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ABSTRACT

This report describes a practicum project designed to help first- through fourth-grade teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and strategies necessary to work effectively with a diverse student population; improve the social and academic performance of culturally diverse students; and increase parent involvement at school. The intervention entailed: (1) a series of 10 teacher workshops targeting classroom management and teaching strategies, personal biases, understanding of cultural differences, expectations, parent involvement, computers, and cross age tutoring; (2) teacher meetings to discuss program concerns; (3) incentives to keep teachers involved; (4) parent workshops to create academic games for use at home; and (5) a student academic celebration held quarterly for scholastic effort, perfect attendance, improved behavior, and citizenship. Evaluation results indicated that after the intervention, student time-on-task was evident in 80 percent of the observations, referrals to the office due to misbehavior declined, improvement in academic performance was evident in weekly reports and quarterly report cards, social improvement was evident on quarterly report cards, fewer students were recommended for retention or remedial placement than the previous year, and 13 of the 15 teachers were successful in implementing the classroom management strategies, teaching culturally diverse students, and involving parents in their classrooms. (Eight appendices include forms for recording classroom observations, office referrals, and report card results; and workshop questionnaires. Contains 66 references.) (KDFB)

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Using Effective Teaching Strategies to Improve the Academic Performance
of Culturally Diverse Students in a Public Elementary School

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A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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Approved:

9/9/96
Date of Final Approval of
Report


Joan M. Mignerey, Ph.D., Advisor

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My deepest recognition goes to the extraordinary staff and the remarkable students of the school where this practicum was implemented for sharing this gratifying experience with me, especially the classroom teachers directly involved, their students, and the parents who took an active role. Without their enthusiasm and participation, this practicum would not have been possible or successful.

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ABSTRACT

Using Effective Teaching Strategies to Improve the Academic Performance of Culturally Diverse Students in a Public Elementary School. Chapman, Shirley M., 1996: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Academic Achievement/Classroom Techniques/Inservice Training/Teacher Effectiveness/Diverse Teaching Strategies/Elementary Education/Teacher Attitudes/Multicultural Education/Classroom Management/Parent Involvement

Teachers were having difficulty meeting the needs of their students as measured by observation; referrals; daily and weekly reports; local school reports; and teacher memos, notes, and verbal discussions. Students were not being academically successful in class and were experiencing difficulty following directions and interacting with their peers.

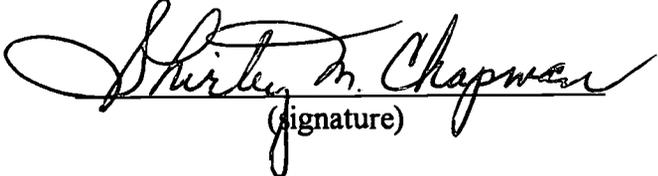
This practicum was designed to help teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and strategies necessary to work effectively with a diverse student population both socially and academically. The strategies employed included a series of 10 teacher workshops conducted by the writer throughout the practicum implementation. A parent workshop was held to create academic games for use at home and parent involvement was invaluable.

Analysis of the data revealed that effective use of diverse teaching strategies improved student success and reduced the number of students who were remedially placed or retained. The information generated from this practicum was shared and disseminated to the district's curriculum and staff development centers, the school faculty, and the local minority task-force committee.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The site for this practicum, located in the Southeastern part of the United States, is in one of the fastest growing counties in the country. The population, which had a 79% increase over the last 14 years, is 377,998 and climbing. The ethnic composition of this rapidly growing county is comprised primarily of Caucasians, 91.3%, a small contingent of Blacks, 6.5%, and the remaining 2.2% are Asian, Pacific Islanders, American Indian and Alaskan native. According to the county census bureau, Hispanics are no longer considered a race and are classified in the categories listed.

Presently, the district has 66 schools; 36 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, 8 high schools, 2 vocational schools, 1 adult school, and 7 alternative and exceptional student education centers. This practicum will be conducted in a community elementary school within the city limits of the county school district.

The practicum community population of 45,495 citizens represents 12% of the total inhabitants in the county and is divided into three major age groups: (a) those between the ages of 0 and 17, (b) those between 18 and 64 years of age, and (c) senior citizens over 65 years of age. These three groups represent 26%, 58%, and 16% of the residents

respectively. The ethnic composition of the practicum community is 62% Caucasian, 33% Black, and 5% Asian, Pacific Islanders, American Indian and Alaskan native.

Community employment consists of a multiplicity of occupations such as construction, real estate, manufacturing, trade, public utilities, service, and government. The majority of employed residents work in retail trade businesses or personal service areas. The unemployment rate in this community is 4.1% and the average income for the families is \$22,852.

The first inner city school built in 25 years, this elementary school began operating during the 1991-1992 school year. The staff consists of a principal, 1 assistant principal, 41 teachers, and 21 teacher assistants servicing approximately 889 children from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The student enrollment includes 68% White, 25% Black, 5% Hispanic, and 2% Indian, Asian, and others. The economic status of the student's families is considerably below that of the general population. Approximately 59% of the students enrolled at the school are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. The targeted population consists of 15 teachers and their culturally diverse classes: three kindergarten, four first grade, four second, and four third grade classes.

There are nine Exceptional Student Education (ESE) units in this school that service approximately 71 students. There are three severely emotionally disturbed classes, one emotionally handicapped class, three varying exceptionalities classes, and two specific learning disabilities classes. This is the only school in the district that is accommodating severely emotionally disturbed students within the regular education setting.

Parental interest has not been a significant aspect in the school's operation. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences and other school related meetings and functions

where parents receive written communication, responses to weekly progress reports, and parent-teacher association membership have been minimal.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer of this practicum has taught fourth and fifth grade and has been a primary education specialist for a total of 13 years. In addition, she held an administrative position as high school dean for one year. She has been assistant principal since the school's inception. The writer received principal certification, certification in early childhood administration, and English speakers of other languages (ESOL) administrative level certification from the State Department of Education. The writer has satisfactorily completed numerous inservice workshops related to the writer's role in the work setting. The writer has been certified to present a variety of workshops to improve effective teaching techniques. The writer's role in the work setting is as follows: assists in staff personal development plans; develops the master schedule; is minority affairs advocate; observes/evaluates staff members; inventories material and equipment; assists with the budget; is parent liaison; fosters positive home, school, and community relations; does extensive home visits; interviews and hires staff; serves as administrative liaison to the ESE department; serves as ESOL contact person; in charge of discipline, and assists in the general welfare and maintenance of the entire school population including cafeteria and transportation.

The writer has enlisted the support of the principal, the school social worker, the guidance counselor, the instructional educators, and the school adopter business to conduct this practicum experience. The school adopter business is a local business that

has chosen the school and very willingly assists in providing material and financial aid, human or physical resources, and various educational incentives requested by the school.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Teachers were having difficulty meeting the needs of their students as measured by observation and reports. Students were not being academically successful in class. Students were not being attentive in class and were experiencing difficulty following directions and interacting with their peers. This steadily expanding disturbance to the educational process had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the school and the morale of the faculty, staff, and the administrators.

In summary, the problem was teachers were having difficulty meeting the needs of their students as measured by observation; referrals; daily and weekly reports; local school reports; and teacher memos, notes, and verbal discussions.

Problem Documentation

Student time off task was obvious 78 times during the classroom observations made 100 times in the targeted classrooms as shown in Table 1 on the following page.

There was an exorbitant number, 334, of referrals to the office for disruptive behavior, inappropriate language, refusing to obey, disrespect, fighting/physical abuse, threatening, and refusing to follow directions for students in the targeted classrooms

Table 1

Time Off Task Summary of Classroom Observations October 1995 Through June 1996

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Time Off Task</u>
Kindergarten	4
Kindergarten	4
Kindergarten	8
First	5
First	5
First	4
First	7
Second	4
Second	4
Second	5
Second	6
Third	3
Third	4
Third	6
Third	9
Total	78

verifying that 15 teachers were having difficulty meeting the academic and social needs of their students. Referrals per teacher are shown in Table 2.

Poor academic progress was apparent in 26 daily and 48 weekly reports for

Table 2

Summary of Referrals for Students in Targeted Teachers' Classrooms October 1995Through June 1996

<u>Grade</u>	<u>No. Of Referrals</u>
Kindergarten	28
Kindergarten	19
Kindergarten	36
First	19
First	17
First	27
First	18
Second	16
Second	17
Second	24
Second	23
Third	07
Third	34
Third	23
Third	26
Total	334

students, who had been designated as chronic offenders, needing daily or weekly communication to parents about the difficulty they were experiencing with class work as well as appropriate behavior in the classroom. Quarterly report cards revealed social and academic difficulty four of four times for culturally diverse students in the targeted classes. Year end reports for retention and remedial placement indicated 19 students retained and 28 students remedially placed. Although the school population was approximately 2/3 Caucasian and 1/3 culturally diverse, students who were retained or remedially placed represented just the opposite, less than 1/3 Caucasian and over 2/3 culturally diverse. Only 4 of the retained students and 6 of the remedially placed students were girls. Teacher memos, notes, and verbal discussions indicated 14 of 15 teachers were experiencing difficulty with classroom management, parental involvement and support, and strategies to use when teaching culturally diverse students.

Causative Analysis

It was the writer's belief that there were five causes for the problem. First, teachers were having difficulty with classroom management. Students were being referred to the administrators for a variety of reasons: not using time wisely, refusing to complete class work, failing to turn in homework, disruptive behavior, refusal to obey, disrespect towards staff members and peers, inappropriate language, and other infractions of the school rules. Teachers tended to have low tolerance levels for student disruptions in any of the aforementioned behaviors. Rather than devise a plan for students to use time wisely by completing class work or homework, teachers simply wrote referrals. The same held true for disruptive behavior, refusal to obey, disrespect towards staff members and peers, as well as inappropriate language.

Second, teachers were from different cultures than the students and had not received the necessary skills and training to effectively work with and understand culturally diverse students in an academic setting. Many of the teachers admitted that their experience at the practicum worksite was the first encounter they had had with Black students. A few of them asked for help in understanding Black students and the environment they came from.

Third, there was an insufficient variety of alternative teaching strategies provided at this work site. The writer's observations indicated teachers usually wrote assignments on the chalkboard with very little guided practice. Most assignments were paper and pencil, or fill-in-the-blank sheets. Students were expected to stay in their assigned seats and work independently on assignments; therefore, they very rarely got an opportunity to interact cooperatively with one another.

Fourth, during individual and group discussions with teachers, including observed teacher interactions with students in the classroom, it was apparent that teachers had low expectations of students. Teachers often indicated that Black students were doing the best they could academically and behaviorally, and just were not able to understand various concepts due to their limited knowledge. Some of them felt it was unfair to expect diverse students to excel as well as their White classmates because of their limited experiences and home environment.

The fifth cause was that during the past four years, it had been difficult to obtain parental involvement at this work site. The writer had conducted parent surveys, and made numerous home visits and telephone contacts. Many of the parents stated that they had their own unfavorable school experiences and found it uncomfortable to work

cooperatively with the school personnel. The parents felt that their children already had two strikes against them when they entered into the school. They felt that nobody really cared about their children and that the only communication they had with the school was negative, always about a problem.

The writer observed, during several classroom visits, that teachers called on the higher achievers more often and their tolerance levels of incorrect responses from the higher achievers was apparent. They had a tendency to delve more for the correct response from higher achievers, while they moved on to another student if the response from the lower achiever was incorrect. Specific academic praise was almost always given to higher achievers while lower achievers received general praise - a comment of "good", or "that's correct".

The class rules were not being communicated clearly enough to students and their parents. Positive rapport was not being established with parents. Parents were usually contacted because of a student's negative behavior instead of starting the relationship in a positive manner when a student had been successful academically or with proper behavior. Parents had communicated to the writer that they were more inclined to be supportive of a negative consequence when a positive relationship had been established.

Classroom management among the teachers was not consistent. Students received mixed messages from day to day. What was acceptable one day was not tolerated by the teacher the following day. By the same token, teachers appeared to have a higher tolerance level for misbehavior among higher achievers. Lower achievers received fewer chances before receiving referrals to the office.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Review of the literature gave overwhelming evidence. The preliminary literature review showed that Pogrow (1994) indicated that students were not learning in ways that yielded academic success. He mentioned the importance of teachers using the proper questioning techniques to get desired results.

Frisby (1993) alluded to the fact that Black children were academically deprived in almost every area and were placed in special education classes in staggering numbers and sparingly placed in gifted classes. This certainly held true for the writer's school, as well as other schools throughout the county. Bowman (1994), Larkin (1993), and Sleeter (1992) mentioned that schools were not successfully educating diverse students, Strickland and Holzman (1989) stated that they were not learning the essentials in the area of critical thinking skills, and Fordham (1988) indicated that Black children who grow up in predominantly Black communities entered school receiving mixed messages which leads to academic failure. Cole (1995) is in agreement with these writers and asserted that students of all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds need to receive good instruction, which includes actively involving students using various types of modalities and learning styles.

Bullard (1992) indicated that teachers are experiencing difficulty helping students become academically successful, and Dooley and Savage (1994) implied the reason was that many students cannot identify with middle-class values and expectations. Cummins (1986) and Turner (1993) alluded that minority students within inner-city schools have a pattern of academic school failure. Turner also indicated that teachers actually insinuated that students' background and environment influenced their opinions of student

expectations. To wit, students from diverse backgrounds were not expected to perform as well as other students.

Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Livermon, and Dolan (1989) suggested that students are not being academically successful through no fault of their own. They further stated that failure of inner city children is more a fault of our nation than the economic conditions that exist. Whalon and Karr-Kidwell (1993) explained that diverse students are experiencing academic deficiency which could be addressed in the curriculum, including problems such as prejudice, indigence, language pattern and educational barriers. Then, too, Baum, Renzulli and Hebert (1994) argued that bright underachieving students are often overlooked which eventually leads to academic failure.

Jones and Derman-Sparks (1992) witnessed several inappropriate approaches to diversity in early childhood programs which lead to failure. Inappropriate approaches addressed were: (a) teachers denying their own prejudices, (b) teachers claiming to be colorblind, and (c) teachers refusing to believe that White children are affected by diversity issues. Hartman, DeCicco and Griffin (1994) discussed an urban elementary school with the highest enrollment in the free lunch program, more chronic underachievers than any other school in the district, and where students who were experiencing failure academically as well as with discipline, were able to achieve in spite of the odds. The main point was that inner-city students value what they achieve through inquiry learning, flourishing as self-reliant researchers, when they are given a chance to make selections based upon their interests. Seven principles, critical for inner-city children, were the focus of the independent research project: (a) high level learning is possible for all children, (b) delving into concepts enhances learning, (c) interactive participation among children

increases the rate of success, (d) children may learn to think critically before they learn basic skills, (e) integrated knowledge is more meaningful, (f) children enjoy demonstrating their qualities when they feel that adults really care about them, and (g) the learning environment includes families and community as a vital part.

Stevens and Slavin (1995) implied that culturally diverse students experience difficulty in school academically and socially, and Frisby and Tucker (1993) stated that they do not benefit from conventional schooling hence, there is a lopsided amount of school failure in addition to low self-esteem. Heath and McLaughlin (1987) expressed that schools are not preparing students for tomorrow's workplace, and Price (1992), agreed when he stated that schools have not equipped students with the necessary tools to be successful in society. Likewise, Menken (1994) contended that students perform poorly in school which limits their life chances for success.

The literature revealed several causes for the problem. Palladino (1992) alluded to mediocre direction and leadership for teachers as reasons for not meeting student needs. This is supported by Perez (1994) who indicated that academic difficulty in school is caused more by educators' ability to meet the challenge than by students' ability to learn, and by Gilbert and Gay (1985) who discussed teachers' negative attitudes, expectations, and instructional strategies as definite areas that need to improve. Irvine (1989) stated that the increasing school failure of minorities is directly related to the decline of minority teachers who bring to the classroom unique learning approaches and understanding of the needs of minority students.

In addition, Gilbert and Gay (1985) indicated that academic failure is caused by many of the instructional procedures used by schools that differ radically from those of

poor Black students, and cited an example concerning teachers and principals not being aware of the cultural conflict between school and community. Areas of conflict between the culture of urban Black students and that of the school include various learning styles; interactional or relational, communication, and perceptions of involvement. Gilbert and Gay cited several examples of each conflict area. "One feature of the interactional style of Afro-Americans that conflicts with that of the schools is the attention to 'stage setting' that precedes the performance of a task: looking over the assignment in its entirety; rearranging posture; elaborately checking pencils, paper, and writing space; asking teachers to repeat directions that have just been given; and checking the perceptions of neighboring students" (p. 135). They indicated that "to the black student, these are necessary maneuvers in preparing for performance; to the teacher they may appear to be avoidance tactics, inattentiveness, disruptions, or evidence of not being adequately prepared to do the assigned task" (p. 135).

Bacon and Thayer-Bacon (1993) stated that teachers are experiencing difficulty in developing critical thinking skills in the classroom because students are not given time for self-expression. Cummins (1986) and Holt (1992) explained that academic failure is caused by traditional classrooms not recognizing the language (the switch between the language of the home and the language of the school) and cultural richness of African-American students. Hockman and Worner (1987) noted that students lack self-esteem and self-awareness and are, therefore, unable to cope with many of life's problems, retaliating because of academic failure. Frisby and Tucker (1993) stated it is perceived that diverse students fail to benefit from traditional schooling due to poor self-concept, and Jackard (1988) also suggested failing to stress self-worth as one cause of academic difficulty

among diverse students. Ladson-Billings (1992) noted that students of color are lagging way behind in school academically because the curriculum is not culturally relevant, Ogbu (1992) argued that the academic success of minorities is suffering partially due to minority cultures and inadequately planned curriculums, and Grossman (1991) cited culturally inappropriate curriculum and poor classroom management among other reasons that diverse students experience academic difficulty. This is further supported by Menkart (1993) who stated that schools are failing their students each year because students see nothing familiar in the curriculum and they soon determine they are not smart and don't belong.

Jones and Derman-Sparks (1992) observed inappropriate approaches to diversity in early childhood programs as the cause of children being ill-equipped to interact socially in a diverse world. Sleeter (1992) argued that diverse students are not achieving and succeeding in school due to many conditions of the classroom: time, class size, the required curriculum, structured programs, and the duties assigned to the teacher other than teaching. Whalon and Karr-Kidwell (1993) explained that educational failure among diverse students is because the curriculum does not reflect their experience, histories, cultures and perspectives. Montero-Sieburth (1989) discussed academic failure being caused by large numbers of students being bussed in to school, alienation of teachers from the communities and neighborhoods in which they teach, and less communication between parents and school.

Bowman (1994) indicated children at risk of school failure is caused by a mismatch between what these children know and can do and what is expected of them by schools.

Menacker, Hurwitz and Weldon (1988) indicated one of the major causes of academic

failure in schools serving low-income minority populations is ineffective parent-school communication and cooperation. Carlson and Korth (1994) discussed schoolcentrism as a deficiency in understanding the communities where low-income students reside, not utilizing the students' relationships that have educational relevance outside school, and ignoring the fact that culturally diverse students bring many talents into the academic school setting.

Although somewhat dated, Cox (1983) listed the effect of disadvantaged home background conditions and the flaw of a school environment which failed to engage its students' environment as a cause of children's poor academic school development.

Asante (1992) believed that the academic failure of African-American children stems from not being culturally centered and empowered in their classrooms.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum.

The goal of this practicum was to improve the academic performance and social behavior of culturally diverse students within a public elementary school.

Expected Outcomes

The outcomes of this practicum were that at the end of implementation:

- (1) Time-on-task would be obvious during classroom observations 80 of 100 times.
Classroom observations made 100 times to the targeted classrooms would indicate students on task 80 times.
- (2) Referrals to the office would be reduced by 175, from 334 to 159, indicating that teachers were being successful meeting the needs of their students.
- (3) Improved academic progress would be apparent in 26 daily and 48 weekly reports for students who had been designated as chronic offenders needing daily or weekly communication to parents about the difficulty they were experiencing with class work as well as proper behavior in the classroom. This would be evident by a change of one criteria indicating a shift from unsatisfactory to need improvement or need improvement to satisfactory.

- (4) Quarterly report cards would reveal improvement in social areas two of four times. This would be evident by a change of one criteria indicating a shift from unsatisfactory to need improvement or need improvement to satisfactory.
- (5) Quarterly report cards would reveal improvement in academic areas two of four times. This would be evident by a change of one criteria indicating a shift from unsatisfactory to need improvement or need improvement to satisfactory.
- (6) Year end reports would indicate a reduction of 24 students for retention and remedial placement.
- (7) Memos, notes, verbal discussions with teachers, and classroom observations would indicate 13 of 15 teachers were being successful with classroom management.
- (8) Memos, notes, verbal discussions with teachers, and classroom observations would indicate 13 of 15 teachers were being successful with parental involvement and support.
- (9) Memos, notes, verbal discussions with teachers, and classroom observations would indicate 13 of 15 teachers were being successful with strategies to use when teaching culturally diverse students.

Measurement of Outcomes

There were four evaluation instruments or forms utilized in this practicum to measure stated outcomes. The purpose of these tools were: (a) to record student classroom on task/off task behavior during observations and visits, (b) to generate a cumulative record of office referrals for discipline infractions and their resolution, and (c) to generate a cumulative record of results of daily, weekly, quarterly, and yearly reports. The forms were also to be used to determine the effectiveness of strategies in reference to

accomplishing practicum outcomes and goals. The four forms and/or questionnaires are detailed below:

(1) Classroom Observation/Visits

Daily visits were made to classrooms to check for on task/off task behavior. In order to ascertain the most accurate data, alternate times were utilized for classroom observations. Teachers were unaware as to the particular time that observations would be made. These observations were the basis of generating appropriate or inappropriate behaviors to be addressed individually with targeted teachers during conferences and to assess suggestions and strategies in reference to classroom management. The results are presented in a table format (see Appendix A).

(2) Summary of Office Referrals

A monthly report was generated depicting the names and total number of students referred to the administration per teacher, type of infractions or behaviors exhibited, and consequences. It provided information to use when assisting teachers with areas to target for improvement. It further ascertained the effectiveness of the strategies suggested during individual sessions. A table of total results per teacher is presented (see Appendix B).

(3) Report Card Results Form

A year end report was generated to indicate quarterly report card results in social and academic areas. It addressed relevance of strategies utilized with teachers compared to student social and academic success. The results are presented in table format (see Appendix C).

(4) Remedial/Retention Year End Report

A year end report, presented in table format, was generated to indicate students who were remedially placed or retained in each grade by gender, race, and teacher.

It depicted whether teacher workshops enhanced student improvement (see Appendix D).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The identified problem, teachers were having difficulty meeting the needs of their students as measured by observation and reports, fell into two categories: (a) classroom management, and (b) poor academic progress of culturally diverse students. The practicum was designed to impact both of these areas by implementing strategies to assist targeted teachers in ways to improve classroom management and academic success among culturally diverse students.

Classroom Management

The strategies employed to improve classroom management included working with each teacher individually on areas of need based upon observation. In addition, a series of discussions were held for the targeted teachers where emphasis was placed on classroom management, behavioral controls, and specific behavioral strategies. Emphasis was also placed on parental involvement.

Poor Academic Progress of Culturally Diverse Students

The major thrust of this practicum was to improve the academic progress of culturally diverse students. The rationale for this emphasis was that the culturally diverse students at this school had a history of poor academic progress. The overwhelming

volume of discipline referrals, the number of retained and remedial students, and the amount of failing report card grades was causing a continual interruption of the educational process. The strategies employed to improve the academic progress of culturally diverse students included a series of 10 teacher workshops conducted during group meetings. Emphasis was placed on improving student achievement using diverse teaching strategies for diverse learners.

Description of Selected Solution

The solution strategy employed by this practicum project was designed to have a threefold effect by impacting on (a) teacher training, (b) improving the social and academic performance of culturally diverse students, and (c) increasing parent involvement. These combined strategies constituted a model for the problems being addressed by this practicum. The model primarily required interventions by the classroom teachers. The model aimed to change student behaviors academically and socially, and to effect parental involvement. The literature overwhelmingly supported the need for teacher training in order to improve the academic performance of culturally diverse students. Cole (1995) listed several topics, all presented utilizing material from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) for improving student achievement, addressing attitudes and beliefs about racism and prejudice, high and low expectations, understanding of cultural differences, barriers to good instruction, teacher expectation and student achievement, home/school partnership, capitalizing on students' backgrounds, and integrating computers in the academic areas.

Gilbert and Gay (1985) suggested improving success in school for poor Black students by maintaining high academic expectations and holding students accountable for

meeting them, whereas Jackhard (1988) discussed the importance of first helping at-risk students deal with life situations in order to be able to assist them with self-esteem issues prior to addressing the academic areas. Sandhu (1994) proposed a three-step model relating to teacher-initiated behaviors: awareness, acceptance, and action, and also argued that excellence in education needs to be promoted for all students by addressing academic and cultural needs of minority students.

Gately and Gately (1993) suggested developing positive co-teaching relationships comprised of eight primary components. The components of the co-teaching relationship are: “(1) interpersonal communication, (2) physical arrangement, (3) familiarity with the curriculum, (4) curriculum goals and modifications, (5) instructional planning, (6) instructional presentation, (7) behavior management, and (8) grading/evaluation” (pp. 4-8). A joint relationship between regular and special educators, focusing on specific areas of strength and weakness, should better meet the needs of a diverse student population.

Parent Involvement

Ascher (1988), Gordon (1988), Fredericks and Rasinski (1990), Leidner (1991), Lontos (1991), Schurr (1992), Vandegrift and Greene (1992), and Manning (1993) discussed involving at-risk families with their children’s education in ways such as: encouraging employers to allow flextime to enable working parents to observe their children in the classroom or attend meetings, announcing meetings and other events long enough in advance for parents to eliminate scheduling difficulties, scheduling teacher-parent-counselor evening meetings, helping parents identify what they are capable of doing, respecting cultural differences, developing communication, being flexible, holding the first activity away from school, preparing staff with inservice workshops, and

providing child care and transportation. Martin (1992) and Palladino (1992) suggested teachers should contact parents to establish lines of communication, to provide feedback on children's performance, to let parents know they understand the difficulty of their role, to determine learning styles, to provide and arrange for tutoring, and to provide examples of excellence.

Teacher Training

Zeichner (1993) addressed the need to help all teachers acquire the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to work effectively with a diverse student population by including key elements in effective teaching for ethnic and language minority students.

Sleeter (1992) described five approaches to multicultural education which involve reworking of the existing education program that many teachers use to improve how schools address diversity in the United States through staff development. Burstein and Cabello (1989) stated the importance of teacher education programs to equip teachers to work effectively with the culturally diverse. They described a teacher education program specially designed to prepare teachers to work with the increasingly diverse student population in urban settings. The program focused on teacher development in four areas to promote relevant determinations in regards to teaching culturally diverse students: (a) appreciation, (b) information, (c) acquisition and maintenance of skills, and (d) deliberation. McDiarmid (1992) discussed a study of multicultural education for teacher trainees in the Los Angeles Unified School District called Multicultural Week (MCW). During MCW, presentations would be made to the trainees on various topics. The general message of the content is: (a) learn to accept and respect students who differ in customs

from your own, (b) include contributions of individuals and groups who have historically been underrepresented in the curriculum, (c) don't prejudge students' abilities based upon their ethnic classification, (d) become familiar with all aspects of the groups represented in the classroom in order to effectively teach all students better. Ploumis-Devick and Follman (1993) suggested strategies and activities for addressing cultural diversity to complement classroom teaching units.

Rossett and Bickham (1994) felt that teaching is a life long commitment desiring special modeling skills, and that memorizing students' names conveys that they are active members of the group. Holt (1992), Pang (1994), and Carnevale and Stone (1994) suggested teacher education programs to assist teachers in becoming more aware, knowledgeable, and sensitive to culturally diverse students and community populations.

Cole (1995) stressed teaching that is engaging, relevant, multicultural, and that appeals to a variety of modalities and learning styles that works well with all children. Manning and Lucking (1991), McCracken (1993), Hartman et al. (1994) and Stevens and Slavin (1995) focused on cooperative learning, examining reasons for and benefits of students working in cooperative teams, and provided an overview of eight selected cooperative learning methods. Wheelock (1992), Turner (1993), Guild (1994) and Pogrow (1994) discussed effective classroom management strategies from teachers' perceptions: student control, teacher expectations, and the influences of the home environment. Slavin et al. (1989) described a program, Success for All, which dealt with increasing the basic skills of elementary inner-city students to grade level status, thus confirming the slogan "every child can learn". Baum, Renzulli, and Hebert (1994) and Ravitch (1992) suggested a multicultural curriculum that conveys to children the

knowledge, skills, language, and habits they need to participate successfully in their own society and the world.

Scherer (1992) emphasized an integrated curriculum, a nurturing environment, students who are infused with pride, teachers spending time learning new content and gathering necessary materials, and high expectations for staff. Sleeter (1992) suggested the need for a strong leader who is visionary, examining and restructuring schools for multicultural education including working constructively with diversity in the classroom, staff development to address collaboration with parents and community leaders in minority and low-income communities, skills in active and nondefensive listening to adults of diverse backgrounds, and time management and planning. Dwyer (1993) described how Educational Testing Service (ETS) staff and associates addressed teaching and learning with emphasis on equity and diversity. ETS created performance assessment tools that logically and equitably represented the complexity of teaching, and they developed a system for training assessors in a method demanding a high degree of competent judgment. Hochman and Worner (1987) listed counseling as a much needed factor in order to modify the behavior of at-risk students.

Report of Action Taken

Organizational Meeting

A news flyer was sent to parents to set the tone for the project (see Appendix H). An organizational meeting was held to establish certain procedures for the project which included: (a) group planning time for participating teachers; (b) flex time for inservice workshops, evening meetings, and home visits; (c) personal development time in the areas of self-worth and self confidence, daily morning reminders, special guidance classes on

self-esteem and social interactions with peers, and positive interactions with school personnel; (d) weekly awards for citizenship, academic excellence, improved behavior, and diligent worker; and (e) open door policy for parents to frequent school. Scheduling of group planning times was not successful for all targeted teachers. Too many changes would have been necessary since the master schedule had already been established for the entire school term. There were, however, several teachers able to plan together.

General Plan

Volunteer teachers (15 teachers and their culturally diverse classes: three kindergarten, four first, four second, and four third) were recommended for this project. The writer visited each targeted teacher's class to explain the project to students and to establish a rapport with them. This procedure proved to be very beneficial as the project progressed. Correspondence was sent to all parents of students in targeted teachers' classes to inform them of the project and to ask for their cooperation in making a positive difference in their child's education. Several attempts were made to obtain parental involvement and support and to maintain on-going communication with parents. News letters were sent to parents explaining the exciting challenge that was going to occur with the implementation of this practicum. The writer received various comments from parents questioning what the program was designed to accomplish. The letter was not as clear to parents as the writer had intended it to be (see Appendix E). The responses received from parents indicated their willingness to be supportive with anything that would benefit their children even though they questioned exactly what the project was supposed to accomplish.

Parents

Correspondence was sent home regarding a parent workshop at school. In addition to a letter to parents, an announcement was included in the school news. The response was so minimal that a formal workshop at the school was canceled. Only three parents indicated a desire to attend at the school. A few indicated they had purchased materials and were using them at home. Instead of a formal workshop, the three parents desiring the workshop were invited to school during the day and materials were made available to them to make items to help their children in the areas of language arts and mathematics. Flash cards for word banks, division, multiplication, addition, and subtraction facts, and fraction games were some of the items made by parents.

Various teacher workshops were planned to provide strategies for teachers to use with culturally diverse students. The writer was committed to conducting these necessary workshops and meetings, providing a friendly, supportive climate for teachers, and a positive educationally rich atmosphere to students and parents. An academic celebration was arranged quarterly for scholastic effort, perfect attendance, improved behavior, and citizenship. Sometimes, the celebration included popcorn and punch, and sometimes ice cream sandwiches and punch. The students really had fun. They received a pep talk from the administrators and a certificate, and they had an opportunity to interact with one another.

The writer, along with enthusiastic, volunteer teachers, planned and presented a parent workshop session within the low-income community. A local church was chosen and the membership gladly opened their doors to this worthy cause. Radio coverage and newspaper coverage was announced prior to the workshop. The writer was a guest on a

community talk show to discuss the practicum and its intended purpose. The survey indicated 21 parents would be interested if the workshop was held in the community. The actual number of parents totaled 14. Four additional families sent older siblings to assist in making various games in their stead. The total number of families represented was 18. This “make and take” workshop provided assistance to parents to help them help their children at home and to understand the importance and proper usage of materials made. Flash cards for shapes, colors, word banks, division, multiplication, addition, and subtraction facts, and fraction games were the types of items made by parents and siblings. The workshop was quite successful. According to the parent workshop questionnaire, parents felt the workshop was beneficial and met their needs (see Appendix F). The parents were very appreciative that teachers would take their time and come into the community to help them make items to use with their children. Many of them had transportation difficulties and didn’t mind walking or making other arrangements to get to the local church. Child supervision was available during the parent workshop session. Refreshments were provided for parents and children.

Parents indicated how much more relaxed they felt in their own neighborhood rather than at the school. During the practicum implementation, the writer established a rapport with parents to boost their self-esteem and confidence so they would be willing to come to school. She focused on eliminating the fears they had about coming to school. This proved to be quite successful because these parents eventually frequented the school for conferences, meetings, performances, and to volunteer.

Classroom Management

The strategies employed to improve classroom management among the targeted

teachers and students included a series of inservice workshop sessions that were conducted at the end of the regular school day throughout the 8-month implementation of the practicum. Information gleaned from workshop surveys assisted in designing strategies for teachers to use (see Appendix F). Classroom management strategies were utilized to increase positive interaction skills and to improve on task time to set the tone for academic success. A new strategy for classroom management was introduced over the morning television news program called "May I have your attention please?" (Wynn and Blassie, 1995) The writer met with a group of teachers prior to the implementation and originated the rhyming jingle from the five rules of Wynn and Blassie. In order to really get the teachers and students mesmerized and ecstatic, the writer selected three staff members each day to do the strategy with movement. The movement was the responsibility of the staff members. The first three introductions were done by the writer and special area staff in order to demonstrate expectations. After a week of daily renditions, everyone around the school chanted the jingle. The jingle worked in a large group setting (the cafeteria) as well as individual classrooms. There were instances where it was suggested to parents that they shadow their children for a day to observe behaviors being exhibited. Parents were receptive to this except in two episodes. For the two children whose parents refused to comply, home visits were made by the writer. This procedure was successful and only needed to occur once for six different children.

Once acceptable classroom behavior was established, teachers were able to instruct culturally diverse students utilizing effective strategies and most students were attentive and able to function appropriately. The writer made daily visits to classrooms and praised students for their hard work, outstanding effort, and excellent behavior when appropriate.

Students who exemplified proper behavior at school, and students who were on task during walk throughs, received Proud Eagle Passes which entitled them to weekly drawings for a free shopping spree in the school store. Proud Eagle Passes were also issued by all staff members throughout the school setting when students were observed exemplifying appropriate behaviors. Whenever student behavior was inappropriate, the writer arranged to go to the classroom rather than have students sent to the office and miss valuable learning time. From time-to-time, newsworthy praise was announced over television during morning announcements. Office referrals were maintained to track discipline infractions, to ascertain how adequately the management strategies introduced during workshops had impacted student behavior, and to determine the appropriate actions to be taken.

Academic Progress

The strategies employed to improve poor academic progress of culturally diverse students included a series of inservice workshop sessions that were conducted throughout the 8-month practicum implementation. All of the workshops presented utilized material from Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) designed to improve student achievement. Attitudes and beliefs about racism and prejudice were addressed in the first workshop. The group delved into their own personal bias and how their own upbringing played a major role in their attitudes and beliefs. It was obvious during workshop discussions that racism and prejudice are still realities in many sectors of American life, including education. Even though forms of racism are more subtle today than in the past, the group agreed that its effects can still harm minority students.

The second workshop included understanding of cultural differences. A chart comparing cultural differences was discussed. It was indicated that minority referred primarily to five ethnic groups: Alaskan Natives, American Indians, Black Americans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans. The curriculum, as was determined during discussions, must reflect the experiences, cultures, and perspectives of all groups. Although students differ in their knowledge of oral and written language, it was indicated that all children come to school with a background of experience that teachers can capitalize on during the learning process. In summary of cultural differences, teachers learned about their students' home-community culture in order to better comprehend students' behavior academically and socially.

This cultural difference workshop led directly into the third workshop which covered tracking, low expectations and inappropriate instruction. In reference to tracking, it was suggested that a variety of growth indicators, such as projects, writing samples, interviews, and observations be utilized in analyzing student achievement. Helping students to evaluate themselves by looking at the results of their own work was also implied.

Next, it was emphasized that teachers and administrators must have high expectations for all students in order to have students meet their fullest potential. Students tended to work more diligently and have faith in themselves when their teachers conveyed a belief in them. Teachers were paired off and they selected three high and three low achieving students in their classrooms. Their mission was to observe one another's classes indicating how many times lower achievers were called upon compared to higher

achievers. Some of the teachers were quite surprised to learn that they were actually calling on higher achievers more and giving them longer time to answer questions.

Finally, inappropriate instruction was addressed. Teachers realized the importance of using culturally relevant curriculum and instructional materials that recognized, incorporated, and accurately reflected students' racial heritage and the contributions of various ethnic groups. They also realized the importance of using language and instructional resources that were nonracist. Incorporating varied teaching styles and techniques were also explored. This helped to dispel stereotypes.

The fourth workshop included some aspects of the third workshop, teacher expectation and student achievement. This workshop emphasized close proximity in addition to calling on both lower and higher achievers, which was a portion of the third workshop. Teachers practiced roaming around the classroom during instruction rather than standing in the front of the classroom. They practiced close proximity for addressing student achievement as well as monitoring classroom behavior. They found that many times it was not necessary to speak to a student about misbehavior. The only thing necessary sometimes was to stand near the student who was misbehaving or who was not on task, and the student would immediately attend to the task at hand. Teachers continued pairing up and observing one another to monitor the effectiveness of calling on lower and higher achievers.

Teachers were encouraged to involve parents in order to promote home/school partnerships. They wrote to parents to establish lines of communication, provided feedback on children's performance, and related to parents that they knew the difficulty of their role and offered their assistance. Other ways of involving parents included

encouraging them to ask their children for explanations of what they were learning in specific subjects, to recognize and reward their children's successes, and to help parents structure homework time. This became easier after the make and take workshop that was held in the community. This workshop, although number five, was simultaneously occurring throughout the 8-month implementation.

Workshop numbers six, seven, and eight were combined with workshops two and three. This procedure allowed more time to be devoted to understanding of cultural differences and utilizing appropriate instruction. Transformation had taken place to reflect diversity in the school setting, capitalizing on students' backgrounds, using culturally relevant curriculum materials, and identifying and dispelling stereotypes. By determining students' learning preferences--if they worked best in groups or alone, by lecture or discussion, by visual or auditory presentations--teachers could better tailor instruction. These workshops were well received. Various discussions of cultural traits and being sensitive to students' needs were emphasized consistently.

The final workshops, 9 and 10, specifically addressed using computers and cross-age peer tutoring to enhance learning, and capitalizing on students' culture, language, and experiences. These concepts were continually implemented throughout the practicum. Third grade classes interacted with kindergarten classes for the cross-age peer tutoring. Kindergarten teachers were amazed at how attentive their students were and how much this process enhanced their learning. On the other hand, third grade teachers noticed how patient and compassionate the lower achieving students were as they interacted with the kindergarten students. ESE third, fourth, and fifth grade students in Speech assisted in kindergarten classes one-on-one with various activities. This process proved to be an

added incentive for students experiencing difficulty academically and socially. Capitalizing on students' culture, language, and experiences was repeatedly documented during the practicum implementation. Integrating computers in the academic areas validated another strategy to assist students because of the accessibility of computers in each classroom. Six computers were available per classroom, as well as a computer lab that was scheduled for each class 45 minutes per day for two quarters of the school year. Teachers had already received the appropriate training.

Teachers

Meetings were held to discuss teacher concerns with the entire group and with individual teachers as the need arose. Many of the teachers voiced concern and asked for help in meeting the needs of culturally diverse students. They specifically indicated students who were experiencing academic and behavioral difficulty. Teachers had an opportunity to discuss each student that was experiencing difficulty in their classroom during the individual teacher sessions. For every referral written, a discussion was held as to the reason for the referral and what strategies had been attempted prior to the situation getting serious enough for a referral. During discussions, various strategies and ways to circumvent the necessity of a referral were suggested. Some role playing and similar referral scenarios were created and teachers were given an opportunity to discuss how they would handle each situation. Comparable activities were conducted to meet each individual teacher's distinct need. During workshops and individual sessions, areas of teacher deficiency surfaced and specific strategies and suggestions were given along with time for follow-up. The writer spent an exorbitant amount of time in certain of the targeted classes more than in others. The writer also invited the principal to observe

certain teacher behaviors, as well as the curriculum specialist, with the understanding that feedback would be appreciated. Teachers received instant feedback throughout the 8-month implementation and were always treated in a non-threatening manner. They were made aware that even when improvement was necessary, documentation would not count against them, as was the usual procedure, except to help them develop into an effective teacher.

Quarterly interims were examined with individual teachers. Daily and weekly progress reports were also reviewed. Teachers indicated those students who did not return daily and/or weekly folders. Some of the students who returned the folders did not have the required parent signature. Emphasis was on positively motivating students, maximizing their strengths and minimizing their weaknesses through various strategies.

The various workshops were utilized in order to assist teachers to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to (a) have high expectations for all students, (b) display positive attitudes toward diverse students, (c) use materials that represented the students being served, and (d) reflect cultural and ethnic diversity. Emphasis was placed on reading. Students were encouraged to read everyday. They were also encouraged to read at home. The school implemented rewards for avid readers. Students earned prizes, free kid meals, and certificates for sandwiches or pizza. Special hall bulletin boards were ordered to exhibit pictures of students and/or their work.

Teachers received various incentives throughout the year to reward their outstanding effort and hard work. The writer established the criteria for the “employee of the week” recognition. Two employees were selected each week. Envelopes were placed near the teacher sign-in and anyone was eligible to nominate staff members stating their

reason for the nomination. Some teacher incentives included: special parking privileges, recognition as employee of the week, various treats put into their mailboxes, “thank you” notes sent to them in appreciation of their hard work, dedication/going beyond the call of duty, and opportunities to receive special gift certificates via drawings. Special drawings included dinner for two, gift certificates to various department stores, grocery stores, and health spas. Teachers also received letters of commendation for their hard work, extra effort shown in keeping parents informed, and extra hours donated to the cause.

The materials utilized in this practicum were furnished by the writer or by one of the business partners of the school. Business partners were contacted and generously supplied requested materials and/or items. Some of the items supplied were certificates to be used as incentives for students, gift certificates for teacher motivation, and materials for students who were in need of them.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of this practicum was that the academic performance and social behavior of culturally diverse students within a public elementary school would improve.

Teachers were having difficulty meeting the needs of their students at this public elementary school, the practicum site. This steadily expanding disturbance to the educational process was having a negative impact on the effectiveness of the school and the morale of the faculty, staff, and the administrators. The solution strategy utilized in this practicum involved interventions by the assistant principal between teachers, students, and parents.

Results

The particular outcomes intended to meet the goal follow.

Outcome 1: Time-on-task will be obvious during classroom observations 80 of 100 times. Classroom observations made 100 times to the targeted classrooms will indicate students on task 80 times. This objective was met in 13 of the 15 classrooms observed. Classroom observations made 100 times in the targeted classrooms indicated students were on task more than 80 times with the exception of two classes. Each total represents the number of students off task during the 100 observations made. This indicates on task behavior of 80 plus times of 100 with the exception of two classes.

Table 3

Off Task Behaviors in Targeted Classrooms During Classroom ObservationsOctober 1995 - June 1996

TEACHERS	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	TOTALS
T1-K	8	8	6	8	10	10	10	10	70
T2-K	4	5	4	4	0	1	0	0	16
T3-K	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
T4-1	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	8
T5-1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
T6-1	5	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	11
T7-1	10	11	6	5	5	5	4	5	51
T8-2	4	5	5	1	0	0	0	0	15
T9-2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
T10-2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	8
T11-2	1	4	1	2	1	0	3	0	12
T12-3	3	4	4	2	1	0	0	0	14
T13-3	0	1	4	2	2	1	0	0	10
T14-3	6	4	3	2	2	0	0	0	17
T15-3	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	4

In Table 3, one of the kindergarten (T1-K) and one of the first grade (T7-1) classes have high off task incidents. This happened because, while teachers were attempting to give directions or to have class discussions, students were continuously talking, disturbing their neighbors, getting out of their seats, sitting improperly, or playing

with items in, or on, their desks. There were constant changes in student expectations, too many chances given when directives were not followed, too many different consequences used for the same offense, and unkept promises to make parent contacts or to have students to see the administrators when rules were not followed.

Outcome 2: Referrals to the office will be reduced by 175, from 334 to 159, indicating that teachers are being successful meeting the needs of their students. A monthly report was generated depicting the name and total number of students referred to the administrators per teacher, type of infractions or behaviors exhibited, and consequences. This objective was met with a reduction in misbehavior by 253 referrals, from 334 to 84. A table of total results per teacher is presented (see Table 4).

Office referrals were for disruptive behavior, inappropriate language, refusing to obey, disrespect, fighting/physical abuse, threatening, and refusing to follow directions. Prior to the 8-month implementation, the referrals were rather evenly distributed with the exception of 12 referrals for fighting/physical abuse and threatening. At the end of the 8-month implementation, referrals for inappropriate language, fighting/physical abuse, and threatening were almost non-existent. Referrals for disruptive behavior, refusing to obey, disrespect, and refusing to follow directions were reduced by a large margin.

This reduction was primarily the result of classroom management strategies presented by the writer, implemented by the teachers and supported by the parents. Suggestions and strategies were based on inappropriate behaviors exhibited during classroom observations by the writer, previously written referrals, and individual sessions with teachers. Misbehavior at school was reported to the parents and they followed through with home consequences as well as those given at school. In certain chronic

Table 4

Summary of Office Referrals for Targeted Classes October 1995 - June 1996

Teacher	Pre Office Referrals	Post Office Referrals
T1-K	19	19
T2-K	28	1
T3-K	36	1
T4-1	19	3
T5-1	17	2
T6-1	27	1
T7-1	18	8
T8-2	16	6
T9-2	17	2
T10-2	24	5
T11-2	23	7
T12-3	07	7
T13-3	34	5
T14-3	23	14
T15-3	26	3
Total	334	84

situations where parents were not responding to notes and could not be reached by phone, home visits were made. Parents were appreciative of the time and effort teachers or the writer took to make a positive difference with their children. Positively rewarding appropriate behavior also accounted for the reduction in office referrals.

Outcome 3: Improved academic progress will be apparent in 26 daily and 48 weekly reports for students who have been designated as chronic offenders needing daily or weekly communication to parents about the difficulty they are experiencing with class work as well as proper behavior in the classroom. This will be evident by a change of one criteria indicating a shift from unsatisfactory to need improvement or need improvement to satisfactory (see Table 5).

This objective was not only met, but the number of students requiring daily and weekly reports was reduced by one half or more. This reduction occurred during the 8-month implementation when several students showed evidence of two criterion indicating a shift from unsatisfactory to satisfactory, therefore, daily and/or weekly reports were no longer necessary. There was a different set of students on daily and weekly reports. The most chronic offenders were receiving daily reports. At the end of each grading quarter, a comparison of satisfactory, need improvement, and unsatisfactory was tabulated. Progress was documented accordingly. The number of students on daily reports was 12 and weekly reports was 24 at the end of the 8-month implementation. This improvement was a result of successful classroom management strategies and effective teaching strategies developed after the workshops and continuous home/school contacts. All students who remained on daily and/or weekly reports showed evidence by change of one criteria indicating a shift from unsatisfactory to need improvement or need improvement to satisfactory.

Table 5 shows the number of students on daily and weekly reports per teacher. During the 8-month implementation, as student behavior and work habits improved, some students moved from daily reports to weekly reports, and eventually to no reports. Improvement was continuously shown throughout the 8-month implementation.

Table 5

Summary of Improved Academic/Behavioral Daily and Weekly Progress Reports for Targeted Classes October 1995 - June 1996

Teacher	Total Daily Reports	Total Weekly Reports	U	N	S
T1-K	4	3	3	3	1
T2-K	3	2	0	4	1
T3-K	0	1	0	0	1
T4-1	1	3	2	2	0
T5-1	0	2	1	1	0
T6-1	1	0	0	1	0
T7-1	3	5	4	3	1
T8-2	0	3	0	3	0
T9-2	0	2	1	1	0
T10-2	0	1	0	1	0
T11-2	0	0	0	0	0
T12-3	0	0	0	0	0
T13-3	0	0	0	0	0
T14-3	0	2	0	2	0
T15-3	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	24	11	21	4

Outcome 4: Quarterly report cards will reveal improvement in social areas two of four times. This will be evident by a change of one criteria indicating a shift from unsatisfactory to need improvement or need improvement to satisfactory. This objective was met during the second, third and fourth quarters. At the end of each grading quarter,

a comparison of satisfactory, need improvement, and unsatisfactory in the area of personal and social development was tabulated. Progress was documented accordingly. All students showed improvement two of four times and some of them showed improvement three of four times (see Table 6).

Some students who started out in the unsatisfactory category moved to need improvement. Some who started out in the need improvement category moved to satisfactory. A few students moved from unsatisfactory to satisfactory by the end of the 8-month implementation. Some students moved only once during the implementation period. In every instance, the move was always positive. No student regressed; however, there were a few students who made no gain. For the most part, the students with no gains were in the classrooms where teachers were experiencing difficulty with classroom management and/or effective teaching strategies.

Those teachers who continued to experience difficulty were given individual counseling, guided practice, and peer assistance. The writer demonstrated specific strategies and also allowed teachers to observe peers of their choice, whether at the pacticum site or at another elementary school. Teachers experiencing the most difficulty were either first year teachers or were new to a particular grade level.

Outcome 5: Quarterly report cards will reveal improvement in academic areas two of four times. This will be evident by a change of one criteria indicating a shift from unsatisfactory to need improvement or need improvement to satisfactory. This objective was met three of four quarters. There was a steady improvement shifting from unsatisfactory to need improvement and eventually shifting from need improvement to satisfactory (see Table 7).

Table 6

Year End Quarterly Report Card Social Results for the 1995-1996 School Term

Teacher	Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4		
	S	N	U	S	N	U	S	N	U	S	N	U
T1-K	6	14	6	7	14	5	8	13	5	10	12	4
T2-K	15	8	3	16	7	3	19	5	2	20	4	2
T3-K	20	4	4	20	5	3	21	6	1	25	2	1
T4-1	12	6	4	12	6	4	14	5	3	16	5	1
T5-1	13	3	6	13	3	6	14	4	4	17	3	2
T6-1	13	5	5	13	5	5	13	6	4	18	3	2
T7-1	9	3	9	8	4	9	9	6	6	12	6	3
T8-2	15	6	5	15	7	4	17	5	4	18	7	1
T9-2	17	6	4	17	7	3	18	7	2	22	5	0
T10-2	15	7	6	16	8	4	17	8	3	19	8	1
T11-2	16	6	4	16	6	4	18	6	2	21	4	1
T12-3	20	4	3	20	4	3	20	7	0	24	3	0
T13-3	17	5	5	17	5	5	18	6	3	21	5	1
T14-3	18	4	6	18	5	5	19	5	4	23	4	1
T15-3	18	6	4	18	6	4	19	6	3	23	4	1

Numerous students started out in the unsatisfactory category, converted to need improvement, and eventually to satisfactory. Some students moved from unsatisfactory to satisfactory by the end of the 8-month implementation, a total of at least two moves. Some students moved only once during the implementation period. In every instance, however, the move was positive. A few students who usually scored very poorly actually made the honor roll. For the most part, the students with the least amount of gain were in

Table 7

Year End Quarterly Report Card Academic Results for the 1995-1996 School Term

Teacher	Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4		
	S	N	U	S	N	U	S	N	U	S	N	U
T1-K	10	10	6	11	9	6	12	12	2	15	10	1
T2-K	14	9	3	16	7	3	19	5	2	20	4	2
T3-K	20	4	4	20	5	3	21	5	2	24	3	1
T4-1	12	6	4	12	6	4	13	6	3	17	4	1
T5-1	13	3	6	13	3	6	15	3	4	18	2	2
T6-1	13	5	5	13	5	5	13	6	4	18	3	2
T7-1	9	5	7	8	6	7	9	6	6	14	4	3
T8-2	13	8	5	15	7	4	17	5	4	21	4	1
T9-2	17	6	4	16	8	3	18	7	2	22	5	0
T10-2	15	6	7	16	7	5	17	8	3	21	6	1
T11-2	16	6	4	16	6	4	18	6	2	21	4	1
T12-3	20	4	3	20	4	3	20	7	0	24	3	0
T13-3	16	6	5	17	6	4	18	6	3	21	5	1
T14-3	18	4	6	18	5	5	19	5	4	22	5	1
T15-3	16	8	4	18	6	4	20	5	3	23	4	1

the classrooms where teachers were experiencing difficulty with effective teaching strategies. Again, those teachers who continued to experience difficulty were given individual counseling, guided practice, peer assistance, demonstration strategies, and peer observation of their choice, whether at the pacticum site or at another elementary school.

Teachers experiencing the most difficulty were either first year teachers or were new to a particular grade level, as indicated earlier.

Outcome 6: Year end reports will indicate a reduction of 24 students for retention and remedial placement (see Appendix D). For the year ending June 1995, there was a total of 63 remedially placed or retained students. The total remedially placed or retained students for 1996 was 31. This objective was met by a reduction of 32 students. A year end report, presented in table format, was generated to indicate students who were remedially placed or retained in each grade by gender, race, and teacher (see Table 8).

Compared to previous years, Table 8 shows vast improvement in the number of retained and remedially placed students for the year ending June 1996. Although the practicum site has always been two thirds majority and one third minority, the retention/remedial placements have always been just the opposite, one third majority and two thirds minority. At the end of the 8-month implementation, retentions and remedial placements appeared more equitably distributed. As indicated, there were few retentions. The retentions were the result of students who enrolled late and had no formal educational experience, students who were very young and encountered difficulty adjusting socially, or there was a rare request from parents to retain the child because they felt their child did not have a solid foundation to be successful in school. When the writer contacted parents about their decision for retention, it was clear that their decisions were based on reports, conferences, notes, and phone calls received from teachers throughout the year.

Outcome 7. Memos, notes, verbal discussions with teachers, and classroom observations will indicate 13 of 15 teachers are being successful with classroom management. This objective was met. Teachers were pleased with the positive behavior

Table 8

Remedial/Retention Year End Report for the Year Ending June 1996

<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Race</u>	<u>Remedial Placement</u>	<u>Retention</u>
T1-K	1 F	H		1
T2-K	----	-		
T3-K	2 M	W	1	1
T4-1	----	-		
T5-1	1 F	W	1	
T6-1	1 F	W	1	
T7-1	3 M/2 F	W	4	1 (F)
T8-2	2 M	W	2	
T9-2	1 F	W	1	
T10-2	----	-		
T11-2	1 M/1 F	B	2	
T12-3	4 M/2 F	4 B/1 H/1 W	6	
T13-3	1 F/2 M	1 B/2 W	3	
T14-3	1 F/1 M	1 B/1 H	2	
T15-3	1 F/4 M	1 B/1 H/3 W	5	
Total	12 F/19 M	9 B/4 H/18 W	28	3
Grand Total				31

Note. F = Female, M = Male, H = Hispanic, B = Black, W = White

of their students. They indicated that students had benefited socially and showed trustworthiness to interact in an appropriate manner with classmates. Of the 15 teachers, 14 were successful with classroom management. The one teacher who was not successful was inconsistent with the students. One other teacher had only minimal success for the

same reason. As indicated earlier, teachers who experienced difficulty were given individual counseling, guided practice, peer assistance, demonstration strategies, and peer observation of their choice, whether at the pacticum site or at another elementary school. Although examples were given as well as demonstrated, they still had difficulty with application. The writer feels the difficulty was partially a result of inconsistency, having low expectations, and having doubt about their own effectiveness.

Outcome 8. Memos, notes, verbal discussions with teachers, and classroom observations will indicate 13 of 15 teachers are being successful with parental involvement and support. This objective was met. Of the 15 teachers, 15 were successful with parental involvement and support. Over half of the parents frequented the classrooms as volunteers, almost every parent came to school for parent/teacher conferences, and returned signed notes and reports from teachers. The few parents who did not come for parent/teacher conferences because of their jobs or other conditions, rescheduled later in the evening or earlier in the morning outside of the normal working day for teachers. Three teachers had only minimal success, but all had some degree of success getting parents involved in their children's education. The minimal success was due to the teachers' personal agendas and families. These teachers were not available during the evenings or early mornings, or they were not comfortable with home visits. In such instances, the writer made the home visits or stayed in the evenings to meet with parents. The impact was not the same, since the difficulty was with the teacher's interactions with students.

Outcome 9. Memos, notes, verbal discussions with teachers, and classroom observations will indicate 13 of 15 teachers are being successful with strategies to use

when teaching culturally diverse students. Of the 15 teachers, 13 were successful with strategy implementation. Two of the teachers had difficulty relating to culturally diverse students because, as they indicated, they felt sorry for the children. It was difficult for them to stay focused on the concept that “all children can learn”. They made excuses for students who were hesitant in performing certain tasks, rather than selecting strategies to get the job accomplished. The 13 teachers who were successful indicated students benefited academically and demonstrated continuity in cooperative groups allowing them to show astronomical gain. Students were turning in class and homework which improved their academic standing, and with this improvement came higher self-esteem.

When students were involved in every aspect of the curriculum and when teachers had high expectations for all students, continuous improvement was evident. Incorporating home environment and language experiences into the curriculum and concentrating on student achievement really made a positive impact. Two of the teachers couldn't get pass feeling sorry for some of their students and they admitted that it was difficult for them to follow through on any punitive consequence whenever these particular students disobeyed the rules. When students realized they could get by, they continued the same inappropriate behaviors. These teachers are continuing with additional cultural awareness training.

Discussion

Four evaluation instruments were utilized in this practicum to measure stated outcomes. The purpose of the instruments was (a) to record student classroom on task/off task behavior during observations and classroom visitations, (b) to generate a cumulative record of office referrals for discipline infraction and their resolution, and (c)

to generate a cumulative record of results of daily, weekly, quarterly, and yearly reports. The forms were also used to determine the effectiveness of strategies in reference to accomplishing practicum objectives and goals.

Teacher Conferences/Meetings

The writer held conferences with the 15 targeted teachers in group sessions and individually as the need arose. During the early stages of the implementation, classroom management strategies, such as selecting classroom rules, setting the tone for teacher expectation for each student, setting the tone for classroom procedures, communicating to students what they can expect from their teacher, and deciding on classroom helpers, were suggested and discussed. Individual students were discussed and ways to improve their specific behaviors. Group meetings proved very productive as teachers openly discussed various difficult students they were encountering, only to find that last year's teacher was able to discuss what worked for them in interacting with particular students.

Conferencing was ongoing during the 8-month practicum implementation. Input received from teachers was helpful in deciding which strategies were successful and which ones needed to be revisited (see Appendix G). There were times when classroom management difficulties were the fault of the teacher's interactions with students. Suggestions were discussed to improve teacher/student relationships.

During individual meetings, discipline referrals for specific students were discussed. A discussion was held on how the teacher handled each situation prior to the referral similar to discussions held on academic concerns. Along with the various workshops, specific strategies were suggested to meet each individual teacher's distinct need based upon their particular students. The more the writer had conferences with

certain of the targeted teachers, it became obvious that classroom management appeared to be as much the fault of some of the teachers as the students. It became necessary to frequent some classes more than others. Modeling became necessary in two of the classes. Positive praise to the teacher was communicated as often as feasible. Some teachers needed to put forth very little effort while a couple needed serious reconstruction.

Student Referral Meetings

Many times, when meeting with individual students to discuss their referrals for inappropriate behavior, they had legitimate complaints about the manner in which referrals were handled. Students would cite examples of how two of them could do the same thing but only one would be punished. They also felt that the teacher did not like them. Students always seemed to wait until they received a referral to mention matters of unfair treatment. Ways were discussed to handle this situation. One suggestion was that students discuss their concerns quietly with their teachers when they were having a good day.

Sometimes parents did not return signed reports and students would be punished. When the writer discussed each situation, it was apparent that some students had followed all the rules by taking the reports home and asking their parent(s) to sign them but for various reasons, the reports were not signed. There were confirmed times when it was not the student's fault, yet, students were suffering the consequence. The writer discussed with teachers, and in some instances parents, ways to alleviate this problem, such as having the parent call the school and ask for the writer or leave a message for the teacher when they did not return correspondence.

Students felt very confident knowing they could come to the writer to voice any matter that was disturbing to them. Lending a listening ear really made a difference in many instances. This open door policy, along with the writer visiting classrooms to handle referrals, cut down on the vast number of referrals received. Eventually, many of the students became confident to have discussions with their teachers instead of the writer.

Classroom Visitations

Daily classroom observations were very successful. Observations took longer than anticipated. Some of the visitations caused the writer to participate in class discussions. Teachers even asked the writer to teach a lesson or read a book to the class. Many times the writer asked questions and took an active part in the class discussion. For instance, the students in one class were celebrating having earned 700 points in the Accelerated Reader Program. The writer called on various students to tell the title of the latest book they had read and the author or what they enjoyed best about the book. In another class, the students were doing fables and explained to the writer the meaning of a fable. In a third classroom, students were listening to a rap record of multiplication facts. They were tapping and rapping along with the record. The writer joined in and the students were excited that she participated. They were also excited about how much they were learning. They were having fun in the process because the teacher had taken the time to make it interesting. At least, that's the writer's perception.

Teacher Workshops

Teacher workshops outlined in Chapter IV were very helpful toward academic and social success of students. Teachers learned specific, teacher-tested ways to increase achievement in reading, writing, mathematics, and oral communication. The focus was on

the challenge of educating students who were increasingly diverse and often economically disadvantaged. The strategies were geared for every grade level.

Effective teaching strategies, including classroom examples and strategies for culturally and ethnically diverse students, were implemented involving students actively in lessons, using thematic, interdisciplinary curriculums, and accommodating students' individual learning styles.

Parent Workshop

One formal and one informal parent workshop was held as indicated in Chapter IV. Parents expressed a sincere desire to help their children. Those who felt incapable or uncomfortable sent their older children to make items for use with their siblings. At the onset, parents were apprehensive about attending school, so arrangements were made to meet them on their turf, so to speak. The workshop held at a local church proved fruitful for everyone. Parents expressed comfort in their own surroundings. They felt free to reveal their true feelings. For the most part, parents were allowed to vent their frustrations towards school. The workshop turned into a "make & take & say how you feel" experience. Parents' anxieties about teachers and schools were lessened in the process. This made the entire procedure a worthwhile encounter. Approximately 90 parents made surprise visits to the school just to observe in their children's classrooms.

Rewards and Awards

Rewards became common at the practicum site. Hard work and extra effort was rewarded on a weekly basis. Sometimes, individual teachers chose daily rewards. Students received all types of awards and certificates for improvement socially and academically. They were always allowed to frequent the office for good behavior, work

habits, or excellent papers. Various incentives such as stickers, candy, pencils, or erasers were given. On other occasions, students received cards for free hamburgers, cheese burgers, or kid meals at various establishments. There were many occasions when a visit on television morning news occurred, and other times when just a congratulatory remark from the principal or the writer was the reward. Positive praise was evident all over the campus. Not only were students rewarded, but teachers and other staff members, including parent volunteers were praised and appreciated in numerous ways.

Summary of Practicum

In summary, using effective teaching strategies for improving the academic performance of culturally diverse elementary students proved to be quite successful. The teaching strategies primarily included teacher interactions with students and hands-on types of activities. Teacher conferences and meetings were also utilized. Teacher workshops on classroom management and academic focus impacted the discipline of the classroom and student success. During the implementation period, students improved socially and academically. Fewer students were remedially placed and/or retained. Teachers and the writer made a few home visits to those parents who had difficulty returning papers or attending conferences.

Random classroom visitations were made on a daily basis. Teachers and students were unaware of the time of visitations, thus, this was one of the reasons for more on-task behavior. Another reason for on-task behavior was effective teaching techniques where teachers exercised proximity while engaged in teaching. When students needed to receive a referral, the writer went to the class rather than having the student sent to the office. This impacted other students in the class as well as the student receiving the referral.

Parents expressed a desire to help their children have a successful educational experience by attending a “make & take” workshop, volunteering at school, and attending programs and conferences. A successful home/school partnership was evidenced through better communication between the home and school as well as improved student social and academic behavior.

The success evidenced by this practicum implementation indicates that various teaching alternatives are mandatory in order to meet the needs of all students. Effective classroom management is also a necessary component, including rewards for positive behavior. It is also apparent that positive communication must exist between the home and school. The success of this practicum has resulted in higher academic achievement and improved social behavior of students, along with fewer remedially placed and retained students in targeted classrooms.

From the vantage point of looking back, it may have been more prudent to have conducted fewer workshops. Also, to specify which workshop various teachers needed would have been helpful. As information was gleaned and classroom observations were made, it was apparent that some teachers grasped various concepts of the workshops and were ready to move on while others needed additional assistance and time to implement.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that all teachers adopt the slogan that “all students can learn” and communicate it daily in their classrooms by precept and example.
2. The procedure of administrators going to the classroom for students who receive referrals in lieu of having students come to the office should be established throughout the school year.

3. School-based workshops on classroom management and effective teaching strategies to use with culturally diverse students should be conducted during preschool and ongoing during the school term.
4. A positive home/school partnership should continue to be fostered via the school by parent newsletters and other forms of communication to keep parents abreast of day-to-day school occurrences, including a survey once a year to see how the school can assist parents in helping their children.

Dissemination

This practicum has been shared with the principal, interested staff members, central office staff including the Executive Director of Curriculum Services, the Staff Development Center, and the assistant principals' association.

As a spin off of the practicum, this writer has been requested to do a presentation in another county, and has also received approval to establish a tutorial program within the community to help students during the 1996-1997 school term. She is presently training some young adults to assist in the program along with volunteer teachers.

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APPENDIX A
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION/VISITS

Classroom Observation/Visit

Month of _____ 1995-1996

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
T1-K															
T2-K															
T3-K															
T4-1															
T5-1															
T6-1															
T7-1															
T8-2															
T9-2															
T10-2															
T11-2															
T12-3															
T13-3															
T14-3															
T15-3															

APPENDIX B
SUMMARY OF OFFICE REFERRALS

APPENDIX C
REPORT CARD RESULTS FORM

REPORT CARD RESULTS FORM

GRADE/TEACHER	QUARTER 1	QUARTER 2	QUARTER 3	QUARTER 4
K - T 1				
K - T 2				
K - T 3				
1ST - T 1				
1ST - T 2				
1ST - T 3				
1ST - T 4				
2ND - T 1				
2ND - T 2				
2ND - T 3				
2ND - T 4				
3RD - T 1				
3RD - T 2				
3RD - T 3				
3RD - T 4				

APPENDIX D
REMEDIAL RETENTION YEAR END REPORT

**Remedial/Retention Year End Report
for the Year Ending June, 1996**

<u>GRADE LEVEL</u>	<u>TEACHER</u>	<u>GENDER</u>	<u>RACE</u>	<u>REMEDIAL PLACEMENT</u>	<u>RETENTION</u>
KINDERGARTEN					
KINDERGARTEN					
KINDERGARTEN					
FIRST					
SECOND					
THIRD					

APPENDIX E
PARENT NEWS LETTER

Parent News Letter

_____, 1995

Dear Parents and/or Guardians,

Something exciting is about to happen to the students at _____ Elementary School in an effort to improve academic and behavioral performance. Your child's teacher and the administrative staff have already pledged their support of this project. We are thrilled about the opportunities that are before us. In order to have your child benefit as much as possible, it is very important that you give your support. Please sign this form to indicate your support of this project. We know you, too, want the best education possible for your child. We have the same goal. Let's think positive as we soar towards success!

Your signature simply means that we can depend on you to follow through with tips for encouraging and assisting your child at home and to attend scheduled meetings involving your child. We will keep an open line of communication between school and home and you will be notified of the progress made as we journey through this project. There will also be some "Make and Take Parent Workshops" made available to assist with games and other materials to use at home with your child. You will be notified prior to these workshops to allow you to include them in your busy schedule.

I give my support towards this project. I understand that this is for the progress of my child both academically and behaviorally and that it can not be as successful without my full cooperation. YES _____ NO _____

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX F

PARENT “MAKE & TAKE” WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE

Parent "Make & Take" Workshop Questionnaire

Please complete this survey and turn in before you leave. We want to know if this workshop has been helpful and what we can do to improve.

1. This was a helpful workshop. Yes _____ No _____
2. I feel that I can help my child better at home because of this workshop.
Yes _____ No _____
3. This workshop has allowed me to make materials to work with my child at home.
Yes _____ No _____

4. What special areas would you like to have materials to help with?

5. Would you be interested in other types of inservice or workshops?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what types?

6. How can this workshop help you more?

Signature _____ Date _____
(optional)

Thank you for coming and for your continued support and interest. Please let us know if the materials you made are helping you to assist your child!

APPENDIX G

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE

Classroom Management Workshop Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire.

1. This workshop was informative. Yes _____ No _____
2. I intend to utilize some of the strategies discussed today with the children in my classroom who are experiencing difficulty obeying the rules.
Yes _____ No _____
3. This workshop was applicable to my classroom situation.
Yes _____ No _____
4. Are there areas of discipline or other concerns that you would like to discuss individually or at the next workshop? Yes _____ No _____

If so, what are they?

5. Do you plan to share your expectations of your students with their parents?
Yes _____ No _____

Signature _____
(Optional)

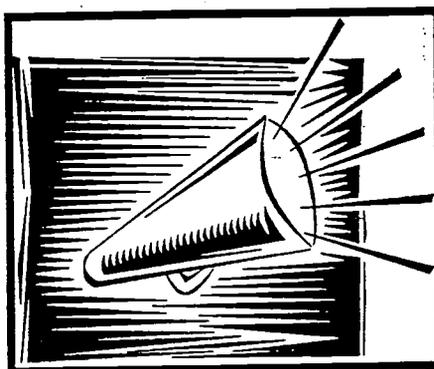
Thank you for the extra effort, hard work and dedication you've exhibited.

APPENDIX H
PARENT NEWS FLYER

PARENTS, GET READY FOR . . .

EXCITEMENT AT COLONIAL!

Some exciting learning is about to take place at Colonial Elementary! We are going to work on various strategies to improve academic performance & student behavior!



We are going to CELEBRATE our successes by earning various certificates and awards - some of which will be provided by our school business partners!

Once each quarter, we will have an "ACADEMIC PEP RALLY!" Parents will be invited, at a specified time, to their particular child's classroom. Students will be eligible to receive all sorts of rewards for a "Job Well Done!" each quarter! There will also be several "Make and Take Workshops" offered to help parents work with students at home! Arrangements will be made for child care. Supplies will be provided by the school. Refreshments will also be provided. Numerous newsletters throughout this school term will keep you informed!

YOU WILL RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION AT A LATER DATE!

Early Ed



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Signature: <i>Shirley M. Chapman</i>	Position: Assistant Principal
Printed Name: Shirley M. Chapman	Organization: Colonial Elementary School
Address: 3800 Schoolhouse Road, East Fort Myers, FL 33916	Telephone Number: (941) 939-2242
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