

An Introduction

Teaching for equity suggests that all educators envision an equitable teaching and learning environment, and work to make equity a reality in their practice. Both students and teachers enter the classroom with varied experiences, attitudes, and beliefs. In each case, those unique perspectives play a central role in both expectations and behavior, though teachers carry a deeper responsibility for understanding the ways their perspectives may limit possibilities for students and for themselves.

Definitions of equity will almost surely vary widely among educators. For our purposes, equity—whatever the fine points of the definition—focuses on equity of outcomes. In a time when the expectations are that schools will serve all students well, not just some of them, giving everyone the same treatment and resources is inadequate as well as disrespectful. Equity of outcomes means providing each student with what she *[or he]* needs to meet the standards the school has set for all its students.

One good place to begin thinking about equity is by learning how students feel about their school experiences. The student voices emerge from the resources in this section through the work of people like Lisa Delpit and Marilla Svinicki, who have found that students are saying:










- They want to participate in class
- They want to be able to make decisions and solve problems on their own
- They want to have resources to do their work well
- They want their teachers to listen to them and understand them
- They want to be respected
- They want their cultures to be respected

Once we listen to the voices of our students we need to examine our educational institutions, societal structures, and teaching practices to see if they meet the needs of all students in our schools and classrooms. Fostering equitable environments requires looking at personal bias and deciding individually and as a staff how to address those biases and move forward with an honest awareness. Many of the resources in this section offer tools for evaluation and reflection, and offer suggestions for making the school and classroom a more equitable place.

To help you address issues of equity in your classroom, this section includes resources for culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching is not about defining students based on race or ethnicity, but using strategies that have proven effective with all students, particularly those marginalized by the current educational system. Tapping into students' prior knowledge, creating democratic classrooms, having high expectations for all students, and cultivating positive perspectives on parents and families are just a few of the elements of culturally responsive teaching.

The recommended readings at the close of this section are critical to further the work of teaching for equity. A commitment to equitable practice happens with deliberate effort on the part of the educator and school community. This commitment requires more than good intentions. It requires gaining a knowledge of equity resources through personal and professional development, allocating time to address equity issues as a staff, setting forth a plan to build an equitable school, and getting the input of students and families on how to promote an equitable community.

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The Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy
 CREDE - Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence
<http://www.crede.ucsc.edu/standards/standards.html>

The Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy, developed by CREDE, are practices that have proven effective for all students, and have been especially successful with typically marginalized students. The five standards, each matched with indicators for classroom practice, are an accessible and safe way to start discussions with teachers surrounding equity in their practice.

One: Teacher and Students Producing Together

Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teacher and students.

Learning occurs most effectively when experts and novices work together for a common product or goal, and are therefore motivated to assist one another. "Providing assistance" is the general definition of teaching; thus, joint productive activity (JPA) maximizes teaching and learning. Working together allows conversation, which teaches language, meaning, and values in the context of immediate issues. Teaching and learning through "joint productive activity" is cross-cultural, typically human, and probably "hard-wired." This kind of "mentoring" and "learning in action" is characteristic of parents with very young children; of pre-school, graduate school, adult learning, school-to-work and service learning, on-the-job training - of all education, except the common K-12 tradition. In schools, there is ordinarily little joint activity from which common experiences emerge, and therefore no common context that allows students to develop common systems of understanding with the teacher and with one another. Joint activity between teacher and students helps create such a common context of experience within the school itself. This is especially important when the teacher and the students are not of the same background.

Joint activity and discourse allow the highest level of academic achievement: using formal, "schooled," or "scientific" ideas to solve practical, real world problems. The constant connection of schooled concepts and everyday concepts is basic to the process by which mature schooled thinkers understand the world. These joint activities should be shared by both students and teachers. Only when the teacher also shares the experiences can the kind of discourse take place that builds basic schooled competencies.

Indicators of Joint Productive Activity

The teacher:

1. Designs instructional activities requiring student collaboration to accomplish a joint product.

2. Matches the demands of the joint productive activity to the time available for accomplishing them.
3. Arranges classroom seating to accommodate students' individual and group needs to communicate and work jointly.
4. Participates with students in joint productive activity.
5. Organizes students in a variety of groupings, such as by friendship, mixed academic ability, language, project, or interests, to promote interaction.
6. Plans with students how to work in groups and move from one activity to another, such as from large group introduction to small group activity, for clean-up, dismissal, and the like.
7. Manages student and teacher access to materials and technology to facilitate joint productive activity.
8. Monitors and supports student collaboration in positive ways.

Two: Developing Language Across the Curriculum

Develop competence in the language and literacy of instruction across the curriculum.

Developing competence in the language(s) of instruction should be a metagoal of all educational activity throughout the school day. Whether instruction is bilingual or monolingual, literacy is the most fundamental competency necessary for school success. School knowledge, and thinking itself, are inseparable from language. Everyday social language, formal academic language, and subject matter lexicons are all critical for school success.

Language development at all levels – informal, problem-solving, and academic – should be fostered through use and through purposeful, deliberate conversation between teacher and students, not through drills and decontextualized rules. Reading and writing must be taught both as specific curricula and integrated into each content area.

The ways of using language that prevail in school discourse, such as ways of asking and answering questions, challenging claims, and using representations, are frequently unfamiliar to English language learners and other students at risk of educational failure. However, their own culturally based ways of talking can be effectively linked to the language used for academic disciplines by building learning contexts that evoke and build upon children’s language strengths.

The development of language and literacy as a metagoal also applies to the specialized language genres required for the study of science, mathematics, history, art, and literature. Effective mathematics learning is based on the ability to “speak mathematics,” just as the overall ability to achieve across the curriculum is dependent on mastery of the language of instruction. Reading, writing, speaking, listening, and lexicons can be taught and learned in every subject matter, and indeed all the subject matters can be taught as

though they were a second language. Joint Productive Activity provides an ideal venue for developing the language of the activity's domain.

Indicators of Language Development

The teacher:

1. Listens to student talk about familiar topics such as home and community.
2. Responds to students' talk and questions, making 'in-flight' changes during conversation that directly relate to students' comments.
3. Assists written and oral language development through modeling, eliciting, probing, restating, clarifying, questioning, praising, etc., in purposeful conversation and writing.
4. Interacts with students in ways that respect students' preferences for speaking that may be different from the teacher's, such as wait-time, eye contact, turn-taking, or spotlighting.
5. Connects student language with literacy and content area knowledge through speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities.
6. Encourages students to use content vocabulary to express their understanding.
7. Provides frequent opportunity for students to interact with each other and the teacher during instructional activities.
8. Encourages students' use of first and second languages in instructional activities.

Three: Making Meaning: Connecting School to Students' Lives

Connect teaching and curriculum to students' experiences and skills of home and community.

The high literacy goals of schools are best achieved in everyday, culturally meaningful contexts. This contextualization utilizes students' funds of knowledge and skills as a foundation for new knowledge. This approach fosters pride and confidence as well as greater school achievement.

Increase in contextualized instruction is a consistent recommendation of education researchers. Schools typically teach rules, abstractions, and verbal descriptions, and they teach by means of rules, abstractions, and verbal descriptions. Schools need to assist at-risk students by providing experiences that show abstract concepts are drawn from and applied to the everyday world.

“Understanding” means connecting new learning to previous knowledge. Assisting students in making these connections strengthens newly acquired knowledge and increases student engagement with learning activities. Schema theorists, cognitive scientists, behaviorists, and psychological anthropologists agree that school learning is made meaningful by connecting it to students' personal, family, and community experiences. Effective

education teaches how school abstractions are drawn from and applied to the everyday world. Collaboration with parents and communities can reveal appropriate patterns of participation, conversation, knowledge, and interests that will make literacy, numeracy, and science meaningful to all students.

Indicators of Contextualization

The teacher:

1. Begins activities with what students already know from home, community, and school.
2. Designs instructional activities that are meaningful to students in terms of local community norms and knowledge.
3. Acquires knowledge of local norms and knowledge by talking to students, parents or family members, community members, and by reading pertinent documents.
4. Assists students to connect and apply their learning to home and community.
5. Plans jointly with students to design community-based learning activities.
6. Provides opportunities for parents or families to participate in classroom instructional activities.
7. Varies activities to include students' preferences, from collective and cooperative to individual and competitive.
8. Varies styles of conversation and participation to include students' cultural preferences, such as co-narration, call-and-response, and choral, among others.

Four: Teaching Complex Thinking

Challenge students toward cognitive complexity.

Students at risk of educational failure, particularly those of limited standard English proficiency, are often forgiven any academic challenges on the assumption that they are of limited ability, or they are forgiven any genuine assessment of progress because the assessment tools are inadequate. Thus, both standards and feedback are weakened, with the predictable result that achievement is impeded. While such policies may often be the result of benign motives, the effect is to deny many diverse students the basic requirements of progress - high academic standards and meaningful assessment that allows feedback and responsive assistance.

There is a clear consensus among education researchers that students at risk of educational failure require instruction that is cognitively challenging; that is, instruction that requires thinking and analysis, not only rote, repetitive, detail-level drills. This does not mean ignoring phonics rules, or not memorizing the multiplication tables, but it does mean going beyond that level of curriculum into the exploration of the deepest possible reaches of interesting and meaningful materials. There are many ways in which

cognitive complexity has been introduced into the teaching of students at risk of educational failure. There is good reason to believe, for instance, that a bilingual curriculum itself provides cognitive challenges that make it superior to a monolingual approach.

Working with a cognitively challenging curriculum requires careful leveling of tasks, so that students are motivated to stretch. It does not mean drill-and-kill exercises, nor does it mean overwhelming challenges that discourage effort. Getting the correct balance and providing appropriate assistance is, for the teacher, a truly cognitively challenging task.

Indicators of Challenging Activities

The teacher:

1. Assures that students - for each instructional topic - see the whole picture as a basis for understanding the parts.
2. Presents challenging standards for student performance.
3. Designs instructional tasks that advance student understanding to more complex levels.
4. Assists students to accomplish more complex understanding by building from their previous success.
5. Gives clear, direct feedback about how student performance compares with the challenging standards.

Five: Teaching Through Conversation

Engage students through dialogue, especially the Instructional Conversation.

Thinking, and the abilities to form, express, and exchange ideas are best taught through dialogue, through questioning and sharing ideas and knowledge. In the Instructional Conversation (IC), the teacher listens carefully, makes guesses about intended meaning, and adjusts responses to assist students' efforts--just as in graduate seminars, or between mothers and toddlers. Here the teacher relates formal, school knowledge to the student's individual, family, and community knowledge. The IC provides opportunities for the development of the languages of instruction and subject matter. IC is a supportive and collaborative event that builds intersubjectivity and a sense of community. IC achieves individualization of instruction; is best practiced during joint productive activity; is an ideal setting for language development; and allows sensitive contextualization, and precise, stimulating cognitive challenge.

This concept may appear to be a paradox; instruction implies authority and planning, while conversation implies equality and responsiveness. But the instructional conversation is based on assumptions that are fundamentally different from those of traditional lessons. Teachers who use it, like parents in natural teaching, assume that the student has something to say beyond the



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known answers in the head of the adult. The adult listens carefully, makes guesses about the intended meaning, and adjusts responses to assist the student's efforts - in other words, engages in conversation. Such conversation reveals the knowledge, skills, and values - the culture - of the learner, enabling the teacher to contextualize teaching to fit the learner's experience base.

In U.S. schools the instructional conversation is rare. More often, teaching is through the recitation script, in which the teacher repeatedly assigns and assesses. Classrooms and schools are transformed into communities of learners through such dialogic teaching, and when teachers reduce the distance between themselves and their students by constructing lessons from common understanding of each others' experience and ideas and make teaching a warm, interpersonal and collaborative activity.

Indicators of Instructional Conversation

The teacher:

1. Arranges the classroom to accommodate conversation between the teacher and a small group of students on a regular and frequent basis.
2. Has a clear academic goal that guides conversation with students.
3. Ensures that student talk occurs at higher rates than teacher talk.
4. Guides conversation to include students' views, judgments, and rationales using text evidence and other substantive support.
5. Ensures that all students are included in the conversation according to their preferences.
6. Listens carefully to assess levels of students' understanding.
7. Assists students' learning throughout the conversation by questioning, restating, praising, encouraging, etc.
8. Guides the students to prepare a product that indicates the Instructional Conversation's goal was achieved.

Securing a Knowledge Base for Democratic Teaching

North Central Regional Education Laboratory

<http://www.ncrel.org/cscd/pubs/lead41/41base.htm>

Establishing an equitable, democratic classroom is not something that happens quickly, nor is there agreement among practitioners as to how to foster that environment. There are, however, tools for discussion and observation around the topic. This article is one educator's perspective on what it takes to make a school embody democracy, and is followed by a questionnaire that can assist in goal-setting and prioritizing. The questionnaire lacks a reflection piece that could be developed and personalized by your staff.

Given the demands of teaching, how do teachers or school leaders secure an adequate knowledge base to ensure that democratic teaching will occur? What are the most pressing needs in teacher education?

To Margaret C. Wang, the current lack of interprofessional programming for preservice and inservice education contributes significantly to the fragmentation of service delivery. "We train regular and special education teachers in separate programs," she observes. "We train school social workers and school psychologists as separate entities. They may be trained in the same university but they meet in the field as strangers. Yet we need all of these professionals to work collaboratively in coordinated ways in the service of students.

"There is not an undergraduate or graduate course that provides training experiences that foster interprofessional collaboration among different disciplines. We view collaboration and coordination as key reform strategies, but we don't make the structural changes required for implementation."

Collaboration with social services is also necessary, even critical, Wang argues, and yet teachers lack adequate training to know how to engage in that type of collaborative process. "School staff need to know how to work with other educational and related social services providers such as through working on after-school programs or second-chance adult education programs with public housing, public libraries, and other educational and social services agencies. We need to take the scarce resources we have and pull them together in the most facilitative and efficient ways possible. We know what needs to be done to achieve the types of outcomes we want for all children. We even know different ways of achieving this vision. Implementation won't be easy — it takes hard work and resilience. We simply need to make the commitment to begin and persist."

Different and creative ways to reach parents and families are necessary as well, she believes. "We need to figure out and gain insights on the multiple best ways to reach the targeted audience," she says. "People often don't access services because they don't know how. Perhaps more importantly, we

don't have the knowledge base or credibility for making our services palatable or accessible to those who may benefit from them. We need to build a knowledge base on how to involve parents and communities in nontraditional ways, such as linking school efforts to involve parents with the efforts of community organizations working on community revitalization activities."

The solution, she says, is not simple: It demands a multipronged approach to education and social services delivery. "My point, however," she concludes, "is that there are multiple ways of knowing and problem solving. We know far more than we use. What we need is a genuine commitment to take action and persevere. We need to commit to it. Once we have the commitment, we can chip away at the barriers and maximize what works."

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Educating for Democracy: School and Classroom Practices

The following questions are designed to help you evaluate and reflect upon the concepts central to educating for democracy as it exists currently in your school.

Democratic School Structures

To what extent does my school involve teachers, parents, and community members in important decisions about resource allocation, staffing, and curriculum?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent does the size and structure of my school allow all staff to know one another, share concerns and solutions to common problems informally, and draw upon one another as a source of collegial support?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent does staff in my school have frequent opportunities - both structured and informal - to talk to one another about their *classroom practices*?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent do staff in my school observe one another teaching and offer constructive feedback?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent is professional development an ongoing, continuous process rather than "one-shot" workshops with little follow-up?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent does staff have real authority to make decisions pertaining to curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, and professional development?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

Culturally Relevant and Academically Rigorous Learning

To what extent does staff at my school invite students to bring their life experiences, cultures, and languages into the classroom as a foundation for curriculum that will be relevant to their lives outside school?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent do teachers and administrators listen carefully and clinically to what students have to say, using that information to improve and refine the nature of curriculum and instruction?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent do teachers hold all students to the same academically rigorous standards and expectations for behavior?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent do teachers and other school professionals work collaboratively to solve students' special needs in an integrated, personalized manner?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent do teachers achieve critical awareness of their own attitudes about students from backgrounds different from their own?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

Working With Parents and Community Members

To what extent do staff at my school want to hear what parents really think about school practices and their children's achievement?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what degree are there creative and informal mechanisms for parents and other community members to ask questions, offer feedback, share concerns, and acquire learning tools for themselves (e.g., after-school parent/family/staff potlucks in neighborhoods where evening meetings would be unsafe, parenting classes for potential dropouts, computer or GED classes for recent immigrant parents)?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

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To what extent does school staff reach out to parents and other family members beyond formal, structured parent/teacher conferences (e.g., home visits, phone calls, radio announcements of school events in languages other than English)?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

In addition to informal opportunities for parents and family members to interact with school staff, to what degree are there structured opportunities for family members to participate in decisions that directly affect the quality and content of student learning?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

If parental feedback about school practices is not positive, to what degree does school staff respond in constructive, non-defensive ways?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

The Quality and Content of Learning

To what extent do students at my school learn content that engages them in the solution of complex, real-life problems, working both individually and collaboratively?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what degree do teachers treat different languages, socioeconomic backgrounds, races, cultures, and ethnicities as rich learning opportunities for all students?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what extent do assessments reflect the thinking skills and reasoning required of students as they engage with challenging content?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

To what degree do students learn to present reasoned arguments and entertain different points of view, supporting their arguments with compelling evidence?

Always ____ **Frequently** ____ **Sometimes** ____ **Never** ____

What They Don't Know Can Hurt Them: The Role of Prior Knowledge in Learning

Marilla Svinicki, University of Texas

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/MinnCon/dontknow.html>

We often hear the phrase “tapping into students’ prior knowledge” but we are rarely given the background or philosophy to gain a firm understanding of why it is necessary. Through a concise, conversational article by Svinicki, one understands not only the need for using students’ prior knowledge, but the practicalities of how to begin to do it in the classroom.

Admit it. You've watched the broadcasts of the Olympics and had your eyes glaze over while Dick Button waxed rhapsodic about the difference between a double axle and a triple lutz. They looked pretty much the same to you, didn't they? You were experiencing what many students face every day in our classrooms, a distressing lack of the prior knowledge necessary to help them understand or appreciate a new experience or content. Current research on learning has offered more and more evidence for the extent to which new learning is determined by what the learner already knows about the topic or related topics. The effect can be either positive or negative, positive if the pre-existing knowledge is correct and consistent with the new information or negative if it is full of misconceptions or conflicts with the new information.

Prior knowledge & current learning

Prior knowledge affects how the learner perceives new information. This phenomenon is readily demonstrated by a simple experiment. What is the first image that you associate with the word "cardinal"? Some people think immediately of football, some of baseball, birds, Roman Catholic priests, or the color red. In the absence of a context, the association you make will depend on your prior knowledge. Your interpretation of this new information, the word "cardinal," was dependent on what you brought to the situation.

Fortunately, in most learning tasks, words occur in a context to assist in interpretation. If the word "cardinal" had occurred in the context of a discussion about the Inquisition, the number of associations which you could choose from would be dramatically circumscribed. But sometimes the context is no more meaningful than the word itself. If you had never heard of the Inquisition, that context would be no help.

Much the same thing happens in the classroom every day. Instructors use terms and concepts of which students have no prior knowledge to provide an adequate context for interpretation. Used at the rapid pace of the expert, this is what they complain about as "jargon" and its over-use leaves gaps in student ability to process new information. The phenomenon is similar to that experienced by the average computer novice attempting to obtain help from an expert. Half of the words are totally unfamiliar and the other half are used



in an entirely new and illogical way. After two or three sentences, the listener is left in the dust and feeling hopelessly ignorant and hostile. This may be the stuff of great comedy routines, but it is disaster in a classroom.

Alternatively, an incorrect bit of prior knowledge which is not corrected could keep the students from understanding an entire lecture. This is frequently the case in science classes, where naive conceptions of natural laws must be unlearned before the correct version can be understood. For example, in chemistry, instructors must somehow convince students that air exists just as liquids and solids exist even though it can't be detected by the senses. Intellectually, students know this, but they often behave as if air were simply the absence of matter. This concept which seems simple, almost automatic, to an expert can be a stumbling block to understanding a whole range of phenomena for a novice.

Prior knowledge affects how a student organizes new information.

Remember that a goal of learning is to incorporate new information into the existing organization of memory. A student uses that existing structure to assimilate new information. For example, in the absence of any strong signals to the contrary, a student in a history class is going to organize new historical information chronologically because that is the way history had been organized in earlier classes. History instructors trying to organize around a different conceptual structure must fight against the students' tendency to see everything as happening in a straight timeline.

Instructors can use this prior knowledge of structure to their advantage when they use analogies or examples. The analogy represents a known organizational structure of information. That organizational structure is what is transferred to the new information. For example, in trying to explain how a gland works, an instructor might say that the gland is like a thermostat. Most students already know that a thermostat controls the temperature by monitoring the presence of heat. They transfer this understanding to the functioning of a gland. It monitors and controls the level of a hormone in the body in the same fashion. If the analogy is a good one, the student can take it from there to intuit all sorts of properties of the gland which parallel the thermostat.

Prior knowledge affects how easily students make connections for new information. One of the keys to learning and memory is the richness of the connections a bit of information has. The more connections, the easier it is to remember. When new information gets hooked up with a particularly rich and well-organized portion of memory, it inherits all the connections that already exist. This is why it is much easier to learn information that is in one's existing field of expertise than to learn information from a brand new field. There are many more ways to access the system. When a student has nothing to hook new information to, he or she is thrown back on the most basic characteristics of the information such as sound, or form, or straight rote memorization.

Using prior knowledge in instruction

To begin, it is helpful to *know what prior knowledge students bring to the learning setting*. Have they had certain common courses? It pays to know what those courses contained. What are their other common experiences? Are they all from similar backgrounds, similar environments? How will that affect the way they interpret the content? Do they have common aspirations and goals? Are they all going in the same direction? What does this information tell you about the prior knowledge they will bring to your class? The use of a pretest of critical concepts and terms can alert both the instructor and the students to gaps or misconceptions that could prove inconvenient later.

Prior knowledge need not be only knowledge of the content, although that is the most critical type of knowledge to monitor. Knowledge of popular culture or current events can be used to great advantage as well in the same ways, especially in the context of analogies. Some would say that knowledge of popular culture is simply another form of cultural literacy.

Use prior knowledge deliberately in the presentation of new information. Beginning a class with a review of what has gone before helps activate prior knowledge. Presenting new information in its relationship to old not only helps students learn the new information but strengthens the old. Introducing new concepts by contrasting them with some that have already been learned makes use of prior knowledge to aid in the learning of new. Better yet, having the students make those comparisons teaches them something about the way to approach the learning of new material and about the structure of the discipline.

It is also desirable to *get the students to monitor their own prior experiences* and consciously use them in learning new information. Asking students to recall past courses that are related to the present course is an interesting way to encourage this. In a graduate course I ask students to produce a personal bibliography from the readings of their previous courses that relate to the present course. They find this an interesting experience which has never been asked of them before, but it makes the point that what they know is related to what they are learning.

Finally it is always a good idea to *check for faulty prior knowledge regularly* so that it is not allowed to continue to detract from learning. There is a wonderfully apocalyptic story about an astronomy class in which the instructor drew many beautiful orbital diagrams and still the students had trouble understanding celestial motions. Finally, by accident, the instructor discovered that several of the students were interpreting the ovals he drew as being in reality ovals rather than the circles shown in perspective. Until you ask the students what they understand about what is being taught, you will never really know what is being learned. Structure the learning to bring those misconceptions to the attention of the students. Often they will not realize their confusion until it is too late.



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Final thoughts

The lesson we take from the research on prior knowledge is simply this: students are not blank slates on which our words are inscribed. The students bring more to the interpretation of the situation than we realize. What they learn is conditioned by what they already know. What they know can be as damaging as what they don't know.

“There can be no knowledge without emotion. We may be aware of a truth, yet until we have felt its force, it is not ours. To the cognition of the brain must be added the experience of the soul.”

- Arnold Bennet

Strategies for Inclusive Teaching
Center for Instructional Development and Research
University of Washington
<http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/inclusive/foster.html>

Participation is a class dynamic that is often expected but infrequently discussed. The Center for Instructional Development and Research explicitly outlines how to plan for and cultivate equitable class participation. The resource was designed for college-level faculty and students, but most strategies are appropriate and effective for a high school setting.

Foster Equitable Class Participation

There are many ways to participate in class. *Equitable class participation* does not necessarily mean that all students are expected to participate in the same way, or even the same amount. Rather, the goal is to make sure that students are able to participate in class in ways that will help them achieve the learning goals for the course, and that no one is kept from participating as a result of the way the course is taught.

Before You Start Teaching

1. *Plan ahead.* Consider the kind of participation that you hope to foster. Here is a set of planning questions to help you think about the role of student participation in your course:
 - What are your goals for class participation?
 - What do you hope students will learn as a result of taking part in discussions, responding to questions, or raising questions of their own?
 - What do you hope to learn about the students from their participation?
 - What range of options are there for participation? Here are a few possibilities:
 - a) Question and answer sessions
 - b) Large group discussions
 - c) Small group activities
 - d) Projects and presentations
 - e) On-line activities outside of class time
 - How do you help students prepare for participation? Here are a few possibilities:
 - a) Reading prior to class

- b) Writing prior to class
 - c) Discussion questions based on readings, lectures, or prior discussions
 - d) Small group discussions prior to large group discussions
 - e) In-class responses to on-line activities outside of class time
- How do you plan to assess participation?
 - a) Observing students' oral participation
 - b) Collecting written answers to discussion questions
 - c) Collecting products or outcomes of group work
 - d) Observing students' on-line participation
 - e) Student self-assessment
2. *Use the first day of class to set expectations.* Add a statement to your syllabus and talk with the students on the first day of class about your expectations for class participation.
 3. *Review strategies for encouraging class participation.*

While You Are Teaching

1. At the beginning of the class, make expectations for participation clear, and explain the importance of participation in terms of the learning goals for the course.
2. Provide feedback on the nature and quality of participation you observe in the course. Let students know what their participation is adding to the course.
3. Provide specific suggestions for improving participation. Here are a few examples of ways to invite student participation:
 - Require students to conference with you once every two weeks.
 - Use group activities or pair work. Students who are hesitant to speak in front of the full class are often willing to contribute to smaller groups of classmates.
 - Give specific tasks and instructions so each person has a role in the group.
 - Look for opportunities for you to interact with individual students in addition to the interactions that are possible in front of all the other students; for example, before and after class, in the transition to group work, or while groups are working.
 - Select a few people a day to summarize key points from the previous day, bring up a question from the chapter, or comment on other work that they can prepare outside of class time.

- Acknowledge other forms of participation; for example, contributions to the class discussion list, comments made in journals, or ideas that you overhear mentioned in small groups, which don't get reported to the larger group.
 - Call on students by name, but keep in mind that being called on can be both motivating and intimidating. Be sure students have had a chance to prepare for answering the question, and that they are given a reasonable amount of time to formulate a response.
 - Provide feedback on students' participation. In questions of fact, point out what's partially right in a wrong answer, as well as where it goes off-track.
4. For classes in which potentially heated issues are going to be discussed, work with the students to establish ground rules for class discussion. Remind students of these ground rules when you anticipate they may be needed, and refer to them during discussions to remind students of your expectations for one another.



Tips for Teachers:

Encouraging Students in a Racially Diverse Classroom

Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning

Harvard University

<http://bokcenter.fas.harvard.edu/docs/TFTrace.html>

This tool promotes deliberate and ongoing reflection on equitable teaching by using questions to examine personal bias, followed by suggestions to minimize bias in the classroom. The list of questions could be used as an anonymous whole-staff evaluation tool, or a personal assessment tool, or a Critical Friends Group (see section on *Adapting Classroom Practice*) discussion-starter. For example, choosing a trusted colleague and asking the questions of one another in a non-judgmental way forces the questioner to internalize the question and forces the respondent to verbalize suppressed, or unrecognized feelings. This metacognitive exercise can be a step to changing attitudes in the classroom.

THE CARDINAL RULE:

Learn as much about and become as sensitive as you can to racial, ethnic, and cultural groups other than your own.

At the same time:

NEVER make assumptions about an individual based on the racial, ethnic, or cultural groups he or she belongs to. Treat each student first and foremost as an individual. Get to know students individually.

Questions a teacher might ask to examine his or her own racial or cultural biases in preparation for teaching:

- Am I comfortable around minority students?
- Am I afraid of students whose background differs markedly from my own?
- Am I afraid of the emotional level when there are students of other races and cultures in my classroom?
- Am I afraid minority students might not be fully competitive with the other students? What is my definition of "fully competitive"?
- Do I expect minority students to need extra help?
- Do I call on minority students as often as others?

- When minority students do answer, am I afraid their answers will not be correct, or that their method of answering will be inappropriate?
- Do I think that there is one correct or appropriate mode of argument or discussion in class? How open am I to multiple modes of discourse?
- Do the minority students seem to participate less than others?
- Do I rationalize or tolerate lack of participation from minority students more than I would for other students? Do I think their silence means ignorance? Do I believe it is culturally based?
- Do I tend to shelve or "make time later" for minority points of view?
- If an issue involving race does come up, do I assume the minority student will know most about it? Will I not mind acting as the class expert concerning it?
- How do I behave with minority students who are under-prepared?
- Does the logic of my classroom hypotheticals or test answers depend upon stereotypical views of minorities?
- What assumptions do I make about different student groups:
 - Do I imagine that Latinos or African Americans will express their opinions in non-academic language?
 - Do I expect that Asian students will do better than most others?
 - Do I respond to a white student's voice as if it had more intellectual weight?
 - Do I assume that white students will be insensitive, arrogant, and condescending towards persons of color?
 - Do I assume that African Americans or Latinos or other students of color are all alike?
 - Do I assume that when an African American man disagrees he is angry?
 - Do I assume that Asian women are likely to be quiet?

What a teacher can do in preparation for class:

- Develop a syllabus that explores multiple perspectives on the topic.
- Develop paper topics that encourage students to explore different racial and cultural perspectives.



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- Consider how all students would experience the syllabus.
- Consider whether students of all cultures are likely to have a background in the material.
- Consider whether different approaches to learning are accounted for.
- Anticipate sensitive areas in the subject matter being taught.
- Think in advance about how one might handle sensitive topics or explosive moments.
- Incorporate multicultural examples, materials, and visual aids as much as possible in class.
- Structure project groups, panels, laboratory teams, and the like so that membership and leadership roles are balanced across ethnic and gender groups.

What a teacher can do to be sure the classroom itself is open to all students:

- Get to know each student individually. Learn their names and how to pronounce them correctly.
- Divide the class into smaller groups, each with the responsibility of reporting on the material from the viewpoint of a particular minority group.
- Ask students to locate cultural or even discriminatory content in textbooks or other materials.
- Ask for each student's thoughts about the subject, acknowledging the statement of each as it is made. This lets students know from the very beginning that their thoughts have a place in the classroom, that there are differences, and that the differences will be tolerated.
- Make it safe for everyone to voice their views by accepting all views as worthy of consideration. Don't permit scapegoating of any student or any view. Team up with a student who is alone out on a limb.
- Present all sides of an issue. Play the devil's advocate for the least popular view.
- Ask students to research the position they are least comfortable with and come prepared to articulate a defense of that posture.
- Acknowledge racial and cultural differences in the room. Ask students to discuss racial tensions or cultural outlooks when they come up in class or in the materials.

- Make the classroom norms explicit.
- Keep expectations high and provide the support required to meet these expectations.
- Be careful about the language you use, avoiding terms or expressions, like "black sheep," that might be offensive. If you use fictitious names or examples in discussions or on exams, use names from a variety of cultures.
- Avoid discussing particular racial groups or race-related issues with a focus that is derogatory or stereotypical to the race. e.g., talking about blacks only in the context of ghettos, welfare, or gangs.
- Use eye contact with all students; be open and friendly outside of class.

What a teacher can do to handle hot moments:

- Ask students, when there is a particularly heated exchange, to step back and see how they might make something positive of this exchange, what they can learn from it. This can move the discussion to a broader, more general level that helps everyone to see what issues have been at stake and what the clash itself might mean.
- Ask students to think about how their reactions mirror the subject at hand, and what they might learn about the subject from their own behavior. Often groups act out or replicate in their own discussion the topic under discussion. Thus a discussion of a case in which race is a factor which has been denied may mirror the case by avoiding the issue of race. Seeing this can enhance people's understanding of the issues.
- If a student makes a blatantly racist assertion or there is a particularly charged discussion, stop the class and give all the students an assignment for the next class meeting to research this statement and write a short essay about their findings. Alternatively, ask students to write about the issue for five minutes in class. This enables students to think about and come to some kind of terms with the issue and can enable further discussion of it.
- Go around the room and ask each student who has spoken (and others if they wish) to state his or her view and explain the reasoning behind it. Every student is heard and the class can be enriched by the range of perceptions.
- Use the passion as a vehicle to talk about differences in kinds and levels of discourse: who is comfortable with emotion and who is not, who favors personalizing material and who prefers to keep it abstract, whether or not there are cultural differences that underlie these differences.

- Use the passion and arguments to look at how group dynamics work -- who speaks and who does not, who allies him or herself with whom, who plays what role -- and to think about how the group wants to work.
- In short, the teacher will have to decide whether to stop the emotional charge and go on, or whether to use it to explore the topic at hand. Often when things get most hot, people are most capable of learning at a very deep level, if the exchange among students is properly handled. To make this possible, however, requires comfort with feelings and with conflict and enormous skill on the part of the teacher.

Some helpful definitions:

We have been helped by the following definitions, which distinguish between racism and other realities often associated with discussions of race.

Prejudice: prejudgment on insufficient grounds; can be positive or negative.

Bigotry: more intensive form of prejudice and carries the negative side of prejudgment.

Stereotyping: attributing characteristics to a group simplistically and uncritically.

Discrimination: the act or practice of according differential treatment to persons on the basis of group categories such as race, religion, sex, class.

Scapegoating: assigning blame or failure to persons or groups in place of other persons or groups to whom blame or failure actually belongs.

Racism: a set of attitudes, behaviors, and social structures that differentiates on the basis of race. It involves four essential elements:

1. **Power:** the capacity to make and enforce decisions is disproportionately or unfairly distributed.
2. **Resources:** access to such resources as money, education, information, etc. is unequal.
3. **Standards:** standards for appropriate behavior are ethnocentric, reflecting the norms and values of the dominant society.
4. **Problem-Defining:** reality is defined by naming the problem incorrectly and thus misplacing it.

Confronting the Challenge of Diversity in Education

Pedro A. Noguera, Ph.D.

In Motion Magazine, April 10, 1999<http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/pndivers.html>

Dr. Noguera's article points out the unique opportunity educators have to explore the diversity present in American education today. Instead of taking the assimilationist approach of the past, we can use the diversity in our classrooms to enhance learning for all students. This article is especially poignant for schools that have recently seen a change in the demographic of their student body due to migration/immigration.

How we respond to the increase in diversity in America will be a challenge for many schools and communities, but it need not be a problem.

More often than not, the increase in racial and cultural diversity that is occurring in schools across the United States is thought of as a problem, or even a threat.

I was reminded of this a few weeks ago when I received a call from a journalist who asked me to comment on some of the problems being experienced by a school district in a suburban area of northern California. She informed me that this had been a fairly homogenous, middle class bedroom community, that had very recently seen an increase in diversity among students. She said that with this increase there had been a rise in the kinds of problems typically associated with urban schools.

When I asked her to be more specific, she said, "You know, gangs, fighting and some complaints from minority parents about school curriculum." Apparently, some minority parents were protesting the district's use of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 8th grade English classes. "School officials are at a total loss," she continued. "They have no idea of how they should be responding to these issues."

A Common Refrain

This journalist's description of the community's troubles in responding to an increase in student diversity is quite common. I hear similar stories, typically phrased as complaints, when I visit public schools throughout California. Diversity is no longer an urban issue.

As the home to more new immigrants than any other state in the nation, communities across California are convulsing from the demographic and political changes that accompany the change in population. And perhaps more than any other social institution, public schools are at the epicenter of this change, and educators are on the frontline in figuring out how to respond.



But, why is the rise in diversity seen as a problem? This is an important question, for I believe that in framing the growth in racial and cultural diversity as a problem, educators, policy makers and journalists, have set the stage for how communities will react to this change.

This is not to say that a change in the racial and ethnic composition of a school or community does not pose new challenges or require a change in approaches on the part of educators. New immigrants often speak languages other than English, and in many California school districts for example, it is not uncommon for 30, 40 and even 50 foreign languages to be present among the student population.

The arrival of new groups, especially racial minorities, often leads to racial conflict and the venting of various kinds of prejudice and intolerance. Too often, those receiving the new arrivals feel threatened and insecure and react with hostility and resentment.

Finally, and most importantly, diversity tends to be perceived as problematic because American schools have historically seen cultural assimilation of immigrants and non-whites as central to their mission. During the nineteenth century, one of the major concerns of educators and politicians was how new immigrants would be absorbed into the American population. For many, public schools were the most logical place at which the task of converting foreigners into Americans could be carried out.

But Americanization was not limited to foreigners. In the southwest it was common for Native American children to be taken from their families and sent to boarding schools so that they could be saved by Christianity. For African American and many Mexican American children, segregated schooling spared them from being subjected to forced acculturation. However, de-segregation has changed that also, and with it, the spoken language of children - whether it be Spanish or Ebonics - has often been subject to eradication. Furthermore, far too often, the cultural differences of these children are equated with cultural inferiority, and not surprisingly, children from these groups are more likely to do poorly in school, get into trouble, or drop out.

Return to Yesteryear

Given our history, and given the real challenges that accompany an increase in diversity, it is not surprising that many educators and communities would treat the issue as a problem. However, like it or not, even in small towns and isolated rural areas, diversity is our future, and all projections point to continued growth in diversity in the years ahead.

Conservative activists in California have responded to this trend with futile efforts aimed at preserving the status quo. The approval of ballot measures such as 187 - which denies undocumented aliens access to public services such as education, 209 - which eliminates affirmative action, and 227 - which prohibits bilingual education in public schools, is likely to make life more

difficult for immigrants and many people of color, but unlikely to stem the tide of diversity.

Evidence that wedge issue politics has the effect of adding to racial tensions and conflict between groups, a prospect which the LA uprising of 1991 clearly showed could have disastrous consequences if left unchecked.

Pluralistic Advantages

However, there is another alternative. Instead of responding to rising diversity with fear and insecurity, we can treat our diversity as an asset and devise ways of responding to it, which enable our society to reap benefits from our pluralism.

For this to happen there must be a significant shift in the perspective taken on the growth in diversity, and educators must play leading roles in bringing this shift about. Schools will undoubtedly continue to serve as the initial meeting place for different cultures, and it will be very important that educators find ways to make those encounters positive experiences for children, parents and teachers.

Shifting the perspective involves getting the public to understand the benefits our society derives from a growth in diversity. For example, there is substantial evidence that rather than draining economic resources, new immigrants often help to revive local economies. It is ironic that in some of the communities where opposition to immigration has been greatest, that there is a complete dependence on immigrant labor in most service jobs (e.g. nannies, gardeners, waiters, etc.).

Furthermore, with larger numbers of people expected to live longer lives, retirees have a vested interest in seeing that our diverse student population is well educated so that they can be gainfully employed and make steady contributions to social security funds.

The Need for A Willingness to Adapt

Finally, schools can move away from their preoccupation with assimilating those who are culturally different and promoting a version of American history that has rendered many groups - racial minorities, women, workers, etc. - largely invisible. In its place we can teach students to respect differences and develop curricula aimed at helping them to understand more about themselves and others.

We can also teach our students to think critically about America's past and help them to recognize that they can play a role in creating a fairer and more equitable society in the future.

How we respond to the increase in diversity in America will be a challenge for many schools and communities, but it need not be a problem. Once we recognize that, like changes that are brought about as a result of innovations



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in technology, diversity is our future, and not a passing fad, then we can begin to make the adjustments that will make change possible.

As educators we will be on the frontline of this change, and we have a responsibility to show that change can happen without acrimony and resentment, if there is an openness to adapt and to continue to learn.

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“Poverty, race, ethnicity and immigration status are not in themselves determinative of student achievement. Demography is not destiny. The amount of melanin in a student's skin, the home country of her antecedents, the amount of money in the family bank account, are not the inexorable determinants of academic success.”

- Justice Leland DeGrasse,
Supreme Court of the State of New York

Ebonics and Culturally Responsive Instruction: What Should Teachers Do?

By Lisa Delpit

Excerpted from *Rethinking Schools*

http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/12_01/ebdelpit.shtml

Conversation and debate are a necessary part of any change process. This article, by Lisa Delpit, addresses the issue of Ebonics in the classroom, and raises some salient questions for educators working with youth from a multitude of ethnic backgrounds, as Ebonics is branching out from its origin in the African American community to youth of many cultures. The article can also be the basis for a broader discussion around equitable teaching of English language learners.

The "Ebonics Debate" has created much more heat than light for most of the country. For teachers trying to determine what implications there might be for classroom practice, enlightenment has been a completely non-existent commodity. I have been asked often enough recently, "What do you think about Ebonics? Are you for it or against it?" My answer must be neither. I can be neither for Ebonics or against Ebonics any more than I can be for or against air. It exists. It is the language spoken by many of our African-American children. It is the language they heard as their mothers nursed them and changed their diapers and played peek-a-boo with them. It is the language through which they first encountered love, nurturance and joy.

On the other hand, most teachers of those African-American children who have been least well-served by educational systems believe that their students' life chances will be further hampered if they do not learn Standard English. In the stratified society in which we live, they are absolutely correct. While having access to the politically mandated language form will not, by any means, guarantee economic success (witness the growing numbers of unemployed African Americans holding doctorates), not having access will almost certainly guarantee failure.

So what must teachers do? Should they spend their time relentlessly "correcting" their Ebonics-speaking children's language so that it might conform to what we have learned to refer to as Standard English? Despite good intentions, constant correction seldom has the desired effect. Such correction increases cognitive monitoring of speech, thereby making talking difficult. To illustrate, I have frequently taught a relatively simple new "dialect" to classes of pre-service teachers. In this dialect, the phonetic element "iz" is added after the first consonant or consonant cluster in each syllable of a word. (Maybe becomes miz-ay-biz-ee and apple, iz-ap-piz-le.) After a bit of drill and practice, the students are asked to tell a partner in "iz" language why they decided to become teachers. Most only haltingly attempt a few words before lapsing into either silence or into Standard English. During a follow-up discussion, all students invariably speak of the impossibility of attempting to apply rules while trying to formulate and

express a thought. Forcing speakers to monitor their language typically produces silence.

Correction may also affect students' attitudes toward their teachers. In a recent research project, middle-school, inner-city students were interviewed about their attitudes toward their teachers and school. One young woman complained bitterly, "Mrs. ___ always be interrupting to make you 'talk correct' and stuff. She be butting into your conversations when you not even talking to her! She need to mind her own business." Clearly this student will be unlikely to either follow the teacher's directives or to want to imitate her speech style.

Group Identity

Issues of group identity may also affect students' oral production of a different dialect. Researcher Sharon Nelson-Barber, in a study of phonologic aspects of Pima Indian language, found that, in grades 1-3, the children's English most approximated the standard dialect of their teachers. But surprisingly, by fourth grade, when one might assume growing competence in standard forms, their language moved significantly toward the local dialect. These fourth graders had the competence to express themselves in a more standard form, but chose, consciously or unconsciously, to use the language of those in their local environments. The researcher believes that, by ages 8-9, these children became aware of their group membership and its importance to their well-being, and this realization was reflected in their language.¹ They may also have become increasingly aware of the schools's negative attitude toward their community and found it necessary -- through choice of linguistic form -- to decide with which camp to identify.

What should teachers do about helping students acquire an additional oral form? First, they should recognize that the linguistic form a student brings to school is intimately connected with loved ones, community, and personal identity. To suggest that this form is "wrong" or, even worse, ignorant, is to suggest that something is wrong with the student and his or her family. To denigrate your language is, then, in African-American terms, to "talk about your mama." Anyone who knows anything about African-American culture knows the consequences of that speech act!

On the other hand, it is equally important to understand that students who do not have access to the politically popular dialect form in this country, are less likely to succeed economically than their peers who do. How can both realities be embraced in classroom instruction?

It is possible and desirable to make the actual study of language diversity a part of the curriculum for all students. For younger children, discussions about the differences in the ways television characters from different cultural groups speak can provide a starting point. A collection of the many children's books written in the dialects of various cultural groups can also provide a wonderful basis for learning about linguistic diversity,² as can audio taped stories narrated by individuals from different cultures, including taping books read by members of the children's home communities. Mrs. Pat, a teacher

chronicled by Stanford University researcher Shirley Brice Heath, had her students become language "detectives," interviewing a variety of individuals and listening to the radio and television to discover the differences and similarities in the ways people talked.³ Children can learn that there are many ways of saying the same thing, and that certain contexts suggest particular kinds of linguistic performances.

Some teachers have groups of students create bilingual dictionaries of their own language form and Standard English. Both the students and the teacher become engaged in identifying terms and deciding upon the best translations. This can be done as generational dictionaries, too, given the proliferation of "youth culture" terms growing out of the Ebonics-influenced tendency for the continual regeneration of vocabulary. Contrastive grammatical structures can be studied similarly, but, of course, as the Oakland policy suggests, teachers must be aware of the grammatical structure of Ebonics before they can launch into this complex study.

Other teachers have had students become involved with standard forms through various kinds of role-play. For example, memorizing parts for drama productions will allow students to practice and "get the feel" of speaking standard English while not under the threat of correction. A master teacher of African-American children in Oakland, Carrie Secret, uses this technique and extends it so that students video their practice performances and self-critique them as to the appropriate use of standard English (see the article "Embracing Ebonics and Teaching Standard English"). (But I must add that Carrie's use of drama and oration goes much beyond acquiring Standard English. She inspires pride and community connections which are truly wondrous to behold.) The use of self-critique of recorded forms may prove even more useful than I initially realized. California State University-Hayward professor Etta Hollins has reported that just by leaving a tape recorder on during an informal class period and playing it back with no comment, students began to code-switch -- moving between Standard English and Ebonics -- more effectively. It appears that they may have not realized which language form they were using until they heard themselves speak on tape.

Young students can create puppet shows or role-play cartoon characters -- many "superheroes" speak almost hypercorrect standard English! Playing a role eliminates the possibility of implying that the child's language is inadequate and suggests, instead, that different language forms are appropriate in different contexts. Some other teachers in New York City have had their students produce a news show every day for the rest of the school. The students take on the personae of famous newscasters, keeping in character as they develop and read their news reports. Discussions ensue about whether Tom Brokaw would have said it that way, again taking the focus off the child's speech.

Although most educators think of Black Language as primarily differing in grammar and syntax, there are other differences in oral language of which teachers should be aware in a multicultural context, particularly in discourse style and language use. Harvard University researcher Sarah Michaels and

other researchers identified differences in children's narratives at "sharing time."⁴ They found that there was a tendency among young white children to tell "topic-centered" narratives--stories focused on one event--and a tendency among Black youngsters, especially girls, to tell "episodic" narratives--stories that include shifting scenes and are typically longer. While these differences are interesting in themselves, what is of greater significance is adults' responses to the differences. C.B. Cazden reports on a subsequent project in which a white adult was taped reading the oral narratives of black and white first graders, with all syntax dialectal markers removed.⁵ Adults were asked to listen to the stories and comment about the children's likelihood of success in school. The researchers were surprised by the differential responses given by Black and white adults.

Varying reactions

In responding to the retelling of a Black child's story, the white adults were uniformly negative, making such comments as "terrible story, incoherent" and "[n]ot a story at all in the sense of describing something that happened." Asked to judge this child's academic competence, all of the white adults rated her below the children who told "topic-centered" stories. Most of these adults also predicted difficulties for this child's future school career, such as, "This child might have trouble reading," that she exhibited "language problems that affect school achievement," and that "family problems" or "emotional problems" might hamper her academic progress.

The black adults had very different reactions. They found this child's story "well formed, easy to understand, and interesting, with lots of detail and description." Even though all five of these adults mentioned the "shifts" and "associations" or "nonlinear" quality of the story, they did not find these features distracting. Three of the black adults selected the story as the best of the five they had heard, and all but one judged the child as exceptionally bright, highly verbal, and successful in school.⁶

This is not a story about racism, but one about cultural familiarity. However, when differences in narrative style produce differences in interpretation of competence, the pedagogical implications are evident. If children who produce stories based in differing discourse styles are expected to have trouble reading, and viewed as having language, family, or emotional problems, as was the case with the informants quoted by Cazden, they are unlikely to be viewed as ready for the same challenging instruction awarded students whose language patterns more closely parallel the teacher's.

Most teachers are particularly concerned about how speaking Ebonics might affect learning to read. There is little evidence that speaking another mutually intelligible language form, per se, negatively affects one's ability to learn to read.⁷ For commonsensical proof, one need only reflect on nonstandard English-speaking Africans who, though enslaved, not only taught themselves to read English, but did so under threat of severe punishment or death. But children who speak Ebonics do have a more difficult time becoming proficient readers. Why? In part, appropriate instructional methodologies are frequently not adopted. There is ample evidence that children who do not



come to school with knowledge about letters, sounds, and symbols need to experience some explicit instruction in these areas in order to become independent readers (See Mary Rhodes Hoover's article in this issue of *Rethinking Schools*, page 17). Another explanation is that, where teachers' assessments of competence are influenced by the language children speak, teachers may develop low expectations for certain students and subsequently teach them less.⁸ A third explanation rests in teachers' confusing the teaching of reading with the teaching of a new language form.

Reading researcher Patricia Cunningham found that teachers across the United States were more likely to correct reading miscues that were "dialect" related ("Here go a table" for "Here is a table") than those that were "nondialect" related ("Here is a dog" for "There is a dog").⁹ Seventy-eight percent of the former types of miscues were corrected, compared with only 27% of the latter. He concludes that the teachers were acting out of ignorance, not realizing that "here go" and "here is" represent the same meaning in some Black children's language.

In my observations of many classrooms, however, I have come to conclude that even when teachers recognize the similarity of meaning, they are likely to correct Ebonics-related miscues. Consider a typical example:

Text: Yesterday I washed my brother's clothes.

Student's Rendition: Yesterday I wash my bruvver close.

The subsequent exchange between student and teacher sounds something like this:

T: Wait, let's go back. What's that word again? {Points at "washed."}

S: Wash.

T: No. Look at it again. What letters do you see at the end? You see "e-d." Do you remember what we say when we see those letters on the end of the word?

S: "ed"

T: OK, but in this case we say washed. Can you say that?

S: Washed.

T: Good. Now read it again.

S: Yesterday I washed my bruvver...

T: Wait a minute, what's that word again? {Points to "brother."}

S: Bruvver.

T: No. Look at these letters in the middle. {Points to "brother."} Remember to read what you see. Do you remember how we say that sound? Put your tongue between your teeth and say "th"...

The lesson continues in such a fashion, the teacher proceeding to correct the student's Ebonics-influenced pronunciations and grammar while ignoring that fact that the student had to have comprehended the sentence in order to translate it into her own language. Such instruction occurs daily and blocks reading development in a number of ways. First, because children become better readers by having the opportunity to read, the overcorrection exhibited in this lesson means that this child will be less likely to become a fluent

reader than other children that are not interrupted so consistently. Second, a complete focus on code and pronunciation blocks children's understanding that reading is essentially a meaning-making process. This child, who understands the text, is led to believe that she is doing something wrong. She is encouraged to think of reading not as something you do to get a message, but something you pronounce. Third, constant corrections by the teacher are likely to cause this student and others like her to resist reading and to resent the teacher.

Language researcher Robert Berdan reports that, after observing the kind of teaching routine described above in a number of settings, he incorporated the teacher behaviors into a reading instruction exercise that he used with students in a college class.¹⁰ He put together sundry rules from a number of American social and regional dialects to create what he called the "language of Atlantis." Students were then called upon to read aloud in this dialect they did not know. When they made errors he interrupted them, using some of the same statements/comments he had heard elementary school teachers routinely make to their students. He concludes:

The results were rather shocking. By the time these Ph.D Candidates in English or linguistics had read 10-20 words, I could make them sound totally illiterate . . . The first thing that goes is sentence intonation: they sound like they are reading a list from the telephone book. Comment on their pronunciation a bit more, and they begin to subvocalize, rehearsing pronunciations for themselves before they dare to say them out loud. They begin to guess at pronunciations . . . They switch letters around for no reason. They stumble; they repeat. In short, when I attack them for their failure to conform to my demands for Atlantis English pronunciations, they sound very much like the worst of the second graders in any of the classrooms I have observed.

They also begin to fidget. They wad up their papers, bite their fingernails, whisper, and some finally refuse to continue. They do all the things that children do while they are busily failing to learn to read.

The moral of this story is not to confuse learning a new language form with reading comprehension. To do so will only confuse the child, leading her away from those intuitive understandings about language that will promote reading development, and toward a school career of resistance and a lifetime of avoiding reading.

Unlike unplanned oral language or public reading, writing lends itself to editing. While conversational talk is spontaneous and must be responsive to an immediate context, writing is a mediated process which may be written and rewritten any number of times before being introduced to public scrutiny. Consequently, writing is more amenable to rule application -- one may first write freely to get one's thoughts down, and then edit to hone the message and apply specific spelling, syntactical, or punctuation rules. My college students who had such difficulty talking in the "iz" dialect, found writing it, with the rules displayed before them, a relatively easy task.



To conclude, the teacher's job is to provide access to the national "standard" as well as to understand the language the children speak sufficiently to celebrate its beauty. The verbal adroitness, the cogent and quick wit, the brilliant use of metaphor, the facility in rhythm and rhyme, evident in the language of Jesse Jackson, Whoopi Goldberg, Toni Morrison, Henry Louis Gates, Tupac Shakur, and Maya Angelou, as well as in that of many inner-city Black students, may all be drawn upon to facilitate school learning. The teacher must know how to effectively teach reading and writing to students whose culture and language differ from that of the school, and must understand how and why students decide to add another language form to their repertoire. All we can do is provide students with access to additional language forms. Inevitably, each speaker will make his or her own decision about what to say in any context.

But I must end with a caveat that we keep in mind a simple truth: Despite our necessary efforts to provide access to standard English, such access will not make any of our students more intelligent. It will not teach them math or science or geography -- or, for that matter, compassion, courage, or responsibility. Let us not become so overly concerned with the language form that we ignore academic and moral content. Access to the standard language may be necessary, but it is definitely not sufficient to produce intelligent, competent caretakers of the future.

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Lisa Delpit is holder of the Benjamin E. Mays Chair of Urban Educational Excellence at Georgia State University in Atlanta. A former MacArthur fellow, her most recent book is "Other People's Children" (New Press: 1995).

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Teaching Diverse Learners
 The Education Alliance at Brown University
<http://www.lab.brown.edu/>

As with many of the resources in this section, the following nine principles could benefit all students in any school, but they are highlighted here because of the deliberate planning that goes into making one's practice responsive to each student, particularly those that have been historically marginalized. The nine principles have been converted into an observation guide to reflect on equitable classroom practice.

Some possible uses for the observation guide would be:

- to reflect on one's own teaching practice
- to assist in developing an equitable curriculum
- to evaluate and discuss pedagogy with peers
- to create a team/school-wide plan to address the nine principles
- to become comfortable with the elements involved in teaching for equity
- to periodically revisit the effectiveness of one's own teaching practice

ONE: ACTIVE TEACHING METHODS

"In our multicultural society, culturally responsive teaching reflects democracy at its highest level. [It] means doing whatever it takes to ensure that every child is achieving and ever moving toward realizing her or his potential."

- Joyce Taylor-Gibson

In Principle:	In Practice:	What I Observed:
Learning is inquiry-based & discovery-oriented	Focus on themes of personal interest to students	
Content is socially and culturally relevant	Relate questions to real life issues	
Dynamic partnership between teacher & student	Share responsibility for instructional practice	

TEACHING FOR EQUITY

TWO: CULTURAL SENSITIVITY		
<p><i>"The increasing diversity in our schools, the ongoing demographic changes across the nation and the movement towards globalization dictate that we develop a more in-depth understanding of culture if we want to bring about true understanding among diverse populations."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Maria Wilson-Portuondo</p>		
In Principle:	In Practice:	What I Observed:
The "strange" becomes "familiar" through understanding of socio-cultural & linguistic norms	Conduct research, solicit student input, pose directed questions, identify cultural informants, attend local events	
Cultural differences are bridged through effective communication	Coach students to become active participants in their own learning	
Knowledge is translated into instructional practice	Employ practices that draw on students' prior knowledge & communication skills	

THREE: CULTURALLY MEDIATED INSTRUCTION		
<p><i>"Ongoing multicultural activities within the classroom setting engender a natural awareness of cultural history, values and contributions."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Kathleen Serverian-Wilmeth</p>		
In Principle:	In Practice:	What I Observed:
Multicultural viewpoints & histories are integrated into the curriculum	Research students' experience with learning & teaching styles	
Learning occurs in appropriate socio-cultural & linguistic situations	Allow students to speak in primary language; initiate field trips for language learning	
Developmentally equivalent patterns of behavior are recognized as such	Encourage diverse ways of achieving developmental milestones	

FOUR: POSITIVE PERSPECTIVES ON PARENTS & FAMILIES		
<p><i>"Whether it's an informal chat as the parent brings the child to school, or in phone conversations or home visits, or through newsletters sent home, teachers can begin a dialogue with family members that can result in learning about each of the families through genuine communication."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Sonia Nieto</p>		
In Principle:	In Practice:	What I Observed:
Parents are active participants in the education process	Seek to understand parents' hopes, concerns & suggestions	
A forum exists for mutual learning & support	Apprise parents of the services offered by the school; initiate a parent training component	
Effective home-school partnerships are maintained	Gain cross-cultural skills necessary for successful exchange & collaboration	

FIVE: RESHAPING THE CURRICULUM		
<p><i>"[Schools must] take a serious look at their curriculum, pedagogy, retention and tracking policies, testing, hiring practices, and all the other policies and practices that create a school climate that is either empowering or disempowering for those who work and learn there."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Sonia Nieto</p>		
In Principle:	In Practice:	What I Observed:
Curriculum is integrated, interdisciplinary, meaningful & child-centered	Develop a coordinated, building-wide strategy	
Equity in the areas of race, class, national origin & language is sought & promoted	Present a variety of learning strategies, responsiveness to the needs of all students	
Higher-order knowledge and skills are developed	Establish high expectations for all students	

SIX: SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION		
<p><i>"Instructional methods that are student centered, collaborative, and process oriented develop a supportive environment for members of all cultures."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Kathleen Serverian-Wilmeth</p>		
In Principle:	In Practice:	What I Observed:
Instruction is cooperative, collaborative, & community-oriented	Provide non-threatening environment	
Performance, persistence & attitudes improve	Develop higher-order thinking skills and cognitive development	
Speaking and self-advocacy skills are strengthened	Create bridge between oral & academic language	

SEVEN: STUDENT—CONTROLLED CLASSROOM DISCOURSE		
<p><i>"Students . . . need to be at the center of teaching and learning. Successful educators acknowledge, respect, and build on the knowledge, beliefs and experiences that children bring with them to class, affirming the value of students' cultures."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Kathleen Serverian-Wilmeth</p>		
In Principle, students:	In Practice, students are given opportunities to:	What I Observed:
Discover their own thinking and learning processes	Make decisions and solve problems on their own	
Become self-confident, self-directed & proactive	Expand their discourse repertoire through frequent expression	
Demonstrate cultural negotiation skills	Develop their understanding of course material using prior knowledge	

EIGHT: TEACHER AS FACILITATOR		
<p><i>"A caring adult can make a big difference in the educational outcome of any child that is at risk of experiencing educational failure."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Maria Wilson-Portuondo</p>		
In Principle, teachers should be:	In Practice, teachers should develop:	What I Observed:
Guides, mediators, consultants, instructors, advocates	A repertoire of culturally appropriate teaching approaches	
Empathetic, available, equitable, open, flexible, caring	Knowledge about language & culture of students	
Understanding of role played by language & culture in identity formation	Awareness of personal ethnocentric attitudes	

NINE: COMMUNICATION OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS		
<p><i>"When a teacher expresses sympathy over failure, lavishes praise for completing a simple task, or offers unsolicited help, the teacher may send unintended messages of low expectations."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Kathleen Serverian-Wilmeth</p>		
In Principle:	In Practice:	What I Observed:
Instruction is effective, equitable, inclusive & high quality	"Make the familiar strange": question beliefs	
All students are respected as eager learners	Provide extensive feedback	
Students develop self-esteem, autonomy, self-reliance & motivation	Propose challenging curriculum	

Adapted from its original format.

Virtual Museum Projects in Native America

Mark Christal, Paul Resta, and Loriene Roy

The University of Texas at Austin

<http://www.ericit.org/newsletter/Volume23-2/articles.shtml>

The Four Directions project is an example of how an educational organization took a deliberate approach to culturally responsive, equitable teaching and made it the focal point of their work in Native American communities. Noteworthy is the intentional symbiotic nature of the three components that the project is built around; culturally responsive teaching, cultural revitalization, and cultural collaboration. The virtual museum tours are part of the project's product and can be viewed by going to the links in the box below.

The Four Directions project (www.4directions.org), funded by a federal Challenge Grant, worked with 19 American Indian schools in 10 states to promote the use of technology for the purpose of creating and delivering culturally responsive curriculum. The Four Directions helped these schools to develop technology-supported curricula and learning activities that were thematic and interdisciplinary, connecting the values and traditions of these diverse cultures with core academic standards. One of initiatives of the project was the production of virtual museums of native culture, which uses Web page authoring, multimedia production, and new media such as QuickTime Virtual Reality (QTVR).

Because of historical circumstances, much of what remains of American Indian material culture resides in museums across the nation and in private collections. The virtual museum projects in the Four Directions schools used digital photography and QuickTime Virtual Reality to “digitally repatriate” Native artifacts for use in the schools’ culturally responsive curricula and to share with the world on the World Wide Web.

Four Directions Virtual Museum Links

The Virtual Tour of the National Museum of the American Indian
<http://www.conexus.si.edu/VRTour>

The Hannahville Indian Community School Virtual Museum
<http://www.hvl.bia.edu/>

The Four Directions Project
<http://www.4directions.org>



QTVR is a photography-based “immersive imaging technology” that enables a user to explore panoramic spaces and examine objects by rotating them to any viewpoint using a computer mouse. Special regions on the QTVR movies called “hot spots” trigger various actions when clicked on, such as picking up a virtual object out of a virtual panoramic space, bringing up detailed views of parts of an object, or displaying a Web page of information about the object or panorama.

The Four Directions project also trained students and teachers in oral history techniques, audio recording skills, and digital audio technology that enabled students to make valuable records of the wisdom and memories of tribal elders.

With the assistance of the Four Directions project, several schools developed virtual museums. The Smithsonian Institute’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in New York City and the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona were partners in the Four Directions project, and have collaborated in the production of Native American virtual museums. Three Four Directions schools sent teams of students, teachers, and community members to produce a virtual tour of the NMAI exhibitions from the perspective of Native American children. This virtual tour is accessible on the World Wide Web at <http://www.conexus.si.edu/VRTour>.

The Heard Museum collaborated with three Four Directions schools to produce cultural content for school learning projects. Teachers at Seba Dalkai and Dilcon, sister Navajo schools in Arizona, used the media students created at the Heard Museum, along with digital audio and video of community members, to create HyperStudio stacks that illustrated the history of the schools.

With help from the Four Directions project, other schools have embarked on virtual museum projects in partnerships with museums in their regions that have substantial collections of culturally relevant items.

Throughout these various virtual museum projects a model has been emerging that combines authentic learning projects, culturally responsive pedagogy, and collaboration between museums and schools. This “Four Directions Model of Virtual Museum Projects” consists of three interacting and over-lapping components.

1. Cultural Responsive Teaching: Virtual museum projects are culturally responsive, because they teach to and through the culture of the child and bring community concerns and values to the center of the teaching-learning process. Students are motivated to excel because they are doing important, authentic work to recover and preserve their heritage. They gain from the knowledge of museum professionals and the wisdom of community elders. They develop skills in research, writing, social studies, science, mathematics, information literacy, and twenty-first century information technology.



2. **Cultural Revitalization:** A common concern among Native American peoples is the recovery and preservation of cultures and languages. Much of what remains of traditional material cultures resides in museum collections far from Native American communities. Virtual museum projects provide a way for communities to “digitally repatriate” precious items of cultural heritage. In the Four Directions Model, virtual museum activities also take place in the Native American communities, where students research and record local materials that supplement the museum's resources for the virtual museum. Local resources such as oral histories, cherished heirlooms, traditional stories, dances, and songs, native language and contemporary arts get combined with museum materials to present the vision of a vital, living culture.
3. **Cultural Collaboration:** Museums exist to preserve heritage and educate the public, but Native Americans sometimes object to the way museum exhibitions appropriate cultural property. Native Americans want the public to have access to authentic knowledge of their histories and cultures, but they believe that some aspects of their cultures should not be shared with outsiders. Virtual museum collaborations provide a venue where thorny issues of cultural property rights may be addressed and protocols for cultural collaboration may be designed and levels of accessibility decided.



The National Museum of the American Indian has also been actively seeking out American Indian schools and colleges for virtual museum partnerships. Two such projects have been conducted at the museum's Cultural Resource Center near Washington D. C. in the past two years. The Four Directions and NMAI virtual museum projects are furthering the concept of virtual museum projects with American Indian students. The next logical step for this culturally responsive teaching strategy would be to adapt the practice to other student populations.

The following books were recommended by school practitioners. The reviews are drawn from book jackets, publishers, and websites.

Diversity and Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching

Raymond J. Wlodkowski, Margery B. Ginsberg

Jossey-Bass

<http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787967424.html>

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg have written the foundational book on defining culturally responsive teaching and creating a culturally responsive pedagogy. Their work offers realistic, tested methods for turning learners' experiences into rich teaching and learning opportunities.

“Every day college and university faculty ask themselves the question, 'How can we become more effective teachers of a culturally diverse student body?' This book provides the most comprehensive and useful answer that I have ever read. Drawing upon years of experience and research with students from various cultural backgrounds, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg offer faculty a remarkable integration of theory and practice—full of the kinds of insights and strategies they can use today.”

- Michael Nettles, professor, Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education, University of Michigan

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's *Diversity and Motivation* addresses the role that cultural factors play in motivating students. According to the authors, providing a culturally responsive teaching environment involves four primary components:

Establish inclusion

When inclusion is established within the classroom, all learners will feel respected and connected to one another.

Develop attitude

Create a favorable disposition among learners toward the learning experience.

Enhance meaning

Expand, refine, and/or increase the complexity of what is being learned in a manner that matters to students. In order to do this, you must consider the values and purposes of your students.

Engender competence

Create an understanding for learners of how they can be effective in learning something of personal value in the classroom.

Throughout *Diversity and Motivation*, you are given theories and specific strategies for accomplishing each of the four objectives. Hypothetical situations provide examples of how you can appropriately deal with cultural tensions and disagreements that arise in the classroom.

Among other things, the authors emphasize ways to reach students whose primary language is not English, and they give suggestions on how to effectively meet each student's individual academic needs. You are encouraged to try out viable alternatives to the typical means of goal setting, research methods and assessment. These options allow students' perspectives and intrinsic values to be taken into consideration, motivating them to work to the best of their ability. (Excerpted from the Center for Instructional Development & Distance Education at the University of Pittsburgh)

Raymond J. Wlodkowski and **Margery B. Ginsberg** combine their respective expertise in motivation and multiculturalism to go beyond the usual rhetoric on promoting diversity, offering real-world guidance and suggestions for successful teaching in today's changing classroom environment.

“We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need in order to do this. Whether we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far.”

- Dr. Ron Edmonds (1982)



Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice

Geneva Gay (2000)

Teachers College Press

<http://store.tpress.com/0807739545.shtml>

"From her careful analysis of the educational research and best practices literature, and her wealth of experiences from working with P/K-18 students and teachers, Gay clearly explains how culturally responsive teaching can be used to dramatically influence the academic achievement of students of color and other marginalized students."

–**Carl A. Grant**, University of Wisconsin at Madison

"Geneva Gay has written a passionate and inspiring book that provides a comprehensive explanation of culturally responsive teaching and how it can make a difference in the lives of students of color. She argues that all teachers, regardless of their ethnic group membership, must have the 'courage, competence, and confidence' to teach in a culturally relevant manner."

–**Christine Bennett**, Indiana University

"Written by one of the leading interpreters of diversity in the schools, this book challenges all teachers to reconsider their pedagogical and personal approaches to young people in our nation's increasingly multicultural classrooms."

–**Carlos E. Cortés**, University of California, Riverside

In this wonderful new volume, Geneva Gay makes a convincing case for using culturally responsive teaching to improve the school performance of underachieving students of color. She combines insights from multicultural education theory, research, and classroom practice to demonstrate that African, Asian, Latino, and Native American students will perform better, on multiple measures of achievement, when teaching is filtered through their own cultural experiences and frames of reference. Key components of culturally responsive teaching discussed include teacher caring, teacher attitudes and expectations, formal and informal multicultural curriculum, culturally informed classroom discourse, and cultural congruity in teaching and learning strategies. The personal stories woven throughout enliven the deeply textured scholarly analysis. This is an excellent resource for anyone who cares about improving and recognizing the factors that shape culturally responsive teaching and learning.

Geneva Gay is Professor of Education and Associate of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, Seattle.

Educating Teachers for Diversity: Seeing with a Cultural Eye

Jacqueline Jordan Irvine (2003)

Teachers College Press

<http://store.tpress.com/0807743577.shtml>

Educating Teachers for Diversity addresses the complex issues of how culture, race and ethnicity, and social class influence the teaching and learning processes. The author provides not only an analysis of current conditions and reforms in education, but also offers suggestions and practices for improving educational outcomes for all children.

Tackling hard truths and controversial issues head on, the author:

- Offers advice for closing the achievement gap of low-income African American students in urban schools.
- Focuses on issues of assessment and measurement for K-12 students and teachers of color.
- Explores the declining number of teachers of color in the United States and its relation to school failure in African American and Latino students.
- Outlines a curriculum for teacher education programs to help them produce culturally aware and effective teachers.
- Examines how colleges of education can reverse the cycle of failure for students of color by producing teachers who are culturally responsive.
- Concludes with a summary of the work and recommendations of such scholars as James A. Banks and Sonia Nieto.

"In this insightful and wise book, Jacqueline Jordan Irvine reflects on topics ranging from the preparation of future teachers for urban schools to the role of colleges of education in current reform efforts. Debunking both taken-for-granted assumptions and facile answers to complex problems, she insists instead on focusing on what really matters: caring for and about the most vulnerable and forgotten children in our schools. Anyone interested in the future of public education today would do well to read this book."

—**Sonia Nieto**, author of *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*

"This is a book to be read by education school faculty and administrators. It offers a design for the revitalization of teacher education that needs to be carefully considered...it is an agenda that must be pursued."

—**David G. Imig**, President and CEO, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Educators

Renegotiating Cultural Diversity in American Schools

Patricia Phelan and Ann Locke Davidson, Editors (1993)

http://www.teacherscollegepress.com/multicultural_studies.html



"This book should be read not just by scholars, but by all who want to know about the perspectives of our youngsters."

—**Kenji Hakuta**, Stanford University

"This landmark volume moves beyond stereotypes and ‘the blame game’ to unify us as stakeholders so all students succeed in school."

—**Catherine Cooper**, University of California, Santa Cruz

An intimate look at the lives of young people as they negotiate the world of the family with the world of their peers and the demands of school. Provides a clear understanding of features in school and classroom environments that aid or impede students in making transitions among their worlds and the world of school—both social and academic.

Unique to Adolescents’ Worlds:

Youth’s perspectives are central—here, the students tell the researchers/educators what is important to them.

Unique conceptual model—the authors have developed a model and typology that emerged from data gathered directly from interviews and observations.

Transcends categories—this work moves beyond a narrow focus of individual ethnic groups to present a model that is applicable to understanding diverse adolescents.

Focus on contextual factors that inhibit youth from connecting with school—rather than viewing individual characteristics as creating risk, the authors see risk as contained in the borders that students face.

Case study approach—provides an intimacy and authenticity that will engage teachers and students in discussions and analysis about their own classrooms and schools.



Walking the Color Line: The Art and Practice of Anti-Racist Teaching

Mark Perry (2000)

Teachers College Press

<http://store.tcpres.com/0807739642.shtml>

"Perry's meticulous journaling over a period of years as teacher and principal in an inner-city alternative high school has been transformed into a book that enables readers to get a profound sense of daily life in this school. It is a rare and special gift for teachers and teacher educators."

–**Susan Huddleston Edgerton**, Western Michigan University

"Perry reveals to us the gestalt of a school climate where teachers and students, teaching and learning, are interconnected as part of a whole."

–**Rosalie Romano**, Ohio University

"What is valuable about this book is Mark's willingness to talk with equal candor about the successes, half successes, near failures, and failures he experienced; as well as how and what he learned in the process. Reading this, teachers and administrators will both recognize themselves and learn how to, and how not to, proceed."

–**Barbara Osborne**, Alternative High School Teacher, Seattle, Washington

At the heart of this volume and central to current efforts to improve public education is the attempt to create anti-racist, democratic, student-centered schools. Mark Perry shows how racially mixed teaching faculties can model democratic ideals and how white teachers and administrators of color can effectively deal with their differences. As a former principal and teacher, he is committed to developing and implementing a culturally relevant curriculum that offers realistic alternatives to inaction. An honest, readable, and succinct account of real-life teaching, this book provides a framework as well as valuable insight for all educators, parents, and community activists who work toward social justice, particularly at the grassroots level.

Mark Perry is a teacher educator, an alternative high school teacher, and a former principal. He works primarily with marginalized, dropout, and adjudicated students. He holds master's and doctorate degrees in Education from the University of Illinois at Chicago.



**We Can't Teach What We Don't Know:
White Teachers, Multiracial Schools**

Gary R. Howard (1999)

Teachers College Press

<http://store.tcpres.com/080773800X.shtml>

"Gary Howard describes in moving and powerful ways the changes and growth that must take place within White educators in order for them to help create caring and humane schools for the new century."

—**James A. Banks**, Series Editor

"Like Paulo Freire, Gary Howard speaks of his own transformation as a rebirth. . . . The theoretical work he has developed on White identity orientations is groundbreaking."

—From the Foreword by **Sonia Nieto**

With lively stories and compelling analysis, Gary Howard engages his readers on a journey of personal and professional transformation. From his 25 years of experience as a multicultural educator, he looks deeply into the mirror of his own racial identity to discover what it means to be a culturally competent White teacher in racially diverse schools. Inspired by his extensive travel and collaboration with students and colleagues from many different cultures, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know* offers a healing vision for the future of education in pluralistic nations.

Gary R. Howard is president and founder of the REACH Center for Multicultural Education in Seattle, Washington.

"Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time."

- Rabbinic saying

Making Assessment Work for Everyone: How to Build on Student Strengths

Kusimo, P., Ritter, M.G., Busick, K., Ferguson, C., Trumbull, E., & Solano-Flores, G. (2000)
Southwest Educational Development Laboratories (SEDL)
<http://www.sedl.org/>

Making Assessment Work for Everyone: How to Build on Student Strengths is intended to provide teachers with research information and practical ideas for modifying assessments to make them more effective. Throughout the document, examples demonstrate how to make the process equitable and beneficial for students and teachers alike.

Making Assessment Work for Everyone is intended to help educators:

- Understand the essential characteristics of good assessment
- Uncover the strengths and cultural perspectives of diverse learners
- Create or select classroom assessments that meet high standards as well as support and reveal the learning of every child
- Increase awareness of potential sources of bias and inequity in assessments
- Use strategies to improve inequitable assessments

Making Assessment Work for Everyone contains eight sections; each provides information, suggestions, and opportunities to try out key ideas. In addition, there are activities to use with students and reflective exercises. Brief vignettes bring to life the challenges of equitable assessment and enable readers to look over the shoulders of educators who have developed strategies and tips for success. This book is intended to be helpful both to individual readers and for use as part of a professional development program. Activities for this latter purpose are included with facilitator notes in Section VII.

Our Guiding Principles

As we encounter more students whose culture and language differ from our own, we will need to expand the ways we assess their knowledge and skills. The information and guidance offered in this publication for doing so is grounded in the following research-based realities and in our understanding of what these realities imply for school and, more specifically, for classroom practice:

1. Culture is inherent in every aspect of schooling; therefore, we need to be aware of the cultural values underlying our schooling practices and how they may result in confusion or conflict for some students.
2. Diversity should be seen as a benefit and as additive; therefore, the strengths in all cultures should be acknowledged and built on in the classroom.
3. Language, the primary vehicle for thought and learning, is inherent in virtually all assessment; therefore, it is important to understand

how the forms and uses of language in assessment coincide or conflict with the forms and uses students have learned in their own homes and communities.

4. All learners are born curious and can acquire new knowledge, skills, and patterns of behavior; therefore, when students are not achieving, our educational practices need to change.
5. No single method of assessment is capable of showing achievement on a full range of learning objectives; therefore, multiple assessments must be used to provide adequate opportunities for learners to demonstrate achievement.
6. Assessment experiences should be part of a positive learning process; therefore, assessment tasks should not erode students' sense of self-worth.
7. All learners deserve opportunities for authentic assessment of their learning and honest feedback; therefore, assessments should make sense to students, and their performance should be reported and interpreted in terms they can understand.
8. Assessment is a high stakes activity. Assessment outcomes often determine who is allowed to enroll in courses or receive job, college, or scholarship opportunities; therefore, we are ethically bound to ensure that it is fair and valid.
9. The most important purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning; therefore, assessments that do not contribute to these processes should be questioned.

Diversity in the Classroom:

A Casebook for Teachers and Teacher Educators

Editor: Judith H. Shulman, Amalia Mesa-Bains (1993)

Research for Better Schools & Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

<http://www.wested.org/cs/wew/view/rs/54>

As schools are grappling with how to translate knowledge around diversity and equity issues into classroom practice, it is important to glimpse the everyday struggles and successes of educators committed to creating equitable teaching and learning communities. The case studies in this book are straightforward, thought provoking, and speak to the teacher/student relationships that are at the heart of all learning. This book would be a valuable tool for classroom planning.

This casebook includes 13 compelling first-person accounts of inner-city teaching dilemmas, focusing on the teacher-student relationship in multilingual, multicultural, and multi-ethnic classrooms. Each case is followed by commentaries by scholars and practitioners, which add multiple perspectives to each account. The narratives provide stimulation for group discussion by both teachers and professional developers. A companion facilitator's guide is available.

Read alone or used as the basis for group discussion, these cases have proved a valuable tool for addressing such questions. Written by teachers whose ethnic backgrounds include Japanese-American, Chinese-American, Latino, Filipino, African-American, and Caucasian, the cases help teachers reflect not just on the barriers of language and customs, but also on deeper, more troubling aspects of the classroom exchange: how unrecognized psychological undercurrents of race, culture, and class can obstruct teaching and learning. Following each case and providing a range of perspectives for interpreting it are commentaries written by administrators, scholars, and other teachers.



Savage Inequalities

Jonathan Kozol (1991)

Perennial Press

http://www.cincinnati.com/samepage/book_kozol.html

Savage Inequalities is the eye-opening result of Jonathan Kozol's visits to a number of urban public schools across America. He effectively explores the long-term effect of school systems that have experienced the hardships of inadequate funding and inadequate staffing in impoverished neighborhoods. The lives of children are sensitively portrayed, and are described by Kozol as "defenseless emblems of hope and promise." *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, published in 1991, won the New England Book Award, and was a National Book Critics Circle award finalist in 1992.

"He [Kozol] courageously crosses the unwritten line that makes charges of racial discrimination taboo in this day and age... a superbly written, thoroughly researched documentary of a world hidden to most." -- Chicago Sun-Times

"... a haunting reminder of Malcolm X's ever urgent question, 'If democracy is equality, why don't we have equality?'" --Mirabella

Recommended readings on multicultural education and culturally responsive teaching:

The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994)

Quote: "...culturally responsive teaching uses student culture in order to maintain it and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture. The negative effects are brought about, for example by not seeing one's history, culture, or background represented in the textbook or curriculum or by seeing that history, culture, or background distorted. Or they may result from the staffing pattern in the school (when all teachers and the principal are white and only the janitors and cafeteria workers are African American, for example) and from the tracking of African American students into the lowest-level classes. The primary aim of culturally relevant teaching is to assist in the development of a "relevant black personality" that allows African American students to choose academic excellence yet still identify with African and African American culture (p. 17)."

Radical Equations: Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project

Robert P. Moses, & Charles E. Cobb, Jr. (2001)

Quote: “Math literacy and economic access are how we are going to give hope to the young generation. . . And why focus, as we do, on algebra, of all things? . . . The Algebra Project is founded on the idea that the ongoing struggle for citizenship and equality for minority people is now linked to an issue of math and science literacy. This idea determines strategies and choices made about the organization, dissemination, and the content of the curriculum (p.14).”

Portraits of Teachers in Multicultural Settings: A Critical Literacy Approach

Lettie Ramirez, & Olivia M. Gallardo (2001)

Quote: “Critical educators recognize that they cannot change a students’ circumstances or environments; however, they find that they can act as agents of change through critically examining how traditional education promotes or hinders the student’s success or failure. Teacher and student alike work together to become part of the problem-solving process. This teaching goes beyond celebration of ethnic holidays and into the heart of what is known as “humanizing pedagogy . . . The teacher/student relationship is at the heart of schooling (p.3).”

Reaching All Students with Mathematics

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) (1993)

Quote: “The contributors to this book recognize that strategies and approaches for enhancing mathematics instruction must be comprehensive and flexible so that no student is left out (p.3).”

“The quality of student-teacher interpersonal communications depends, in part, on issues of cultural diversity and a healthy respect for differences (Chapters 2, 3, 8, and 13 address a different aspect of this issue) (p.5).”

How People Learn: Bridging Research and Practice

National Research Council (1999)

Quote: Key Finding #1--“Students come to the classroom with preconceptions about how the world works. If their initial understanding is not engaged, they may fail to grasp the new concepts and information that are taught, or they may learn them for purposes of a test but revert to their preconceptions outside the classroom (p.11).”



Wachale!: Poetry and prose about Growing Up Latino in America
I. Stavans (2001)

This work could easily be integrated into a poetry unit and honor the multiple life experiences of Latino authors.

Recommended Websites:

Online Resources for culturally responsive teaching through Knowledge Loom

<http://knowledgeloom.org/resources.jsp?location=6&bpinterid=1110&spotlightid=1110>

Teaching Diverse Learners: Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory

<http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl/>

New Horizons for Learning, Teaching and Learning, Multicultural Education
http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/multicultural/front_multicultural.htm

Culturally Engaged Pedagogy, a concept by Renee Moore, Carnegie Foundation

<http://kml2.carnegiefoundation.org/html/poster.php?id=84>

Pi Lambda Theta publication, Ed Horizons, on African American students in public schools in the September 2002 issue

<http://www.pilambda.org/horizons/v80-4/v80index.htm>

Center for Multicultural Education, University of Washington, Seattle
Research on Successful K-12 Programs, including the Algebra Project, AVID, and others

<http://depts.washington.edu/centerme/k-12.htm>

NOTES: