the relationship among school, family, and the broader community. The chapter addresses educators' concerns regarding the challenges of involving parents and extended family members in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students. In this chapter, we offer suggestions and provide activities that show how to bridge the gaps among school, family, and the community. We encourage the reader to become a language detective and to explore the culture of the communities in which students live, work, and play. We also encourage developing a curriculum that is culturally responsive and that promotes interaction between students and their families. Ultimately, when teachers and students create a space in which students' languages, cultures, and identities are negotiated and valued, teaching is facilitated and students excel.

Culture is intimately connected to language. For that reason, we suggest that *The Diversity Kit* be used in its entirety to explore the areas of human development and language as additional dimensions of learning. We encourage the reader to explore diversity and all of its richness through *The Diversity Kit* and to challenge social conventions and uneven power relationships that have historically marginalized culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Overview: Culture, Identity, and Development

GUIDING QUESTIONS

? *What is cultural identity?*

? *How does culture impact development and learning?*

? *How does valuing students' cultures support their development in schools?*

What Is Cultural Identity?

Children begin to develop a sense of identity as individuals and as members of groups from their earliest interactions with others (McAdoo, 1993; Sheets, 1999a). One of the most basic types of identity is ethnic identity, which entails an awareness of one's membership in a social group that has a common culture. The common culture may be marked by a shared language, history, geography, and (frequently) physical characteristics (Fishman, 1989; Sheets, 1999a).

Not all of these aspects need to be shared, however, for people to psychologically identify with a particular ethnic group. Cultural identity is a broader term: people from multiple ethnic backgrounds may identify as belonging to the same culture. For example, in the Caribbean and South America, several ethnic groups may share a broader, common, Latin culture. Social groups existing within one nation may share a common language and a broad cultural identity but have distinct ethnic identities associated with a different language and history. Ethnic groups in the United States are examples of this.

ACTIVITY: Exploring Cultural Identity

With a colleague or in a small group, discuss the following questions:

- *What is your cultural identity? Describe it.*
- *Do you remember a time when you felt a connection with someone who shared your cultural background? Describe that feeling. What made you feel connected to that person?*
- *What kinds of issues related to cultural identity (either your own or your students') have come up for you as a teacher?*

Definitions of Culture and the Invisibility of One's Own Culture

In your discussion with a colleague it is likely that both of you had different ideas about what constitutes culture. Anthropologists and other scholars continue to debate the meaning of this term. García (1994) refers to culture as

> [T]he system of understanding characteristics of that individual's society, or of some subgroup within that society. This system of understanding includes values, beliefs, notions about acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and other socially constructed ideas that members of the society are taught are "true." (p. 51)

Geertz (1973) asserts that members of cultures go about their daily lives within shared webs of meaning. If we link García and Geertz's definitions, we can imagine culture as invisible webs composed of values, beliefs, ideas about appropriate behavior, and socially constructed truths.

One may ask, why is culture made up of invisible webs? Most of the time, our own cultures are invisible to us (Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1996; Philips, 1983), yet they are the context within which we operate and make sense of the world. When we encounter a culture that is different from our own, one of the things we are faced with is a set of beliefs that manifest themselves in behaviors that differ from our own. In this way, we often talk about other people's cultures, and not so much about our own. Our own culture is often hidden from us, and we frequently describe it as "the way things are." Nonetheless, one's beliefs and actions are not any more natural or biologically predetermined than any other group's set of beliefs and actions; they have emerged from the ways one's own group has dealt with and interpreted the particular conditions it has faced. As conditions change, so do cultures; thus, cultures are considered to be dynamic.



ACTIVITY: Exploring Values, Beliefs, and Ideas

Think about the values, beliefs, and ideas that are prevalent in your culture. Then, speculate on how those values, beliefs, and ideas may have emerged from the conditions members of your culture faced in the past. Use the table below to record your thoughts.

VALUE, BELIEF, OR IDEA	WHERE IT CAME FROM
EXAMPLE: Education is the most important thing in life.	*Asian Indian parent's experience about how to achieve success in the United States.*

Now, think of some prevalent values, beliefs, and ideas of your culture that are currently being challenged by members of the cultural group. How have conditions changed for members of the group since the old values, beliefs, and ideas were formulated?

HISTORICAL VALUE, BELIEF, OR IDEA	CHALLENGE TO THE VALUE, BELIEF, OR IDEA	CHANGED CONDITIONS THAT MAY HAVE LED TO THE CHALLENGE
EXAMPLE: Parents arrange their children's marriages.	*People should marry for love.*	*Increased education and individual pursuit of work; the feminist movement.*

Individual Differences Within Cultures and the Dynamic Nature of Culture

Individual cultural identity presents yet another layer of complexity. Members of the same culture vary widely in their beliefs and actions. How can we explain this phenomenon? The argument for a "distributive model" of culture addresses the relationship between culture and personality (García, 1994; Schwartz, 1978). This argument posits that individuals select beliefs, values, and ideas that guide their actions from a larger set of cultural beliefs, values, and ideas. In most cases, we do not consciously pick and choose attributes from the total set; rather, the conditions and events in our individual lives lead us to favor some over others. In summarizing Spiro's concept of "cultural heritage," García (1994) draws a distinction between "cultural heritage" and "cultural inheritance." Cultural heritage refers to what society as a whole possesses, and a cultural inheritance is what each individual possesses. In other words, each individual inherits some (but not all) of the cultural heritage of the group.

No two individuals from any culture are exactly alike.

We all have unique identities that we develop within our cultures, but these identities are not fixed or static. This is the reason that stereotypes do not hold up: no two individuals from any culture are exactly alike. While living inside a culture allows members to become familiar with the total cultural heritage of that society, no individual actually internalizes the entire cultural heritage. In fact, it would be impossible for any one person to possess a society's entire cultural heritage; there are inevitably complex and contradictory values, beliefs, and ideas within that heritage, a result of the conditions and events that individuals and groups experience. For example, arranged marriage has long been a cultural practice in India based on the belief that the families of potential spouses best know who would make a desirable match. More and more frequently, however, individuals reject the practice of arranged marriage; this is partly due to the sense of independence from family brought on by both men and women's participation in a rapidly developing job market. The changing experience of work is shifting cultural attitudes towards family and marriage. These different experiences and the new values, beliefs, and ideas they produce contribute to the dynamic nature of culture.

Because individual differences within cultural groups are far greater than differences between cultural groups, it is both particularly crucial and particularly challenging to operationalize understandings of culture and avoid stereotyping in diverse classrooms. To learn about the cultural and individual experiences of students, Hollins (1996) suggests that teachers

- observe and record individual student responses to classroom events or situations,
- develop and administer questionnaires about student beliefs and expectations,
- conduct formal and informal interviews, and
- request life histories and biographies.

ACTIVITY: Personal Cultural History Exercise

(adapted from Okazawa-Rey, 1998)

The purpose of the personal cultural history exercise is to

- *recall and reflect on your earliest and most significant experiences of race, culture, and difference;*
- *think about yourself as a cultural being whose life has been influenced by various historical, social, political, economic, and geographical circumstances; and*
- *make connections between your own experience and those of people different from you.*

This activity may generate a lot of feelings for you and others in your group. Please keep all information confidential (within the group), and do not refer to the specifics of what others have said without their permission after the activity. It will be useful to appoint someone as the group's facilitator.

Using drawings, symbols, and colors, each participant should answer the following questions:

- *What is your racial and ethnic identity?*
- *What is your earliest recollection of someone being included or excluded from your group based on race or culture?*
- *What is your earliest recollection of being different or excluded based on race or culture? Describe a time when your difference made a difference.*

After drawings are complete, share with each other:

- *How it made you feel to think about and answer the questions*
- *How it felt to use a medium most people are unaccustomed to using*
- *The story that your picture tells. (Other group members should be active listeners and may only ask factual questions of the speaker.)*

After sharing your histories, analyze your collective experiences; pay particular attention to geography, historical time period, race, class, gender, religion, language, and other factors. Think about the following questions:

- *What similarities and differences do you notice in your experiences?*
- *What are some of the major forces that shaped your experiences?*
- *How did oppression, discrimination, and prejudice affect your lives?*
- *If your lives were not noticeably affected by discrimination and prejudice, why might this be?*
- *When might you have had an advantage because of your group membership? When were you placed at a disadvantage?*
- *In the United States, what difference does color or race make? Ethnicity? Language background?*

Think about the role schools played in the dynamics of oppression when you were a young person.

- *Can you think of policies or practices that have negative consequences for members of a particular group?*
- *How was what happened in school supported in other institutions?*
- *What strategies did communities, families, and individuals use to resist discrimination and organize on their own behalf?*

Reflect on how your personal experiences with culture and difference shaped your conception of yourself as a professional.

- *How might a person's cultural and racial experiences influence their career path?*
- *Share with a colleague or two some of the ways in which your experiences with culture and difference influenced your career choice.*
- *How have these experiences shaped your views of students who are from racial and cultural groups different from your own?*



Minority Cultural Identity Development

Students who are not members of the dominant group may have difficulty developing their own identity because they are pressured in school (and often, also, in public) to suppress behaviors that mark them as different. A sense of individual and group identity is related to normal emotional and cognitive development, so when this process is interfered with, students are more likely to fail in school (Sheets, 1999b).

Identity is not a neat and tidy concept, nor is it something one person can assign to another (though social attribution of a person's identity can affect him or her—as when people make assumptions about what ethnic group another person belongs to and treat him according to preset expectations). Members of the dominant culture whose identity development is less likely to be interfered with may not understand the complex process of identity development for students from minority or mixed ethnic backgrounds.

VIGNETTE: Supporting Students' Ethnic Identity in School

An urban high school in the Northwest allowed one of its staff members, Dr. Rosa Hernandez Sheets, to conduct a research project. Her plan was to take 27 freshmen who were not doing well in school and put them in a class—a 2-hour language/social studies block—in which they could express their ethnic and cultural identities and develop friendships that would support their academic development. These students, who were Asian (6), African American (10), Biracial (6), and European American (5), could work individually or together in groups of their choosing. They could pursue literature and research topics of interest to them. The role of the teacher was to try to promote a classroom climate in which students could hold open discussions related to their cultural values. The teacher was to place less emphasis on curriculum and more emphasis on strong student participation and positive development of ethnic identity. As a result of this project, the following occurred:

- *Students spoke freely about their personal experiences with race, culture, and ethnicity.*
- *Students chose a range of research topics linked to their own social needs and culture-based knowledge.*
- *Students worked together in same-ethnic/race groups most often (with the biracial students splitting between Asian and African American groups, based on their non-white parent) and produced research reports that were accepted for presentation at the following year's National Association for Multicultural Education.*
- *Nine of twenty-seven students earned honors credit on their academic transcript.*
- *Most received an A as a grade in the course.*
- *Sheets (1999b) observed, however, that the academic success of students did not transfer to their other classes. In those classes, students had a significant number of disciplinary incidents, high levels of absenteeism, and low academic performance.*

DISCUSSION:

- **What are your first thoughts about this scenario?**
- **Why do you think students' success in Dr. Sheets' class did not transfer to their other four classes?**
- **Consider how student identity affects educational success. What might this say about the usual attribution of school failure to low basic skills, home problems, and poverty?**
- **How can we make room in classrooms for students to engage in this kind of personal identity construction?**

The above vignette illustrates some of the complexity of interrelationships among students' backgrounds and sense of self, teachers' attitudes and instructional approaches, and the institution of schooling. Opening up a class in this way seems risky, and most teachers may not feel that they have the skills to manage potential conflicts based on race and ethnicity. Some wouldn't be comfortable with the way students segregated themselves and would regard that outcome as a failure. Yet, there were many positive outcomes in this situation. What became clear was that using students' cultural identities as the point of departure for instructional strategies and curriculum design transforms their performance in school.

How Is Learning Both Social and Cultural?

In the past 15 years, developmental psychology has shifted its focus from individual development in isolation to a focus on how social interactions shape development (Greenfield et al., 1996). The work of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), a Russian psychologist whose work was not translated into English until the 1960s, forms the basis of the sociocultural (sometimes referred to as sociohistorical) approach to developmental psychology.

ACTIVITY: Culture and Learning

- *In your opinion, what are some of the strongest influences on the way children learn and develop?*
- *What role do you think culture plays in development and learning?*
- *With regards to culture, what settings and conditions have allowed you to learn best?*

Vygotsky observed that cognitive development is embedded in the context of social relationships (Goldstein, 1999). Thus, interactions between people are the vehicle for intellectual growth. Learning cannot occur in isolation; it is socially mediated. Goldstein (1999) explains Vygotsky's notion of socially mediated knowledge:

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological)… All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. (p. 649)

As Moll (1992) notes, "From a Vygotskian perspective…a major role of schooling is to create social contexts for the mastery of and conscious awareness in the use of…cultural tools, such as oral language, literacy, and mathematics" (p. 213). Classroom tasks or activities contain both culture and the individual; that is, the individual's mental processes must grapple with learning concepts or skills the culture deems important. Because social interactions are culturally defined, sociocultural interactions can either facilitate or hinder learning.

We refer to Vygotsky's concept of the "zone of proximal development," or ZPD, in the language section of *The Diversity Kit*. In his volume *Mind and Society,* Vygotsky (1978) defines the ZPD as

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

In other words, as students develop cognitively, they take more and more responsibility for increasingly difficult tasks. The challenge for a teacher is to find the developmental zone in which a student can approach a more difficult task with the appropriate amount and type of support. Over time the student begins to take more control over that kind of task (Cole, 1985).

The ZPD has tremendous significance for teaching and learning. When a teacher and student share the same culture, the instructional interaction is simple: an adult

or more skilled peer helps a student master a task through what Rogoff (1990) calls "guided participation." McLaughlin and McLeod (1996) posit similarly that

> Participation in cultural activities with the guidance of more skilled partners enables children to internalize the tools for thinking and for taking more mature approaches to problem solving that are appropriate in their culture. Individual development is mediated by interactions with people who are more skilled in the use of the culture's tools. The development of young children into skilled participants in society is accomplished through children's routine, and often tacit, guided participation in ongoing cultural activities as they observe and participate with others in culturally organized practices. (p. 2)

This dynamic, as Vygotsky notes, is immensely powerful developmentally. But what happens when the teacher and student bring different cultural frames of reference and communication styles to their interaction? Rather than a dialogue or activity that draws students into the "zone of proximal development," there can be a disconnect between the teacher's and student's ways of forming and displaying knowledge. As a result, child-adult interactions in the classroom can fail to advance student learning. Students can, in effect, be stranded developmentally, and teachers can experience frustration when their attempts to engage students in developmental dialogue or activity break down. Cultural differences, then, must be bridged in order to activate powerful developmental dynamics like the ZPD. Teachers who have students from many cultural backgrounds may wonder how they can adjust their teaching to align with the cultural orientations of all of the students. While this is not an easy task, providing instruction that draws on students' ways of knowing will have a positive impact on student learning.



VIGNETTE: Conducting a Critical Ethnography

In a school-university partnership in New York City, Carmen Mercado and her colleagues engaged middle school students of various ethnic and language backgrounds in ethnographic research using an "apprenticeship-enculturation" approach. This approach involved students' observing how adults carry out authentic research activities as they themselves do research (Mercado, 1992). Students chose topics that interested them and that related to the overarching theme of taking action against the undesirable conditions in their community. The university and teacher researchers, while conducting their own research on the academic uses of literacy, assisted students in developing the literacy skills necessary to conduct an ethnographic study. With support, students became experts in tasks such as writing field notes, analyzing data, writing ethnographies, and presenting their work at professional conferences. After the first year of the project, students who had acquired the ethnographic skills and habits of mind necessary for success helped the university and teacher researchers instruct novice sixth- grade ethnographers.

DISCUSSION

- **How does the work of Mercado and her colleagues apply Vygotskian principles?**
- **Why do you think Mercado calls this an "apprenticeship-enculturation" approach?**
- **How could such an approach assist learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds?**
- **What do you or could you do as a teacher to try out this theory of learning and teaching?**

VIGNETTE: Making Connections through Dialogue

Christina Igoa, author of *The Inner World of the Immigrant Child* (1995), describes some strategies that she used when she began teaching a group of immigrant fifth and sixth graders. She writes:

Shortly after I got acquainted with the class, I prepared quiet, productive activities on which the children could work individually or in pairs without my direct participation. I trained two to four mature students to be student teachers who could answer questions or clarify directions.

As I looked across the room at the global reality of children from all corners of the world, I knew I needed to find out where they came from so I could prepare the curriculum. As the children worked quietly, I met with each student for a one-on-one dialogue. It was a profoundly rich experience.

At the university level it is often a given for students to meet individually with professors to clarify mutual expectations, discuss academic concerns, and bring up matters that might affect the attainment of goals. In our classroom, such dialogues gave the children the opportunity to express themselves; and the dialogues became an important methodology in working with the students. Through the dialogues I found a way of connecting with each child as a unique individual, validating the child's cultural history, and establishing a trusting, respectful, and warm relationship.

I set up a little "office space" around my desk and met with each student for about 15 minutes. During the dialogue, I inquired into the style of teaching and method of learning used in the child's country of origin...

For those who preferred to remain silent, I entered the silent stage with them by respecting the child and waiting. If there was resistance, if the child wasn't ready to talk, we spent time together quietly in order to establish trust and warmth. I spoke very directly to the child and tried to find out what I could

do to make it safe for the child to speak to me. I felt that if I could figure out what the child was feeling, I could understand his or her behavior. (pp. 125-126)

DISCUSSION

- **What kinds of questions do you think Igoa asked her students during her conferences with them? What kinds of questions do you think you would ask your students?**
- **In what ways was one-on-one dialogue between Igoa and her students an essential part of teaching and learning in her class?**
- **What are some ways that Igoa might use the information she gathered about teaching and learning in students' home countries to assist them in their development?**
- **How can Vygotsky's theory of ZPD and the role of culture in learning be applied to the vignette?**

How Does Valuing Students' Cultures Support Their Development in Schools?

Cultural Value Orientations: Collectivism and Individualism

Cultural value orientations have an enormous impact on learning in schools (Greenfield et al., 1996; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Greenfield, 2000; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001). Current research on cultural value orientations and learning in school reveals that schooling becomes problematic when students from collectivist cultures encounter the individualistic culture of U.S. schools and classrooms. Trumbull et al. (2001) explain that "(t)he continuum of 'individualism-collectivism' represents the degree to which a culture emphasizes individual fulfillment and choice versus interdependent relationships, social responsibility, and the well-being of the group. Individualism makes the former the priority, collectivism the latter." (p. 19)

ACTIVITY: Valuing Culture

- *What do you think it looks like for teachers to value students' home cultures?*
- *How has your own culture been valued or devalued in school? At work?*
- *How might cultural power relationships affect student performance? Teacher attitudes?*



It is important to emphasize that cultures and individuals vary in the degree to which they are collectivist or individualist, but that, generally, an individualist orientation among students is the norm in many U.S. classrooms. Among world cultures, collectivist orientation to culture is often found among Native Americans, Latin Americans, Africans, and Asians (Greenfield et al., 1996). African American culture has been described as more collectivist than the dominant U.S. culture in terms of family orientation and kinship help but more individualistic than many other cultures in terms of its emphasis on individual achievement (Hollins, 1996).

Like other belief systems that undergird cultures, individualism and collectivism are often invisible to the people who live within those respective "webs of meaning." A member of a collectivist culture probably goes about her daily business without consciously thinking, "I'm helping my brother with his homework because we have a network of interdependent relationships within my collectivist culture." A member of an individualist culture likely doesn't stop to reflect, "I am striving to get all A's in my classes because in my individualist culture we value personal achievement over all else." Members of cultures, on the whole, do not consider the overarching frameworks within which they live their lives; they simply live. However, as we discussed earlier, when cultures come into contact, people quickly recognize that different values, beliefs, and ideas have come into play, even when they are unsure what those values, beliefs, and ideas are.

When students with a collectivist orientation are forced to conform to individualistic modes of learning, there is a cultural mismatch, and the result is often frustration and failure for teachers, students, and families. Likewise, when school personnel with individualist mindsets and families with collectivist mindsets attempt to interact in a school setting, negotiating meaning and intent can be difficult, as we see in the vignette on page 24.

VIGNETTE: Mismatches in Cultural Expectations

In a linguistically diverse, urban neighborhood, parents (and their preschool children) remained with their elementary school children during the school's morning breakfast program. During that time, the students shared their food with their family members. However, school administrators and teachers felt that the parents were taking advantage of the subsidized breakfast program. Stating that parents were violating federal and district guidelines, administrators decided to close the school doors to the parents in the mornings. Parents protested the action, and teachers felt that the breakfast incident was another example of the school's failure to foster parental involvement.

DISCUSSION

- **Analyze the vignette above in light of the information on collectivism and individualism. What beliefs might the parents have had that led to their decision to stay at school and eat breakfast with their children?**
- **What beliefs might have guided the administrators when they prohibited the parents and siblings from eating breakfast with their school-aged children?**
- **How did the school personnel and the parents judge each other?**
- **How might the situation have been dealt with differently by school personnel, taking cultural value orientations into account?**

Trumbull et al. (2001) contrast individualism and collectivism as they may play out in school settings. The following table draws from their work with immigrant Latino families. Keep in mind that cultures, and individuals within cultures, will vary in terms of where they fall on the collectivist-individualist continuum, so their perspectives on schooling will vary as well.

TABLE 1

INDIVIDUALIST PERSPECTIVE	COLLECTIVIST PERSPECTIVE
Student should "achieve her potential" for the sake of self-fulfillment.	*Student should "achieve her potential" in order to contribute to the social whole.*
Student should work independently and get his own work done. Giving help to others may be considered cheating.	*Student should be helpful and cooperate with his peers, giving assistance when needed. Helping is not considered cheating.*
Student should be praised frequently. The positive should be emphasized whenever possible.	*Student should not be singled out for praise in front of her peers. Positive feedback should be stated in terms of student's ability to help family or community.*
Student should attain intellectual skills in school; education as schooling.	*Student should learn appropriate social behaviors and skills as well as intellectual skills; education as up-bringing.*
Student should engage in discussion and argument in order to learn to think critically (constructivist model).	*Student should be quiet and respectful in class because he will learn more this way (transmission model).*
Property belongs to individuals, and others must ask to borrow or share it.	*Most property is communal and not considered the domain of an individual.*
Teacher manages behavior indirectly or emphasizes student self-control.	*Teacher has primary authority for managing behavior, but also expects peers to guide each other's behavior.*
Parent is integrally involved with student's academic progress.	*Parent believes that it is teacher's role to provide academic instruction to student.*

ACTIVITY: Exploring Individualist and Collectivist Orientations

Read TABLE 1 on page 25. Then, discuss the following questions:

- *What makes sense to you about the expectations in the "Individualist Perspective" column?*
- *What makes sense to you about the expectations in the "Collectivist Perspective" column?*
- *Elaborate on some of the expectations and explain why you agree or disagree with them as a teacher. What factors from your own cultural background might influence your opinions?*
- *What kinds of conflicts might occur in a classroom because of these different cultural values? How might you deal with such conflicts? What might you do in your classroom to allow for different cultural values?*

Historical Power Relations and Their Impact on Development and Learning

Greenfield et al. (1996) and Bartolomé (1995) draw our attention to another key variable in minority child development and learning: the historical power relationships between dominant and non-dominant cultural groups. Frequently, Asian Americans have been touted as the "model minority." That is, as an undifferentiated group Asian Americans have not experienced the widespread school failure commonly observed among Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and Native Americans. Ogbu (1994) offers a distinction between voluntary and involuntary minorities. Voluntary minorities are those who freely immigrate to the U.S., such as Asian Americans. Involuntary minorities are those who have been conquered, colonized, or subjugated by the U.S., such as Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and Native Americans. There is a clear parallel between those groups that are involuntary minorities and resulting school failure. For involuntary minorities, participation in public institutions (like schools) that value the culture of the dominant group may result in further loss of culture, language, and power. Thus, in the case of involuntary minorities, it is of utmost importance to create a climate that values students' cultures and that follows culturally responsive pedagogy. Villegas (1991) elaborates:

> A culturally responsive pedagogy builds on the premise that how people are expected to go about learning may differ across cultures…Cultural differences present both challenges and opportunities for teachers. To maximize learning opportunities, teachers must gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms, then translate this knowledge into instructional practice. (p. 13)

Bartolomé (1995) proposes that culturally responsive pedagogy alone is not enough to mediate the effect of historical inequity on involuntary minorities. Bartolomé emphasizes that methods by themselves do not suffice to advance the learning of involuntary minorities. She advocates what she calls "humanizing pedagogy," in which a teacher "values the students' background knowledge, culture, and life experiences and creates contexts in which power is shared by students and teachers" (p. 55). This power sharing and valuing of students' lives and cultures may provide a positive counterforce to the negative sociocultural experiences of students; it can enable them to see themselves as empowered within the context of school and allow them to retain pride in their cultural heritages.

VIGNETTE: Letter from Kai James (1998)

Kai James was a freshman in high school when he wrote the following letter.

"Dear High School Teacher"

I am a new high school student and I am looking forward to these next years of my schooling. I feel the need to write this letter because I seek a different experience in high school from that of elementary school. One of the things I would like to see changed is the relationship between students and teachers. I feel that a relationship that places students on the same level as teachers should be established. By this I mean that students' opinions should be taken seriously and be valued as much as those of teachers, and that together with the teachers we can shape the way we learn and what we learn…

After years of being ignored, what the students need, and in particular what black students need, is a curriculum that we can relate to and that will interest us. We need appropriate curriculum to motivate us to the best we can be. We need to be taught to have a voice and have teachers who will listen to us with an open mind and not dismiss our ideas simply because they differ from what they have been told in the past. We need to be made aware of all our options in life. We need to have time to discuss issues of concern to the students as well as the teachers. We must be able to talk about racism without running away from it or disguising the issue. We must also be taught to recognize racism instead of denying it and then referring to those who have recognized it as "paranoid." We also need to be given the opportunity to influence our education and, in turn, our destinies.

We should also be given the right to assemble and discuss issues without having a teacher present to discourage us from saying what we need to say. Teachers must gain the trust of their students, and students must be given

the chance to trust their teachers. We need teachers who will not punish us just because they feel hostile or angry. We need teachers who will allow us to practice our culture without being ridiculed ... (pp. 109-110)

DISCUSSION

- **What is Kai James asking teachers to do?**
- **What do you think James' experiences as an African American student have been like in school?**
- **Why do you think changing the power structure of schools is important to him?**
- **After reading this letter, what new thoughts do you have about cultural identity, development, and learning?**

In this section we have explored the concepts of culture and cultural identity. We have discussed how notions of cultural identity affect minority student populations, how culture impacts students' learning, and how an understanding of students' cultures can inform teachers' instructional strategies. We have advocated a culturally responsive pedagogy that values students' funds of knowledge, including their culture, language, and experiences. Culturally responsive pedagogy and curricula incorporate that knowledge into the learning process. In the following section of *The Diversity Kit* we expand upon the areas of culture, teaching, and learning more fully.

Culture, Teaching, and Learning

GUIDING QUESTIONS

? *How are high expectations especially critical for culturally and linguistically diverse learners?*

? *How can teachers learn about students' home cultures?*

? *How can teachers use their understanding of students' home cultures to teach in culturally relevant ways?*

It is important for all students that schooling become linked with their worlds and experiences in significant ways. For students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, this often does not occur, and the overt consequences can be tragic, including high absenteeism, poor performance on standardized testing, failing grades, and high dropout rates. Most important, students are denied an opportunity to learn. This forecloses important life opportunities for large portions of our student populations.

"I assume that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience . . ."
(Dewey, 1938)

How Are High Expectations Especially Critical for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners?

Gay (2000) suggests that test scores, grade-point averages, course enrollments, and other indicators of school achievement are symptoms, not causes, of problems for students of color. In fact, there are many other indicators of school success or failure. Ultimately, school failure is what students of color experience, but it is not their identity or net worth.

The current standards-based reform movement demands that *all* students gain proficiency in specific skills and content areas. Before standards, two levels of practice existed. One level provided for basic skill development for all learners. The other level accommodated college-bound students with higher order skill development. Standards promote the belief that all children can learn at high levels given appropriate time and resources. While there is a small but growing body of research regarding the problems and promises of standards-based reform for culturally and linguistically diverse students, it has become clear from results in many states with new standards and assessements that large percentages of culturally and linguistically diverse students are not being adequately prepared in school. This highlights the need to transform

schooling for diverse learners in ways that will ensure their academic progress and success. On the most basic level, teachers must now refocus their beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse students, transforming low expectations to high expectations.

When teachers form low expectations of students based on a perceived lack of intellect or cultural sophistication, these expectations become a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, and student performance falls (Villegas, 1991). This ill-informed notion, also known as the "cultural deficit theory," assumes that some students cannot achieve because of their culture, ethnicity, language, or race.

The notion of the minority student who "doesn't care" is all too often a misconception of both dominant and minority teachers, who have assimilated the values of the dominant culture through their schooling (Delpit, 1995). It conveniently attributes a student's struggles to the student, her family, and her community, leaving school structures and teacher practices unscrutinized. While specific communication breakdowns may heighten teachers' stereotyped beliefs regarding students' home cultures, the views found in the classroom generally mirror the pervasive prejudice towards minority groups that is often found in the dominant culture. Educators' views of minority and poor students' home cultures as culturally and intellectually deficient have resulted in great harm to a large number of students. Cultural deficit theory has had far-reaching ramifications in classrooms and schools (Delpit, 1995; Villegas, 1991).

"A child cannot be taught by anyone whose demand, essentially, is that the child repudiate his experience and all that gives him sustenance and enter into a limbo in which he will no longer be black" (James Baldwin cited in Gay, 2000, p. 85).

"A child cannot be taught by anyone whose demand, essentially, is that the child repudiate his experience and all that gives him sustenance and enter into a limbo in which he will no longer be black."

James Baldwin
(cited in Gay, 2000, p. 85)

ACTIVITY: Honoring Cultural Identity

In her book *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice,* Geneva Gay (2000) quotes James Baldwin, who informs us of the importance of recognizing and valuing students' language and culture in a way that honors students' personal identities.

Reflect on the Baldwin quotation on page 33 and discuss the following questions.

- *What do you think Baldwin means by "repudiate his experience and all that gives him sustenance"? How might this occur in a classroom?*
- *What does "enter into a limbo in which he will no longer be black" mean?*
- *What other identities might substitute for black in the setting in which you work?*
- *What parts of the teaching and learning process might diminish instead of build on what students bring with them from home to school?*

VIGNETTE: Challenging Cultural Assumptions: Mr. Stivale

Recently, a faculty meeting was held in a middle school in a small city with a large population of students from Puerto Rico. One of the participants at the meeting, Mr. Stivale, has been a math and technology teacher for about 20 years. Mr. Stivale regularly makes comments to Puerto Rican students such as, "I bet you never saw a computer until you came to the United States," and "I know you have trouble with English, so let's see if someone can translate this into Puerto Rican." At one point during the meeting Mr. Stivale asserted that "some of these kids [referring to the Puerto Rican students] just don't want to learn, and you can't make them. I'm not interested in them." He then looked around the table, assuming that other participants would be in agreement. Other participants looked uncomfortable, but no one challenged his statement.

DISCUSSION

- **How do you think Mr. Stivale's cultural deficit approach impacts students?**
- **What kind of information do you think Mr. Stivale needs in order to change his approach?**
- **Why do you think no one challenged Mr. Stivale's statements at the faculty meeting?**
- **As a colleague of Mr. Stivale's, how might you have responded?**

It is likely that Mr. Stivale would claim that he treats all students fairly. Upon observing his class, however, it became clear that Mr. Stivale communicated his belief that Puerto Rican students, many of whom come from working-class families, have a cultural deficit. This teacher's beliefs and lack of knowledge about students' cultures translated into overt disrespect for students and their cultures. We might consider this a kind of worst-case scenario but not an uncommon one.

Cultural deficit assumptions often appear more subtly as well. Many well-intentioned teachers seek to assist low-performing minority and ELL students by making the curriculum less cognitively challenging so that students can "get it." Sometimes teachers assume that culturally diverse and poor students don't have the cultural prerequisites teachers view as precursors to higher order thinking. For example, often a teacher who has students from backgrounds that do not privilege literacy will assume that students will be unable to process sophisticated narrative structures in texts. The teacher thus places these students into "lower" reading groups.

Official and informal ability grouping and tracking communicates to students the teacher's belief that they are not intelligent enough to succeed academically. This assumption is dangerous for several reasons. First, it does not consider that such students may come from home cultures with highly complex oral traditions—traditions that might, in fact, make them better able to relate to complex narrations within texts (Delpit, 1995). Second, it ignores the mission promised by standards-based reform to ensure high academic achievement for all students. Third, and most fundamental, it exemplifies the hazardous but common practice of substituting suppositions (or prejudices) for knowledge about students' and families' circumstances. This results in limited opportunities after high school (Anyon, 1981; Delpit, 1995). Gay (2000) notes that students of color, especially in poor and urban areas, receive less instructional attention. They are also

- called on less frequently,
- praised less often,
- reprimanded more often and punished more severely,
- given answers more frequently by teachers,
- not encouraged to develop higher order thinking,
- not encouraged to elaborate on statements,
- rewarded for following rules and regulations and for being "nice".

The self-fulfilling prophecy referred to earlier holds true in the other direction as well; when educators hold out high standards to students while simultaneously communicating a respect for their home cultures, student performance increases. In addition, Gay (2000) reports that caring relationships have the following qualities:

- patience
- persistence
- facilitation
- validation
- empowerment for participants

Uncaring relationships, on the other hand, are characterized by

- impatience
- intolerance
- dictations
- control

Caring teachers hold students accountable for high-quality academic, social, and personal performance and ensure that this can happen. Kleinfeld refers to these teachers as "warm demanders" (in Gay, 2000, p. 50).

VIGNETTE: Constructing a Community of Learners: Mr. Díaz

On Thursday mornings, each child in Mr. Raphael Díaz's fourth-grade class at the Alfred Lima Sr., Elementary School has an adult mentor all to him- or herself. Mr. Díaz has set up the mentor-student pairs in collaboration with a professor of teachers-in-training at a local college. For the next hour, the 23 students in this Spanish, bilingual classroom engage with their mentors in a variety of reading, writing, and conversation activities in English. For the remaining 4 hours of the school day, the class maintains its high level of enthusiasm, with one change: the focus of their engagement shifts to their teacher, Mr. Díaz, who is proficient in both Spanish and English.

The principles of culturally responsive teaching abound in Mr. Díaz's teaching practice. Perhaps the best example of his practice is the efficacy with which he communicates high expectations to each student. This message is personalized for individual students at every opportunity. Mr. Díaz might remark, "Ricky, in a couple of years you will come back and teach me," or "You see, Alexi? You are doing so well on your own, pretty soon you won't need me anymore," or "Ashley, you know so much about this topic, soon you'll be able to write a book about it."

In much of his teaching, Mr. Díaz serves as mediator, encouraging his fourth-grade students to become independent learners. For instance, in math classes, rather than simply giving them set problems to learn, he encourages students to identify and analyze the data presented in problems. He asks them to frame relevant questions and to determine appropriate tasks and their sequence. In this way, students learn to express themselves in an environment of academic discourse. Trained to make their own choices, they are then encouraged to defend these choices to their peers. After a reading activity, students write in their journals and then share their thoughts by presenting them to the whole class. In a similar manner, during math class, students are required to show their work and explain the process to others. This creates an

ethic of sharing and responsibility, promoting Mr. Díaz's belief that learning is a serious endeavor with many rewards and demands.

The students have a constant stream of support in their teacher. Born in Cuba, Mr. Díaz attended New York City public schools. Now a successful artist as well as a teacher, he knows firsthand the strengths and gifts his students bring to school and what it takes to succeed, both in school and in the world. His ongoing message of respect and belief in his students is heard and respected in turn because students know that this message is informed and comes from the heart.

"What is the one thing you remember most about the Dominican Republic?" Mr. Díaz asks a girl who has just read a journal entry about what she did over the weekend. Several times during the day, Mr. Díaz asks similar questions about home or country, demonstrating not only a personal awareness of each student's cultural origin but also an understanding that each student carries his/her home and homeland with him/her throughout the day. These are elements of a student's situational past, of present academic and social development, and of future potential.

Mr. Díaz's classroom is wealthy by many standards. Sun pours through many windows lining two walls of the large, corner room. More than 30 posters on the walls and over 100 books in the classroom library reflect a wide diversity of cultures, ages, periods of history, and interests. Art supplies, computers, containers for tools, and completed work all make it possible for students and teacher to do the job they are asked to do. But resources do not come easily. Mr. Díaz writes proposals for books and materials to supplement those provided by the school.

Mr. Díaz joins with his students in constructing a community of learners in his classroom. Together, they shape the classroom into an inspiring home for learning and create a space in which Spanish, English, and a wide range of cultural heritages are named and respected. They also share what they do

well, offering to inform the community of educators about the wealth of diversity in their school community (Knowledgeloom, 2001).

DISCUSSION

- **What makes Mr. Díaz a "warm demander"?**
- **What does Mr. Díaz do to convey high expectations to students?**
- **What strategies does Mr. Díaz use to engage his students and foster academic growth? What kinds of higher order thinking does he require of students?**
- **How does Mr. Díaz affirm and incorporate students' home cultures in the classroom? How do you think this might affect student learning?**
- **How can setting high expectations and affirming and incorporating students' home cultures work to improve student outcomes?**

Gay (2000) notes five strong trends in teacher expectations:

- Teacher expectations significantly influence the quality of students' learning opportunities.
- Teacher expectations are affected by factors that have no basis in reality and may persist in the face of contrary evidence.
- There are pervasive expectations about intellectual capacity based on ethnicity and gender of students; these lead to the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon.
- There are higher, universal, academic achievement expectations for European-American students than for students of color, except for some Asian American students.
- Teachers' expectations for students and their sense of professional efficacy are interrelated. Teachers who have low expectations for students do not feel confident they can teach those students, and as a result attribute students' failure to lack of intellect and deficient home lives. Teachers with strong self-confidence and feelings of efficacy in their teaching abilities have high expectations for all students.

How Can Teachers Learn about Students' Home Cultures?

It stands to reason that teachers need to know the values, practices, and learning styles of the cultural groups from which their students come. However, Zeichner (1996) warns that generalized studies about cultures can lead to stereotypes. Thus, it is best not to engage solely in text-based research about students' cultures. The alternative is to engage in amateur ethnographic inquiry about one's own students (Heath, 1983).

Briefly, ethnography refers to the systematic inquiry into how members of a group make meaning of the world. What constitutes a "good job," an "important tradition," the "responsibilities of a daughter," or even the "value of homework" in a student's domestic priorities can all be investigated ethnographically. Ethnography conducted in sufficient detail should illustrate not only cultural trends but intracultural differences. That is, not everyone within a culture has the same views on a given topic or

has exactly the same habits. Villegas (1993) offers these methods of collecting information:

- Home visits
- Conversations with community members
- Consultations with other teachers
- Observations of students in and out of school

In addition, an ethnographic investigation would also include conversations with the students.

One source for better understanding the students' culture is household "funds of knowledge." "Funds of knowledge" is the term researchers use to include (1) information, (2) processes of thinking and learning, and (3) useful skills associated with a community's normal life (Leighton, Hightower, Wrigley, 1995). All three of these elements must be understood in relation to specific, diverse, sociocultural practices. Believing that students of Mexican origin possess specific "funds of knowledge," researchers Luis Moll, Norma González, and their colleagues helped Arizona teachers make connections between these students' school and homes. These connections resulted in teachers gaining access to information that helped them make academic material more relevant to students (Moll, 1992; McLaughlin & McLeod, 1996). Their work had two goals: (1) to form relationships among home, teachers, and school by tapping into the family's strengths and (2) to allow the teacher to learn about the family's funds of knowledge so that the information could be used as a resource and complement to classroom curriculum (González, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, & Amanti, 1993; Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez, 1997).

"Funds of knowledge" expresses the belief that students bring valuable home knowledge to the learning environment. In addition, what students bring may differ according to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and their individual circumstances. This gives teachers the opportunity to consider how students learn to construct knowledge in social contexts. In many instances, schools and teachers are not aware of the abundant knowledge that families have or that this

"Funds of knowledge" expresses the belief that students bring valuable home knowledge to the learning environment.

knowledge can be incorporated in order to teach academic skills. Funds of knowledge, then, refers to understanding, discovering, and appreciating the many cultural practices of students and their families. Consider the following example of how teachers used the knowledge acquired from home visits.

VIGNETTE: Funds of Knowledge—Learning about the Community

(adapted from McLaughlin & McLeod, 1996)

Teachers visited students' homes as if they were anthropologists, gaining an understanding of their Latino students' cultural backgrounds as well as gathering material for their curriculum. One teacher drew on the expertise of parents employed in construction occupations to create a mathematics curriculum based on building a house. Another found that many of her students' families had extensive knowledge of the medicinal value of plants and herbs, so she taught scientific concepts in that context. Still another based a curriculum unit on the discovery that some students regularly returned from Mexico with candy to sell. Students investigated the economics of marketing, compared Mexican and American candy, did a nutritional analysis of candy, studied the process of sugar processing, and conducted a survey on favorite candies, for which they graphed data and wrote a report.

The example on page 43 illustrates how teachers used cultural knowledge not simply to talk about superficial things like foods, clothes, and holidays but to develop classroom practice. These findings and understandings led to in-depth information about the accumulated bodies of knowledge in the various households (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992).

Discovering students' funds of knowledge entails finding out and understanding the social history of the households—their sources, evolution, and most important, their work history. For example, some children from migrant families might possess knowledge about farming or agriculture (a domain of knowledge) because that is what their parents do for a living. These students would have knowledge of crop planting and harvesting. Moll (1992) observed that families had material and scientific knowledge about carpentry, masonry, electrical wiring, fencing, and building codes, just to name a few areas.

Traditionally, teachers have made home visits for several reasons: to discuss a student's behavior or problems with subject areas or to provide information on how parents can help the student at home. In the funds of knowledge approach, home visits have a different purpose. Teachers develop skills in observing and interviewing before they do home visits; they participate in study groups, reflect on their journals or field notes after home visits, and then use what they have learned to build and enhance their curriculum. The aim is to identify and document knowledge that exists in the student and use that knowledge to develop, transform, and enrich classroom practice (González et al., 1993). Teachers implementing the model may initially be reluctant to visit their students' homes and to report their observations as a researcher. But as they become familiar with the process, teachers begin to see that the effort is worthwhile. In addition, when visits and ethnographic reflection are connected, they bring about significant changes not only in teachers but in all parties involved (González et al., 1993). The example on page 43 illustrates how one teacher discovered the resources within her students' families and how she became a learner in the process.



VIGNETTE: From Martha Floyd-Tenery, Bilingual Resource Teacher

As I reread some of the early journal entries I made for this project, I realize how I have changed my views of the household. As I read these entries, I realize that I had discussed my students in terms of low academics, home-life problems, alienation, and SES [socioeconomic status], and that I was oriented towards a deficit model. I no longer see the families I visited that way. Since I am looking for resources, I am finding resources, and I recognize the members of the families for who they are and for their talents and unique personalities. We now have a reciprocal relationship where we exchange goods, services, and information. I have also discarded many myths that are prevalent in our region and that I myself used to believe.

DISCUSSION

- **What are some myths related to the education, values, and responsibilities of diverse students? How might these myths be reflected in your teaching?**
- **Short of being personally involved in a collaborative ethnographic analysis of the household dynamics of all your students, what could you do to improve your knowledge of your students' worlds?**
- **To what extent would you incorporate funds of knowledge in your classroom? What benefits do you think your non-minority students would receive?**

How Can Teachers Use Their Understanding of Students' Home Cultures to Teach in Culturally Relevant Ways?

Curriculum and instruction that attempt to build on students' cultural knowledge are part of what is called "culturally responsive pedagogy" (Bartolomé, 1995; Villegas, 1991). When culturally responsive teaching occurs, students' home cultures and experiences are drawn upon as resources for teaching and learning instead of being viewed as barriers to education. The importance of understanding students' particular cultural backgrounds and skills was elaborated upon in our discussion about funds of knowledge.

Ladson-Billings (1995) extends the concept of culturally responsive teaching to culturally *relevant* teaching. "A next step for positing effective pedagogical practice is a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. I term this pedagogy culturally relevant pedagogy" (p. 469).

"A next step for positing effective pedagogical practice is a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. I term this pedagogy culturally relevant pedagogy."

Ladson-Billings (1995) outlines three criteria for culturally relevant teaching:

- An ability to develop students academically. This means effectively helping students read, write, speak, compute, pose and solve higher order problems, and engage in peer review of problem solutions.
- A willingness to nurture and support cultural competence in both home and school cultures. The key is for teachers to value and build on skills that students bring from the home culture. For example, teachers of African American students can use the lyrics of rap songs to teach elements of poetry before they proceed to a study of more conventional poetry.
- The development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness. Teachers help students recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities. Ladson-Billings offers the following vignette.

VIGNETTE: Exposing Inequities through Education

"A class of African American middle school students in Dallas identified the problem of their school being surrounded by liquor stores (Robinson, 1993). Zoning regulations in the city made some areas dry while the students' school was in a wet area. The students identified the fact that schools serving white, upper middle-class students were located in dry areas while schools in poor communities were in wet areas. The students, assisted by their teacher, planned a strategy for exposing this inequity. By using mathematics, literacy, social, and political skills, the students were able to prove their points with reports, editorials, charts, maps, and graphs. . . students' learning became a form of cultural critique." (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 477)

DISCUSSION

- **How does Ladson-Billings' vignette demonstrate the first criterion for culturally relevant teaching—developing students academically—and the third criterion—developing a sociopolitical or critical consciousness?**
- **How might the teacher in the vignette have drawn on students' cultural competence in order to accomplish the project?**
- **Think about your own teaching. What kind of project might you and your students develop that would employ culturally relevant teaching? How could you assess your project based on Ladson-Billings' three criteria?**

Nieto (1999) adds to this pedagogy her Five Principles of Learning. These are explained below:

- **Learning is actively constructed**
  This challenges the banking concept of education, in which learning is conceived of as a process of receiving, filing, and storing deposits of information (Freire, 1970). This principle acknowledges learner agency and works against the reproduction of socially sanctioned knowledge. It presupposes that all students have the ability to think and reason and that learning is more than rote memorization of facts.

- **Learning emerges from and builds on experience**
  Everyone has important experiences, attitudes, and behaviors to bring to the process of education. Some bring oral stories instead of written ones; while some experiences appear to possess more cultural capital, they are not inherently more valuable.

- **Learning is influenced by cultural differences**
  The work of Vygotsky (1978), Greenfield et al. (1996), and other cultural psychologists has demonstrated the cultural basis of learning. One example is Trumbull et al.'s (2001) work on collectivism and individualism, which refers to the degree to which a society values individual versus collective learning. This was elaborated in the previous section on Culture, Identity, and Development in *The Diversity Kit*.

- **Learning is influenced by the context in which it occurs**
  Social, political, and economic contexts all affect learning in significant, though not always obvious or predictable, ways. Nieto (1999) cites Kinchloe and Steinberg's proposition that cognition is always interactive with the environment and that schools are never ideology-free zones.

- **Learning is socially mediated and develops within a culture and community**
  Schools organize themselves in ways that are welcoming of particular groups and individuals, based on theories about what human development looks like, what is worth knowing, and what it means to be educated. Teachers act as sociocultural mediators, responsible for assisting their students through their zones of proximal development. Nieto (1999) cites Cummins' work on identity, affective development, and power relationships as issues that are involved in helping students move through their ZPD's to become successful learners.

Finally, Gay (2000) outlines Diamond and Moore's work regarding teacher roles and responsibilities. Culturally relevant teaching requires that teachers act as

- cultural organizers—understanding how culture operates in the classroom, creating learning environments that emanate cultural and ethnic diversity, and facilitating high performance for all students;
- cultural mediators—giving students opportunities to have critical conversations about cultural conflicts, analyzing mainstream cultural ideals realities and comparing them to other cultural ideals realities, clarifying ethnic identities, honoring other cultures, developing strong cross-cultural relationships, and combatting prejudices of all kinds;
- orchestrators of social contexts—making teaching compatible with the socio-cultural contexts of ethnically diverse students and helping students adapt their cultural competencies to school learning resources.

Most teachers would rightly comment that the above roles and responsibilities are daunting without a sound framework or strategies. The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, (CREDE) presents findings from research in this area. Their work suggests that there are several core principles that can be used as an organizing structure for programs for all at-risk children (Center for Research on Education, 2001). The CREDE principles include:

- **I.** Joint Productive Activity: Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teachers and students.
- **II.** Language Development: Develop students' competence in the language and literacy of instruction throughout all instructional activities.
- **III.** Contextualization: Contextualize teaching and curriculum using the experiences and skills of home and community.
- **IV.** Challenging Activities: Challenge students towards cognitive complexity.
- **V.** Instructional Conversation: Engage students through dialogue.

Below we consider each principle, its potential contribution to creating a culturally relevant classroom, and some classroom indicators of the principle.

Principle I states "Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teachers and students." The sociocultural view of learning espoused by Vygotsky (1978) and elaborated upon by Rogoff (1990) and Tharp & Gallimore (1988) posits that learning occurs when an adult or expert peer assists a learner through his or her ZPD. This happens most effectively when the novice and the expert are working together towards a common goal or product that connects "schooled" or "scientific" ideas with practical problems. When joint productive activity occurs, teachers and students create a common context of experience within school, even when they do not share the same home culture. In addition, conversation around the shared experience helps students learn relevant communicative and academic language (see **Table 2**, Center for Research on Education, 1997; 2001).

TABLE 2

TEACHER INDICATORS OF JOINT PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY
Plans instructional activities requiring student collaboration in the creation of a joint product.
Matches the demands of joint productive activity with time available for completion.
Arranges seating to accommodate individual and group needs to talk and work together.
Participates with students in joint productive activity.
Organizes students in a variety of groupings based on friendship, mixed academic ability, language, project, and interests or in any other way that promotes interaction.
Plans with students how to work in groups and how to make transitions from one activity to another, such as from large-group introduction to small-group activity, clean-up to dismissal, and the like.
Manages student and teacher access to materials and technology to facilitate joint productive activity.
Monitors and supports student collaboration in positive ways.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

Principle II states "Develop students' competence in the language and literacy of instruction throughout all instructional activities." This means that everyday social language, formal academic language, and subject matter lexicons (for example, the "language" of math) must all receive explicit attention through purposeful instructional conversations and reading and writing across the curriculum. The language of school is often unfamiliar to English language learners and other students with diverse needs, but linking children's ways of talking with academic subject matter will build the context necessary for children to acquire school discourse (**Table 3**).

TABLE 3

TEACHER INDICATORS OF DEVELOPING LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Listens to student talk about familiar topics such as home and community.
Responds to students' talk and questions, making "in-flight" changes during conversation that directly relate to students' comments.
Assists written and oral language development through modeling, eliciting, probing, restating, clarifying, questioning, praising, etc., in purposeful conversation and writing.
Interacts with students in ways that respect communication styles that differ from the teacher's, such as wait time, eye contact, turn taking, or spotlighting.
Connects student language with literacy and content area knowledge through speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities.
Encourages students to use content vocabulary to express their understanding.
Provides frequent opportunity for students to interact with each other and the teacher during instructional activities.
Encourages students' use of first and second languages in instructional activities.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

Principle III states "Connect teaching and curriculum to students' experiences and skills of home and community." Children will become literate within everyday, culturally meaningful contexts. Teachers must show students how abstract concepts (or "schooled concepts") are derived from and can be applied to the everyday world. In order for teachers to fully understand children's experiences and skills, it is necessary to collaborate with students' families and communities in order to understand patterns of participation, conversation, knowledge, and interests. With such understanding, teachers can transform instruction in the subject areas into meaningful activity for students (**Table 4**).

TABLE 4

TEACHER INDICATORS OF CONTEXTUALIZATION
Begins activities with what students already know from home, community, and school.
Designs instructional activities that are meaningful to students in terms of local community norms and knowledge.
Acquires knowledge of local norms and knowledge by talking to students and family and community members and by reading pertinent documents.
Helps students connect and apply their learning to home and community.
Plans jointly with students to design community-based learning activities.
Provides opportunities for parents or families to participate in classroom instructional settings.
Varies activities to include students' preferences, from collective and cooperative to individual and competitive.
Varies styles of conversation and participation to include students' cultural preferences, including co-narration, call-and-response, choral, and others.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

Principle IV states,"Challenge students toward cognitive complexity." All students must be provided with high academic standards and with meaningful assessment that allows feedback and responsive assistance. Instruction must be provided that requires higher order thinking, not simply drill exercises. It is often wrongly assumed that diverse and English language learners are of limited ability and cannot meet academic challenges (**Table 5**).

TABLE 5

TEACHER INDICATORS OF CHALLENGING ACTIVITIES
For each instructional topic, assures that students see the whole picture as a basis for understanding the parts.
Presents challenging standards for student performance.
Designs instructional tasks that advance student understanding to more complex levels.
Helps students accomplish more complex understanding by building from their previous success.
Gives clear, direct feedback about how student performance compares with challenging standards.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

Principle V states "Engage students through dialogue, especially the instructional conversation." The instructional conversation between teachers and students is based on the idea that students have something to say beyond a presupposed answer that the teacher possesses. Therefore, it is the teacher's role to listen carefully, make guesses about the intended meaning of the student, and adjust responses to assist the student's efforts. This conversation reveals the knowledge, skills, and values (the culture) of the learner, which provides the information necessary for the teacher to contextualize instruction to accommodate the student's experience and knowledge (**Table 6**).

TABLE 6

TEACHER INDICATORS OF INSTRUCTIONAL CONVERSATION
Arranges the classroom to accommodate conversation between the teacher and a small group of students on a regular and frequent basis.
Has a clear academic goal that guides conversation with students.
Ensures that student talk occurs at a higher rate than teacher talk.
Guides conversations to include students' views, judgments, and rationales using text evidence and other substantive report.
Ensures that all students are included in the conversation according to their preferences.
Listens carefully to assess levels of students' understanding.
Assists students' learning throughout the conversation by questioning, restating, praising, encouraging.
Guides the students to prepare a product that indicates that the instructional conversation's goal was achieved.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

In this section of *The Diversity Kit* we have explored several important concepts relating to culture, teaching, and learning. We have argued that holding high expectations for culturally and linguistically diverse students is crucial to ensuring high academic achievement. We have also challenged teachers and educators to question cultural deficit theories of learning and to replace them with ideas that value students' diverse cultural backgrounds, including the concept of funds of knowledge. Finally, we have presented five principles that can guide school-wide efforts to organize programs for all students. In the following section we expand upon the role of the community and explore the role of family in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Culture, Family, and Community

GUIDING QUESTIONS

? *How can educators identify the resources and knowledge that students' families and communities possess in order to enhance communication, student achievement, and family involvement?*

? *How can the cultural histories and knowledge of students, families, and communities be identified and integrated into the curriculum?*

? *How can family and parental involvement challenges be overcome?*

In this section of *The Diversity Kit* we explore how to cultivate collaboration with families and communities in order to support the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Research reveals that families and communities play an important role in a child's learning process (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 1997; Hidalgo, Bright, Siu, Swap, & Epstein, 1995). Understanding the families and communities in which students live can help educators develop student potential. Families and communities can also support student learning. However, to do this means that students' families and communities must be considered resources to be tapped. Sarason (1982) suggests:

> [O]ne has to believe that there are diverse types of people who can be helpful in the classroom even though they have no professional credentials. This in no way means that those who lack these credentials have, as a group, a kind of folk wisdom absent in professionals. Wisdom and imaginativeness are distributed in the same way among professional and nonprofessional groups. (p. 276)

As stated above, the literature on improving student achievement identifies the central role of family and community involvement. But this requires that schools do more than simply communicate students' academic achievement. Oakes and Lipton (1999) suggest:

> [A] further step is to connect students' work in school to their experiences in the community. By engaging students and their families in finding and solving real problems that matter to them at school and outside of school, schoolwork can become less abstract and detached (and thereby more likely to be learned). (p. 354)



Knowing how to relate to students whose socialization is unlike that of the teacher

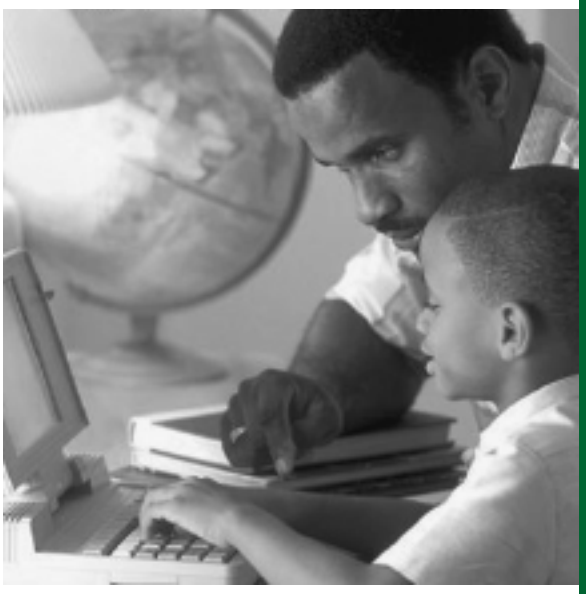
entails getting to know students' communities and homes and observing them in their own environments (Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997). Further, understanding the cultural values and funds of knowledge that students' families and communities possess not only serves the purpose of improving academic achievement (though that may be the stated focus of schools), it also helps schools avoid interfering with families' child-rearing practices. When school cultural norms supplant those of the home, children can become alienated from their families. But when families and schools understand each other's values and ways of educating children, threats to family unity can be avoided and the positive effects of education within diverse cultural communities is enhanced.

Schools must look for practical ways to build meaningful partnerships with families and communities. Clearly, family and community are resources that educators need to draw upon. But as Lueder (1998) points out, it is also important that schools reconsider their assumptions about what family, school, and community partnerships can accomplish. He suggests the following benefits of these partnerships, which are far reaching and go to the heart of a school's success:

- The probability of higher student achievement, as well as more excitement and joy in the classroom and at home, is greater when this kind of learning community is created.
- Though the child remains central, engaging families and community in education will not only help the children but help the family, school, and community as well.
- When families and communities work collaboratively with the school, everyone's role becomes less stressful, more productive, and more rewarding. There will be fewer conflicts and problems. (p. 34)

Although McGroarty (1986) cautions that "knowledge of culture alone will not provide educators with sufficient knowledge to understand and modify school-related behavior" (p. 305), teacher awareness of their own culturally influenced attitudes and behavior provides a starting point for increased understanding of cultures. This kind of self-reflection can form the foundation for a better understanding of students, their families, and their communities (Brown, 1992). It is important for educators to have a fuller personal understanding of how culture influences linguistic, social, and mental behavior. In the Culture, Identity, and Development section of *The Diversity Kit* we explore cultural identity and challenge you to reflect on how culture has influenced your own identity.

Building on Family Strengths



Classroom practices should not undermine the cultural learning style of a child's home and community, though too often the cultural practices of schools have exactly that effect on diverse learners. For example, Moll (1992) contends that classroom practices underestimate what culturally and linguistically diverse children are able to do. Latino children, for example, are often assigned tasks that do not promote their educational and intellectual capabilities. The case of Latino students is not exceptional; too often schools are not as connected to the cultural practices of diverse students' families and communities as they need to be.

Scholars (e.g., Au & Jordan, 1981; Baker & Soden, 1998; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) suggest that knowledge about family and community culture should influence three major components of education: pedagogy, curriculum, and school policy. Each of these areas can be informed by knowledge of students' social, linguistic, and academic strengths. For example, teachers can observe student-teacher and student-student interactions to understand how students learn and to determine their prior knowledge in a particular content area (Díaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986). Pedagogically, when teachers understand students' backgrounds and cultures, they are best able to connect academic content to students' real-life experiences. The following vignette illustrates this well.

VIGNETTE: Bringing Schools and Communities Together

(adapted from Shields, 1995)

It's a misty, cold morning in South Bernstone, a small coal-mining and farming community in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, and a group of fourth graders is sitting cross-legged, engrossed in the "lecture" being given by Mr. McCormick, a local farmer and a student's parent. Mr. McCormick is simply describing the process of fertilizing, weeding, and harvesting the field of pumpkins. He calls on children in turn who are interested in why bugs do not eat up all the pumpkins and how much money he will make when he brings the pumpkins to market.

This is the class' third visit to the farm—they witnessed some of the seeding and came back to see the new plants sprouting their first fruits. As with their previous visits, the students will go back to school and write essays in small groups in science class. This time, however, they will also get to bring pumpkins back, some of which will be cooked in the school kitchen. (p. 197)

DISCUSSION

- **Discuss the pedagogical techniques illustrated in the story.**
- **How would you plan a lesson around such an activity?**
- **In what ways do you draw upon parents' knowledge and experiences in students' learning activities?**

Impact of Culture on Learning

To design effective instruction, the cultural background of the learner must be understood. Villegas (1993) suggests that teachers can build bridges between home and school by selecting meaningful instructional materials, using examples and analogies to clarify new concepts, and using varied teaching strategies that connect cultural experiences and academic content. Cultural differences in approaches to formal learning can be accommodated in the classroom as well. For example, teachers who are able to distinguish individualist cultural values and independence from collectivist cultural values and interdependence are more deliberate in providing flexible instructional activities that give students from various cultural backgrounds opportunities to work in groups and on independent tasks (Greenfield et al., 1996).

To design effective instruction, the cultural background of the learner must be understood.

When teachers use the skills students have developed in the home and draw upon those skills to engage students in learning new academic material, they are effectively linking the home and students' prior knowledge with school. In one example, Díaz, Moll, & Mehan (1986) observed that writing in the study participants' home consisted mainly of phone messages, shopping lists, and an occasional letter; writing was limited to its functional and practical uses. Although not much writing was observed in the home and community, parents nevertheless associated writing with being *bien educado*, or well-educated. Díaz et al.'s (1986) findings effectively illustrate that teachers' awareness of literacy acts at home (such as writing) can inform instructional strategies that rely on what students already know.

In general, to get students actively involved in writing, teachers need to use community information to motivate them. Díaz et al. (1986) suggest using strategies such as prewriting discussions to explore a topic that is of importance to the community. Teachers can also assign activities that involve the students' exploration of their own community. For example, students can conduct a survey with adults in the communities on the topic of bilingual education. After drafting a piece of writing on a topic of importance, students can seek feedback from teachers and peers and revise the piece to create a final product. At each stage students can be encouraged to respond to both the content of the piece and the message it communicates.

In *Creating Culturally Responsive Classrooms*, Shade et al. (1997) advocate incorporating social interaction into the writing process. To do this, Shade et al. offer the example of students submitting their written work to "publishing companies." "Editors" subsequently review the work and then send their feedback to the author through an electronic mail system. The work is revised, published, and catalogued in the school's library. Shade et al. conclude that students' writing is enhanced when it incorporates collaboration and social interaction into the writing process. This example shows that by designing activities that require social interaction, educators can create opportunities for students to connect their unique forms of communication to the more formal writing process used in school.

ACTIVITY: Shade et al.'s Social Process of Writing

In small groups or in pairs, discuss the following questions:

- *How have you seen student writing encouraged through increased emphasis on social process? What positive effects or challenging situations has this approach resulted in?*
- *How would you have to change processes in your classroom to try an approach like the researchers used?*

Cultural Knowledge, Curriculum, and Learning

As discussed above, it is extremely valuable to create ways for students to apply social processes learned at home and in communities to school activities. But an even more direct connection between home-community knowledge and school curriculum often goes unutilized as an avenue for engaging students. This connection entails linking students' home and prior knowledge to school learning. All students enter school with certain knowledge and skills acquired in the home. Damen (1987) describes prior learning as an important factor in academic learning because students learn better when they are able to connect their prior learning to new information. As Au & Kawakami (1994) point out, one important reason why linguistically and culturally diverse students are often not successful in school is the mismatch between school culture and home culture. They suggest that the success of these students is also affected by relationships, communication, and respect. According to Hollins (1996), building on and extending the knowledge learned in the home culture will enhance and facilitate students' academic growth and success in school.

Too often, schools fail to identify the daily experience and cultural knowledge of their learners and to integrate it with the school curriculum. Research conducted by Moll (1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992) has revealed that educational institutions do not view working-class, minority students as emerging from households rich in social and intellectual resources. Gonzalez et al. (1993) similarly observe:

Too often, schools fail to identify the daily experience and cultural knowledge of their learners and to integrate it with the school curriculum.

> Rather than focusing on the knowledge these students bring to school and using it as a foundation for learning, schools have emphasized what these students lack in terms of the forms of language and knowledge sanctioned by the schools. This emphasis on so-called disadvantages has provided justification for lowered academic expectations and inaccurate portrayals of these children and their families. (p. 2)

Before any meaningful attempt can be made to connect student knowledge to schooling, we must challenge the deficit assumption. However, it is not enough just to believe that students' prior knowledge is important. Hollins (1996) underscores the importance of having specific information about students, families, and communities. To begin with, teachers need information concerning the knowledge, experiences, perceptions, and expectations of the students they teach. They also need to understand the expectations, perceptions, and desires of students' parents, caregivers, and significant others. Beyond these sources, educators need knowledge about the history and culture—as well as the social, political, and economic dynamics—of the community in which they teach. Hollins (1996) suggests that

> the basic premise of the theory of cultural mediation in instruction is that teaching and learning are more meaningful and productive when curriculum content and instructional processes include culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge. (p. 150)

Linguistic knowledge is the single most important type of knowledge many students bring to the classroom; it is also the type of knowledge schools most neglect to draw upon. In the case of speakers of dialects or home languages different from those used in the school, teachers can help students be successful by recognizing and building on the strengths of the students' language. Speakers of a non-dominant language may feel that the language they bring to the classroom is somehow not valued. Effective teachers can make their instruction culturally responsive by providing opportunities for students to use knowledge of their first language to gain proficiency in English. This underscores Boykin & Bailey's (2000) observation that students' academic achievement and cognitive functioning are enhanced when the school's contexts for learning are responsive to the child's background and cultural experiences.

Effective teachers can make their instruction culturally responsive by providing opportunities for students to use knowledge of their first language to gain proficiency in English.

Teachers also need to know how to conduct lessons that reflect the values of the home culture. In cases of cultural mismatch, teachers can be informed about practices that are effective for

students from a wide variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Sometimes teachers have to change from a traditional instructional strategy to one that focuses on the values and cultures of the students. According to Ellison, Boykin, Towns, & Stokes (2000), a skilled teacher identifies those aspects of students' cultural backgrounds that will help them self-motivate, make adjustments, and learn in the classroom. In short, teachers need to create a learning environment using the knowledge of the role culture plays in students' learning.

ACTIVITY: Examining Curriculum for Culture and Language

(adapted from Hollins, 1996)

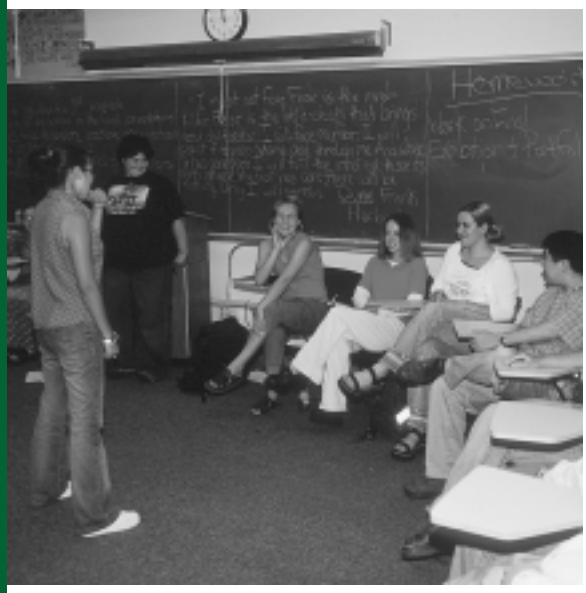
In a small group, examine a curriculum guide or a textbook. Use the following questions to determine the appropriateness of its content for the variety of cultures and languages represented by your students.

- *How does the content provide a positive historical perspective for the related accomplishments, values, and beliefs of a culturally diverse population?*
- *How does the content reflect the accomplishments of different ethnic groups in developing new knowledge in the field?*
- *In what ways does the content allow for students' use of cultural knowledge as well as knowledge about culture?*
- *How does the curriculum address the expectations and aspirations of the students and their families?*

Overcoming Challenges to Involving Families and Communities

Families and communities can be valuable resources for schools and teachers in that they provide knowledge about the culture and language of their students. Tapping these resources requires changing how schools perceive the parents' and communities', values and beliefs. These changes include building a school culture that will accept values, beliefs, and ways of viewing the world that are often quite different from those of the mainstream population. As diverse populations come into the community, changes such as these will have to take place to ensure excellent and equitable education for all students.

Over time, the role of families and parents has gradually changed as a result of broader changes occurring in society. Changes in families' ethnic, linguistic, and racial compositions; cultural backgrounds; and socioeconomic conditions impact a school's interactions with its students' families. Further, understanding the communication patterns of culturally and linguistically diverse students can either enhance or discourage school collaboration with families and communities. Weinstein-Shr (1995) maintains that in order to help refugee and immigrant families, schools need to develop an understanding of the linguistic, religious, and geographic differences (including differences between rural and urban settings) among their diverse student population. For example, the first wave of adult refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Cuba had university educations. In contrast, most of those arriving later were farmers with little or no education.



Weinstein-Shr (1995) notes that the following three issues need to be understood when working with a refugee population: survival, communication, and power. Many refugees fled from their home country and have survived despite some very difficult experiences. Once in the United States, these groups count on their traditional kinship bonds and community organizations to provide them with resources for solving some of their immediate problems. So, while most Asian immigrants place a high value on education, parents are perplexed when the teacher asks them for help. It is

important for teachers to become familiar with how the families view the roles of the teacher and school. Social, cultural, and historic contexts impact how families participate in their children's education.

In other instances, teachers may encounter a sense of alienation in Hispanic and other families because of other kinds of cultural misunderstandings. Bermúdez (1994) identifies various barriers that limit family involvement, including (1) working parents, (2) lack of confidence, (3) lack of English skills, (4) lack of understanding of the home-school partnership, (5) lack of understanding of the school system, (6) negative past experiences with schools, and (7) insensitivity and hostility on the part of school personnel.

A brief description of each of these challenges to family participation follows.

- **Work interference:** Many parents hold nine-to-five jobs. Meetings occurring in the evening would be more appropriate for these parents. It is important to include other members of the family such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles, especially if the child is from a single-parent home. Some of these challenges can be overcome if schools assess parents' work hours and institute flexible schedules for parent activities.

- **Self-confidence:** Believing that education only takes place in school is a misconception held by many Hispanic and Asian groups as well as other recent immigrants. At times, parents lose self-confidence when schools implement partnership activities. Schools that nurture parents by involving them through non-threatening environments and through home activities that focus on family strengths have a better chance for success than schools that rely on traditional parental involvement activities. Arrastía (1995) observed in the Mother's Reading Project how mothers from different ethnic groups built their self-confidence through storytelling; together they came to understand how each individual, regardless of educational level, possesses rich knowledge that can be expressed through stories. Such programs have been successful in engaging hard-to-reach parents.

- **Language skills:** Parents who do not understand or speak English have not been able to collaborate easily with schools. Both language and (in some cases) economic realities may make them feel isolated within the school. Schools must design and implement a plan for effective communication between school and home. Good communication is at the center of effective family and parental involvement. If the school or teacher sees families and parents as resources, then communications will be two-way—initiated by teachers and by family members (Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders & Simon, 1997). Schools need to look closely at various ways of helping families and communities. For example, providing English-as-a-second-language classes at the school or in the community is one effective strategy. Often when schools assess parents' needs, they gain insight into specific language needs, talents, and resources that foster effective working partnerships between schools and families.

- **Cultural differences in viewing parents' role:** In some cultures the parents' role in school is very different from the traditional American role. Because of this, teachers must be able to create partnerships with parents in a way that respects their beliefs and values. Building and gaining the trust of these parents is crucial. Participation in aptly designed programs changes parents' attitudes and perceptions as to what they are capable of doing. As they gain confidence, parents begin to understand how to collaborate with teachers. Providing multiple opportunities to participate—such as evening or Saturday activities, fairs, conferences, and meetings—will enable parents to select from an array of activities that are sensitive to their needs and life circumstances.

- **Knowledge of the school system:** Parents need to know how the school system works and how they can have access to it for the betterment of their children. Too often, school personnel mistrust or misunderstand parents, believing that they are not interested in or do not value education.

- **Past experiences:** Some parents have negative feelings and experiences related to school. Some have experienced racial discrimination, encountered few teacher role models from their language or cultural background, or have been punished in school for speaking their home language. These and other experiences are difficult to forget. Schools need to not only provide more positive experiences for students but also to engage with families in ways that demonstrate respect, make clear the desire to collaborate, and explicitly create a positive climate to counter the negative history that individual parents may have had.

- **Attitudes of school personnel:** School personnel may subtly display patronizing or negative attitudes toward parents. For example, communication with parents often occurs only in English, without regard to whether the family understands English. Schools need to welcome parents whenever they visit the school by conveying a positive attitude toward the first language of the students and families. All school personnel should have opportunities to participate in staff development that will increase their awareness and acceptance of cultural differences within the school. Communicating with parents about student progress on a regular basis sends the message that the school cares and considers families to be key partners in the work of teaching and learning.

ACTIVITY: Challenging Cultural Assumptions of Parental Involvement

Refugees and immigrants come to the United States under many different circumstances. Each group is as different as the countries from which they come; they have different beliefs, values, and languages.

In a small group or in pairs, read the following teacher comment and answer the questions that follow.

"I feel so bad for these kids. The parents don't come to parent-teacher conferences. I've never seen any at open house either. I don't think they really try to help the kids with school. I wonder, maybe in their culture, education isn't as important."—Third-grade teacher

- *What are some possible reasons why the parents may not have participated in their child's education?*
- *What questions might the teacher ask herself or others to gain insight into parents' beliefs regarding their participation in school?*
- *How could parents participate in their child's education in ways that the teacher may not know about?*
- *What kinds of opportunities can the teacher explore to collaborate with families?*

Just as parents have challenges that impede their collaboration with schools, teachers have challenges that impede their work with parents. Bermúdez (1994) reports the following barriers that impede teachers when it comes to family and community involvement:

- Negative attitudes toward parents: misconceptions and assumptions about parents
- Unfamiliar cultures: lack of understanding of the students' cultures
- Language barriers: inability to understand the parents' home languages
- Training: lack of training in working with parents
- Increased responsibilities: lack of time to develop family involvement activities
- Institutional support: lack of support from school district

ACTIVITY: Overcoming Barriers to Involvement

Divide into six groups with each group drawing a number corresponding to one of the six barriers above. Discuss your selected barrier and develop three strategies to overcome the barrier.

Onikama, Hammond, & Koki's (1998) synthesis of research on family and community participation in school offers the following general conclusions:

- Family involvement is multifaceted and complex. There are many types of family involvement in education. In developing a family involvement program, educators need to consider the cultural, linguistic, and economic factors that are relevant to the unique needs of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families.

- Home, school, and community are three major spheres of influence on children. Their interactions may be either positive or negative, close or distant, growth promoting or growth discouraging. They range from one-on-one interactions with the child to events occurring in the society itself. All three major spheres of influence should be considered in efforts to promote family involvement in education (Epstein, 1995; 2001).

- Some barriers to participation, such as lack of time and knowledge about how to become involved, cut across all cultures and peoples. Others barriers, such as language differences and distrust of schools, may be particular to specific cultural groups.

- Family involvement in some regions may have unique barriers. For example, a community's religious and cultural priorities may often affect the level of family participation in school functions. Barriers that result from the community's culture raise special challenges for educators soliciting family involvement at school (p.19).

Finally, Chavkin & Williams (1993) suggest that schools can benefit from establishing some general guidelines for family and community involvement, especially when the school proposes culturally responsive participation. School districts that are willing to establish realistic guidelines will change the way of viewing family and community involvement. Schools, teachers, families, and the communities all reap the benefits and share the common goal of success for every student.



In this section of *The Diversity Kit* we have explored the role of family and community in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students. We have highlighted

the academic and social benefits of a culturally responsive pedagogy that incorporates students' prior learning. We have also stressed the importance of teachers knowing the cultural backgrounds of the students they teach.

In the following section of *The Diversity Kit*, we explore various aspects of language and how language use impacts the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students. We then dig more deeply into the areas of second language learning, literacy, and assessment. We reiterate that the areas of human development, culture, and language should not be explored as isolated, unrelated fields of study; rather, each of these three sections are deeply intertwined. We therefore encourage you to utilize all three sections of *The Diversity Kit* in your exploration of diversity and social change in education.

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RESOURCES and FURTHER READING

Chavez Chavez, R. & O'Donnell, J. (1998). Speaking the Unpleasant: The Politics of (non)Engagement in the Multicultural Education Terrain. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

This book consists of 17 chapters contributed by a variety of multicultural experts and academics. The intent of the book is to address (non)engagement of both students and pre- and in-service teachers with specific consideration of racism and discrimination issues. In short, the authors seek ways in which to engage the mainstream. The chapters confront this challenge at both the personal and institutional levels. The book is designed to move the reader off-center, and from reflective to reflexive teaching practices.

Genesee, F. (Ed.). (1998). Educating Second Language Children (6th printing). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

In this volume, the contributors emphasize that educating children requires not only attention to language development but also the development of the whole child. Similarly, contextual factors—including school, family, and community—must also be considered for their impact on the education of second language children. Thus, the scope of this volume includes addressing the influence of culture, the role of the family, and understanding the challenges that second language, immigrant and refugee children face. Some of the authors tackle tough issues such as low-literacy students and special education needs, and others offer strategies and tools that will assist any educator in the classroom.

Nieto, S. (1999). Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education. New York: Longman.

This book, now in its third edition, meets the challenge of addressing the social, political and cultural contexts of education and how these contexts impact the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The book provides a solid conceptual framework and utilizes numerous case studies throughout, which serve to link theory to classroom practice. Questions at the end are designed to encourage practitioners to critically address issues of race, language, ethnicity, discrimination, and teacher expectations.

Perez, B. (Ed.). (1998). Sociocultural Contexts of Language and Literacy. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

This edited volume emphasizes the social and cultural contexts of education on the acquisition of language and development of literacy among second language learners in the United States. The editor's framework includes the social construction of literacy, based on the work of Buner and Vygotsky among others. This constructivist view rejects the notion that literacy consists of simple decoding and knowledge of sounds. Some of the contributions focus on ethnically diverse communities (American Indian, Puerto Rican, Vietnamese), and the work of the editor focuses primarily on literacy in the classroom. Each chapter ends with several activities for educators interested in exploring literacy grounded in culture and community.

WEB SITES and ONLINE RESOURCES

http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/presrvce/pe3lk1.htm

This site provides an overview of issues relating to multicultural education and educating teachers who will work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Additional readings are available online through the links provided.

http://www.tolerance.org/index.jsp

This extremely useful Web site is devoted to promoting tolerance and social justice. The homepage consists of links specifically designed for teachers, parents, and children. The Teaching Tolerance organization provides many useful resources free of charge, including a biannual journal and curriculum kits. The site also addresses current events and news topics related to tolerance.

http://www.knowledgeloom.org/crt/index.shtml

This professional development Web site, operated by the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, addresses a wide variety of topics regarding what works in teaching and learning. The Culturally Relevant Teaching Spotlight provides a forum for discussion with a panel of experts, highlights success stories from exemplary classrooms, and points practitioners to additional resources and research. Educators can directly access the panel forum and join the discussion. They may also register on the Web site to share stories and contribute their ideas.

http://projects.terc.edu/cheche_konnen

The Chèche Konnen Center is engaged in a national reform initiative to improve elementary and middle school science teaching and learning for language minority students. The Center utilizes a research-based approach to teacher professional development that integrates inquiry and reflection in three areas: science and mathematics, teaching and learning, and culture and language. Educators interested in constructivist science teaching with English language learners can access an array of information and resources on the site.

Videos

The Color of Fear. (n.d.). Stirfry Seminars, Oakland, CA (www.stirfryseminars.com)

In this 90 minute video, eight men from different racial groups confront racism and discrimination through their interaction and dialogue over a 3-day period. The video offers powerful perspectives on racism and discrimination and can serve as an excellent point of departure for those wishing to facilitate conversations about social change. The video is aimed towards an audience of mature adults. A sequel to the video, *Walking Each Other Home*, provides additional depth and insight into the relationships that evolve among the men.

LAB

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THE DIVERSITY KIT

An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education



PART III:

Language

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An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education

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Language

The Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory

a program of The Education Alliance at Brown University

The LAB, a program of The Education Alliance at Brown University, is one of ten educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Our goals are to improve teaching and learning, advance school improvement, build capacity for reform, and develop strategic alliances with key members of the region's education and policymaking community.

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Contents

Executive Summary **1**
Language, Culture, and Schooling **3**
Guiding Questions **3**
The Ability of Language to Shape Life Chances **5**
Cultural Differences in Communication Style and Language Use **6**
ACTIVITY: Exploring Storytelling *8*
Direct and Indirect Speech *9*
VIGNETTE: Communicating Bad News *10*
VIGNETTE: The Field Trip *12*
Language Attitudes *14*
Language Varieties: Dialects, Pidgins, and Creoles *15*
ACTIVITY: Exploring Language Variation *17*
CASE STUDY: African American Vernacular English .....
(Black Language) *20*
Learning a Second Language **25**
Guiding Questions **25**
Theories of Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition **27**
ACTIVITY: Interview with a Second Language Learner *30*
Environmentalist Theory *31*
ACTIVITY: Schumann's Social and Psychological Distance *32*
Nativist Theories *33*
ACTIVITY: Krashen's Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis *35*
Developmental Stages of Sequence of Language Acquisition **42**
VIGNETTE: Silent Period: Marta and Esteban *42*
ACTIVITY: Language Experience Approach *46*
Models of Bilingual Education **49**
Language and Literacy **53**
Guiding Questions **53**
Cultural Approaches to Literacy **54**
VIGNETTE: Class Books *56*
Oral Language as the Basis for Written Language *57*

Elements of Literacy Proficiency *58*
Phonological Awareness 58
Print-Based Skills 60
Vocabulary and Prior Knowledge 60
ACTIVITY: Semantic Mapping 62
Knowledge of Discourse Structures 63
Knowledge of Appropriate Literary Styles 63
Purposes for Reading 64
Second Language Issues in Acquiring Literacy *65*
VIGNETTE: Disproportionate Representation of English Language Learners 67
Knowledge of Morphology 68
Knowledge of Syntax 68
ACTIVITY: Critical Literacy 71
ACTIVITY: Exploring Literacy for English Language Learners 72
Different Orthographies *73*
Language and Assessment 77
Guiding Questions 77
Assessing Language Proficiency 78
Language Factors, Content Mastery, and Assessment 82
Assessment as a Cultural Event 85
VIGNETTE: Hermana May Understand, but I Can't Tell *86*
Authentic Assessment and Second Language Learners 90
ACTIVITY: Assessment Design Self-Assessment Checklist *93*
A Note on Grading 94
ACTIVITY: Grading the Work of English Language Learners *94*
Language Differences, Language Deficits, and Learning Problems 93
References 97
Resources and Further Reading 107
Web Sites and Online Resources 109
Videos 111

PART III: LANGUAGE

Activity	Title	Page #
ACTIVITY	Exploring Storytelling	8
VIGNETTE	Communicating Bad News	10
VIGNETTE	The Field Trip	12
ACTIVITY	Exploring Language Variation	16
CASE STUDY	African American Vernacular English (Black Language)	20
ACTIVITY	Interview with a Second Language Learner	30
ACTIVITY	Schumann's Social and Psychological Distance	32
ACTIVITY	Krashen's Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis	35
VIGNETTE	Silent Period: Marta and Esteban	42
ACTIVITY	Language Experience Approach	46
VIGNETTE	Class Books	56
ACTIVITY	Semantic Mapping	62
VIGNETTE	Disproportionate Representation of English Language Learners	67
ACTIVITY	Critical Literacy	71
ACTIVITY	Exploring Literacy for English Language Learners	72
VIGNETTE	Hermana May Understand, but I Can't Tell	86
ACTIVITY	Assessment Design Self-Assessment Checklist	93
ACTIVITY	Grading the Work of English Language Learners	94

Executive Summary

We live in a world connected through language. All human beings have the desire to communicate, and this is achieved largely through language. In fact, as Fromkin and Rodman (1998) have observed, "wherever humans exist, language exists" (p. 26). Given the universal nature of language, it might not appear to be worthy of study. But upon closer scrutiny, it is clear that language acquisition and language use are deeply complex phenomena. Language production is not only a physiological event but a process deeply embedded in culture.

In this section of *The Diversity Kit*, we ground our understanding of language in culture and cultural context. The noted sociolinguist Joshua Fishman (1991) has described three connections between language and culture:

- **Language indexes culture**: A language that has grown with a culture is the best language through which to describe and communicate that culture.
- **Language symbolizes culture**: Language reflects the status and social positioning of a culture.
- **Culture is partly created from its language**: Certain cultural events such as rituals, storytelling, folktales, and greetings are deeply intertwined in language. A shift to using a new language will signify a shift in culture.

In this section of *The Diversity Kit*, we highlight the fact that language and culture are deeply intertwined. We also maintain that all language varieties, including what is traditionally referred to as dialect, pidgin or Creole, are equally complex systems of communication that are appropriate to meet the communicative needs of a particular speech community.

In the first chapter, Language, Culture, and Schooling, we introduce the reader to cultural differences in communication style and language use. We consider language attitudes and explore variations in language, including African American Vernacular English.

In the second chapter, we delve into theories underlying second language acquisition, the developmental stages of second language acquisition, and some of the educational programs and models that support bilingualism and biliteracy. In this chapter, we ask the reader to become an "educational linguist" and to explore the ways that language is used in the communities of culturally and linguistically diverse students. We underscore that students' knowledge of language and language use can be powerful tools that challenge existing social inequities.

Finally, in the last two sections, we explore language as it relates to literacy and language and assessment. We review some of the areas of linguistics that educators need to be familiar with, such as phonology, morphology, and syntax. These areas, along with an understanding of print, appropriate literary styles, and purposes for reading, make up the complex process of literacy acquisition. We present language assessment and introduce the reader to measures that can be used to assess language proficiency. Here, we differentiate between language difficulties—which are common occurrences in the natural progression of second language acquisition—and language deficiencies, with which second language learners are often misdiagnosed, causing them to be disproportionately represented in special education classes.

As with the sections on human development and culture, we urge the reader to engage in ongoing conversations in their schools and communities that address issues of diversity and the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Through the activities and vignettes presented, we ask the reader to explore language variation and use. We also challenge the reader to raise questions about complex social phenomena and inequities, questions that may not offer simple solutions but do illuminate pathways toward social change.

Citations

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Language, Culture, and Schooling

GUIDING QUESTIONS

? *How do cultural linguistic backgrounds influence how students use language?*

? *Why is language such an important factor in the classroom?*

? *What do teachers need to know about so-called "non-standard" varieties of English in order to teach their students successfully?*

[E]ducational failure is often . . . language failure. . . . [A] minimum requirement for an educationally relevant approach to language is that it takes account of the child's own linguistic experience, defining this experience in terms of its richest potential and noting where there may be differences of orientation which would cause certain children difficulties in school. (Halliday, 1973, pp. 18-20)

It has been said that every language represents a way of thinking (Fanon cited in Smitherman, 1998). It is understandable then that language is the most important tool for transmitting culture from one generation to another. In fact, culture and language are so thoroughly intertwined that loss of one leads to loss of the other (Brown, Hammond, & Onikama, 1997; Fishman, 1991; Wong Fillmore, 1991).

Virtually all learning experiences involve language to some degree. Symbolizing is the basis of human intelligence, and language is the primary tool we use to symbolize what we experience and think (Crystal, 1987; Gardner, 1983; Oller, 1991; Vygotsky, 1962). It is no wonder that language plays such an important role or that we tend to regard literacy (or the literate use of oral language) as the essential indicator of an educated person. But language is used in different ways by different cultural groups, and what counts as appropriate usage of language differs from group to group. Languages have evolved to serve the cultural needs of their speakers, and language is the principal vehicle for cultural transmission across generations. Just as culture influences our theories of child development (what we take to be normal and desirable development), culture influences how we use language and what we take to be normal language development (Eriks-Brophy & Crago, 1993; Heath, 1983; Hymes, 1971; Nelson-Barber, 1997; Philips, 1983).

Culture and language are so thoroughly intertwined that loss of one leads to loss of the other.

To succeed within their own cultural group, all children need to learn not only the linguistic code of that group but the ways in which language is used (Heath, 1986). Language use includes the goals of speaking (i.e., what is accomplished by using language) as well as rules about when children should speak, to whom they may speak,

and the circumstances surrounding what topics are spoken (Bloom & Lahey, 1978). These are the pragmatic or social expectations surrounding language. Children learn these conventions along with the pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar of a language, but these aspects of language are so automatic (and learned so unconsciously) that neither children, their parents, nor their teachers tend to be consciously aware of them. Some researchers believe that language use is the most powerful cultural element in the classroom (Heath, 1986; Villegas, 1991).

Teachers' first impressions of children are often based on the ways they use language (Ramirez, 1985).

The Ability of Language to Shape Life Chances

It could be argued that we do not create language, it creates us. The language surrounding children teaches them who they are, what their place in the world is, and what they need to do to become autonomous and valuable citizens. If they are unable to interact with and negotiate a culture's discourses with critical insight and confidence, they will be less autonomous and more likely to be dependent on others. "Discourses" refers to the daily linguistic interactions, both academic and social, that take place either in or outside of school. People become empowered when they can use and adapt language for their own purposes, but too often the discourse of the dominant culture (and the school) displaces the discourse of students from minority or nondominant cultures (Gutièrrez, Stone, & Larson, in press).

Success in education is highly dependent on people's ability to display knowledge, usually through the spoken or written word. Teachers' first impressions of children are often based on the ways they use language (Ramirez, 1985). In later stages of education, verbal contact through formal or informal assessments is the main link between students and those who decide their educational fate. In fact, formal education is largely a process of teaching the rules for using words and other signs used in academic meaning systems and then judging how well those rules have been learned. Beyond school, the life chances of students are determined by their ability to interact with the discourses around them. The structures of these interactions and activities are based upon assumptions and expectations about language and communication. Much of the discourse that controls outcomes for children is shaped by (and shapes)

institutions over which culturally and linguistically diverse parents have little influence. Schools need to be more linguistically flexible than other institutions if they want to improve the life chances of language minority students.

Cultural Differences in Communication Style and Language Use

Communication styles vary across cultures, and communication norms are expressions of each culture's values. Cultures have informal rules that govern speaking, listening, and turn-taking behaviors. However, teachers sometimes overlook how a child's culture's own expectations for communication and interaction may be very different from the dominant patterns in schools. They regard children who come from non-dominant linguistic and cultural groups as unresponsive, disruptive, or slow learners. When the cultural communication styles of students within a school are diverse, no single style of communication should be deemed the only acceptable one in the classroom.

Children whose ways of using language differ from those approved in school may find school language conventions baffling. Such children have learned different conventions than those required for participating in the classroom. If their teachers do not have information about their students' cultures, they may believe the children are shy, slow, or nonverbal (Dumont, 1979; Labov, 1969; Philips, 1983). Studies with American Indian students and African American students have shown that students' levels of verbal responsiveness depend on social circumstances, how questions are posed, and who is posing the questions (Labov, 1972; Swisher & Deyhle, 1992). Other research with Hawaiian and Navajo students has shown how different classroom organization patterns can lead to good or poor student participation (Au & Jordan, 1981; McCarty & Schaffer, 1992).

When the cultural communication styles of students within a school are diverse, no single style of communication should be deemed the only acceptable one in the classroom.

There are numerous examples of ways that students differ in language use. For instance, conventions for telling stories—an activity all children are asked to do as early as kindergarten—vary tremendously (Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981). Some cultures or cultural groups use a

topic-associating

An episodic style to telling a story in which a string of personal anecdotes makes up the discourse.

topic-centered

An approach to telling a story that establishes a primary topic and structures the story around it.

topic-associating or episodic style, in which a string of personal anecdotes makes up the discourse. The theme of a string may not be immediately clear to the listener because there is no evident beginning, middle, or end. Dominant-culture teachers in the U.S. are often more comfortable working with children who use a ***topic-centered*** style. A topic-centered approach to telling a story establishes a primary topic and structures the story around it. Teachers need to be aware of the different possible ways of telling stories if they are to understand children from nondominant cultural backgrounds.

Howard Smith (1998) cites Shirley Brice Heath's comparison of the storytelling styles of two communities, one African American and one white:

> People in both Trackton and Roadville spend a lot of time telling stories. Yet the form, occasions, content, and functions of their stories differ greatly. They structure their stories differently; they hold different scales of features on which stories are recognized as stories and judged as good or bad… [The white] community allows only stories which are factual and have little exaggeration; the other uses reality only as the germ of a highly creative fictionalized account. (p. 184)

As Heath notes, these communities share a common emphasis on storytelling but differ in how they understand what a story is and how it ought to be told.

sociolinguistics

The study of language forms, language use, and the relationship between language and society.

The need to understand students' storytelling approaches is just one reason why teachers need to understand ***sociolinguistics***. Sociolinguists study language forms, language use, and the relationship between language and society (Crystal, 1987). Without some sociolinguistic knowledge, teachers may perceive differences in children's language as deficits and thereby perpetuate biases in judgments about what children are capable of learning. Ethnographic research is one way teachers can learn about the discourse styles of their particular students and communities.

ACTIVITY: Exploring Storytelling

- *Invite class members and their families to a culture-sharing evening. Have a storytelling hour, during which family members can tell stories that were told to them as young people.*

- *Reflect on the forms and structures of the stories you heard from members of different cultural groups and consider this information when listening to class members.*

- *Take an opportunity to share stories from your community—past or present—with colleagues in your school. Take time to discuss the differences in storytelling you observe.*

Some cultures embrace indirectness and ambiguity, while others emphasize directness and confrontation (Lustig & Koester, 1999).

Direct and Indirect Speech

Another instance of cross-cultural difference that sometimes causes tremendous misunderstanding among people is the varying degrees of directness in interpersonal communication. Some cultures embrace indirectness and ambiguity, while others emphasize directness and confrontation (Lustig & Koester, 1999). In the United States, the norm is to be direct, whether this makes someone else uncomfortable or not. In fact, many Americans from the dominant culture would think it disingenuous to communicate any other way. However, this valued style of communication is in distinct contrast to what Mexican Americans or Micronesians, for example, have learned. People from those cultures are likely to go out of their way to avoid confronting someone with negative information. They might go to a relative and hope that the message gets around to the target person. From their perspective, everyone can save face through the indirect communication of a complaint. An European American might be befuddled or annoyed and ask, "Why didn't they tell me directly if they have a problem with something that I have done?" (Lustig & Koester, 1999, p. 93). It isn't hard to see why misunderstandings arise among students or between teachers and students who have been socialized to two such different communication norms. When confronted directly with a criticism or correction, especially in front of others, a student from a culture that privileges indirect communication might feel far more embarrassed than his or her teacher realizes.

VIGNETTE: Communicating Bad News

I was visiting an island in the Pacific whose indigenous culture has remained relatively intact despite incursions by Europeans and Americans over the past centuries. As a speaker at an educational conference, I was thrilled to have several days to meet educators from this island, and many others throughout Micronesia, and learn from them how they taught in culturally relevant ways. Of course, I wanted to send post cards of this lovely island to family and friends; I sneaked away to the post office one afternoon to buy some beautiful stamps depicting local arts. I stood in line for nearly half an hour, along with perhaps 20 locals, tourists, and conference guests. As I neared the counter and the lone postal clerk, I heard murmurings to the effect that there might not be any stamps. The Arizona tourist ahead of me turned around and announced in tones that everyone could hear, "They are out of stamps, and there won't be any until three o'clock this afternoon when the plane from Hawaii arrives!"

DISCUSSION

- **If you had been behind the writer in line, how do you think you would have felt when the Arizona tourist made the announcement?**

- **Have you ever been in a situation like this one? If so, which of the people mentioned in the scene did you behave most like?**

- **Can you think of an instance in which some of your students have spoken more or less directly than you would have in their situation?**

There are, of course, many other revealing examples of cross-cultural variations in language use. Any diverse classroom may represent a mixture of cultures, each with its own beliefs about how children should communicate. Some cultural groups emphasize listening over speaking and believe that wisdom entails speaking very selectively (Philips, 1972). Other groups (such as the dominant U.S. culture) believe that power and knowledge come through active use of language in social situations (Greenfield, Quiroz, & Raeff, 2000). Some groups use language with children primarily to socialize them to expected behaviors. Others attempt to get small children to talk about what they observe or experience in ways that are similar to how language is used in schools (Snow, 1983). Some cultures may believe that children should speak one at a time (as is common practice in U.S. classrooms), while others believe children may speak at the same time (Au & Jordan, 1981). Some cultures believe that questioning an adult is a sign of critical thinking (as in U.S. dominant culture), while others believe that questioning an adult is a sign of poor upbringing and lack of respect (Eggen & Kauchak, 1997; Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1996). Understandably, these differences can have a profound effect on how comfortable a child feels within the language practices of his or her classroom. Teachers will be in a much better position to get children to participate in classroom talk if they understand how talk takes place in their students' homes. If children have not been expected to use language in "school" ways at home, they will need time to learn those ways. Teaching new ways of using language need not result in a devaluation of children's own ways with words.

Cultural differences in styles of expression and communication can affect parental involvement in schooling as well as student behavior.

Cultural differences in styles of expression and communication can affect parental involvement in schooling as well as student behavior. Schools today often expect parents to participate in parent-teacher conferences and, at times, on committees that set educational policy or support the school in other ways. The intent behind these expectations is positive: schools want to foster participation and empowerment of parents. They want schooling to reflect parents' priorities and for parents to have an investment in their children's education. However, because of the special esteem accorded teachers in many other cultures, members of those cultures may believe that decisions about practices and policies should be left to professionals. Parents holding these cultural values are puzzled when a school tries to involve them in goal setting at parent-teacher conferences and decision

making on advisory councils. Teachers, on the other hand, may think such parents are uncaring or unconcerned about their children's education. If the parents speak little or no English and the teacher cannot speak the parents' language, communication problems are compounded. However, it is more often the values and intentions underlying the language—rather than the language difference itself—that cause misunderstandings between home and school (Trumbull, Greenfield, Rothstein-Fisch, & Quiroz, 2001).

In the vignette below, one teacher bridges the gap between the cultures of her students—who are mostly Latino immigrants—and the culture of school, with its requirements for a very particular kind of discourse.

VIGNETTE: The Field Trip

Ms. Altchech's fourth-grade class was preparing to take a field trip to the Ballona Wetlands Park near their Los Angeles school. They were lucky enough to have a wildlife docent from the park come to their classroom twice before the trip. When he asked the students what they knew about various animals they would likely see on the trip, they routinely answered with stories about animal experiences with their families. On the second visit, he let a couple of stories go by and then issued the admonition, "No more stories!" Ms. Altchech knew that what he wanted was a "scientific discussion" with no "extraneous" commentary. She wasn't surprised, though, when his next question was met with silence. Why? Her students are largely from immigrant Latino families, and their cultures do not always stress the separation of content knowledge from social experience.

Later, Ms. Altchech invited her students to tell their stories that related in some way to the planned field trip. As they talked, she constructed a T-chart on the board with key elements from the students' stories on the left. Then, she asked them to help her extract the "scientific information" from their stories. For example, she used a student's comment that "the hummingbird's

wings moved so fast" to draw out information about the bird's metabolism and feeding habits. The students were participating, and the science lesson was taught in a culturally responsive way.

DISCUSSION

The classroom extension below shows a reconstruction of the T-chart Ms. Altchech and her students developed. Through her instructional strategy, Ms. Altchech helped students move from a familiar discourse style to the more academic style expected in the classroom. She used their own strengths and values (including a strong orientation to family) to shape the instruction. She allowed students to relate their stories—stories that often involved trips or other family activities. The result was a high level of student engagement, ready identification of students' prior knowledge, and a joint construction of the "scientific knowledge" that was the goal of the lesson.

FIGURE 1

Classroom Extension

STUDENT EXPERIENCE	SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION
Carolina's Story I was playing in the garden with grandmother and I saw a hummingbird near the cherry tree. The bird "stood in the air." I tried to go close to the pretty little bird, but it kept darting away.	**Hummingbird** Brownish with bright iridescent green and red coloring around head and neck Wings beat rapidly Bird can hover and fly in any direction Has to eat frequently because it uses so much energy in its movements

Language Attitudes

Attitudes toward language influence our perceptions about other people's social identities, social status (Fishman, 1991), and intellectual abilities (Ramirez, 1985). All speakers use one or more dialects of the language they speak. Regional dialects have traditionally symbolized allegiance to a region, conveyed positive and shared connotations associated with valued traits, and signaled social bonding within class and ethnic groups. Accents and dialectal variations, however, have also had negative connotations, and in many societies they are impediments to social, educational, and economic opportunities.

Attitudes and values attached to some facets of language (e.g., regional or national accent) are evident and widely acknowledged. These are often captured in humor and parodies. However, people are rarely aware of the depth of reactions to divergent language styles and the speakers who use them. "The ideal of linguistic democracy, in which the speech of every citizen is regarded with equal respect by all others, is perhaps the most unrealistic of all social ideals. Speech is one of the most effective instruments in existence for maintaining a given social order" (Christian, cited in Peñalosa, 1980, p. 183).

In general, those who achieve the highest degree of economic success in U.S. society tend to have the least regionally-accented speech (see Peñalosa, 1980). The significance of this reality has not gone unnoticed among speakers of different varieties of English. Few television newscasters, for example, speak with a distinctive accent, and some have consciously eliminated certain regional characteristics from their speech.

Language attitudes – both positive and negative – also operate within the classroom and can affect the teaching and learning process. Language plays a major role in establishing the social identities and relationships of teachers and students in the classroom. As Ramirez (1985) has observed, the initial impressions teachers form about students are often based upon features of their speech. Once established, these views appear to remain relatively fixed and may influence teachers' expectations of students. Moreover, negative teacher attitudes may reinforce similar student attitudes toward their own or others' nonstandard language use. Thus, students may be subjected to teacher, peer, and internalized prejudice because of the dialect they speak (Hall & Guthrie, 1981).

Attitudes toward language influence our perceptions about other people's social identities, social status, and intellectual abilities.

Language Varieties: Dialects, Pidgins, and Creoles

Dialects

A language is a dialect with an army and a navy.

Max Weinreich (quoted in Fromkin & Rodman, 1998, p. 399)

As the above quotation suggests, the line between what counts as a language and what counts as a dialect can be a fuzzy one. Linguists often refer to a dialect as a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by features of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary. Pace of speech, volume, and other nonlinguistic behaviors—such as how close one stands to a conversational partner—are also likely to vary. Discourse conventions may be different in a dialect—for instance, conventions that govern the structure and narration of stories, the rules of conversation, and the uses for written language. In fact, the traditional definition of dialects holds that they are mutually intelligible versions of the same language. For example, despite variations in pronunciation or usage, a speaker of Southern U.S. English can generally understand a speaker from the Northwest. However, in the case of Chinese, different varieties, such as Mandarin and Cantonese, are usually considered to be dialects even though they are not mutually intelligible in spoken form. (The fact that they use the same characters means that they *are* mutually intelligible in written form.) And while Swedish and Norwegian are mutually intelligible, they are treated as separate languages for sociopolitical reasons. So, the common definition of dialect has numerous exceptions; for that reason, we refer to a particular language or dialect as a "language variety." We use the term language variety, then, to cover any form of a language, whether a geographical or social dialect, a patois, a Creole, or some other code of a language. Most speakers of a language use a variety that differs in recognizable ways from the so-called "standard" form; none of these varieties is in any sense inherently inferior to the standard variety in grammar, accent,



or phonology. At the same time, these sociocultural and geographical variations within a language signal matters of great importance to those who use them. Varieties serve valuable group identity functions for their speakers; they express interests that are closely linked to matters of self-respect and other psychological attributes.

Varieties may be distinguished by their use by a particular group of speakers who are separated from others geographically or socially. For example, in the United States, we might distinguish at least the following regional dialects: Southern, Mid-Atlantic, New England, New York City, Midwestern, Southwestern, Appalachian, and Northwestern. There are other dialects representing smaller numbers of speakers within these regions. In Pennsylvania, for example, Pennsylvania Dutch speakers speak a dialect influenced by German. Hawaii has its own variety (Hawaiian Creole English), and Alaska has many varieties of English among the communities of Alaskan Native peoples. An example of a language variety that is based on social group rather than region is African American Vernacular English. We explore this more fully below.

Teachers need a basic understanding of what a dialect is—that it represents a functioning, rule-governed language system not a substandard language in any linguistic sense. There is a tendency for people to confuse the social status attached to a dialect with its linguistic adequacy or value, but this is a mistake that teachers need to avoid. Otherwise, teachers may make false judgments about students' language skills or intelligence. In fact, sophisticated language skills are needed to master any variety (Rickford, 1998). Although teachers do not routinely get the opportunity to learn about language structures and usage the way linguists do, they need to become linguists of a sort to understand how language comes into the learning process. In particular, they need to understand what constitutes a language deficit versus a language difference. "A child doesn't need to know any linguistics in order to use language to learn; but a teacher needs to know some linguistics … to understand how the process takes place—or what is going wrong when it doesn't" (Halliday cited in Farr & Trumbull, 1997, p. 11).

There is a tendency for people to confuse the social status attached to a dialect with its linguistic adequacy or value, but this is a mistake that teachers need to avoid.

ACTIVITY: Exploring Language Variation

- *Think of an instance when you received a phone call from someone who used language in a way that was different from your own use. What questions did his or her language use raise for you? Have you ever noticed a difference in language use over the phone and later met the person? Have assumptions based on their language use been confirmed or contradicted in person?*

- *Have you ever encountered someone in a group setting, noted their ways of using language, and then had an opportunity to work with them beyond that original group setting? Did your perception of them change when you saw how they used language differently in a different social setting?*

- *Have you ever found yourself adopting a dialect or local language variation to fit in with the conversation of others? Have you ever been made aware that you were doing so unconsciously? How does it feel to speak like others do or to speak differently from those in a given social setting?*

While most of us recognize that learning a new language presents challenges, we may not realize that for some children learning a new language variety is one of the most daunting tasks they face in school. There are rarely programs or practices in place to help these children with this task. In addition, their teachers may not understand that their students' home languages are perfectly systematic, logical systems. They may hear these as merely deviations from "Standard English" and strive to override them with corrections. So called "Standard English" is simply one form among many equally valid and complex varieties of English. What is grammatical to a person depends on what dialect(s) he or she has learned (Crystal, 1987).

As with languages, many people do master more than one language or language variety, and it is not necessary to get rid of one to learn another. Because our schools focus so intensely on helping English language learners master English or helping nondominant speakers master the standard form, we often forget that children have already mastered complex linguistic systems that will continue to be meaningful and useful in their personal lives.

Language varieties come into the work of the school in one way or another. Children may have two or more varieties that they use in their everyday communication—one used at home, another in the peer group, and a third at school. Largely because of the school's influence, this last one may come to be very close to the standard variety. At the same time, many children arrive in schools with little or no contact with the "standard" form that is used as the language of formal education. Often these children are penalized (socially and instructionally) for speaking a variety that is accorded low status in the school. Some language varieties that have routinely been disparaged include Appalachian, Southern, and African American Vernacular English.



Decisions about whether to require students to speak and write the standard variety in school are fraught with controversy. Insistence on Standard English may add a layer of demands that make acquisition of other skills more difficult for students. In addition, students who choose to use Standard English must often confront peer pressure and accept corrections they may interpret as

If Standard English is to be required, students need to understand the value and purpose of learning it in terms that are meaningful to them.

insulting to their own speech patterns and identities. However, if students do not learn Standard English, their life opportunities may be limited (Christian, 1987). If Standard English is to be required, students need to understand the value and purpose of learning it in terms that are meaningful to them (Christian, 1987). Nevertheless, students may still be faced with a dilemma. As Chaika (1982) observes, the speech of children and adolescents resembles that of the people with whom they identify. Because language is an integral part of identity, students may feel conflicted adopting a new variety not spoken by family or community members with whom they identify.

Sociodrama is a technique that has been reported to help students develop proficiency in Standard English appropriate to various situations, without relying on excessive use of grammar and pronunciation exercises (Chaika, 1982). In a typical sociodrama exercise, students are asked to assume roles and act out situations in which they would be using standard forms of the language (e.g., interviewing for a job, complaining to someone in authority, and speaking in a style suitable for the assigned role). A similar technique can be applied to writing (e.g., newspaper articles) and used in combination with group work and peer editing. The role-playing context acknowledges that choices can be made about when to use a particular language variety. In this way, students do not get the message that only one variety is legitimate.

With greater understanding of the issues surrounding dialects, teachers are more likely to respect and value students' language and to seek strategies that help students become bidialectal, if that is the goal agreed upon by the school and the community. There is no educational or linguistic reason a student should not maintain use of his or her home language while acquiring additional varieties.

CASE STUDY: African American Vernacular English

(Black Language)

Many African American children speak what has been called variously "African-American Vernacular English," "Black English Vernacular," "Black Language," or "U.S. Ebonics" (Perry & Delpit, 1998). This variety, like all other natural linguistic systems, is rule-governed and capable of serving all of the intellectual and social needs of its speakers. Black Language has multiple forms—oral and written, formal and informal, vernacular and literary (Perry, 1998). Its forms and ways of being used have been influenced by West African and Niger-Congo languages (O'Neil, 1998; Smith, 1998), as well as by the social circumstances surrounding the histories of African Americans in the United States. For example, deletion of the final consonant in a consonant cluster (wes' for west or col' for cold) brings English words more in line with the form of words in some West African languages (Smith, 1998). In addition, words and phrases have been coined in order to keep some things private from the dominant white culture (particularly during the time of slavery). The oratorical devices (e.g., rhythm, rhyme, metaphor, repetition) used by African American preachers are distinctive elements of Black Language as well (Perry, 1998). In fact, many other discourse conventions distinguish Black Language, including particular structures for storytelling or narrative writing (Ball, 1997; Heath, 1983; Michaels & Cazden, 1986).

Black Language is strongly valued by many African Americans as a symbol of intimacy and solidarity—it represents "intergroup distinctiveness from the white community" (Beebe, 1988, p. 65). Differences between Black Language and Standard English are constantly reinforced and apparently increasing. One reason is that students who do not identify with speakers of Standard English are not likely to emulate their speech patterns.



As with children whose storytelling and conversational styles differ from those of the

dominant U.S. culture, with speakers of Black Language, teachers need not negate the value of Black Language in order to introduce new language skills. Carrie Secret—an Oakland, Calif. teacher—encourages her elementary students to use English (or Standard English) when they are writing, but she also acknowledges the value of their language (which she calls Ebonics):

> We read literature that has Ebonics language patterns in it. For example, last year in fifth grade we read Joyce Hansen's *Yellow Bird and Me* and in fourth grade we read her book *The Gift Giver*. The language was Ebonic in structure. The language was the bonding agent for students. The book just felt good to them. (Secret, 1998, p. 81)

Figure 2 on page 22 outlines some of the issues involved in teaching students who speak Black English and suggests some strategies for addressing them.

FIGURE 2

Black English—Dialect Issues in Instruction

POSSIBLE DIALECT CONFLICTS	POSSIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
Students omit final consonants or consonants in clusters.	Draw attention to the contrast between students' pronunciation and spelling and Standard English spelling. Generate a list of words with a similar pattern (e.g., cold, bold, mold, fold, hold). Note: This does not require correcting pronunciation but simply pointing out the differences and choices.
Students use complex verb patterns that differ from what Standard English employs (e.g., "He be going…" to indicate a habitual behavior).	Have the class or a small group brainstorm about alternative ways to get across the same meaning. (He often goes…, He usually goes…, He has a habit of going). Have students choose the best forms for their intended meanings. Discuss when Black English or Standard English would be more appropriate or expressive.
Students omit the copula (the verb "to be") or the "'s" possessive in places Standard English would use it. (e.g., "She thrilled about her brother good luck" vs. "She is thrilled about her brother's good luck.")	Again, using Carrie Secret's strategy, help students make explicit the differences between the two dialects and make conscious choices about when to use either one.
Students use Black Language style in a situation where Standard English would be more socially effective (e.g., writing a request for information to a public agency, preparing to give a plea to the school board for additional resources for a special program).	Use sociodrama to have students take on different roles, highlighting how one would communicate effectively in different situations. Sometimes Black Language will be more effective and sometimes Standard English will be; identify which applies where.
Students use rhetorical features in writing that are considered "oral" strategies from the dominant dialect's point of view (e.g., repetition of phrases or themes).	Have students read their writing aloud and discuss whether or how this is effective to their purpose in writing. The student's strategy could be powerfully effective depending on his or her intended audience.

While Black Language provides an important example of student dialect and how teachers might respond to it, teachers need to learn about the norms of whatever varieties their students speak. Appalachian, for example, is spoken by many families; research suggests that students who speak it, like students who speak Black English, often encounter misunderstandings and misjudgments about their abilities (see, for example, Heath, 1983).

Pidgins and Creoles

pidgin

A simplified language that has developed as the means of communication between speakers of two or more languages who do not know each other's languages.

A ***pidgin*** is a simplified language that has developed as the means of communication between speakers of two or more languages who do not know each other's languages. The word itself is thought to have come from the word "business" as pronounced by Chinese speakers trading with English speakers. Pidgins retain important content words (nouns and verbs) and usually maintain the basic word order of the target language (e.g., subject-verb-object in a pidgin version of English) but eliminate the small grammatical words (prepositions, conjunctions, articles, and some pronouns). Tense may be indicated by context or words like "before," "after," or "by and by." Number is usually implied in the context. So, for example, a person might say, "Farmer sell vegetable bymby (by and by)," to mean, "The farmers will soon be selling their vegetables."

Creole

When a pidgin becomes a speaker's first language through intergenerational mother tongue transmission.

When a pidgin becomes a speaker's first language through intergenerational mother tongue transmission, it is called a ***Creole***. A Creole generally derives from a pidgin. Once it is acquired as a true language of primary communication, a Creole begins to become more complex than its parent language. Additional grammatical features are added, such as verb tenses, prepositions, conjunctions, plural markers, and articles—if those exist in the language that forms the basis of the pidgin or Creole (Crystal, 1987; Carr, 1972). A Creole is a fully functional system with the creativity of any natural language. Whether or not the Creole has the social status of the "preferred," high-status variety, it is an adequate language variety that requires the same linguistic skills any other language requires.

An excellent example of the Creolization process is the movement from pidgin English to Hawaiian English Creole in the last century. There is evidence that a Hawaiian pidgin was the original pidgin produced in the early 1800s after the influx of English-speaking traders. Its use continued until around 1890, after the immigration of speakers of many other languages. This pidgin, as its name implies, was based not on English but on Hawaiian (Roberts, 1995). Although commonly called "pidgin" by Hawaiian citizens, the present-day vernacular language is a Creole—a form of English influenced by Hawaiian, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and at least two Filipino varieties. There may be a small number of speakers of true pidgin English; Carr (1972) suggests that there were still some in isolated areas as late as 1972. Many Hawaiian speakers move back and forth between Creole and the more standard form of English. As we have observed, language use is contextual, and speakers choose the variety that fits whatever context they are in.

Understanding the nuances of student language is essential to all good teaching. Language affects all aspects of schooling—how students participate in classroom discourse, how they develop their skills as independent learners, and how they demonstrate their knowledge and abilities. In the following sections, we discuss at greater length three key elements of how language affects schooling—second language learning, language and literacy, and language and assessment. These are only some of the significant arenas in which awareness of the role of language in the classroom pays off. Nevertheless, understanding the role of language in these arenas will provide educators with some insight into the rich potential for teaching effectively by keeping the influence of language in mind.

Learning a Second Language

GUIDING QUESTIONS

? *What are some of the major theories surrounding second language acquisition? How long does it take to acquire conversational fluency in a second language? How long does it take to acquire academic language proficiency?*

? *What are the general stages of second language acquisition?*

? *In what ways can educators facilitate and support students as they acquire a second language?*

? *What do some of the educational programs that support second language learners look like?*



In this chapter of *The Diversity Kit,* we provide you with an overview of some of the major theories of second language acquisition in their historical contexts. We highlight some of the most important contributions that have added to our understanding of the process of second language acquisition, the relationship between first language and second language, and the ways educators can facilitate that process for second language learners through specific instructional strategies. We also explore the terrain of bilingual education in that context. Throughout this chapter we suggest activities that will stimulate your curiosity and that will further explore both the process and context within which people strive for bi- or multilingualism.

Just recently, U.S. census data revealed that nearly one out of every five children between the ages of 5 and 17 comes from a home in which English is not the primary spoken language (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2001). This reflects an increase of over 50% from the 1990 survey (see Crawford, 2001 for summary). This statistic is surely not surprising to anyone living or working in an ethnically or linguistically diverse community in the United States; however, there remains widespread misconception among the general population about how languages are learned and what can be done in an educational setting to facilitate language learning and bolster support of English language learners in the United States.

Complicating the issue of education for culturally and linguistically diverse students is the fact that mainstream teachers are largely white and monolingual. Teachers are often not trained (and likewise not supported) to educate an increasingly diverse student population (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 1999). Hamayan (1990) suggests that in order for second language learners to be successful academically, teachers must better understand the process of second language learning.

Scholars in the area of education and linguistics have recently begun to address the problem of adequate teacher preparation programs. While recognizing the limitations of their suggestions on program implementation, Wong Fillmore & Snow

(1999) argue that teacher preparation programs should more systematically provide training to pre-service teachers in the area of educational linguistics. They suggest that adequate training in this area would include second language acquisition theory and a general understanding of linguistics. Brumfit (1997) underscores the need for work to be conducted on teachers' roles as educational linguists. He defines the role of educational linguists as "conscious analysts of linguistic processes, both their own and others" (p. 163). In this chapter we hope to bridge the gap between teachers' understanding of second language acquisition and the needs of second language learners. We also wish to encourage teachers to become educational linguists in their own particular schools and classrooms.

Theories of Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition

Simultaneous bilingualism refers to the acquisition of two languages at the onset of speech.

Successive or sequential bilingualism refers to the addition of a second language after the initial establishment of the first language.

Significant advances have been made during the latter part of the twentieth century with respect to theories of bilingualism and second language acquisition. The theories have influenced our knowledge about what influences the process of second language acquisition, including the influence of the first language on the second language. Hakuta (1986) suggests that early interest in child second language acquisition and bilingualism was influenced by the work of Werner Leopold. In a lengthy and meticulously documented study, Leopold detailed the acquisition of two languages by his daughter, Hildegard. Leopold spoke exclusively in German to his daughter while his wife communicated to her exclusively in English; he referred to this process as simultaneous bilingualism. Simultaneous bilingualism refers to the acquisition of two languages at the onset of speech. In contrast, successive or sequential bilingualism refers to the addition of a second language after the initial establishment of the first language, roughly around the age of five (August & Hakuta, 1997; Wei, 2000). Leopold's study focused on the details of the development, separation, and interaction of the two languages acquired by his daughter. However, rather



than determining whether bilingualism was a handicap or advantage, Leopold's case study revealed that the process of bilingualism is largely influenced by a variety of social and familial circumstances.

Other researchers continued to study bilingualism from the perspective of linguistic interference of the first language on acquisition of the second. For example, in contrast to Leopold's study, which relied on qualitative methods and description of simultaneous bilingualism, Madorah Smith studied child second language development and bilingualism through the use of a variety of quantitative scales and analyses (Hakuta, 1986). Smith studied the differences among individual children, namely, between bilingual and monolingual children. The sample of the study consisted of 1,000 Hawaiian children. Smith compiled lists of children's errors in language use; some of the errors identified included the use of idiomatic expressions not found in Standard English. Not surprisingly, Smith concluded that there were individual differences among the children. The most significant conclusion she made was that mixing languages was not a choice made by the interlocutor (speaker) but rather a reflection of the mental state, or confusion, of the child (Hakuta, 1986). Other researchers of that time drew similar conclusions on the impact of bilingualism on intelligence. Goodenough (1926), for example, concluded that the use of a minority language in the home led to a retardation in intelligence.

Between the late 1950s and early 1960s researchers shifted their attention from a description of language behavior to a more complex analysis of the structure and functioning of the mind. The shift was sparked by the work of linguist Noam Chomsky, who demonstrated that there was an underlying structure of language that could not be accounted for through a descriptive structural analysis, the lens through which prior research on language acquisition had been conducted. The research agenda then shifted away from descriptive structuralism to an area of linguistic inquiry known as generative grammar or "mentalism" (Hakuta, 1986, p. 70). Some of the criticism among researchers trained in positivist research orientation (which uses controlled experimental studies) was that social and contextual variables influenced the data findings, making any generalizations regarding the research

tenuous at best. Subsequent work began, then, to attempt to control for those variables. When this occurred, many of the findings that suggested linguistic retardation and ethnic inferiority were actually reversed. One of the first studies to draw new conclusions from research data was conducted by Peal and Lambert in 1962. The researchers controlled for many of the variables in their sample, including socioeconomic status and criteria for subjects in the sample. Peal and Lambert's (1962) study revealed a positive effect of bilingualism where bilinguals experience "cognitive flexibility" not found in monolinguals. Cognitive flexibility among bilinguals suggests that knowledge of more than one language system leads an individual to a heightened ability in the area of concept formation.

Instrumental orientation suggests that a person will acquire a second language when the person considers the language to be useful.

Integrative orientation suggests that a second language learner identifies with speakers of the target language, and the individual desires membership and inclusion into that particular linguistic group.

In the early 1970s Gardner and Lambert (1972) focused their attention on the psycholinguistic variables that influence second language acquisition. They postulated that there are two discernable orientations that explain an individual's motivation to acquire a second language: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental orientation suggests that a person will acquire a second language when the person considers the language to be useful. For example, acquisition of a second language may yield an increase in social position or economic benefit. Integrative orientation suggests that a second language learner identifies with speakers of the target language, and the individual desires membership and inclusion into that particular linguistic group. The work of Gardner and Lambert concluded that, generally speaking, integrative orientation is a stronger motivating factor than instrumental orientation. Subsequent research (e.g., Gardner, 1985) has expanded this theory to include the influence of formal and informal environments, language aptitude, situational anxiety, and social and cultural background on the process of language learning. The more recent work of Lucy Tse (1998) supports integrative orientation and ethnic identity as strong motivating forces behind second language acquisition when an individual attempts to acquire the heritage language.

ACTIVITY: Interview with a Second Language Learner

Identify a person in your community who has acquired a second language. Plan a 30-minute interview with that person. Using Gardner and Lambert's theory of language motivation as a framework for the interview, find out what motivated your interviewee to acquire that language. What factors contributed to his or her language acquisition? In what capacity or for what purposes does your interviewee use the second language? With whom does the person use the language to communicate?

After the interview, reflect on how the interviewee's perspective supports or challenges Gardner and Lambert's theory of language motivation orientation. Which motivation orientation appeared to be stronger? What surprises did you find?

It is likely that there were a variety of environmental factors that influenced the above individual's acquisition of the second language. According to Larson-Freeman & Long (1991, p. 227), there are at least 40 theories of second language acquisition. These theories may be viewed as environmentalist, nativist, or interactionist perspectives. In the following section we will explore the cornerstone environmentalist and nativist theories of second language acquisition that have emerged over the past 25 years.

Environmentalist Theory

The work of John Schumann (1978) provided a foundation for theories that explored the environmental factors of second language acquisition. Schumann's Acculturation Model was based on the premise that the extent to which a second language learner adapts to the new culture influences acquisition of the target language. There are clear linkages between Schumann's Acculturation Model and Gardner and Lambert's theories on second language motivation orientation. Schumann's Acculturation Model posited that a group's social and psychological distance from speakers of the target language accounted for lack of proficiency in the target language. The essential factor in the model is the degree to which the second language learner adapts to a new culture, with language being one aspect of culture. In his model, Schumann identified eight factors that influence social distance; these are summarized below. Note that these factors refer to group rather than individual distance.

Schumann's eight factors of social and psychological distance:

- ***Social dominance*** considers the degree of equality (subordination or domination) among groups.
- ***Integration pattern*** reflects the desire of both the target language and language learner groups to assimilate.
- ***Enclosure*** refers to the degree to which the language learner group exists independently from the target group (as with community functions, religion, etc.).
- ***Cohesiveness*** of the group influences second language learning.
- ***Size*** of the group influences second language learning in that smaller groups are more readily assimilated into the target language group.
- ***Cultural congruence*** reflects the degree to which the two groups' cultures are considered to be similar and to share aspects.
- ***Attitude*** refers to affective factors, including the feeling of language confusion and culture shock or the second language learners' motivation to learn the target language.
- ***Intended length of residence*** refers to the amount of time that the second language learner group intends to remain with the target language group.

Schumann's model highlights the social context in which languages are learned. In particular, Schumann's model has enabled researchers to understand the environmental and contextual factors that impact second language acquisition. However, the model does not attempt to account for a language learner's cognitive processes.

ACTIVITY: Schumann's Social and Psychological Distance

Sojourners are people who relocate for a brief or limited amount of time. Their intended length of residence in a foreign country is fixed and intentionally shorter than that of immigrants seeking permanent relocation. In this activity, identify two non-native English speakers, one who is a permanent relocatee such as an immigrant and the second who is a sojourner in the United States. Using Schumann's factors of social and psychological distance, interview the two relocatees about their experiences. How has each person's experience, specifically their intended length of residence, influenced his or her acquisition of English? If possible, interview both relocatees at the same time in a focus group interview. How do the two relocatees differ in their orientation? What can they learn from understanding each other's experience, especially as it relates to second language acquisition?

Nativist Theories

In contrast to environmentalist theories of second language acquisition, which hold that nurture (experience) is more important than nature in language development, nativist theories hold that acquisition occurs largely as a result of an innate biological process. Nativist theories are largely based on the work of Chomsky in the 1950s. Chomskyan theory suggests that all human beings have an innate ability to acquire language. Chomsky referred to this 'hardwiring' of the brain for language acquisition as the Language Acquisition Device, or LAD. Chomsky's work directly opposed the position of behaviorists such as B. F. Skinner, who had previously suggested that language development occurred largely as a result of behavioral reinforcement in a child's environment. Scholars of language and the brain generally agree that the human brain is predisposed to process language input according to some preset principles and will formulate rules for the comprehension and production of language.

One of the principal scholars to apply Chomsky's theory to the process of second language acquisition is Stephen Krashen. Krashen's (1985) Monitor Theory, derived from Krashen's Monitor Model proposed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, consists of five interrelated hypotheses. The first of these is the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis. This hypothesis draws a clear distinction between the acquisition of a second language and the learning of a second language. Krashen suggests that acquisition takes place when we learn a language subconsciously and for a variety of different purposes. In contrast, language learning occurs when we focus on various aspects of a language (e.g., grammatical structure, phonology), often in a prescribed learning environment such as a formal academic setting. Gee refers to this distinction as incidental and intentional learning. However, where Krashen views acquisition as an individual psychological process, Gee (1992) extends this to include a social component:

> Acquisition is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practiced within social groups, without formal teaching. It happens in natural settings that are meaningful… (p. 113)

Krashen's second hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, suggests that language is acquired in a natural order and that certain aspects of a language are picked up before others. That is, a general pattern is discernible regardless of a person's first language. The third hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis, states that the rules learned about a language can regulate output (i.e., speaking or writing). Three conditions influence

activation of the language monitor: when there is sufficient time to use it, when there is a focus on linguistic form, and when a second language learner knows the rules of the language.

The fourth hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis, suggests that in order for language acquisition to occur, learners must receive input that is slightly beyond their current ability level. Krashen calls this *i + 1*. This hypothesis has largely influenced teachers who provide "comprehensible input" through a variety of instructional strategies. Note that if input remains at the current level of a second language learner's ability (*i + 0*), then no acquisition takes place. Similarly, if input is too far beyond a learner's ability level (*i + 2*), then the second language learner interprets the language as merely incomprehensible noise or babble. Therefore, teachers of English language learners must know the ability level of each student in order to provide the right level of input—input that is comprehensible, but slightly beyond the level of the student. Finally, the Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that an individual's feelings—such as boredom, anxiety, or lack of desire—may block language input into the brain. Thus, when the affective filter is raised, language input, even if comprehensible at *i + 1* input, cannot reach the LAD.

Krashen's work on second language and his Monitor Theory have been widely linked to classroom practice. The Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), originally developed for foreign language learners in the United States, was based on Krashen's work on second language acquisition. The underlying principles of the Natural Approach are (1) that a student's production of the target language will follow pre-production, (2) that the environment and affect will impact that production, and (3) that for input to reach the LAD, it must be made comprehensible to the learner.

ACTIVITY: Krashen's Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

Think about your own language learning experience (a first and/or second language). Using Krashen's distinction between acquisition and learning, what do you believe was the acquisition component of that experience, and what was the learning component? Share a personal example with the class. Were your experiences similar to or different from others'?

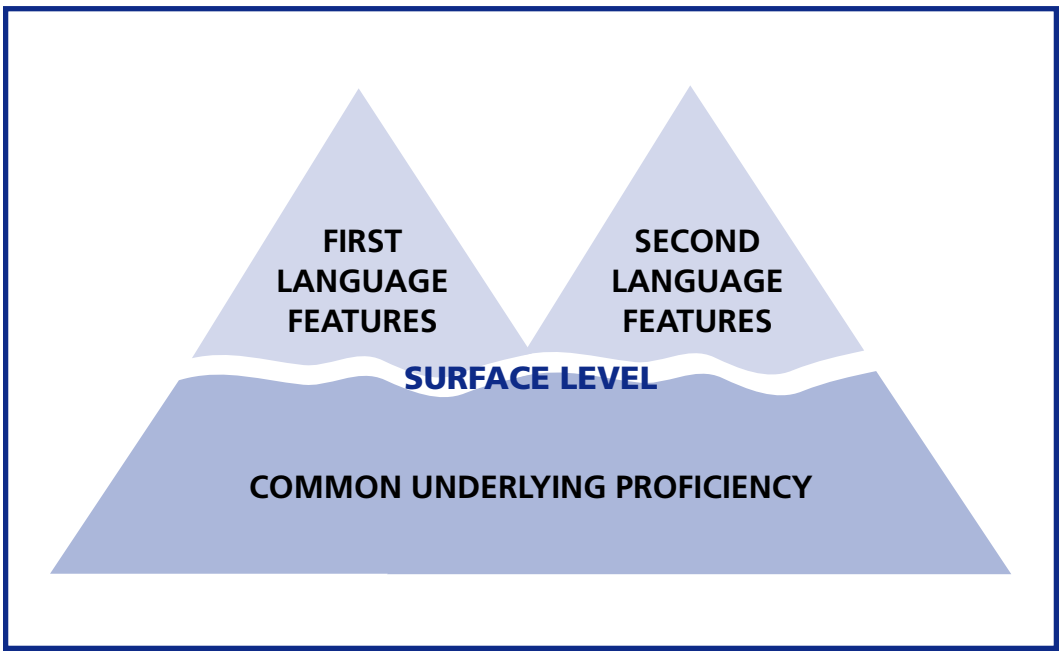
While theories of second language acquisition were being hypothesized and investigated, other scholars were investigating the relationship between first and second languages and expanding theories of cognition and bilingualism. One scholar whose work has continued to influence our understanding of bilingualism, language proficiency, and first and second language transfer is Jim Cummins. In the course of his work in those areas, Cummins posited three major principles related to second language acquisition theory. These are: the linguistic interdependence principle, the distinction between conversational fluency and academic language proficiency, and the additive bilingual principle.

Cummins theorized that there was a common operating system that existed across an individual's two (or more) language systems (1980). That is, on the surface, an individual may appear to have two distinct languages. Below the surface, however, there is an operating system that is shared by both languages. Cummins' theory challenged the myth that separate underlying proficiencies (SUPs) are responsible for the functioning of language in a bilingual's brain. The existence of SUPs would suggest that each language takes up a certain amount of space in an individual's brain, leaving little room for the adequate development of more than one language.

In contrast, the common underlying proficiency (CUP) suggests that there is one operating system responsible for language processing and cognition. The CUP theory holds that reading, writing, speaking, and listening are derived from the same central location and that these four functions may be developed and enhanced through either the first or second language. The common underlying proficiency is represented pictorially in **Figure 1** as an iceberg with above- and below-surface level features. The figure shows that individual languages may appear distinct at the surface level. However, below the surface, both languages share a common operating system.

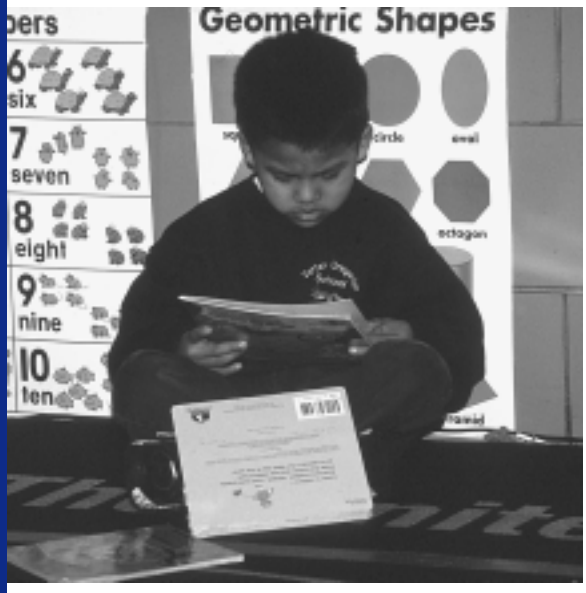
FIGURE 1

Common Underlying Proficiency (Cummins, 1980)



The interdependence hypothesis proposed by Cummins maintains that second language acquisition is influenced greatly by the degree to which the first language is developed. He states this as "to the extent that instruction through a minority language is effective in developing academic proficiency in the minority language, transfer of this proficiency to the majority language will occur given adequate exposure and motivation to learn the language" (Cummins,1986, p. 20). That is, when the first language is supported and developed, acquisition of the second language is enhanced. The interdependence hypothesis has important implications for educators and policymakers: providing students with continued first language support (as in well-implemented bilingual education programs) will foster English language learning.

In the Threshold Theory, Cummins explored the relationship between cognition and bilingualism. This theory suggests that the degree to which bilingualism is developed will have consequences, either positive or negative, for a child. The Threshold Theory has been depicted pictorially as a house with three floors, separated by two thresholds or levels. At the first floor, children who have low levels of competence in two languages are likely to experience negative cognitive effects of bilingualism. At the second floor, children who have acquired age-level competence in one language but not the second may experience positive and negative consequences of bilingualism. Finally, at the top floor, bilingual children who have age-level competence in both languages are likely to experience positive cognitive advantages. Cummins proposed the Threshold Theory to help explain why some children were not experiencing the positive benefits of bilingualism (enhanced cognitive, linguistic, and academic growth). The theory has been criticized for not being able to define the level of bilingualism required at each of the thresholds to avoid the negative effects and gain the positive benefits of bilingualism. From the Threshold Theory, Cummins proposed the Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that the level of competence attained in the first language will impact the level of competence in the second language.



Perhaps his most well-cited contribution to the field of bilingual education, Cummins developed a theory that differentiated between two different types of language:

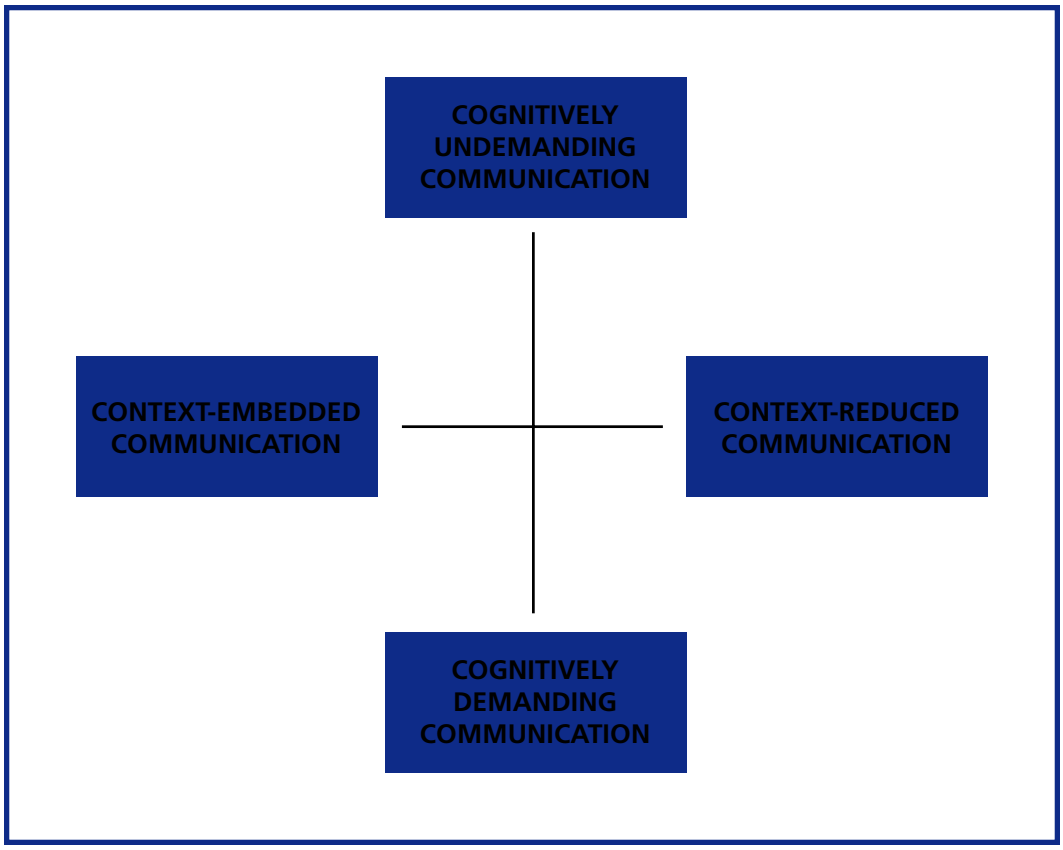
basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) or conversational language skills, and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which is required for bilingual children to participate and succeed academically. Cummins observed that a child's ability to communicate with conversational fluency could actually mask the child's inability to participate in a cognitively demanding academic environment. This distinction had a great number of implications for children who were diagnosed as learning disabled and overrepresented in special education programs because of their limited academic language. Conversely, children who demonstrated conversational fluency but not academic language proficiency were being exited too quickly from programs that provided first language support (as in transitional bilingual education programs) while the second language was being developed (see Cummins, 2001b).

The BICS/CALP distinction was criticized for being dichotic and static (Harley et al., 1990) and also for its inability to operationalize the terms in research studies (see Baker, 1997; Wiley, 1996). The criticism was perhaps valid for investigating the cognitive dimension of CALP because the relationship between (academic) language and cognition is not simple or easily unraveled. In response to some of those critiques, Cummins has recently refined the terms used to differentiate these different language uses to conversational fluency and academic language proficiency (see Cummins, 2001a).

The theory underlying the conversational fluency-academic language distinction was later advanced to further address the type of communication and the cognitive demands placed on second language learners. These two dimensions—context-embedded versus context-reduced communication, and cognitively undemanding versus cognitively demanding communication—are depicted on page 39 in **Figure 2**.

FIGURE 2

Cognitively Un/Demanding Communication and Context Embedded/Reduced Communication
(Cummins, 1981)



As the theory suggests, context-embedded communication occurs when communicative supports (such as objects, gestures, or intonations) are available for a student. These help the student discern the meaning of the communication. Context-reduced communication occurs when there are few, if any, communicative cues or clues to support the interaction. The second dimension includes the degree to which cognitively demanding communication is required. Cognitively demanding communication occurs frequently in a classroom setting where students are required to analyze and synthesize information quickly. In contrast, cognitively undemanding communication may occur on a playground or at a local shop.

Cummins' two dimensions of context-embedded/-reduced communication and cognitively un/demanding communication have implications for schooling of second language learners. For example, some scholars (Robson, 1995) have shown how instructional strategies and assessments can be coordinated using the theory as a framework to guide instruction that exposes second language learners to increasingly cognitively demanding and context-reduced forms of communication. The distinction between the two dimensions proposed by Cummins is further insight for practitioners and policymakers to understand the difference between conversational fluency and academic language and subsequently assess the academic achievement of students using the appropriate measures.

Research shows that it takes approximately two years for second language learners to approach a native speaker's level in conversational fluency and from 5 to 7 years for them to approach a native speaker's level in academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1981). A recent review of research conducted by Hakuta, Butler, & Witt (2000) further reveals that it may take from 3 to 5 years for English language learners to acquire oral proficiency and from 4 to 7 years to acquire academic English proficiency.

The work of these scholars has influenced both education policy and practice regarding English language learners. For example, we know that educational environments that support the ongoing development of students' first language while they are acquiring English are among the most effective. But this knowledge lies in stark contrast to recent mandates prohibiting use of the first language in the classroom, as with recent legislation in California (Proposition 227) and Arizona (Proposition 203). Programs that build upon students' first language while they acquire English, with the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy, are considered "additive," a term first coined in the early 1970s. Additive bilingualism refers to the acquisition of a second language without detriment or loss to the first. In contrast, subtractive bilingualism occurs when the acquisition of a second language occurs at the expense or loss of the first language.

Additive bilingualism refers to the acquisition of a second language without detriment or loss to the first. In contrast, subtractive bilingualism occurs when the acquisition of a second language occurs at the expense or loss of the first language.

More recent research on second language acquisition has reflected a shift among researchers to include qualitative data. In fact, scholars from a variety of disciplines, including sociologists and anthropologists, have described processes of second language acquisition and explored the impact of its social, cultural, and political contexts. For example, in their work with second language learners, Wong Fillmore et al. (1991) documented the rate of first language loss among young immigrant children in the U.S. The authors' study revealed that language loss holds negative consequences for intergenerational relationships within a given family structure. Their conclusions are stark:

> What is lost is no less than the means by which parents socialize their children—when parents are unable to talk to their children, they cannot easily convey to them their values, beliefs, understandings, or wisdom about how to cope with their experiences… When parents lose the means for socializing and influencing their children, rifts develop and families lose the intimacy that comes from shared beliefs and understandings. (p. 27)

Sociopolitical context and power relations between groups impinge upon the learning environment of the students. When students' linguistic repertoires are valued and considered a resource, collaborative relationships are formed that challenge unequal patterns of power among groups. This occurs in properly implemented bilingual education programs as well as in programs that view students' linguistic repertoires as a resource rather than as a problem (Ruiz, 1984). We return to this idea at the conclusion of this chapter. In the following section we outline the developmental sequence of second language learning.

Developmental Stages of Sequence of Language Acquisition

VIGNETTE: Silent Period: Marta and Esteban

Marta and Esteban are recent immigrants to the United States, and both are in Mrs. Grover's third-grade classroom at Barton Elementary School. Since their arrival at the beginning of the school year, both children have been receiving English as a second language (ESL) pullout instruction from a trained ESL teacher. However, they spend the majority of their time in Mrs. Grover's classroom with their peers. Mrs. Grover wants to ensure that the students are on target in acquiring English and progressing academically while learning English, but she has recently noticed that Marta is able to communicate with her peers, while Esteban rarely communicates at all; when he does, his utterances are limited to two-word strings.

In the teachers' room, Mrs. Grover expresses her observations and her concern to the children's ESL teacher. The ESL teacher, Miss Simmons, explains to Mrs. Grover that second language learners often experience a period of time during which they are not producing language but are still listening and processing what's going on around them. This period has been called the "silent period." Miss Simmons reassures Mrs. Grover that this is entirely within the scope of the second language learning process and that it can last up to 6 months. She suggests that Mrs. Grover explore activities that Esteban can participate in without using oral language (such as picture drawing and pointing) until he appears ready to produce English. Mrs. Grover and Miss Simmons agree to work together to brainstorm ways to actively engage Esteban in all classroom activities during the silent period. They also agree to communicate regularly on his progress.

The vignette on page 42 illustrates that the process of second language acquisition is complex. Unraveling the sociocultural and political influences on the second language learner is no small task. In addition, there is tremendous variation in the contexts within which both individuals and groups acquire a second language. Educators face the challenge of understanding those contexts, what motivates individuals, the relationship between first and second languages, and the academic environment (including the different demands placed on the second language learner in a classroom setting). But what can we say about the process and general stages of language acquisition for second language learners? In the following section, we present an overview of those stages. We believe that teachers' understanding of the second language acquisition process will help to dispel some of the myths surrounding what second language learners can and cannot do. It can also guide teachers' instructional strategies toward ways to accommodate second language learners in their various developmental sequences.

While there is a certain amount of difference between first and second language acquisition, researchers generally agree that learning the rules and structure of a second language is very similar to learning the first language. So, while the two processes are not precisely the same, they do parallel one another. We know, for example, that second language learners make similar errors as those made by native, monolingual speakers. As with young children acquiring their native language, second language learners may listen to and process language before actually producing it. The difference is that second language learners, by definition, already have access to a first language. Therefore, they are more sophisticated learners; they understand how language works and can use that first language knowledge as a bridge to acquisition of the second language. Cummins' linguistic transfer theory (discussed above) postulates how this occurs. As a result, for each individual the degree to which the first language has been developed directly influences the acquisition of the second language.

Interlanguage refers to a language system produced by a second language learner that is not equivalent to either the first or the second language.

Selinker (1972) described a learner's knowledge of a second language at a given point as interlanguage. Interlanguage refers to a language system produced by a second language learner that is not equivalent to either the first or the second language. Interlanguage may be viewed best as a continuum between the first and second

languages. At any given time, a language learner's knowledge of the second language is situated at a point along the interlanguage continuum. Selinker also identified the phenomenon of fossilization. Fossilization occurs when a language learner's acquisition of the second language wanes or even halts along the interlanguage continuum. This may occur when a language learner has acquired enough of the rules of the second language to adequately communicate.

Fossilization occurs when a language learner's acquisition of the second language wanes or even halts along the interlanguage continuum.

Scholars of second language acquisition have identified a common developmental sequence that second language learners pass through while learning a second language, even though they may refer to these stages differently. Here we will outline the developmental stages of second language acquisition. It is important to keep in mind that there is great individual variability in second language acquisition, in particular with the rate at which learners pass through the various stages and the influence of the first language on the second. It is also important to remember that learners who appear to have made progress learning the target language by demonstrating correct performance may still demonstrate incorrect performance at a later stage. This happens because as learners begin to unravel the grammatical rules of the target language and test out new rules, errors often reappear. In fact, the errors are indicative of progress as the second language learner gains deeper understanding of how the second language works.

In the first stage of the developmental sequence, child second language learners may continue to use the home language in second language situations. In this stage the child may assume that others understand his or her first language; it may take several months for the child to discontinue use of the first language. Saville-Troike (1987) has referred to this type of child discourse as "dilingual discourse."

Scholars refer to the next stage as the preproduction stage. This stage is characterized by the "silent period" (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). In this stage, the learner absorbs the sounds and rhythms of the new language and processes language input through listening and comprehension skills. As mentioned in the vignette above, communication may include using nonverbal means such as pointing or picture drawing. During this period, access to context-embedded communication is very important and likely to help the student move efficiently through the preproduction

period. Clues picked up in the immediate environment, such as gestures and realia (real objects), will facilitate language understanding during this stage. Context-embedded communication, then, is highly desirable, and a teacher can create this type of environment through instructional strategies that use gestures and realia to make input comprehensible. While second language learners may stop talking, this does not mean they will stop communicating.

Scholars refer to the next stage of the sequence of second language acquisition as the early production stage. During this stage, researchers have observed two types of speech: telegraphic speech and formulaic speech. Telegraphic speech refers to the use of a few content words that generally omit grammatical morphemes. In our section on language and literacy, we explore morphemes more fully. Briefly, grammatical morphemes are small words or markers that carry meaning, such as the definite article *the* or the plural marker *–s*. Telegraphic speech commonly consists of a second language learner's reference to nouns or objects. An example of telegraphic speech may be "Tommy ball," which omits a verb and definite article ("Tommy has the ball"). In contrast, formulaic speech refers to the use of specific, unanalyzed utterances that language learners have observed around them. An example of this might include greetings such as "How ya' doin'?"

Telegraphic speech refers to the use of a few content words that generally omit grammatical morphemes.

Formulaic speech refers to the use of specific, unanalyzed utterances that language learners have observed around them.

As second language learners progress in language acquisition, they pass through a stage scholars refer to as the extending production stage. In this stage, utterances become longer and more complex. Students begin to recognize and correct some of their own errors, and they become more comfortable initiating and sustaining conversations. At this stage, the second language learner speaks in short sentences. Learners also begin to expand on simple sentences, displaying knowledge of additional grammatical elements of sentences. The student learner may begin to master conversational language skills but is not likely to have developed extensive proficiency in academic language.

A teacher may assist the student by modeling a complete utterance and asking the specific, clarifying questions.

Simple descriptions and comparisons, as well as sequencing events, may help in the classroom. Graphic organizers that illustrate relationships among ideas, for example, may be useful for scaffolding language during this stage. The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is an instructional strategy teachers often use to assist students at this stage of their second language learning. Students at this stage may begin to read and write, producing simple written sentences. Using the LEA strategy, students dictate to the teacher short narratives or dialogues based on their personal experiences. The teacher records those experiences, then reads the piece back or asks the students to read them back. In this approach, meaningful vocabulary is acquired through dialogue with the teacher and among the students (if LEA is conducted as a group activity).

ACTIVITY: Language Experience Approach

Identify a topic of interest to a second language learner or have her choose one. For example, the student may excel at soccer and be knowledgeable about the equipment and rules of the game. Using the Language Experience Approach described above, ask the student to talk about her experience playing soccer. The student can do this by telling a story or recounting an event that took place. Record what the student said using the board, chart paper, overhead, or computer. Read back what the student has said (repeating the sentences correctly). Point to the words. As a follow up activity, you might ask the student to read the piece aloud. Alternatively, you might make certain word cards based on the meaningful words the student used. The student may take the story and word cards home.

At the stage of intermediate language proficiency, second language learners begin to engage in verbal conversations with a higher level of comprehension. Second language learners are typically able to produce narratives and to interact more extensively with other speakers. Students make fewer speech errors, have a good command of conversational fluency, and begin to acquire academic language. As a result of this development, instructional strategies used in the classroom should focus on both language development and subject matter content.

Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), also known as sheltered instruction, is a technique that a teacher may use once the student has attained intermediate-level fluency in English. SDAIE classrooms teach grade-level content material through modified grammar and vocabulary. Teachers also use some of the visual supports and realia found in the classroom. SDAIE is a strategy that counters the common complaint that second language learners are handed a "watered-down" curriculum. Rather, SDAIE aims to make input comprehensible so that second language learners can acquire academic language—all while providing a supportive, effective learning environment.

The instructional strategies used by teachers are designed to make input comprehensible in a meaningful context. To do this, teachers must understand the language proficiency of the students and the content and vocabulary of the lesson they're teaching. Teachers become conscious of the language used in the lesson by scanning and reviewing the language of the text. They seek to make new vocabulary and academic language comprehensible to the students by using visual clues (gestures, body language, pictures, etc.). Vocabulary development is essential to academic language proficiency (Cummins, 2001a).

In the advanced stage of language development, second language learners approach native speakers' ability to use multiple "registers" of language, progressing in their development and knowledge of academic language. "Register" refers to a specialized type of talk or writing that is used either to conduct a particular activity or to communicate with a particular group when engaged in that activity (one example is legalese—a register used among law professionals and others knowledgeable of law). Even students who were previously enrolled in bilingual education programs that gave them first and/or second language support are likely to continue to need support at this advanced stage. Teachers working with second language learners are faced with the dual task of enhancing students' second language while providing content area instruction.

Certain instructional strategies can be used to support the academic language proficiency of students. Ideally, language use and curricular content material should be integrated rather than taught as isolated subjects. Scholars suggest that active and meaningful learning occurs when the learning process goes beyond memorizing discrete facts and rules. Language is more readily acquired when it is used to transmit messages in natural forms of communication rather than when it is explicitly taught.

"Cognates" refers to the relationships among languages that are historically derived from the same source.

At this advanced stage of language development, students' exposure to increasingly complex texts appears to be critical to their acquisition of academic language. Cummins (2001a) has suggested that at higher levels the constructs of vocabulary acquisition (namely students' lexicon or dictionary) and academic language proficiency are virtually indistinguishable. Therefore, teachers should focus on using texts that expose students to increasingly complex academic language. For certain groups of second language learners, the first language may act as a bridge to English through the use of cognates. "Cognates" refers to the relationships among languages that are historically derived from the same source. For example, a certain word in French will resemble the same word in Spanish, as with the words for book: *livre* and *libro*. Similarly, cognates exist for languages such as English and Spanish, as with the Spanish word for civilization: *civilización*. Raising students' awareness of the relationships among words—especially through exposure to text and classroom discussion about language—will help them draw on their own linguistic repertoires and will facilitate their acquisition of academic language.

Models of Bilingual Education

We wish to round out this chapter on Learning a Second Language by discussing various models of bilingual education. Now that you have an understanding of the major theories underlying second language acquisition and the general stages that learners pass through while acquiring a second language, we wish to present an overview of the most widely followed models of bilingual education. It is important to bear in mind that none of these types of programs are prototypical—that is, there is tremendous variation in the scope and implementation of actual programs for second language learners. Issues that affect a program's scope and implementation include funding, access to trained teachers, support (both community and administrative) for the programs, and the first language background of students (as with dual-language immersion programs). We also believe that while certain guidelines may be useful in implementing a quality program, the program itself should not be so prescriptive that its implementation lacks imagination, creativity, and adaptability to individual learners.

Quality bilingual education programs generally share a number of characteristics: highly trained bilingual, bicultural teachers; quality curriculum; community and parental support; and high expectations for students (Brisk, 1998). We believe, however, that regardless of program type, all quality educational programs share the principle that students bring valuable resources (including linguistic repertoire) to the classroom. The interaction that occurs between student and teacher should tap into these resources in collaborative and powerfully affirming ways. We expand upon this theme in the concluding section of this chapter.



In the United States there is a wide array of programs and instructional strategies in which English language learners participate. Scholars in the field of bilingual education, however, have yet to agree on uniform terminology for such programs (compare, for example, Brisk, 1998 and Baker, 1997), rendering quite tenuous any conclusions drawn from research on program evaluation and program effectiveness (August and Hakuta, 1997). Further, the actual language

environment (including how language is used) of a particular program may diverge from a program's stated type (Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991). For example, Escamilla's (1994) case study of the sociolinguistic environment of an elementary school in California revealed that the school favored English language use in a variety of contexts (such as in the parent handbook) despite its stated policy of bilingualism. Similarly, Coady (2001) found that English was used as an instructional strategy and was largely present in written forms in the classrooms of two all-Irish schools in the Republic of Ireland. Thus, the stated program model differed from what was actually implemented in practice.

Finally, program names can be deceptive. For example, the use of the term "immersion" in the United States, as with Structured English immersion, has been misleadingly equated with immersion programs in Europe and Canada, as in French immersion programs in Canada or all-Irish schools known as *Gaelscoileanna* in Ireland (see Johnson & Swain, 1997). The former programs are directed toward language minority students in the United States and have as their goal English monolingualism; the latter programs target language majority students with the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy. Thus, it is clear that not only is the target population different, but the program objectives and outcome goals diverge as well.

It is important, nevertheless, to highlight some of the more common program types that are currently implemented in the United States. **Table 1** on page 51, adapted from Baker (1997), reveals some of the differences and similarities among program structures and program types.

TABLE 1

Selected Models of Bilingual Education Adapted from Baker (1997)

TYPE OF PROGRAM	TYPICAL TYPE OF CHILD	LANGUAGE OF THE CLASSROOM	SOCIETAL AND EDUCATIONAL AIMS	AIM IN LANGUAGE OUTCOME
Submersion	Language minority	Majority language	Assimilation	Mono-lingualism
Submersion (withdrawal classes)	Language minority	Majority language with "pullout" second language lessons	Assimilation	Mono-lingualism
Transitional	Language minority	From minority language to majority language	Assimilation	Relative mono-lingualism
Immersion	Language majority	Bilingual (emphasis on second language)	Pluralism and enrichment	Bilingualism and biliteracy
Two-way/ dual language immersion	Language majority and language minority (often 50-50)	Minority and majority	Maintenance for minority students, pluralism, and enrichment	Bilingualism and biliteracy

Based on Baker's classification, immersion programs for language minority students in the United States would be more accurately classified as submersion programs or submersion programs with English language withdrawal/support classes.

Regardless of what a particular program or model of bilingual education is dubbed, it is important to consider both the societal and educational aims of the program and the language outcomes. Nevertheless, the name and type of program should not be misrepresented. For example, a submersion program in Baker's typology has assimilation and monolingualism as its aims and outcomes. These aims and outcomes would hold true for most English immersion programs in the United States, a theoretical model advanced by opponents of bilingual education programs. In Baker's typology, however, immersion programs for language minority children would aim for pluralism, enrichment, and bilingualism/biliteracy. So, we need to look beyond a particular program model to the actual characteristics that describe language development and outcome objectives.

Effective bilingual education programs empower students through maintaining and developing their first language (and identity) while engaging them fully with a broader, English-speaking society. Through critical examination of language, students are able to address social realities and challenge uneven social relationships. Ultimately, the critical examination of language (analyzing forms and uses of language) serves to heighten students' and teachers' awareness of the social realities and complex sociopolitical structures that perpetuate uneven power relationships. Language and knowledge about language are empowering in that they equip students with the tools they need to challenge existing social realties.

This chapter of *The Diversity Kit* has focused on various aspects of learning a second language, including the theories underlying second language acquisition, developmental stages and instructional strategies, and models of bilingual education. At the beginning of the chapter we urged you to become an educational linguist in your own classroom or community. We encourage you to continue your exploration into the ways in which languages are learned and used and how knowledge of language can empower students.

Language and Literacy

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- *How are oral language, literacy, and culture related?*
- *How does literacy instruction need to be adapted for culturally and linguistically diverse students?*
- *How does knowledge of language, including morphology and syntax, assist second language learners?*

The term "literacy" in the strictest sense refers to the ability to make meaning from written code. Over the course of recent decades, however, views of reading have shifted from a focus on the mechanical aspects, or coding and decoding, of language to a broader interpretation of reading as "a strategic process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text" (Braunger & Lewis, 1998, p. 6). Here we also take literacy to include the sociocultural context in which this construction of meaning occurs. Thus, in this section of *The Diversity Kit*, we define literacy as not only a multifaceted act of reading, writing, and thinking, but also as constructing meaning from printed text in a particular sociocultural context.

Some scholars have used the term "critical literacy" to refer to the ability to use language in all of its forms (including oral language use) as a tool for thinking, communicating, and challenging unequal power relationships among groups of people (Calfee & Nelson-Barber, 1991). The emphasis of both definitions is on using language to communicate and to make sense of the world, but the broader definition is more consistent with the notion of empowering students to participate in a democratic society and challenge the unequal power relationships within it (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Of course, in the Information Age, the range of print and media has expanded to include Internet communications and new types of graphics that require particular interpretive skills (Rafferty, 1999). Current definitions of the word literacy more frequently include proficiency with these new forms of media.

In this section of *The Diversity Kit,* we focus on learning to read and write and how that process is related to oral language proficiency. We also acknowledge that there are connections between high-level uses of written and oral language. Learning the discourse of the classroom entails acquiring what might be called "literate" or "formal" uses of oral language, which have much in common with the type of language that students will eventually encounter in print. Also, we cannot overlook the fact that literacy does not exist outside of a social context. That is, literacy refers to the ability to think and reason according to the norms of a particular society. Societal expectations for literacy determine (or at the least, influence) who becomes literate, how an individual becomes literate, and for what purposes literacy is used.

Cultural Approaches to Literacy

There is a cultural foundation for learning to read and write. Literacy, which is highly valued in U.S. dominant culture, is not uniformly meaningful across cultural groups. For example, certain American Indian and Alaskan Native groups prefer to keep their

ancestral languages oral because of the social costs of having a written language (Kwachka, 1994). Among these costs are the erosion of traditional roles of elders (i.e., an individual can obtain information in a book rather than ask an elder) and the loss of oral traditions. These groups or "speech communities" typically have highly sophisticated oral strategies for organizing lengthy narratives, as well as social strategies that ensure transmission of cultural traditions and history. Particular individuals are responsible for understanding and remembering certain knowledge and passing it on to other appropriate individuals. When written forms of the language are introduced, they can disturb (and, in fact, permanently change) the culture of the group. Moreover, special oral skills that develop memory (use of rhyme and special storytelling strategies) may be lost when a speech community transitions to using written language.

Indigenous tribes of the Americas and elsewhere have been faced with a paradox: on the one hand, despite what they regard as the negative implications of written literacy, they know that certain languages may have a better chance of surviving if they are reduced from oral to written form in a process known as graphization (Cooper, 1989). On the other hand, graphization necessarily alters the patterns of language use traditionally used by the group. Further, groups that have chosen to record their oral language in writing will have distinctive patterns of literacy use, depending on the group's needs. If the group is bilingual, people may choose to use certain forms of communication in one language and other forms of communication in the other language; this is a linguistic phenomenon known as diglossia. For example, in the Marshall Islands of Micronesia, personal letters are most often written in the vernacular language, Marshallese. However, beyond elementary school grades, academic writing is conducted in English. Further, Micronesia also uses literacy in rich ways one might not consider in an American context. Examples include carved story boards illustrating legends or historical events (used to retell the story without actual text), tattoos that have explicit "textual" meaning, and petroglyphs, or drawings in stone that transmit ancient cultural history and content.



Teachers who want to draw upon students' prior experiences and make connections to classroom literacy will want to explore

the culture-based literacy norms of their students. The vignette on page 56 illustrates how one teacher makes connections to her students' cultures. These immigrant Latino students come from Mexico and Central America, and their cultures are very collectivistic. In their homes, children learn to focus on shared success rather than individual success; cooperating to accomplish almost any kind of task is the norm.

VIGNETTE: Class Books

Mrs. Amada Pérez, a Ventura, California third-grade teacher, had children create posters about themselves on 11"x17" paper as a homework assignment. She explained, "When they brought them back, I interviewed each child. They learned about each other. The collectivistic part is putting them together as a class book." She laminated the pages so that they would stand up to ongoing use by more than 20 students who took great pride in their joint product. On another occasion, she paired her third graders with first graders (they have a buddy arrangement) to collaborate on a single book based on a story they had heard called "If". Mrs. Pérez described what happened: "They drew on paper and cut out their drawings. They wrote a sentence on the computer—some in English, some in Spanish. Some of their pages illustrated things like 'If people could smell wind…,' 'If tables could have faces…,' 'If grass could be eyebrows…,' 'If my heart were a butterfly…,' 'If a whale could run in the park…,' 'If apples could eat trees….' Reading the whole finished product as a group, they were in awe of each other's work."

(Adapted from Trumbull, Diaz-Meza, and Hasan, 2000.)

When Mrs. Pérez has her students make individual books and create an author's page about themselves, they inevitably portray themselves in the context of their whole family. Often, it is impossible to tell which person in the illustration is the child author. In their text, children tell about all of the members of their family. Should Mrs. Pérez instruct the children to focus only on themselves? If she did not understand the cultural origin of her students' behavior, Mrs. Pérez might think that the students had simply misunderstood her directions. This short, nonfictitious vignette illustrates how cultural values can permeate literacy in the classroom. The class books are symbolic of two values: collaboration and shared property. These values are not prevalent in mainstream American society; thus, there is a potential for conflict and misunderstandings, especially in a culturally mixed classroom where the teacher is not aware of these different orientations. In addition, the value of family is also reflected in the children's preference to draw their whole family on the author's page.

Oral Language as the Basis for Written Language

Well-developed oral language proficiency provides the foundation for written language (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In fact, reading involves responses to visual symbols based on auditory language. Successful reading in any language depends on seeing print, hearing speech, and associating these with stored experiences (i.e., making meaning). Language development, therefore, is essential for proficient reading. As reading researcher Marilyn Adams (1990) has observed, "Children … understand spoken language, and we depend on that. It is from speech and through speech that they must come to understand written language as well" (p. 221).

Successful reading in any language depends on seeing print, hearing speech, and associating these with stored experiences (i.e., making meaning). Language development, therefore, is essential for proficient reading.

Whether in the first or second language variety, language provides labels for thoughts that can then be used to transmit and receive ideas, either through oral or written modes. This relationship between language and reading is well-documented. According to Snow et al. (1998), "Between 40 and 75% of preschoolers with early language impairment develop reading difficulties later…. [Even] those with mild-to-moderate language delays, who appear to overcome their spoken-language

difficulties by the end of the preschool period, remain at greater risk than other youngsters…" (p. 105). Thus, the importance of early language development cannot be underestimated.

Elements of Literacy Proficiency

The major elements of literacy proficiency are phonological awareness, vocabulary and prior knowledge, knowledge of discourse structures, knowledge of literary styles, and awareness of purposes for reading. Although these elements are not the only building blocks of literacy, we believe they are among the most important. In addition, teachers' understanding of morphology and the syntax of a language can facilitate second language learners' acquisition of English. The goal of this section is to provide an introduction from which teachers can proceed to identify areas they want to pursue in greater depth.

Phonological Awareness

To read successfully in any alphabetic language, students must be able to distinguish among the sounds of the words they are reading and to hear the smaller units of the sounds that compose words. This has been referred to as phonemic awareness, a skill that is actually a component of phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is "the ability to attend explicitly to the phonological structure of spoken words, rather than just to their meanings and syntactic roles" (Snow et al. 1998, p. 111). To be phonologically aware is (at a simple level) to be able to detect patterns like rhymes or (at a more abstract level) to learn to hear the individual sounds (phonemes) in words. For example, a young reader must learn to hear "fog" as "f-o-g."

At a more advanced level, reading successfully requires that the reader understand the relationship between words such as intervene/intervention or among words such as integrate/integral/integrity. At this level, linguists speak of morphophonological awareness. As unprounceable as this word might seem at first, it is an illustration of an important concept: words are often composed of meaningful chunks (think of "beauti-ful" or "dis-connect"). The task for the developing reader is not only to hear words as composed of sounds but to perceive their underlying structure—their morphophonological structure. "Morpho" refers to "morphemes," which can be words (beauty, connect) or the small pieces added to words (-ful, dis-) to make a particular meaning. So, to be morphophonologically aware (which is very important to being a good reader), children have to understand the sound-letter correspondence, how morphemes may be combined, and the relationship between the pronunciation and spelling of multimorphemic words.

For instance, a student who hears the word "protects" as "pratex" and writes it that way has a basic ability to analyze words phonetically, but he or she is missing a deeper morphophonological knowledge that goes beneath the surface of the word. "Protects" is composed of two morphemes that can be combined with other morphemes in many ways: pro-, and -tects (*pro*vide, de*tect*, etc.). Moreover, a more developed reader-writer would know intuitively that "protects" is a verb, and verbs don't usually end in -x. In the past, portions of reading texts and workbooks were devoted to structural analysis, which addressed many aspects of morphophonological awareness, including combining prefixes and suffixes with root words to change the grammatical category of a word (work/working). So, although there is a current emphasis on phonemic awareness in the reading literature, it should be understood as one piece of a larger set of skills.

Phonemic awareness is one of the most important predictors of student success in reading (Adams, 1990; Snow et al., 1998). In fact, the vast majority of students who have difficulty learning to read have problems at the level of phonemic awareness (Snow et al., 1998). Such students may not readily hear all three sounds in "fog" but hear it only as an unanalyzed syllable. This skill—being able to figure out that spoken language is composed of phonemes, hearing the sounds in a word, and distinguishing between words based on the different sounds—helps children learn the letter-sound (grapheme-phoneme) correspondence needed to read and spell words. More important, phonemic awareness is essential to knowing how to use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to identify new words. These skills are learned, and because they do not develop naturally they should be explicitly taught. **Table 1**, on page 60, shows a series of phonemic awareness tasks that can be used to assess a student's level of proficiency with this skill. They are listed roughly in order of difficulty. If a student cannot do any one of these tasks with relative success, he or she probably needs some specific intervention to improve phonemic awareness.



Preceding any of these tasks, a teacher should assess a student's ability to recognize and produce rhyming words. Ability to detect and produce rhymes is a phonological skill that develops before grapheme-phoneme correspondence, and lack of

awareness of rhymes suggests that instruction needs to begin with earlier developing skills (rhyming, detection of numbers of syllables in a word). Many children can hear the beginning sound in a word (and perhaps associate it with a letter) but cannot break the word down into component sounds. Note that all of the tasks in **Table 1** are oral tasks that do not require knowledge of the alphabet. The letters within slashes (/s/p/a/, etc.) stand for sounds, not letter names.

TABLE 1

Examples of Phonemic Awareness Tasks

TASK	EXAMPLE
Word-to-word matching	*Do pen and pipe begin with the same sound?*
Sound isolation	*What is the first sound in rose?*
Odd word out	*Which word starts with a different sound—bag, nine, beach, bike?*
Sound-to-word matching	*Is there a /k/ in bike? In bone?*
Phoneme deletion	*What word would be left if the /k/ sound were taken away from cat? What sound do you hear in meat that is missing in eat?*
Phoneme counting	*How many sounds do you hear in the word cake?*
Blending	*What word would we have if you put these sounds together: /s/ /a/ /t/ ?*

(Adapted from Stanovich, 1994)

Print-Based Skills

Other related important predictors of reading success in English are knowledge of the alphabet and awareness of how print works—for example, that letters can be used to represent speech (Snow et al., 1998) and that words in English are written from left to right (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). However, a child may know the alphabet, the sounds that each letter represents, and that words are read from left to right but still get stuck trying to distinguish among individual phonemes in words.

Vocabulary and Prior Knowledge

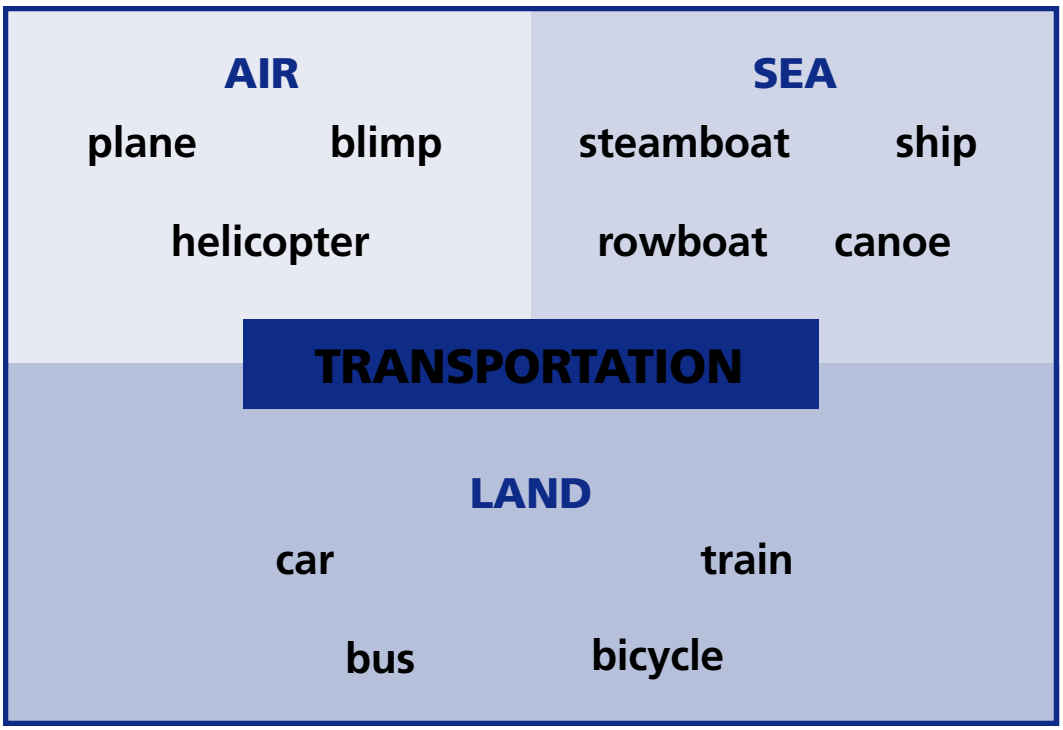
A second important component of literacy proficiency has to do with the skills required to understand ideas or concepts of language in order to gain meaning from reading. This is the area of prior knowledge and vocabulary development. These two areas are deeply intertwined: words represent concepts, and students' vocabularies are greatly dependent on their daily life experiences, reading, and instruction. For instance, a word like "butterfly" may evoke an image of an insect with large wings. Greater experience with butterflies (or more exposure in school) will likely lead to a more elaborated sense of the word's meaning (stages of development of the butterfly, habitats, geographical distribution, types of butterflies, etc.).

"Reading comprehension is a process that involves the orchestration of the reader's prior experience and knowledge about the world and about language."

This combined factor, vocabulary and prior knowledge, is also a major predictor of success in reading and a primary determinant of reading comprehension for students learning to read English as a second language (August & Hakuta, 1997). "Reading comprehension is a process that involves the orchestration of the reader's prior experience and knowledge about the world and about language" (Bartoli & Botel, 1988, p. 186). Teachers should strive to help students build the background knowledge and vocabulary necessary to comprehend the reading. This can be accomplished through informal instruction, such as reading aloud to students; it can also be accomplished through direct, step-by-step instructional strategies for teaching key concepts and vocabulary in both pre- and postreading activities (e.g., semantic mapping). Semantic mapping is a simple technique that asks students to show (and learn from each other) relationships among words. An example of semantic mapping is presented on page 62.

ACTIVITY: Semantic Mapping

With students, create a map of modes of transportation. Cluster together words related to types of land transportation, air transportation, and sea transportation. Can you expand the modes of transportation beyond the example presented below?



DISCUSSION:

- **Ask students how transportation may differ based on a region's geography. How do cultural norms and cultural considerations influence modes of transportation available? Uncommon modes of transportation, such as rickshaws, may be examples of this.**

Knowledge of Discourse Structures

A third component of literacy considers students' knowledge of different kinds of oral and written discourse structures. "Discourse" refers to any unit of oral or written speech that is longer than a sentence. As sentences get strung together, there is an expectation that the resulting discourse will be structured in a certain way, depending on its purpose. Reading and writing entail producing and comprehending extended stretches of oral and written discourse (often referred to as "text") that are organized in different ways. Readers who understand the structure of a text and are able to comprehend the text beyond each individual sentence tend to be more successful at reading (Meyer, 1977; Mandler & Johnson, 1977; Stein & Glenn, 1979). In the Culture section of *The Diversity Kit,* we discuss the organization of stories or narratives and how culture influences not only narratives but also expository discourse such as argumentation and persuasion, description, and explanation (see Kaplan, 1988; Kochman, 1989).

Discourse structures most commonly used in the U.S. are not superior to other discourse structures; they simply differ from those that are more commonly used in other cultures. For example, an argument in which facts are presented first and a conclusion is then drawn is neither superior nor inferior to an argument in which an allegation is made and facts offered to support it. Students who have been exposed to different expectations for how text should be structured may not recognize the patterns of the stories or descriptions that are used in the classroom (or are expected in their writing). When students have difficulties reading English texts or writing according to accepted standards, teachers may wrongly judge that they are deficient in language skills or reading ability. The problem for teachers in assessing the writing of such students is that it is difficult to recognize patterns that are not familiar to the teacher. Teachers may see only the lack of something they expect to see, rather than understanding the pattern or structure produced by the student. Although teachers' familiarity with students' writing patterns tends to be overlooked in the literature on balanced literacy instruction, it is very important, particularly for English language learners who may come from different cultural backgrounds.

Knowledge of Appropriate Literary Styles

A related area has to do with literary styles students may use in their own writing or recognize in the texts they read (Kaplan, 1988). A couple of brief examples will illustrate this issue. Vietnamese narrative style apparently emphasizes the importance of a story's setting. A Vietnamese American student who has been exposed to this

tradition may expend what a teacher considers a disproportionate amount of time describing the setting of a narrative—time the teacher feels should be used to develop the story's plot or characters. Students from an Arabic writing tradition may appear to digress when they use elaborate description. In both cases, students and teachers may find themselves focusing on different elements of the text. These cases may result in inaccurate assessment of a student's literacy skills, but they also provide an opportunity for student-teacher discussion about how literacy styles can differ and about what is expected of students in an academic setting.

It is not just immigrant students who may encounter conflicts between their own styles and the styles expected of them in school. According to Kochman's research (1989), African Americans are more likely to follow the classical Greek pattern of arguing in a way that is logical but also employs an appeal to the emotions, revealing personal feelings about a topic. Dominant culture individuals tend to regard the emotional appeal as undermining the logic of the argument (which, of course, it need not), while their African American peers regard the elimination of emotion as insincerity. Because of these differences, the writing of students from different backgrounds may look quite different. In addition, literate oral discourse (giving a speech, for instance) could take very different forms but still be effective, depending on the audience.

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Purposes for Reading

Although we may not think of purpose as a reading skill, it affects a reader's approach to any given text. Purposes for reading or writing may vary from person to person and from culture to culture. Students' experiences within their families will have provided them with certain ideas about the purposes of reading. In some homes, reading may primarily serve religious purposes (reading the *Bible*

or *Koran*, for example). Other purposes of literacy may be to keep up with the news, to make lists for shopping or planning, to seek out information, to keep and review records, to gain pleasure or escape. In addition, literacy may be valued in order to communicate with distant relatives or to complete tasks for one's job. Home exposure to specific genres of literacy may impact students' expectations for literacy use in school. However, it is dangerous to assume that a student's limited exposure to certain forms of literacy in the home means she will not be a proficient reader. All students can expand their reading repertoires through instruction and through exposure to and interaction with a variety of texts.

Uses of literacy and motivation are intertwined. Braunger & Lewis (1998) suggest that in order to sustain their engagement with text "children must be motivated to want to read for authentic purposes connected to their own lives in meaningful ways" (p. 33). Studies have shown that students aren't personally engaged in literacy activities when they are unable to make a connection between the text and their own lives. In these cases, students do not develop into mature readers (see Greenleaf, 1997). It should come as no surprise that students who are engaged, purposeful readers are more likely to succeed in school than those who are not (Morrow & Weinstein, 1986; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1990). If they are to be successfully engaged, students' cultural backgrounds and personal interests must be allowed to influence their choices for what to read and write.

Second Language Issues in Acquiring Literacy

Learning to read in English is likely more of a challenge for English language learners than for those who already speak Standard English as a native language. When learners from non-Standard English backgrounds encounter English print, link it to the sound patterns of their native speech, and seek meaningful references drawn from their cultural heritage, they may be unable to make adequate connections. At best, their reading skills may stop at the decoding level, and the written material may not make sense to them. To avoid these disconnects, teachers must build a broad basis of oral English, a foundation firm enough to support acquisition of the English writing system. However, this does not mean that writing instruction needs to wait until the student is fully proficient in oral English. Snow et al. (1998) suggest that "print materials may be used to support the development of English phonology, vocabulary, and syntax." However, they encourage postponement of formal reading "until an adequate level of oral proficiency in English has been achieved" (p. 325). In short, the richer the experiences students have in English, the more abundant will be the resources for thinking through English and extending that knowledge to reading in English (Thonis, 1981).

For students who have been using another language or dialect in the home, coming to school and learning to read using somewhat different phonemic patterns can be an exceedingly difficult and frustrating task. Such students would benefit from explicit instruction that helps them distinguish between meaningful sounds in one language or dialect and another. For example, the /sh/ sound is not present in the Spanish language, and first language Spanish speakers may confuse it with /ch/. The /r/ sound may be confused with English /d/ because of where the tongue is placed to make both sounds. English /th/, as in "they," may also be confused with Spanish /d/. The Spanish /h/ sound is represented by "j" or "g," and the letter "h" is actually silent; these differences will need to be addressed with students who have learned to read in Spanish.

Students who have mastered a language variety not spoken in school may not readily hear the differences between their own set of phonemes and those of the school dialect because these differences often do not interfere with face-to-face communication. Students who speak African American Vernacular English (AAVE, also referred to as Black Language or Ebonics), for example, tend to use /v/ for the /th/ sound in "mother" and /f/ for the /th/ sound in "with." A teacher can point out these differences, which primarily affect spelling and not reading.

If students do not have the background knowledge to support comprehension of texts in English, teachers will have to help build that knowledge and the associated vocabulary. They may also need expanded experiences to develop their background knowledge. Thus, the development of both prior knowledge and vocabulary is also critical. Even when students do have the expected experiences and knowledge (and relevant vocabulary in their first language), they may not have the actual English vocabulary to express their knowledge. In this case, the task for the teacher (and peers) is to help the student match new vocabulary to prior knowledge.

Research shows that students who are literate in their first language can become proficient readers in the second language without learning to read from scratch in the second language (Cummins, 1981; Droop & Verhoeven, 1998; Fitzgerald, 1995; Krashen, 1996). Because most reading skills transfer, once oral language skills in the second language have been acquired, the task of learning to read again is unnecessary. However, these students need instruction in the specific, nontransferable skills: hearing the sounds of English, linking them to the symbols (letters) that represent them, learning English spelling patterns (which go beyond the sound-letter level), and understanding the different English terms for concepts they have already developed in the first language.

VIGNETTE: Disproportionate Representation of English Language Learners

Ms. Altchech teaches fourth grade. She observes that because many English language learners are mainstreamed into English-only instruction in fourth grade, there are suddenly many referrals for special education evaluations of these students. She recognizes that most teachers believe that phonemic awareness skills in Spanish will transfer readily to English. And while the general principle may transfer, the majority of students will likely need explicit instruction in English orthography (spelling conventions) and word analysis. In addition, English language learners' English vocabularies are not going to be equivalent to those of native English speakers. If they have not had prior experience with a concept (for example, ice fishing, hula dancing, keyboarding), they may also need to learn the ideas behind the new vocabulary.

DISCUSSION:

- **What can Ms. Altchech do to investigate her observation that English language learners are being overreferred to special education?**
- **How can she inform her colleagues of the information she finds?**
- **What can Ms. Altchech do to inform her colleagues of the relationship between oral language development and literacy for English language learners?**
- **How can she connect this with students' prior knowledge?**

Knowledge of Morphology

Morphology refers to the study of the forms of words, including the structure of words themselves. Morphemes are the smallest functioning unit in the composition of words. That is, words are composed of one or more morphemes. Morphemes are considered to be either "free" when they can occur as separate words or "bound" when they must be attached to other words. For example, the word "cats" consists of two morphemes: the free morpheme "cat" and the bound morpheme "-s" that acts as a marker of plurality. Sometimes altering a free morpheme by adding or removing a bound morpheme results in a shift in the class or meaning of a word. For example, adding the bound morpheme " -ish" to the noun "sheep" results in an adjective. These morphemes are considered derivational because the new word is derived from a base word.

Morphology refers to the study of the forms of words, including the structure of words themselves. Morphemes are the smallest functioning unit in the composition of words.

Knowing how language works and how words are comprised can facilitate the language acquisition process. Krashen's (1982) Monitor Hypothesis, which was presented in the Learning a Second Language section of *The Diversity Kit*, is part of one broad theory of second language acquisition. This hypothesis suggests that knowledge of the rules of language helps second language learners to check or monitor the language they produce or their linguistic output. This can occur with both oral and written output. As with other aspects of language teaching and learning, a general understanding of the composition of words lends itself to the second language acquisition process. It is important that teachers understand how language works linguistically as well as functionally.

Knowledge of Syntax

As with morphology, a general understanding of syntax on the part of both second language students and teachers is important in the process of language acquisition. Syntax refers to the rules that govern how sentences are formed in a language. This includes both the grammar and structure of a language. Syntactically, English follows a sentence construction that consists of subject + verb + object. An example of this structure is the sentence, "The children went to school." In this sentence, "children"

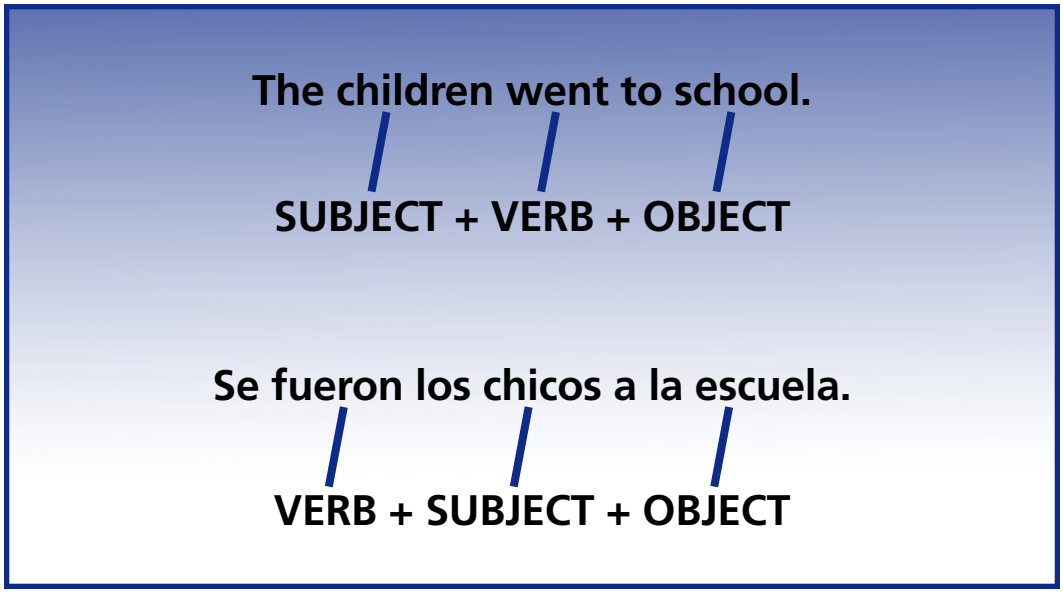
Syntax refers to the rules that govern how sentences are formed in a language. This includes both the grammar and structure of a language.

is the subject, "went" is the verb, and "school" is the object.

The sentence structure of another language may differ from that of English. In Spanish, for example, sentence structure typically follows a verb + subject + object construction. Thus, a translation of the sentence above into Spanish would reveal a sentence structure that is different from that of English. The sentence would be "*Se fueron los chicos a la escuela,*" or literally "Went the children to school." The difference in these two constructions is depicted in the sentence tree in **Figure 1**. Note also that the Spanish construction uses a reflexive verb (went/*se fueron*) in addition to a definite article (the/l*a*) before the word school (*escuela)*.

FIGURE 1

Sentence Tree



To take another example, adjectives in English generally precede the nouns they describe, as in the construction "the white cat." However, in Spanish, as in other Romance languages, the construction is reversed, and adjectives generally follow the nouns they describe. Thus, the Spanish construction for the noun phrase above is "*el gato blanco.*" This translates directly to "the cat white."

When an English language learner is acquiring English, he or she may refer back to the knowledge of syntax gained in the first language; until the rules and structure of English are acquired, students may apply the syntactic rules of their first language to the second language. It is important that teachers are aware of this in the process of second language acquisition. Teachers can explicitly teach their English language learners about the syntax of English while pointing out the syntactic differences among the languages of their students.

Knowing how languages function and how words may be used is perhaps the most creative aspect of language learning and teaching. Language is dynamic; new words are generated continually, and existing words are constantly deriving new meaning. It is important for teachers to recognize that language acquisition is more than just learning words.

In summary, learning a language consists of knowing the uses and meanings of that language, in addition to knowing how that language functions. Cummins (2001a) has proposed a framework consisting of three foci of language acquisition:

- Focus on meaning. This refers to making input comprehensible to second language learners.
- Focus on language. This refers to learners' knowledge and awareness of the specific forms and uses of language, including a critical look at those forms and uses.
- Focus on use. This suggests that language can be used to generate new knowledge, address social realities and inequities, and create new literature and art.

Cummins suggests that these three dimensions of language can help guide pedagogy, which will enhance the cognitive and linguistic development of second language learners. He suggests further that these dimensions can lead to the growth of critical literacy skills. To understand the different dimensions of language, including its forms, meaning, and use, try the following activity.

ACTIVITY: Critical Literacy

- *1. Read through the local newspaper and find any article concerning culturally or linguistically diverse populations.*

- *2. Identify words that appear to impact the message or tone of the article. For example, the phrase "influx of immigrants" contains the message that a community is faced with large numbers of immigrants. Based on historical demographic data, this may or may not be true. On a more subtle level, this message implies that the social and economic costs associated with immigrants are a burden to the community—a burden thrust on them against their will.*

- *3. Use the article in your classroom or at a local community group to generate a list of loaded words from the articles brought in. Do members of the group understand the words and their associated meaning(s)? How do these words generate or reinforce existing stereotypes about members of the community?*

- *4. Words can be analyzed for their various linguistic functions (semantic, phonemic, morphologic, and syntactic). What substitute words could be used in place of the loaded words to portray a more accurate description of the social reality?*

- *5. Generate a new list of words that could act as substitutes. Rewrite the article using the newly generated words from the group.*

- *6. Submit the group's article to the local newspaper.*

When teachers have a strong understanding of morphology in addition to syntax, phonology, and semantics, second language learners will become more proficient in their ability to use and understand language.



ACTIVITY: Exploring Literacy for English Language Learners

Teachers can enhance learning opportunities for English language learners by using a variety of strategies that call for the use of language and literacy. Reflect on and discuss these points:

- *Discuss views of literacy with a group of your colleagues.*
- *In their view and yours, what constitutes a good beginning literacy program for English language learners?*

Different Orthographies

For students whose first language writing system is alphabetic and who have learned to read in that language, moving to English orthography (spelling conventions) may not be a huge leap. However, for those who have learned to read in a syllabic writing system (like that of Japanese, where a syllable like *ka* or *mi* is represented by a single graphic element), the leap is greater. Japanese, for example, uses a combination system, with some words written in symbols that stand for syllables (*hiragana* or *katakana*) and some written in *kanji* that represent whole words. *Kanji*, which are Chinese in origin, can be very complex, with many pen or brush strokes composing a single one. Such a system places an extremely high demand on memory but less demand on phonological and phonemic skills.

Even when a student's first language is written in an alphabetic system, we cannot expect students to make the transition to English reading without considerable explicit instruction (Escamilla, 1999). Perhaps the biggest sticking point for speakers and readers of languages that have fewer vowels is the complex vowel representation system in English: five letters represent 11 vowel sounds individually or in combination. The letter a alone stands for at least four sounds. Confusion can arise over differences in the sounds represented by the same letter; as mentioned, in Spanish the letter h is silent, unless it is combined as ch, and j is pronounced roughly like the English h in many dialects (as is g before i or e). The vowels may present even more problems: the letter e in Spanish stands for a sound roughly equivalent to a long a (as in *bake*) in English, while the letter i stands for the long e sound (*keep*) in English.



In this chapter we have explored various aspects of language and literacy, including the relationship between oral language development and literacy. We have also considered the importance of vocabulary enrichment and connecting students' home knowledge and literacies to the academic environment. Finally, we have looked at how knowledge of language, including morphology and syntax, can assist U.S. second language learners in their acquisition of English.

By way of highlighting some of the issues we have introduced in this chapter, **Figure 2** shows the major components of reading proficiency and some literacy questions one might pose related to language and culture. Addressing the following questions should aid in planning instruction and interpreting student performance.

FIGURE 2

Key Questions About Literacy

COMPONENTS OF LITERACY PROFICIENCY	SAMPLE QUESTIONS RELATED TO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
Phonological awareness	*How much overlap is there between the phonemes of the student's first language and those of English?* *What are the possible ways for words to be structured (use of root words with suffixes, prefixes, or compounding)?* *Are children encouraged to "play" with language, to engage in rhyming games, etc., which would increase phonological awareness? What is the orthography (spelling system) of the student's first language like?*
Vocabulary knowledge	*What kind of vocabulary does the student have in his or her first language? in English? With regard to key words in an instructional unit or topic, does the student grasp the concepts represented by the words?* *How elaborate is the student's understanding of important words?*
Prior knowledge	*What experience has the student had with classroom topics?* *Is the topic at hand one he or she may have learned about at home or in another school?* *What personal experiences could be used as bridges to classroom topics?*

COMPONENTS OF LITERACY PROFICIENCY	SAMPLE QUESTIONS RELATED TO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
Knowledge of oral and written discourse structures and strategies	*What are the text structures of the student's home culture (i.e., narrative, exposition, formal, oral language)?* *How are they similar to or different from what is expected in the classroom?*
Knowledge of literary styles	*What are the written styles of the student's home language or culture? Is the student's writing influenced by those styles?*
Purposes for using literacy	*How is literacy used in the student's home or culture? How are those uses similar to or different from the purposes for reading in school?*
Knowledge of morphology and syntax	*How can students' prior knowledge about language, both oral and written, be tapped to facilitate second language learning?* *What areas and skills of first language seem to transfer to the second language?* *In what ways (e.g., word games, explicit teaching) can teachers expand students' knowledge of the functions and meanings of language?*

Ultimately, teachers who maintain high expectations for students, who value the knowledge and literacies that students bring to the classroom, and who link students' home languages to the English that is required in an academic context will be most successful in fostering an equitable and high-quality educational experience for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

In the following chapter on Language and Assessment, we explore different types of assessments, including authentic assessments, which may be used with culturally and linguistically diverse students. We encourage you to explore issues of language, culture, and human development in education by using *The Diversity Kit* in its entirety.

Language and Assessment

GUIDING QUESTIONS

? *In what ways is language both a tool and a target of assessment?*

? *In what ways should assessment of English language learners be modified to reflect linguistic and cultural considerations?*

? *How is assessment (mis)used to distinguish between language deficiency and language difficulty in English language learners?*

Language is both a target and a tool of assessment. In the case of children acquiring English as a second language, teachers use two types of assessment: they evaluate language in terms that correspond to educational standards in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and they also assess mastery of content area material, a process that often takes place through language but is also largely an assessment of an individual's language proficiency. Language specialists using formal assessments evaluate students' attainment of different aspects of language, including syntax (grammar), vocabulary, pronunciation, ability to use language appropriately in different circumstances (pragmatics), and sometimes writing skills. Both types of assessment are necessary to understanding students' language proficiency.

Assessing Language Proficiency

Understanding a student's language proficiency requires evaluating the student in several settings and evaluating multiple ways of using language. Formal tests administered by specialists may be used for placement purposes or to assess progress in language development in English; however, other sources, such as parent interviews and teacher observations, can help give a full picture of a student's language use. This full picture cannot be developed by a single test. Below, we pose sets of questions pertaining to three important aspects of language proficiency: communication outside the classroom, language in school, and relative proficiency with English and the home language.

Communication outside the classroom

- How successful is the student in communicating with peers in a social setting (like the playground)?
- Is he or she able to use English to accomplish intentions (such as sharing equipment, getting someone to work or play with him or her, getting an answer to a question)?
- How well does he or she communicate at home, according to family members?
- What language does the student prefer to use in these situations?
- Does he or she use both the first language and English successfully?
- Is the student able to communicate his or her needs to both children and adults?

Language use in school

- How well-developed is the student's "academic" vocabulary (related to school subjects)?
- Does the student successfully use English to learn academic subjects?
- What kinds of support does the student need in order to engage in an academic discussion (bearing in mind culture-based discourse preferences)?
- How proficient is the student at academic writing tasks?
- Is there a gap between oral proficiency and reading or writing proficiency?

Relative proficiency in English and the home language

- How does the student's academic vocabulary in his or her first language compare to that in English?
- What is known about the student's literacy (reading and writing) in his or her first language?
- How does the student's grammatical proficiency in English compare with that of his or her native, English-speaking peers?
- Does the student have particular kinds of problems (e.g., with verb tenses, plurals, possessives)?
- Is the student comfortable using both the first language and English and is he or she able to select appropriate times for both (e.g., using first language in small-group discussions where others speak it and using English in the larger group or on assignments and assessments)?

As these questions suggest, a classroom teacher is in an excellent position to observe a great deal more about a student's language proficiency and use than a specialist who may see the student only for testing. Teachers need to be aware of a student's level of academic language proficiency and, in particular, the student's vocabulary development in academic subjects—something that can affect comprehension of both oral instructions and texts. Ideally, a classroom teacher with students who are still acquiring English will have the support of bilingual or ESL staff, whose observations can be pooled with his or her own to arrive at a valid assessment of students' language proficiency. It is always advisable to assess the student in both her first language and in English, particularly when the student's first language development is still being supported or when a child is just entering school. **Figure 1** on page 80 is a checklist that a teacher can use as an aid in assessing students' language proficiency in English.

FIGURE 1

Interpersonal and Academic Language Skills Checklist

Name: **Date:**

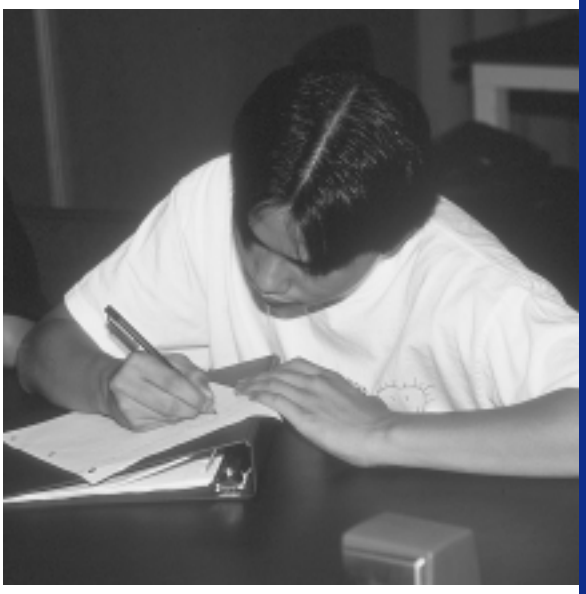
Directions: *Please check skills that have been observed at an appropriate level in either English or the non-English language.*

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE	NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE
Contextualized/Noncognitively demanding:		
1. Answers basic questions appropriately.		
2. Exchanges common greetings.		
3. Follows general classroom directions.		
4. Participates in routine school activities.		
5. Describes classroom objects or people.		
6. Gives classroom commands to peers.		
7. Participates in sharing time.		
8. Retells a familiar story.		
9. Initiates and maintains a conversation.		
10. Follows along during oral reading.		
Decontextualized/Noncognitively demanding:		
11. Decodes fluently.		
12. Reads noncognitively demanding information (e.g., notes, signs, directions, simple sentences, etc.).		
13. Writes words and simple sentences.		
14. Generates simple sentences.		
15. Writes from dictation.		

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE	NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE
Contextualized/Cognitively demanding:		
16. Follows specific directions for academic tasks.		
17. Uses terms for temporal and spatial concepts (e.g., first, last; top, bottom; left, right; etc.).		
18. Asks/answers questions regarding academic topics.		
19. Understands contextualized academic content.		
20. Reads stories for literal comprehension.		
Decontextualized/Cognitively demanding:		
21. Distinguishes main ideas from details (oral).		
22. Predicts conclusions after listening to story.		
23. Understands lectures on academic content.		
24. Uses language to reason, analyze, synthesize.		
25. Participates in academic discussions.		
26. Reads content area information for comprehension.		
27. Uses glossary, index, appendices, etc.		
28. Writes meaningful short paragraphs.		
29. Uses correct language mechanics.		
30. Writes coherent stories or reports.		

(Adapted from O'Malley, 1997)

Language Factors, Content Mastery, and Assessment



Accurate assessment of children's language proficiency is critical in order to make valid interpretations about their academic progress. This is important because learning and demonstrating content mastery are frequently dependent upon language proficiency. Even so-called nonverbal tests often require that a test taker employ mental language to conceptualize the problem or hold certain ideas in memory (Oller, 1992; Roth, 1978). A student may have met requirements for English-only instruction but still takes longer to process ideas in English than in her first language. For this reason, timed tests or time-limited assessments of any kind may penalize an English language learner (Ascher, 1990). Sometimes the directions on a test are ambiguous or require close parsing of complex syntax. This is troublesome because if a student does not frame a problem correctly from the outset, his or her solution is likely to be flawed (Duran, 1985).

In addition, we know from research that the vocabulary of students still acquiring English is likely to be less elaborate than that of a native speaker. Such a student may know that "buckle" means "a metal belt fastener" but not that it can mean "to cave in" (either figuratively or literally— as "to buckle at the knees"). And, of course, grasping common idioms such as "at a low ebb," "music to my ears," or "out of step" may take a long time for second language learners, making them appear to lag behind. When a student performs poorly on an academic assessment, we often simply do not know the degree to which the performance is due to poor learning versus inadequate mastery of language (Garcia & Pearson, 1994; Hamayan & Damico, 1991).

Performance assessments, or those that demand an extended response, often call upon multiple, high-level language skills. **Figure 2** on page 83 demonstrates this fact.

FIGURE 2

Language Factors in Assessment

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY*	LANGUAGE DEMANDS
Write a report to a friend who was sick today, explaining to her the science experiment you did and how you did it. (Elementary writing task following a classroom science assessment)	*Recount a multistep past event, sequencing and reinterpreting information; assume role of the teacher to a nonpresent audience. Requires considering what recipient already knows, level of detail he or she needs to comprehend.*
Tell us anything else about your understanding of this story—what it means to you, what it makes you think about in your own life, or anything that relates to your reading of it. (Segment of an elementary reading assessment)	*Give account of own experience(s), linking experience(s) to text, elaborating story comprehension.*
Imagine that you are a staff writer for a small magazine. One day you are given your "big chance." You are asked to write a final scene of an incomplete story. (Taken from a high school writing task)	*Complete an account (a story) following prescribed format; comprehend and analyze the story so that the new segment makes sense; take on the voice of another author, maintaining style.*

* Tasks are adapted from examples provided by the California Department of Education (Estrin, 1993).

Teachers can evaluate the difficulty and appropriateness of assessment (and instruction) by asking some questions:

- What components of language arts are involved in the activity, and how competent is the student with each one?
- How complex are the directions for undertaking the task? (Consider sentence structures and length, specialized vocabulary, length and complexity of text, dependence on small relational words such as "before," "after," "if…then," "because," etc.)
- How flexible is the task in terms of its requirements for language use? Are there alternative ways of expressing understanding or representing information given in language (drawings vs. essays, for example)?
- Even though the task appears to be nonverbal, what kinds of hidden language demands does it have (for example, for problem representation)?
- How can the task be facilitated or mediated? Can additional explanation be offered? Is the student allowed to use a dictionary or other tool?
- How much decontextualized language is being used, or how much will the student have to produce (demands of reading, writing especially)? Does the topic provide any bridges to student experience?
- How many different language functions must the student "pull together" to perform a complex, integrated task—and where might the process break down for a student who is still learning English or who has limited mastery of language functions?
- How cognitively demanding does the task appear to be, judging from what is known about a student's language proficiency and previous educational experience?
- To what degree does a language use or an associated genre match the student's cultural experience with that use or genre?

(Adapted from Farr & Trumbull, 1997)

Because language factors may cloud the picture of academic achievement, we must develop assessments that minimize this confusion; we must develop a way to mediate the administration of assessments so that they elicit performances that reveal the true learning of students in subject areas. In terms of evaluating student performance, teachers also need to determine which kinds of student errors indicate learning problems and which simply indicate normal developmental stages along the way to language mastery. Much assessment is done through writing, and while it is natural to notice student errors in writing (whether writing is the object of assessment or the vehicle for assessing learning in another subject area), not all errors merit the attention they get in scoring (Leki, 1992; Valdés, 1991).

Criteria need to be established for what should count as a serious error. For instance, even though omission of articles (as in "My family had picnic this weekend") may grate on the ears of many English teachers, this particular error is relatively trivial. In addition, when teachers are familiar with students' first languages, they can look at student work with an understanding of first language transfer rather than focusing unduly on errors (Sweedler-Brown, 1993). Many Asian languages do not use articles at all, and even advanced English speakers and writers may continue to struggle with similar language issues.

Assessment as a Cultural Event

As with other areas of education, assessment is embedded in cultural context (Estrin & Nelson-Barber, 1995). There are accepted ways of evaluating student progress or child development in every culture, but these ways differ from one culture to the next. Immigrant students, in particular, may take some time to understand the norms of assessment in U.S. classrooms; the same may be true for American Indian students growing up in traditional communities (Deyhle, 1987). For this reason, it is important to use a variety of assessment techniques and formats—including informal observation as well as a range of more formal measures—with nonmainstream students. The following vignette illustrates some problems with informal assessment and the complexities of understanding the performance of a student from a culture different from dominant U.S. school culture.

VIGNETTE: Hermana May Understand, but I Can't Tell

Hermana came from Palau, an island republic in the Pacific about 700 miles east of the Philippines, to a first-grade classroom in Honolulu earlier this year. She's staying with an older sister and brother-in-law. Earlier today I read the class a story that has always captured their imagination, Maurice Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are. As I read, Hermana sat quietly, eyes down. I remember thinking, "Is she interested? Has she put herself into the story?" It was easy to tell with the others. I could almost feel Sam's interest as he wiggled, frowned, and smiled along with the story. I've been trying to get a sense of Hermana's understanding while I read. I decided to try this book because it's never failed me before. When I called on Hermana and asked her how she liked the story, she barely spoke. "Good." She said it so quietly that no one else heard. When I asked how she'd feel if she were the boy in the story, she looked confused. The more questions I asked about the story, the less she responded. I'm frustrated and worried. I have no idea what she really understands.

This teacher probably needs to know more about the child's home culture. Perhaps she could talk with a parent or with a community member (a paraprofessional, if there is one in the school system) who may be able to shed light on Hermana's behavior. She can also try different, more private ways of finding out about Hermana's story comprehension. Retelling the story through drawings may be one nonthreatening and even culturally appropriate way to do so. Some questions that will need to be answered are:

- **What is the role of stories in the child's home culture?**
- **What kinds of stories are told to children or read by them?**
- **How are children expected to participate in storytelling?**
- **Do parents or elders typically ask questions about the child's response to a story?**
- **Is it considered appropriate to offer an opinion or to put oneself in the place of a character?**

Answering these questions will perhaps point to some cultural explanations for Hermana's behavior. Of course, the teacher must bear in mind that Hermana is also an individual whose personal experiences, interests, and abilities will influence her orientation to literacy.

Below we attempt to capture some of the dilemmas teachers may face in trying to make assessment appropriate for children from many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This list is not exhaustive, but it illustrates a range of concerns and possibilities.

FIGURE 3

ASSESSMENT DILEMMA	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Students' culture does not encourage competitive responses in a group.	*Allow for small-group or pair interaction with informal teacher observation.* *Do not confront student in large group but encourage volunteering answers.* *Allow for choral response.*
Students are used to cooperating and helping each other at home. They find the competitive frame of assessment strange, and they don't understand why they can't help each other more. (In some cases, students may come from countries where individual testing is rarely , if ever, done.)	*Allow students to help each other (using their cultural strengths) whenever possible. Their group orientation can facilitate learning greatly.* *Explain that for certain assessments students will need to work independently, and make explicit the rules about when and where not to cooperate.* *There is no reason that even practice tests for standardized achievement tests can't be done in pairs or small groups.*
Students do not understand purpose and consequences of assessment.	*Explain that assessments can help show what a student has learned and needs to work on.* *Let students know that it is important to "do your best."*

ASSESSMENT DILEMMA	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
You want to use performance assessments based on students' research projects more, believing you can see students' progress better in a meaningful context where skills have to be integrated—but extended writing in English is difficult for your English language learners.	*Allow students adequate time for writing. They may need more than native English speakers.* *If students are collaborating, let them use their first language (if they share a first language) to plan their project and discuss what they are learning. Consider demonstrations, dramatizations, visual models, and illustrations as alternatives to at least some of the writing.*
On writing assessments, some students intermix text patterns and conventions that they have learned in school and ones that come from their language or dialect. For example, a student may introduce dialogue where it doesn't seem appropriate according to school norms. Or he or she may not use a "conventional" ordering of events.	*Help students become aware of the patterns and conventions they are using so that they can make choices about when to use which ones.* *If students meet agreed-upon standards, they should not be graded down on the basis of different text patterns. If a high-stakes assessment requires adherence to school norms of writing, be sure students know that.*
An assessment has been developed for native English speakers; some of your students are still learning English, but all of your students are required to take it.	*Explain to students that the assessment is really for native English speakers and that they should do as well as they can but not feel bad if they don't understand something. Rephrase instructions as needed, so that at least they understand the overall task at hand.* *Use results judiciously; recognize that such tests are not valid indices of the overall knowledge, skill, or ability of students who are learning English.*

The more teachers understand how culture and language affect learning— influencing how students participate in class and what they produce—the more informed they will be about both instruction and assessment. They will understand serious flaws in conventional assessment practices and will find themselves modifying assessments, developing new ones, or even discovering new assessment methods. They will also be more informed critics of the value of assessments for students for whom the assessments were not necessarily designed.

Authentic Assessment and Second Language Learners

In his book *Educative Assessment* (1998), Grant Wiggins states, "the aim of assessment is primarily to educate and improve student performance, not merely to audit it." Wiggins is an advocate of authentic tasks for students, ones that allow students to conduct real-world, engaging work and draw on higher order cognitive skills. In conjunction with authentic tasks, Wiggins points out the significance of ongoing neutral feedback, which will lead to student self-adjustment (alteration of performance) and improvement. Feedback can be communicated through detailed rubrics, performance checklists, written narratives, and conferences; student work can be organized into ongoing (works-in-progress) and performance portfolios (in which students are asked to select work as part of a critique process for advancement). It is important to understand that feedback is not solely derived from the teacher. Peer feedback, parent feedback, and self-assessment are crucial components along the road to self-adjustment. Students' products may include essays, research projects, scientific experiments, oral exhibitions, and visual and performing arts pieces, to name a few (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Falk, 1995).



If we revisit some of the key strategies for instruction of second language learners, we notice that they bear a striking similarity to the kinds of authentic work Wiggins proposes. For instance, the TESOL Standards

and the CREDE Standards emphasize the need to provide environments where English language learners can interact in meaningful ways with their peers. In a classroom where students are asked to perform authentic tasks, peer interaction becomes the norm, just as it is the norm to converse and exchange ideas with one's peers outside the classroom. Darling-Hammond et al. (1995) describe collaboration among students in the *Motion* program at International High School in New York. International High School serves students who have been in the U.S. for 4 years or less.

> The use of assessment to drive collaborative learning turns out to produce one of the most powerful experiences *Motion* students have. Students work in groups to design experiments and solve problems in mathematics and physics, to interpret literature and write to and with one another about books and ideas, and to conquer physical challenges at Project Adventure. Throughout these activities, they must surmount language barriers to communicate with each other—thus being forced to learn and use English for complex, content-rich tasks—and they must surmount the challenges of different styles, approaches to work, and prior levels of knowledge. (p. 134)

Ultimately, students in classrooms that provide the opportunity for authentic tasks and assessment are more invested in their work and more likely to self-adjust or alter their performance. At International High School, for example, new students engage in an ongoing process of writing their autobiographies. Through small-group collaboration and feedback, the writers produce works that will eventually be part of their final portfolios. One teacher is quoted as saying that "no student has ever lost his or her autobiography" (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995, p. 166).

Utilizing authentic tasks and assessment requires careful planning and implementation. Wiggins has developed a checklist for teachers to apply to tasks they have designed.

TABLE 1

Assessment Design Self-Assessment Checklist

- ☐ **It is clear which desired achievements are being measured.**
- ☐ **Criteria and indicators are the right ones for this task and for the achievement being assessed.**
- ☐ **Content standards are addressed explicitly in the design; successful task performance requires mastery of the content standard.**
- ☐ **Genre(s) or performance/production are important and appropriate for the achievements being assessed.**
- ☐ **Standards have been established that go beyond the local norms of the school to credible outside standards or have been established by internal or external oversight.**
- ☐ **Students will have ample and appropriate guidelines for understanding their performance obligations.**
- ☐ **Task will provide students and teachers with ample feedback for self-assessment and self-adjustment both during and after its completion.**

(Wiggins, 1998)

These criteria can help teachers plan their assessment of English language learners thoughtfully. The first criteria, "It is clear which desired achievements are being measured," invites us to consider whether our goal is to teach and assess language proficiency or content mastery. If we have designed the task to teach and assess content, then we must not confuse lack of language proficiency with lack of content mastery in our assessment of student work.

ACTIVITY: Assessment Design Self-Assessment Checklist

Analyze the other six criteria from the Assessment Design Self-Assessment Checklist. How can each of these help improve instructional design and assessment for English language learners and students from nondominant cultures whose ways of learning and communicating may differ from those of the dominant culture?

A Note on Grading

When it comes to considering the implications of language and culture, grading presents the teacher with the same dilemmas as assessment. In the case of grading, the teacher needs to carefully determine what standards must be met and which student products and performances she should count in determining a grade. In addition, the teacher needs to decide how to weight the different pieces of assessment (such as how much each will count toward the final grade). In fact, these considerations apply to all students, but language and culture complicate the picture. For instance, a teacher may value classroom participation, but some students avoid full participation in whole-group discussion because of their cultural backgrounds. Should they be given lower grades? Students who are still acquiring English may work more slowly on a test. If they don't finish, should they be graded on the same basis as other students? If so, should such a grade be factored into their final grade in the same way as for other students? If students' essays are scored according to several traits (for example, ideas, conventions, cohesion, voice, etc.), should equal weight be given to traits that rely heavily on high-level grammatical mastery?



ACTIVITY: Grading the Work of English Language Learners

Many teachers find themselves with the question of how to grade the written reports of the language minority student who has insufficient proficiency in English. The student has turned in a paper with very good content, but many grammatical errors. They know the student worked harder on his composition than any of their other students.

Discuss what criteria you would use for grading the student's work.

There are no simple answers to the dilemmas posed above. Teachers will have to make decisions based on policies in their own schools and—as much as possible—on their students' particular profiles and needs. However, because grades affect students personally (in terms of motivation and self-judgment) and have consequences for students' school careers (such as retention and placement), they must be taken very seriously. In many cases, a district undertakes assessment reform without simultaneously addressing grading practices, thus jeopardizing the validity, fairness, and equity of its accountability system.

Language Differences, Language Deficits, and Learning Problems

Because individuals have such a deep-seated sense of what language ought to sound like, on the basis of their own language socialization, the hardest task in distinguishing between difference and deficit is coming to accept a greater range of expression as normal. Very few students have actual language disorders, and virtually none are simply making random errors or speaking in slang (or other "nonstandard" language varieties). For example, a suburban school district collaborated with an inner-city school district to racially integrate the students. As soon as African American students arrived, they were being referred for speech therapy. The teachers reported that they made numerous grammatical errors and couldn't pronounce many words (e.g., saying "muvver" for "mother" and "birfday" for "birthday"). It was only through a series of professional development workshops with the new African-American speech and language therapist and reading specialist that teachers came to understand that these "errors" were simply systematic differences between standard and nonstandard forms of language. Yet, a public perception persists that nonstandard languages are codes filled with errors and spoken by ignorant people.

In working with English language learners, distinguishing between normal developmental differences and actual deficits takes the assistance of professionals who have been trained in language acquisition—whether bilingual teachers or bilingual speech and language therapists. Normal patterns of development will look different depending on a learner's first language, the age at which English was acquired, the methods by which English was taught, and even the child's "linguistic personality." Some children are naturally more talkative and sociable, and they tend to take more risks quickly with a new language (Saville-Troike, 1984). English language learners should be evaluated by a professional at least once a year, and sooner if a teacher observes

that a student is not making academic progress. Of course, understanding culture-based differences in language use will help a teacher put much of a student's linguistic behavior in proper perspective. A taciturn student may have been socialized to be quiet and respectful. Teachers who have had some experience with students from a particular language or cultural group will have a sense of whether a student is progressing normally. (See "Assessing Language Proficiency" for ideas on how teachers can check student progress.) The greatest risk is underestimating a child's capabilities because his or her language sounds different, but there is also a risk that a child who could benefit from special services may have a real deficit overlooked.

Assessment of a student's language proficiency and academic progress in multiple areas requires the use of multiple measures. With regard to language assessment, it is critical to evaluate how the student uses language in different situations and for specific purposes (for example, for social versus academic purposes). As we have said, assessment is itself a cultural phenomenon. In some countries, such as Mexico, very little formal assessment is done. In some cultures within the United States, the ways assessment is conducted in our schools would be considered either rude or inane. For these reasons, we need to identify a range of ways to assess and hope that we can match them appropriately to our students. At the same time, we need to help students become comfortable performing in ways that schools expect. So language-dependent are our assessments that it will always be difficult to determine, with English language learners, whether an assessment is testing a language ability or academic progress.

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RESOURCES and FURTHER READING

Baker, C. (1997). Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

This book is a remarkable source for gaining a broad understanding of second language acquisition, bilingualism, and bilingual education. As its name implies, each section provides a solid foundation of information on which readers can build and explore topics of interest in further detail. Baker not only synthesizes theory and research but also contributes his own work in the areas of language attitudes and the Welsh context of bilingual education. The book provides a much-needed international perspective on issues of bilingualism and bilingual education.

Corson, D. (2001). Language Diversity and Education. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

This recent volume, intended primarily for graduate students, draws upon a variety of disciplines including sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, anthropological linguistics, and education. The work explores the range of language varieties that currently exist in many schools, including standard and nonstandard varieties, bilingual and ESL education, and gendered and culturally different discourse norms. The framework is embedded in language, power, and social justice. The chapter on Research Methods draws upon several studies that have used nontraditional or combinations of methods to investigate issues of language and power in educational settings.

Corson, D. (1999). Language Policy in Schools. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

The focus of this book is to provide a working tool or handbook for educators investigating language policy and language practice in their schools. The book provides a framework of critical policymaking and language planning for social justice and provides educators with the tools necessary to investigate language policy and language use in schools. Each chapter ends with "Discussion Starters"—questions that are meant to prompt readers to reflect on the chapter and relate the information to their personal experiences. The final chapter is devoted to summarizing the questions that can guide educators' investigation of school language policy and examining issues of critical policymaking.

Hurley, S.R. & Tinajero, J.V. (Eds.). (2000). Literacy Assessment of Second Language Learners. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

In this volume, contributors address the concerns of practitioners and scholars regarding the dearth of literacy assessments for English language learners. Many of the contributors provide case studies and vignettes to illustrate issues with and applications of literacy assessments. The editors explore the connection between first and second language literacy, and the connection between oral language and literacy. Other authors contribute holistic writing rubrics that show how assessments conducted in both first and second languages are essential in order to gain a more accurate and overall view of a student's work. Each chapter ends with questions for discussion. Overall, the book combines theory with rubrics, graphics, and other tools intended to facilitate literacy assessment in the classroom.

Perry, T. and Delpit, L. (Eds.). (1998). The Real Ebonics Debate: Power, Language and the Education of African American Children. Boston: Beacon Press.

The 1996 Oakland, Calif. school board's decision requiring all schools in the district to participate in a Standard English proficiency program was followed by tumultuous debate surrounding the position and use of Ebonics in schools. As a result of the debate, the editors of this volume chose to compile a rich and vast array of work from educators, linguists, practitioners, and students. Each piece provides a distinct viewpoint and clear voice in the Ebonics debate. In addition, the volume adds depth and insight into any conversation of language, power, and identity.

Samway, K.D. and McKeon, D. (1999). Myths and Realities: Best Practices for Language Minority Students. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This small volume provides readers with accessible information regarding best practices for educating language minority students. The book is organized into nine broad topic areas, arranged to counter the myths surrounding the education of language minority students. Some of the topics include demographics, enrollment, first and second language instruction, and assessment. Myths are listed under each of the nine topics and are followed by a concise reality statement, which is based on recent and relevant research. In total, the authors dispel over 40 myths. Practitioners will find this handy, especially in the current context of meeting the needs of English language learners.

WEB SITES and ONLINE RESOURCES

http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/

This Web site is devoted to the teaching and learning of language for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. The scope of the site is broad, ranging from excerpts of Dr. Cummins' own work, including papers recently presented, to resources for teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The links provide practitioners with an enormous array of additional resources, including governmental and private education sites and teaching tools for educators.

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/JWCRAWFORD/

This Web site is Jim Crawford's Language Policy Emporium. The site, which includes current event topics of national concern such as bilingual education and English Only, is meant to stimulate discussion surrounding the sociopolitical context of educating culturally and linguistically diverse students. Crawford's most recent work is also accessible directly from this site. This site is one of the top sites in the U.S. devoted to issues of language policy.

VIDEOS

Student Voices: English Language Learners. (2000). The Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, Providence, RI.

This 30-minute video is designed to highlight the educational experiences of nine English language learners in secondary public schools. The video is organized around three themes: isolation and barriers, teachers and guidance, and strength and resilience. The students offer compelling suggestions for how educational reformers can and why they should work toward inclusion and equity in education.

Where the Spirit Lives. (1989). Studio Entertainment, New York.

Based on language policy toward Native Indian groups, this 97-minute video captures the lives of two Native Indian children who were taken by the government and institutionalized with other children. The video reveals how children were forced to cut ties to their families, language, culture, and identity. This is an engaging and useful video for educators interested in understanding how national language policies were implemented and their impact on the lives of children and Native Indian families.



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