

**RETHINKING SCHOOL REFORM IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL AND
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY: CREATING A RESPONSIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY**

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INTRODUCTION

Our understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity as it relates to educational endeavors continues to expand in its utilization of diverse theories of language, learning, thinking, teaching, social structures and culture (Garcia, 1999, 2001; Garcia and McLaughlin, 1995; Anyon, 1995; Wong Fillmore, 1991). The growing ethnic and linguistic diversity of our students has led educators to become more interested in an interlocking study of linguistic, psychological, and social domains, each independently significant, but converging in a singular attempt to reconstruct the nature of schooling for these students. It is this complex set of understandings upon which an educator must depend when addressing teaching and learning in today's classrooms. For the educator of culturally and linguistically diverse students as a constituency, the issue of culture--what it is and how it directly and indirectly influences academic learning--becomes particularly important. Recently developed foundations for the schooling initiatives targeted at culturally diverse students in the United States will be the focus of this paper. We include an expanded discussion of the issues that bring together research, theory, and educational policy and practice of significance to these students. Even more specifically, the discussion addresses educationally related conceptual/theoretical pursuits which attempt to "explain", and, therefore, lay the foundation for educational "action" toward improved educational conditions for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

BACKGROUND

The U.S. is a country of incredible cultural and linguistic diversity. This trend of ethnic and racial population diversification continues most rapidly among its young and school age children. California has already been transformed into a minority/majority state; 52% of today's students come from "minority" categories, in less than two score years, 70% of California's students will be non-White and one-half will speak a language other than English on their first day of school. Nationwide, White, non-Hispanic student enrollment has decreased since 1976 by 13%, or a total of 5 million students. (Statistics [NCES], 1996)

The demographic transformation that has become more evident in the last decade was easily foreseen at least that long ago. Our future student growth is as predictable: in a mere 40 years, White students will be a minority in every category of public education, as we know it today. Unfortunately, these emerging majority ethnic and racial background students continue to be placed "at risk" in today's schools.

This portrait of educational vulnerability has been a historical reality for culturally diverse children in the United States. This population identifier, "culturally diverse", is a relatively new educationally related term. Of course it has little appreciation for the diversity among such identified U.S. populations. That is, it is quite evident that such identified populations (African Americans, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Chicanos, Latinos, Southeast Asians, Pacific Islanders, Filipino, Chinese, etc.) are quite heterogeneous linguistically and culturally both within and between such identified categories. However, educational interest spawned by a significant record of educational underachievement has generated educational programs, educational research and a wide range of intellectual discussion regarding the "at risk" educational circumstances of these populations (Barona & Garcia, 1990). Combined with the contemporary educational "zeitgeist" which embraces excellence and equity for all students, best reflected in the National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983 report, A Nation at Risk, and the more recent national goals legislation, Goals 2000 (1994) and reauthorization of The Elementary and Secondary Education Act now the Improving America's School Act of 1994 attention to the underachievement of culturally diverse students has been significant. The major thrust of any such educational effort aimed at these populations has been centered on identifying why such populations are not achieving, and, how schools can be "reformed" or "restructured" to meet this educational challenge (Barona & Garcia, 1990; Comer, 1986; Garcia and Gonzalez, 1995).

U.S. EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Within the last few decades, research and practice in culture and education has ranged from a focus on "Americanization" (Gonzalez, 1990), educational equity (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974), to

multicultural education (Banks, 1982; Grant & Sleeter, 1988; Banks and Banks, 1995), and more recently to the "responsive" relevant instruction of children from diverse culturally and linguistically groups (Garcia, 1994). It is quite arguable that approaches to the education of culturally diverse populations continues to be driven by the goal of "Americanization," and we present an extensive discussion of this educational response to illustrate the degree to which it still pervades many educational programs and practices despite concerns over its appropriateness. Other responses to cultural diversity are examined to set the stage for the development of the conceptual framework we propose for addressing cultural and linguistic diversity through a more robust view of its central role in establishing learning communities that serve all students optimally.

Americanization

Historically, "Americanization" has been a prime institutional education objective for culturally diverse children (Elam, 1972; Gonzalez, 1990). "Americanization" schooling practices were adopted whenever the population of these students rose to significant numbers in a community. This adaptation established special programs and was applied to both children and adults in urban and rural schools and communities. The desired effect of "Americanizing" students was to socialize and acculturate the diverse community. In essence, if schools could teach these students English and "American" values, then educational failure could be averted. Ironically, social economists have argued that this effort was coupled with systematic efforts to maintain disparate conditions between Anglos and "minority" populations. Indeed, more than anything else, past attempts at addressing the "Black, Hispanic, Indian, Asian, etc., educational problem" have actually preserved the political and economic subordination of these communities (Spencer, 1988).

Coming from a sociological theory of assimilation, "Americanization" has traditionally been recognized as a solution to the problem of immigrants and ethnicity in the modern industrialized United States. "Americanization" was intended to merge small ethnic and linguistically diverse communities into a single dominant national institutional structure and culture. Thomas and Park (1921) argued that the immigrants' "Old World" consciousness would eventually be overcome by "modern" American values. It can be argued that "Americanization" is still the goal of many

programs aimed at culturally diverse students (Rodriguez, 1989; Weis, 1988; Nieto, 1993).

"Americanization" for these students unfortunately still means the elimination not only of linguistic and cultural differences but also of an undesirable culture. "Americanization" programs assume a single pre-modern homogeneous culture considered to be ethnic in contact with a single homogeneous culture consider modern, and the relationship between the two is not that of equals.

The "Americanization" solution has not worked. Moreover, it depends on the flawed notion of group cultural deficiency. The "Americanization" solution presumes that culturally different children are as a group culturally flawed. To fix them individually, we must act on the individual as a member of a cultural group. By changing the values, language, etc. of the group we will have the solution to the educational underachievement of students who represent these groups. In essence, the groups should "melt" into one large and more beneficial "American" culture. The challenge facing educators with regard to culturally diverse students is not to "Americanize" them.

Educational Equity

No one argues about the significance of education in this country. We are all quite convinced that an educated society is beneficial for sustaining and enhancing individual well-being, our standard of living and maintaining a democratic society (Dewey, 1921). Moreover, education is perceived as a vehicle for achieving the "American Dream." Therefore it is not surprising that numerous social institutions have attempted to initiate and maintain their educational endeavors in conjunction with efforts in the public schools. In fact today's adult will have been exposed to more formal educational experiences (courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, etc.) outside of the usual kindergarten-high school process than within it. Education in this society, from cradle to grave, is considered important.

If so, then, equal access to educational opportunities is a corollary to this basic assumption. This was clearly brought home by the U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1954 in Brown v. Board of Education. This landmark case concluded that separate/segregated education for Black Americans was unequal to that education provided for White Americans. In essence, the court argued that every effort must be made to address equal access to education regardless of race. This decision

was reinforced for Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans, and women in the significant U.S. Congressional activity during the 1960-70's "War On Poverty" era. The major legislative piece, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, in Title IV of that act, banned discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in any program receiving federal financial assistance (Title VII of that act address educational equity across gender). Not coincidentally, the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 began to provide millions of federal dollars in assistance to state and local school systems. Therefore, if these school systems were to make use of federal funds, they were held accountable to the standard of non-discrimination.

Directly, this legislation banned recipients of federal resources from "restricting an individual in any way in the enjoyment of any advantage or privilege enjoyed by others receiving any service, financial aide or benefit under the (federally) funded program." Moreover, the recipient of federal funds was prohibited from utilizing criteria or methods which would have the effect of impairing accomplishments of the objectives of the federally funded program with respect to individuals of a particular race, color or national origin. Taken together, these legal and legislative initiatives placed the societal values regarding the importance of education into a form of direct relevance to culturally diverse populations. In essence, any child, regardless of race, color, national origin and language is entitled, equally, to the benefits of educational endeavors. This equal educational approach to the growing number of culturally diverse student pervaded our schools for over a decade, and is still a part of what drives many educational initiatives for these students. But, equal access has not been the only stimulus driving our educational interest in culturally diverse students and their continued well-documented under achievement under policies and practices associated with "Americanization" and "Equal Educational Opportunity."

Multicultural Education

From the educational establishment and minority groups themselves came another important educational thrust of particular consequence to culturally diverse students. Mostly aimed at curriculum reform, this initiative suggested that curriculum in this country should reflect the diverse

character of the cultural and linguistic groups of the country. A *multicultural education* was recommended for several reasons. First and foremost, the curriculum should better represent the actual contributions by various cultural groups to this country's society. Curriculum in schools was criticized for its unbalanced perspectives which emphasized Western European values, history, literature and general world view (Banks, 1982). The United States was not one monolithic culture, and, the curriculum should reflect that cultural diversity. Second, a multicultural curriculum would inform "majority" group children of "minority" group contributions and would at the same time reaffirm the "minority" group significance to the society--helping in the development of positive self-esteem (Ethnic Cultural Education Program, 1977). Third, multicultural education was perceived as a school reform movement aimed at changing the content and process within schools. Its goal was not only to provide equal educational opportunity, but also, to enhance the schooling experience for all students (Sleeter & Grant, 1987).

The multicultural education concept took on several distinct approaches to the instruction of students, in general, and culturally diverse students, in particular. However, the major impact of this reform movement has been in the curriculum area. That is, the area of schooling which addresses the content of instruction. In essence, this major reform attempted to address what students should be learning. This reform made it quite clear that we needed to know more about this country's diverse cultural groups and that after we had uncovered such knowledge we needed to dispense it in our every day schooling endeavors. Quite significant was this overall agreement about the importance of including curriculum that addressed diversity, since there was some disagreement with regard to the goals of such activity.

Sleeter and Grant (1987) have provided an excellent review of these discrepant goals and the overall limited consequences of the multicultural education reform movement on American education. Within a model described as "teaching the multiculturally different", the goal was to assist educators to assist culturally different students to succeed in mainstream schooling. Although not directly implicating the need to "change" or "assimilate" children of different backgrounds into the mainstream, this goal seemed to serve as a foundation for this form of

multicultural education. This prescription was usually subtractive in nature. That is, children with different cultures and languages were asked to leave behind these attributes through the assistance of bridge-like educational programs which promised access and success in academic and then, later, other societal domains. Multicultural education, within this view, was seen as a temporary, highly directed educational endeavor which would lead to a melting pot of successful and a more homogeneous student population.

Attention to multicultural education in this country over the last two decades has produced a set of debates and substantive accomplishments. New curriculum efforts by publishing companies have been launched to address concerns of "bias" raised by proponents of multicultural education (Grant, 1994). Teacher training programs have been required to provide specific training at the pre-service level (California Commission on Teacher Credential, 1991). School based programs such as the "magnet" and double immersion bilingual education programs described in more detail below, find their roots, at least partially, in the values and goals of multicultural education. Broadly speaking, the goals of multicultural education range from those related to bridging/assimilation for culturally diverse students, to enhancing human relations, to actively promoting cultural diversity as a societal goal. Keep in mind that these goals build upon the previous historical and ongoing initiatives dealing with equal educational opportunity--no child should be denied the benefits of education. These two educational initiatives have individually and together changed the educational response to the growing presence of cultural diversity in our schools.

RETHINKING SCHOOLING, RREFORM AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

"Americanization," "Equal Educational Opportunity" and "Multicultural Education" efforts have failed to address a number of important educational concerns. For the most part they have lacked strong theoretical foundations, addressed only curriculum, produced many single case studies of ethnic groups, and produced little empirical data to substantiate the positive effects of implementation. As indicated previously, academic achievement in many culturally diverse populations has not been enhanced significantly over the past decades. Equal educational opportunity activity has and continues to generate legislative and legal policy along with

concomitant resources to address this core societal value. But such action has not addressed, in any comprehensive manner, how educational equity should be achieved. Moreover, educational inertia in and around multicultural education has similarly espoused important societal values but has led to advances in a number of educational fronts. It has not produced a set of comprehensive strategies that address the educational concerns it has raised (Sleeter, 1995, Sleeter and Grant, 1999; Grant, 1999). Therefore the result of these educational equity and multicultural reform initiatives has been to raise issues. They have accomplished that outcome, and they have been assisted by the demographic reality of a changing culturally diverse society.

The legacy of an equal educational opportunity and multicultural education era has left us with some clearly identifiable results. First, educational endeavors related to linguistically and culturally diverse students have been pragmatically oriented. That is, they have focused on a set of problems--discrimination, desegregation, under-achievement, low self-esteem, non-English proficiency, etc.--and have forwarded programs to address these problems. In doing so, these efforts tended to lack any substantive theoretical underpinnings. The proposed solutions were driven by the social values associated with educational equity and pluralism.

Another legacy of the last three decades of educational activity centered on culturally diverse populations, particularly the result of multicultural education endeavors, has been the extended case study approach to cultural diversity. The educational community has produced an extensive literature of the characteristics of different racial, ethnic and ethnolinguistic groups. The goal of this work was to document the cultural and linguistic attributes of different groups in this country such that these attributes could be understood and utilized to better serve these populations. It was not uncommon to learn that American Indian children were non-verbal (Appleton, 1983), Asian American children were shy (Sue & Okazaki, 1990), Mexican American children were cooperative (Garcia, 1983), African American children were aggressive (Boykin, 1983) and Anglo children were competitive (Kagan, 1983). Although this case study work was meant to further advance our understanding of culturally diverse students, it often had the effect of promoting stereotypes. Moreover, it did not recognize the broader, well-understood axiom of social scientists that study

culture: there is as much heterogeneity within any cultural group as there is between cultural groups. If all Mexican Americans are not alike, if all African Americans are not alike, if all Asians are not alike, etc., then what set of knowledge about those groups is important educationally? What overarching conceptualization of their language, cultural and their schooling is important to provide optimal learning opportunities and results? The following is brief overview of recent research and conceptualizations that address these questions.

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

The importance of guaranteeing excellence for Hispanic children is becoming increasingly salient as America moves into the 21st century with a large number of these students increasing (California State Department of Education, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). What factors may promote Hispanic students' academic achievement? Though few researchers or educational program developers have established coherent models or programs that address the question specifically, there is literature that may shed light on the question. First, some studies focus on individual characteristics of students, such as resilience, and identification and engagement with school, and on the social supports from peers, families, and communities that may promote these behaviors. Second, recent research identifies classroom characteristics and practices that hold promise for engaging Hispanic students and for advancing their achievements. Third, school variables, such as resources and climate, may be important predictors of students' outcomes. Finally, I will address very specific research results related educational programs to promote Hispanic students' academic achievement.

Researchers consistently find that Hispanic students are represented disproportionately among those who are economically disadvantaged (Miller, 1995). Children living in poverty have less access to formal learning opportunities, fewer resources, greater health problems, and developmental delays, all of which can negatively impact educational outcomes (Garcia, 1999). Although being a minority student is not a risk factor in and of itself, as Montgomery & Rossi (1994) note, experiencing adverse treatment in or outside the classroom because of one's race or

ethnicity is a risk factor. Such variables or "risk factors" obviously impede the achievement of Hispanic children.

As I have discussed at some length, cultural differences also contribute to the academic challenges for Hispanic children. Schools attempt to assimilate minority students to mainstream values without considering the potential ramifications of doing so. When the values of the home and community are incongruent with the values of the school, minority children may experience confusion, stress, and adjustment problems that ultimately result in low self-esteem and poor academic performance (Ford, 1996). Hispanic students who do achieve may be viewed as assimilating and run the risk of being accused of "selling out" or "becoming a coconut" by their Hispanic peers (Matute-Bianchi & Ogbu, 1997). Peer rejection can be very damaging for racial and ethnic minority youth for whom the need for peer affiliation is very strong (Ford, 1996; Gandara, 1994).

Despite these and other obstacles that Hispanic youth may face, there are those who achieve academic success through their resilience. Resilience is defined as the ability to succeed regardless of challenging or threatening circumstances. Resilient children are able to do well in school despite family, community, or social circumstances that are not congruent with academic success. What enables these children to achieve despite the obstacles to their success? The following characteristics have been found to foster resilience: an internal locus of control and high self-esteem (Finn & Rock, 1997); strong interpersonal skills, a capacity to be responsive to others, a high level of activity, good problem-solving skills, flexibility, independence, a clear sense of purpose, a good parent-child relationship (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993). Wang and her colleagues suggested that schools may foster students' resilience by defining clear educational goals, encouraging students to take responsibility for helping each other, having adequate learning resources, and keeping parents actively engaged and informed.

Closely related research on the factors associated with resiliency, a few studies have identified the characteristics of high achieving minority students, including Hispanics, counterparts. For instance, Lee, Winfield, and Wilson (1991) reported that high achievers (defined as scoring

above the national average in reading achievement) tend to come from families of higher social class, with a higher proportion of working mothers. Lee and her colleagues found that the schools attended by high-achieving African American students were comprised of higher SES families, had higher student commitment, offered enriched curriculum more often, and had a lower proportion of students in remedial reading. A positive attitude toward achievers and toward school, strong belief in the tenets of the achievement ideology, and a low incidence of psychological issues, such as fears and anxieties also characterize high-achieving minority students (Ford & Harris, 1996).

In contrast to resilience, researchers increasingly conceptualize poor educational performance as the outcome of a process of academic disengagement, which may begin as early as a child's entry into school. In a comparison of the relationship between self-esteem and achievement for a national sample of White, African American, and Latino students, Osborne (1997) found that self-esteem was correlated with achievement at all grades but decreased most dramatically between eighth and twelfth grade. This result suggests that as students progress through school their sense of self become less and less tied to their academic performances and achievements. To improve student achievement and engagement, schools must foster investment behaviors, such as encouraging students' involvement and interest in school-related activities (Montgomery & Rossi, 1994).

In addition to the importance of individual factors to students' patterns of engagement and achievement, certain cultural and social factors play key roles. Ogbu (1985) contends that minority students, including Hispanics, "do not believe as strongly as Whites that school credentials are sufficient" (p. 57) for attaining success in society. According to Ogbu, minority students' low achievement is due to how they are treated educationally, socially, politically, and economically. Therefore, if students perceive low incentives and rewards for academic engagement and achievement, as Ogbu's theory postulates, they are likely to be discouraged from persisting and engaging in school. Montgomery & Ross (1994) state that successful students often have parents, teachers, and peers who "push" them to do their best academically. These students know that if they fail to engage and persist, they may experience undesirable outcomes such as reproaches from

teachers, loss of privileges at home, or criticism from their friends. Similarly, Ford (1996) states that the high expectations of parents and affiliations with peers who share a strong achievement orientation are important social factors that prevent underachievement among gifted African American students.

Researchers have consistently found the troubling fact that many social risk factors may reside within the confines of the student's classroom. Specifically, researchers have found evidence that minority students, in general, are exposed to teacher behaviors that, in some cases intentionally and in other cases unintentionally, reflect prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes. First, in predicting eight indicators of second-generation discrimination, Meier, Stewart, & England (1989) found that the greatest single predictor was the racial distribution of the teaching faculty. In 43 of 44 statistical models, the researchers found that higher percentages of African American teachers were associated with lower levels of second-generation discrimination. Second, in a review of the literature on teacher expectancy, Irvine (1990) concluded that teachers, White teachers in particular, held more negative expectations for African American students than for White students. Furthermore, teachers held more negative views regarding the personality characteristics, traits, abilities, behaviors, and potentials of African American students. Similarly, Dusek and Joseph (1986) reported that African American and Mexican American students were not expected to perform as well as White students by their teachers.

All teachers tend to communicate their expectations to students in either subtle or overt ways. Some of the classroom experiences of students for whom teachers hold low expectations include: (1) being called on less frequently; (2) when called on, provided less time to respond; (3) given the answer rather than helped to solve the problem themselves; (4) criticized more often; (5) praised less; (6) paid less positive attention but disciplined more strictly (Brophy, 1983). Research shows that African American students are aware of social injustices and believe that they have to work harder than their White classmates to succeed (Ford & Harris, 1996). In response to racism, Hispanic youth may react in anger and rebellion. They may deliberately excuse themselves from

the academic achievement, making reasonable decisions to "drop-out" (U.S. Department of Education, 1998).

WHAT WORKS

August and Hakuta (1997) provide a comprehensive review of optimal learning conditions which serve linguistically and culturally diverse student populations—conditions leading to high academic performance. Their reviews of some 33 studies indicate that the following attributes were identified by this case study research strategy:

A supportive school-wide climate, school leadership, a customized learning environment, articulation and coordination within and between schools, use of native language and culture in instruction, a balanced curriculum that includes both basic and higher-order skills, explicit skill instruction, opportunities for student-directed instruction, use of instructional strategies that enhance understanding, opportunities for practice, systematic student assessment, staff development, and home and parent involvement. (August & Hakuta, 1997, p. 171)

A more recent report by the National Research Council in March, 1999, Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Success in Reading, summarizes a large body of research over the last two decades regarding reading and effective reading instruction for students who come to school speaking Spanish as their primary language. That report makes clear that both phonetic analysis and meaning making are important in the beginning stages of reading development. Of significance, the report makes very clear that the body of research available regarding the reading development of English by non-native English speakers whose first language is Spanish is most effective by instruction in reading in the child's native language.

These features resonate with other recent studies of effectiveness for programs specifically designed for linguistically and culturally diverse populations (Lockwood & Secada, 1999). California Tomorrow (1995), in a study of early childhood care in California, concluded that a set of principles guided quality child care across a variety of care settings that serve a growing community of linguistically and culturally diverse families:

1. Support the development of ethnic identity and anti-racist attitudes among children.
2. Build upon the cultures of families and promote cross-cultural understanding among children.

3. Foster the preservation of children's home language and encourage bilingualism among all children.
4. Engage in on-going reflection and dialogue (California Tomorrow, 1995, p. 8).

In a state mandated study of exemplary schools serving the state's linguistically and culturally diverse students, most Hispanics, several key attributes were common in those exemplary schools serving these students (Berman, 1992a). These features included: (a) *flexibility* --adapting to the diversity of languages, mobility, and special non-school needs of these students and their families; (b) *coordination*--utilizing sometimes scarce and diverse resources, such as federal and state moneys and local community organizations in highly coordinated ways to achieve academic goals; (c) *cultural validation*--schools validated their students' cultures by incorporating materials and discussions that built on the linguistic and cultural aspects of the community; and (d) *a shared vision*--a coherent sense of who the students were and what they hoped to accomplish led by a school's principal, staff, instructional aides, parents, and community (Berman, 1992a).

Three more recent "effective-exemplary" analyses of schools that serve high percentages of linguistically and culturally diverse students nationally are worthy of mention (Thomas & Collier, 1995a). In studies of five urban and suburban school districts in various regions of the United States, three key factors are reported as significant in producing academic success for students. The studies focus on the length of time needed to be academically successful in English and consider factors influencing academic success, such as the student, program, and instructional variables. These studies include some 42,000-student records per school year and from 8 to 12 years of data from each school district.

1. Cognitively complex academic instruction through students' home language for as long as possible and through second language for part of the school day.
2. Use of current approaches to teaching academic curriculum using both students' home language and English through active, discovery, and cognitively complex learning.
3. Changes in the sociocultural context of schooling, such as integrating English speakers, implementation of additive bilingual instructional goals, and transformation of minority/majority relations to a positive plane (Thomas & Collier, 1995).

A series of case studies of exemplary schools throughout the U.S. serving highly diverse and poor student populations also illustrates what can be done to promote academic excellence (McLeod, 1996). In these studies, selected schools with demonstrated academic success records were subjected to intensive site by site study with the goal of identifying specific attributes at each site related to the functioning of the school as well as a more ambitious effort to identify common attributes across the sites. Schools in four states (Texas, Illinois, California, Massachusetts) were particularly successful in achieving high academic outcomes with a diverse set of students and utilized these common goals for ensuring high quality teaching.

Foster English acquisition and the development of mature literacy. Schools utilized native language abilities to develop literacy that promoted English literacy development. Programs in these schools were more interested in this mature development than transitioning students quickly into English language instruction. This approach paid off in English language development at levels that allowed students to be successful in English instruction.

Deliver grade-level content. Challenging work in the academic disciplines was perceived and acted on simultaneously with the goals of English language learning. Teachers organized lessons to deliver grade-level instruction through a variety of native language, sheltered English, and ESL activities.

Organize instruction in innovative ways. Examples of innovations included: (a) "schools-within-schools" to more responsively deal with diverse language needs of the students; (b) "families" of students who stayed together for major parts of the school day; (c) "continuum classes" in which teachers remained with their students for two to three years, helping teachers become more familiar with and respond to the diversity in the students; and (d) grouping of students more flexibly on a continuous basis so as to respond to the developmental differences between their native language and second language.

Protect and extend instructional time. Schools utilized after-school programs, supportive computer based instruction, and voluntary Saturday schools and summer academies. These school activities multiplied the opportunities for students to engage in academic learning.

Regular teachers or trained tutors were utilized to extend this learning time. Not surprisingly, a majority of students took advantage of these voluntary extensions. Care was taken not to erode the daily instructional time that was available--erosion often related to auxiliary responsibilities by teachers that take valuable time away from instruction.

Expand teachers' roles and responsibilities. Teachers were given much greater roles in curricular and instructional decision making. This decision making was much more collective in nature to ensure cross-grade articulation and coordination. Teachers in these schools became full co-partners. They devised more "authentic" assessments that could inform instruction, developing assessment tools and scoring rubrics in reading and mathematics.

Address students' social and emotional needs. Schools were located in low-income neighborhoods serving poor families. Therefore, a proactive stance with regard to issues in these communities was adopted. An after-school activity that was aimed at families, particularly dealing with issues of alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, health care, and related social service needs, brought the school staff together with social service agencies at one school site. Similar examples of actual family counseling and direct medical care were arranged at other sites.

Involve parents in their children's education. Some of the schools were magnet schools. Parents had chosen to send their children there. In such schools, parent involvement was part of the magnet school contract. This included involvement in school committees, school festivals and celebrations, student field trips, and other activities. In non-magnet schools, parent outreach services were an integral part of the school operation. In all cases, communication was accomplished on a regular basis in various home languages. Parent participation in governance of the school was a common attribute, although levels of parent participation were highly variable (adapted from McLeod, 1996, pp. 13-33).

In a more intensive case study of two elementary schools and one middle school, Miramontes, Nadeau and Commins (1997) describe in detail the development of exemplary school attributes with an emphasis on linking decision making to effective programs. These schools, serving a majority of Hispanic students, over a period of several years, developed local, state and

national recognition for their academic success with very linguistically and culturally diverse student bodies--schools with as many as five languages represented in significant proportion. They conclude that a set of premises were key in guiding the development and reform of the schools' effective programs.

Basic Premises of Effective School Reform

Premise 1--Active Learning. Knowledge is best acquired when learners actively participate in meaningful activities that are constructive in nature and appropriate to their level of development.

Premise 2--The primary language foundation. The more comprehensive the use of the primary language, the greater the potential for linguistically diverse students' to be academically successful. There are always ways to nurture the primary language regardless of school resources.

Premises 3--The quality of primary language use. There is a difference between a token use of the primary language in instruction and its full development as a foundation for thinking and learning.

Premise 4--Strategies for second language development. Second language development creates an added dimension to instructional decision-making. Instruction must reflect specific strategies designed to meet the needs of second language learners.

Premise 5--Contexts for second language development. Second language instruction must be organized to provide student the time, experiences and opportunities they need to fully develop language proficiency. This requires a range of social and academic contexts in which both language and content are emphasized.

Premise 6--First and second language environments. Bilingual academic proficiency requires that clear, distinct, and meaning enriched contexts for each language is created during instructional time.

Premise 7--Transitions and redesignations. Decisions regarding transition to formal second language reading and redesignations that exit students from programs cannot be made arbitrarily.

Premise 8--Instructional assessment. Instructional assessment must be based on students' first and second language development, rather than on grade level or predetermined criteria. An appropriate assessment plan should address language and literacy development, as well as content knowledge.

Premise 9--Parents and community. Parents and community need to play a major role in the learning and schooling of their children.

Premise 10--Planning for cross-cultural interactions. Instruction must be organized to help students understand and respect themselves and their own culture as well as the cultures of the broader society. Planned cross-cultural interactions are an essential component of programs for all students.

Premise 11--Socio-cultural and political implications. Socio-cultural factors and political context must be considered in making decisions regarding every aspect of program planning.

Premise 12--Teachers as decision-makers. Teachers are decision-makers. As part of a learning community they are all equally responsible for decisions regarding the instructional program for linguistically diverse students.

(C. B. Miramontes, A. Nadeau, & N. L. Commins, 1997, pp. 37-38.)

Recent articulations regarding these challenges reinforce this charge. The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association in their enunciation of standards for English language arts recognize that:

Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

Celebrating our shared beliefs and traditions are not enough; we also need to honor that which is distinctive in the many groups that make up our nation.

(IRA/NCTE Standards for the Language Arts, 1996, p. 3)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children echoes these same concerns in its position statement related to educational practices regarding linguistic and cultural diversity in early childhood:

Early childhood educators can best help linguistically and culturally diverse children and their families by acknowledging and responding to the importance of the child's home language and culture. Administrative support for bilingualism as a goal is necessary within the educational setting. Educational practices should focus on educating children toward the "school culture" while preserving and respecting the diversity of the home language and culture that each child brings to the early learning setting.

(NAEYC Position Statement: Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity-- Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education. Young Children, September, 1996, p. 12)

In conclusion, information derived from recent research indicates that linguistically and culturally diverse students can be served effectively (Lockwood & Secada, 1999; Romo, 1999; Tashakorri & Ochoa, 1999). These students can achieve academically at levels at or above the national norm. Instructional strategies that serve these students best acknowledge, respect, and build upon the language and culture of the home. Teachers play the most critical role in students' academic success, and students become important partners with teachers in the teaching and learning enterprise. Although much more research is required, we are not without a knowledge base that can make a difference.

A RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY: ADDRESSING CULTURAL DIVERSITY WITHIN SCHOOLING CONTEXTS

We frame this discussion in a broad educationally relevant theoretical continuum. At one end of this continuum, it is argued that addressing culturally diverse populations calls for a deeper understanding of the interaction of a students' culture and the prevailing school culture (Cole, 1996; Garcia, 1994). This cultural significance position is supported by a rich contribution of research that suggests that the educational failure of "diverse" student populations is related to this culture clash between home and school. Evidence for such a position comes from Boykin (1986) for African American students, Heath (1983) for poor white students, Wiesner, Gallimore, and Jordan (1988) for Hawaiian students, Vogt, Jordan and Tharp (1987) for Navaho students, Garcia (1988, 1991) for Mexican American students and Rodriguez (1989) for Puerto Rican students. In essence, these researchers have suggested that without attending to the distinctiveness of the contribution of culture, educational endeavors for these culturally distinct students are likely to fail.

enhancing academic expectations with challenging curriculum is a prescribed solution. Implied in this "general principle" position is that the educational failure of "diverse" populations can be eradicated by the systemic and effective implementation of these understood general principles of instruction which work with "all" students.

Interspersed within this continuum are other significant conceptual contributions that attempt to explain the academic underachievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Paulo Freire (1970) has argued that educational initiatives cannot expect academic or intellectual success under social circumstances that are oppressive. He and others (Cummins, 1986; Pearl, 1991) suggest that such oppression taints any curriculum or pedagogy and only a pedagogy of empowerment can fulfill the lofty goals of educational equity and achievement. Similarly, Bernstein (1971), Laosa (1982), and Wilson (1987) point to socio-economic factors that influence the organization of schools and instruction. Extensive exposure, over generations, to poverty and related disparaging socio-economic conditions, significantly influence the teaching/learning process at home, in the community and in schools. The result is disastrous, long-term educational failure and social disruption of family and community. Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) offer an alternative, macro-sociological perspective with regard to the academic failure of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Such a conceptualization interprets this country's present social approach to several immigrant and minority populations as "caste-like." In this theoretical attempt to explain underachievement, these theorists argue that these populations form a layer of our society that are not expected to excel academically or economically and are therefore treated as a "caste-like population." These expectations are transformed into parallel self-perceptions by these populations with academic underachievement and social withdrawal as the result.

Clearly, the above conceptualizations are not presented here in any comprehensive manner. Moreover, the "cultural dissonance" to "general principles" continuum need not be interpreted as a set of incompatible approaches in the attempt to understand the educational circumstances of culturally diverse students. Instead, this short introduction should make evident that a wide variety of scholars have seriously dealt with this topic of attempting to understand why so many culturally

and linguistically diverse students are not well served by today's educational institutions. These conceptual contributions have not exclusively espoused multicultural education principles or educational equity policies. Instead they have attempted to address the issues surrounding the challenges of educating a culturally diverse population by searching for explanations for those conditions.

These contributions take into consideration the work of Anyon (1975), Bernstein (1971), Cummins (1979, 1986), Brice-Heath (1986), Freire (1970), Levin (1988), Ogbu (1991), Rose (1995), Trueba (1987), and Tharp and Gallimore (1989) who have suggested that the schooling vulnerability of culturally diverse students must be understood within the broader contexts of this society's circumstances for students in and out of schools. That is, no quick fix is likely under social and schooling conditions which mark the student for special treatment of his/her cultural difference without consideration for the psychological and social circumstances in which that student resides. This approach warns us against the isolation of any single attribute (poverty, language difference, learning potential, etc.) as the only variable of importance. This more comprehensive view of the schooling process includes an understanding of the relationship between home and school, the psycho-socio-cultural incongruities between the two and the resulting effects on learning and achievement (Cole, 1996).

Imbedded in this perspective is the understanding that language, culture, and their accompanying values, are acquired in the home and community environment (Cummins, 1986; Goldman & Trueba, 1987; Heath, 1981), that children come to school with some knowledge about what language is, how it works, and what it is used for (Hall, 1987; Goodman, 1980; Smith, 1971), that children learn higher level cognitive and communicative skills as they engage in socially meaningful activities (Duran, 1987), and that children's development and learning is best understood as the interaction of linguistic, socio-cultural, and cognitive knowledge and experiences (Trueba, 1988). A more appropriate perspective of learning, then, is one which recognizes that learning is enhanced when it occurs in contexts that are both socio-culturally and linguistically meaningful for the learner (Cole, 1996; Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986; Heath, 1986; Scribner & Cole, 1981;

Wertsch, 1985). Covington (1996) further emphasizes that students learn best and teachers feel most satisfied when both are encouraged to become allies in the learning process and encouraging the cooperation and sharing.

Such instructional events, however, are not generally accessible to culturally diverse children. Those schooling practices which contribute to the academic vulnerability of this student population and which tend to dramatize the lack of fit between the student and the school experience are reflected in the monolithic culture transmitted by most conventional schools in the forms of pedagogy, curricula, instruction, classroom configuration and language (Walker, 1987). Such practices include the systematic exclusion of the students' histories, language, experience, and values from classroom curricula and activities (Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Ogbu, 1982), "tracking" which limits access to academic courses and learning environments which do not foster academic development and socialization (Duran, 1986; Eder, 1982; Oakes, 1990) and perception of self as a competent learner and language user, and limited opportunities to engage in developmentally and culturally appropriate learning that are not limited to teacher led instruction (Cazden, 1988; Garcia, 1988).

How do we as educators begin to understand such a complex set of interactions? One framework for understanding is founded on the concept of "act psychology." First formulated at the end of the nineteenth century, the notion of act psychology proposes a model for human cognitive processes, or how we come to know. It focuses on the assertion that the mental functions of perceiving, remembering, and organizing—ultimately, knowing—are all acts of construction (Barlett, 1932). It also asserts that what we know is closely related to the circumstances in which we come to know it.

The term "constructivist" really is an apt one. The constructivist perspective is rooted in the notion that for humans knowing is a result of continual building and rebuilding. Our "construction materials" consist of give and take between the organization and content of old information and new information, processes of organizing that information, and the specific physical and social circumstances in which this all occurs. We come to understand a new concept by applying knowledge of previous concepts

to the new information we are given. For example, in order to teach negative numbers, a math teacher can use the analogy of digging a hole—the more dirt you take out of the hole, the greater the hole becomes; the more one subtracts from a negative number, the greater the negative number becomes. But a math teacher cannot use this example with children who have no experience digging holes. It won't work. As you can see, this theory of how the mind works implies that continual revisions (or “renovations,” as an architect might say) are to be expected. Therefore, when we organize teaching and learning environments, we must recognize the nature of those environments. As educators, we “build” teaching and learning environments out of what we know and how we come to know it. And we must continue to build. To ignore that is to discount the relevance of previous educational environments to the ones we are considering now. They got us to here, but that does not mean they will get us to tomorrow.

Embedded in the constructivist approach to education is the understanding that language and culture, and the values that accompany them, are constructed in both home and community environments (Cummins, 1986; Goldman and Trueba, 1987; Heath, 1981). This approach acknowledges that children come to school with some constructed knowledge about many things (Goodman, 1980; Hall, 1987; Smith, 1971) and points out that children's development and learning is best understood as the interaction of past and present linguistic, sociocultural, and cognitive constructions (Trueba, 1998). A more appropriate perspective on learning, then, is one that recognizes that learning is enhanced when it occurs in contexts that are socioculturally, linguistically, and cognitively meaningful for the learner. These meaningful contexts bridge previous “constructions” to present “constructions” (Diaz, Moll, and Mehan, 1986; Heath, 1986; Scribner and Cole, 1981; Wertsch, 1985, 1991).

Such meaningful contexts have been notoriously inaccessible to culturally diverse children. On the contrary, schooling practices often contribute to their educational vulnerability. The monolithic culture transmitted by the U.S. schools in the form of pedagogy, curricula, instruction, classroom configuration, and language (Walker, 1987) dramatizes the lack of fit between the culturally diverse student and the school experience. The culture of the U.S. schools is reflected in such practices as:

1. The systematic exclusion of the histories, languages, experiences, and values of these students from classroom curricula and activities (Banks and Banks, 1995).
2. “Tracking,” which limits access to academic courses and which justifies learning environments that do not foster academic development and socialization (Oakes, 1990; Noguera, 1999) or perception of self as a competent learner and language user.
3. A lack of opportunities to engage in developmentally and culturally appropriate learning in ways other than by teacher-led instruction (García, 1999).

Responsive Pedagogy. The implication of this re-thinking has profound effects for the teaching/learning enterprise related to culturally diverse students (Garcia, 1994). This new pedagogy is one that redefines the classroom as a community of learners in which speakers, readers, and writers come together to define and redefine the meaning of the academic experience. It might be described by some as a pedagogy of empowerment (Cummins, 1986), by others as cultural learning (Heath, 1986; Trueba, 1987), and others as a cultural view of providing instructional assistance/guidance (Tharp & Gallimore, 1989). In any case, it argues for the respect and integration of the students' values, beliefs, histories, and experiences and recognizes the active role that students must play in the learning process. It is therefore a *responsive pedagogy*, one that encompasses practical, contextual, and empirical knowledge and a “world view” of education that evolves through meaningful interactions among teachers, students, and other school community members. This responsive pedagogy expands students' knowledge beyond their own immediate experiences while using those experiences as a sound foundation for appropriating new knowledge.

Of course, a pedagogy that is responsive to the dynamics of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity within the broader concerns for high academic achievement both requires and emerges from a particular learning environment. While considerable work has been devoted to restructure schools and change the fundamental relationships that exist among school personnel, students, families, and community members, seldom have these efforts included attention to the unique

influences of the linguistic and sociocultural dimensions of these same relationships and structures. The environments that potentially support and nurture the development of a responsive pedagogy are not unlike those promoted by leading school reform and restructuring advocates; however, we further suggest that the incorporation of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity concerns creates a set of educational principles and dimensions that are more likely to address the challenges faced by schools that must attend to the needs of growing populations of diverse students.

Responsive Learning Communities. The learning environments that we consider essential to the development of a responsive pedagogy are referred to as "Effective Schooling" (Garcia, 1997) and "High Performance Learning Communities (Berman, 1996). The focus on the social, cultural, and linguistic diversity represented by students in today's public schools further challenges us to consider the theoretical and practical concerns relative to ensuring educational success for diverse students. That is, high performing learning communities must necessarily address issues of diversity in order to maximize their potential and to sustain educational improvement over time. To further examine this challenge, Chart 1 summarizes the conceptual dimensions for high performing responsive learning communities.

Chart 1 Conceptual Dimensions of a Responsive Pedagogy: Addressing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in High Performance Learning Communities

Schoolwide Practices

- A vision defined by the acceptance and valuing of diversity--Americanization is NOT the goal
 - Treatment of classroom practitioners as professionals, colleagues in school development decisions
 - Characterized by collaboration, flexibility, enhanced professional development
 - Elimination (gradual or immediate) of policies that seek to categorize diverse students thereby rendering their educational experiences as inferior or limiting for further academic learning--
 - Reflection of and connection to surrounding community--particularly with the families of the students attending the school
-

Teacher Practices

- Bilingual/bicultural skills and awareness
 - High expectations of diverse students
 - Treatment of diversity as an asset to the classroom
 - Ongoing professional development on issues of cultural and linguistic diversity and practices that are most effective
 - Basis of curriculum development to address cultural and linguistic diversity:
 1. Attention to and integration of home culture/practices
 2. Focus on maximizing student interactions across categories of English proficiency, academic performance, recency of immigration, etc.
 3. Regular and consistent attempts to elicit ideas from students for planning units, themes, and activities
 4. Thematic approach to learning activities--with the integration of various skills, events, learning opportunities
 5. Focus on language development through meaningful interactions and communications versus on grammatical skill-building that is removed from its appropriate context
-

CONCLUSION

In summary, a responsive learning community recognizes that academic learning has its roots in processes both out-of-school and in school. Such a conceptual framework rejects the "Americanization" strategy, extends beyond the policy and practice frameworks of "Equal Educational Opportunity" and concludes that a focus on broader issues of culture, like those represented in the "Multicultural Education" movement is useful but not enough for serving, effectively, culturally diverse students in today's schools. Instead, a focus on responsive instructional engagement encourages students to construct and reconstruct meaning and to seek reinterpretations and augmentations to past knowledge within compatible and nurturing schooling contexts. Diversity is perceived and acted on as a resource for teaching and learning instead of a

problem. A focus on what students bring to the schooling process generates a more asset/resource-oriented approach versus a deficit/needs assessment approach. Within this knowledge-driven, responsive and engaging learning environment, skills are tools for acquiring knowledge, not a fundamental target of teaching events (Cole, 1996; Garcia, 1994; Tharp & Gallimore, 1989).

In addition, the search for general principles of learning that work for all students must be redirected. This redirection considers a search for and documentation of particular implementations of "general" and "non-general" principles of teaching and learning which serve a diverse set of environments, in and out of school. This mission requires an understanding of how individuals with diverse sets of experiences, packaged individually into cultures, "make meaning", communicate that meaning and extend that meaning, particularly in social contexts we call schools. Such a mission requires in-depth treatment of the processes associated with producing diversity, issues of socialization in and out of schools, coupled with a clear examination of how such understanding is actually transformed into pedagogy and curriculum which results in high performance learning communities for all students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

We turn now to outlining a research agenda designed to pursue the challenge of addressing cultural and linguistic diversity with a focus on improved teaching and learning. Just as there are certain elements of schoolwide and teaching practices that increase the likelihood that culturally and linguistically diverse students can be academically successful, the literature reviewed in this paper also provides considerable guidance in the particular research questions that can serve as a starting point for developing useful strategies for schools.

Beginning with the core issue of student engagement in the classroom, we are reminded by the literature on language acquisition and effective instruction for language minority students that students are much more likely to be engaged learners in environments in which the curriculum and teaching approaches build on the diversity of the students and teachers (Wong Fillmore 1991; Pease-Alvarez, et al. 1991). This also requires of teachers a familiarity with, or ideally a close

connection to, the home communities that the students represent in the schools in order to begin to develop practices that reflect the kinds of experiences that serve as a basis upon which students can build an understanding of complex ideas and new concepts (Pease-Alvarez, et al. 1991). In addition, as discussed previously, engaged learning for culturally and linguistically diverse students necessitates considerable time devoted to interactions with each other and with the adults in the school community that can help to develop improved social and communication skills, as well as create a “safe” environment in which to learn. Finally, assessments of the progress that students are making in learning various subjects, developing conceptual understandings of subjects, and acquiring particular skills, need to be aligned with the curricular and instructional goals set forth; and, assessments have to involve all students as a means of truly gauging the quality of the learning environment. In other words, if linguistically and/or culturally diverse students are systematically left out of regular schoolwide or classroom assessments, the results of such efforts cannot begin to address all of the learning that goes on in a school--or, more importantly, the areas in which further attention should be devoted.

With these elements in mind, a set of critical questions help guide a systematic assessment of the existence of responsive learning communities at the school site level:

* What is the school vision and mission(s); how are issues of language, culture and diversity addressed in these; and, how are these articulated for/to teachers, students, district and school administrators and policy bodies, and parents?

* What are the prevailing norms and underlying beliefs that shape the roles, expectations and standards; how do these change as schools create and implement new policies and practices aimed at developing responsive performance learning communities?

* How are language, culture and student diversity incorporated into the instruction, curriculum and assessment practices?

* What are the resources, experiences, and structures that contribute to the professional development of the school community; how are these related to student achievement?