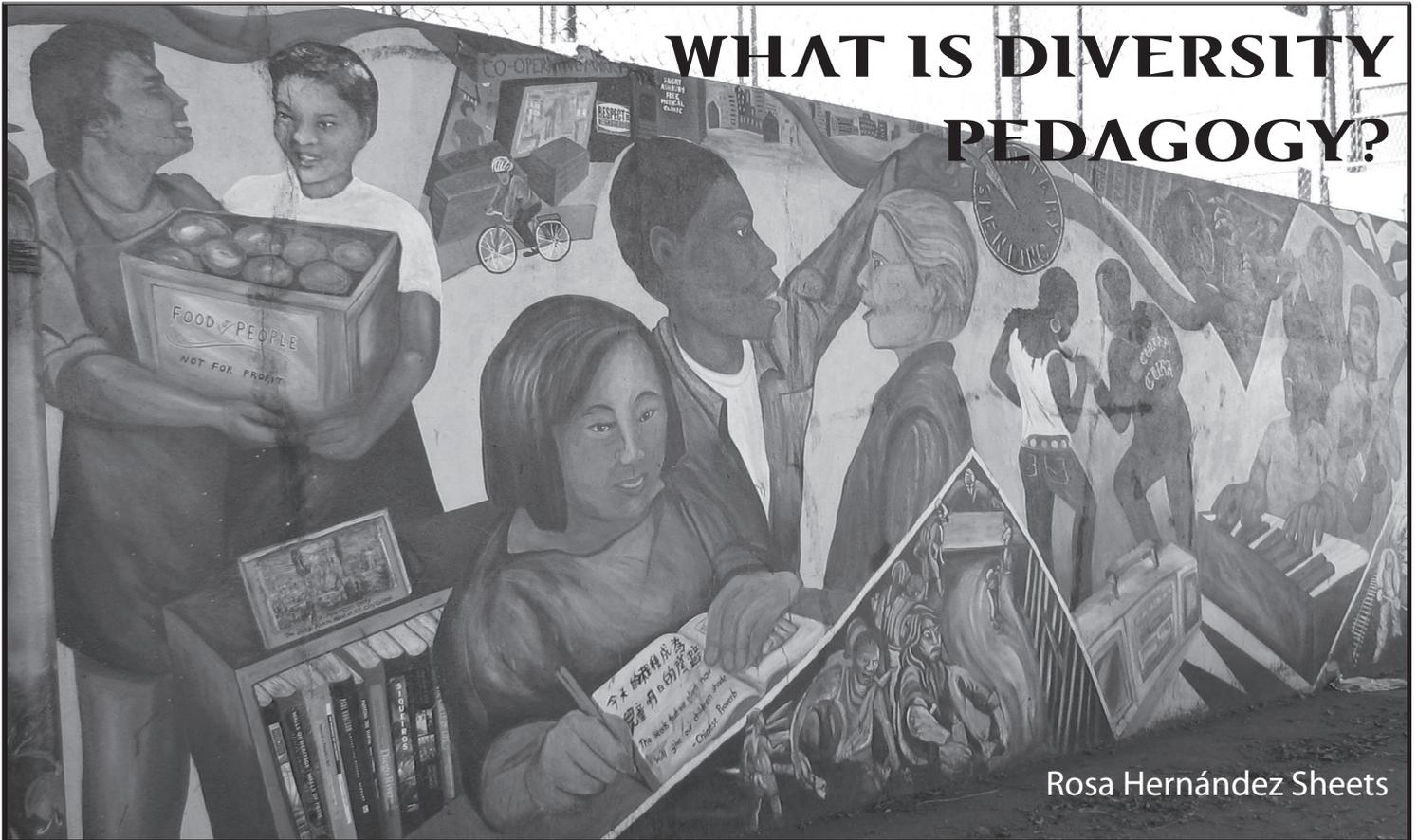


WHAT IS DIVERSITY PEDAGOGY?



Rosa Hernández Sheets

Diversity Pedagogy Theory (DPT) is a set of principles that point out the natural and inseparable connection between culture and cognition (Sheets, 2005). In other words, to be effective as a teacher, you must understand and acknowledge the critical role culture plays in the teaching-learning process.

DPT maintains that culturally inclusive teachers (a) observe children's cultural behavioral patterns to identify individual and group cultural competencies and skills; and (b) use this knowledge to guide their teaching decisions. Culturally competent teachers facilitate learning. They understand how to change and adapt instruction. These teachers create optimal learning conditions which enable more children to learn what they intend to teach.

This article introduces *Diversity Pedagogy Theory*, describes the structural aspects of DPT, and examines the relationship among culture, cognition, teaching, and learning. It provides classroom vignettes explicating the theory in practice and provides suggestions for classroom applications. In the conclusion, I ask that

you consider the importance of becoming conscious of your thinking habits and I encourage you to begin and evolve into a culturally competent educator.

Diversity Pedagogy Theory

As a new teacher, or even as an experienced teacher, you begin your career (or each new school year) with mixed degrees of delight and stress or uncertainty and excitement. You quickly realize that mastering the art of teaching is at once challenging and developmental. You realize that your potential to move from the novice stage to an expert level, in terms of cultural competency, depends on your capacity (a) to perceive diversity as the norm, and, as such, fundamental to all aspects of the teaching-learning process, and (b) to understand the importance of gaining knowledge about the diverse cultures represented in your classroom.

As you develop as an educator, you will learn to critically evaluate the cultural origins of the activities you practice and familiar routines you establish. You will become consciously aware whether your teaching decisions simultaneously benefit some children while disadvantaging others. DPT will provide you with an organized set of pedagogical tools to help you develop desirable dispositions, gain a culturally inclusive knowledge base, and learn cultur-

ally responsive methods to craft culturally responsive lessons. This article introduces you to the principles of DPT.

Linking Culture to Pedagogy

DPT links culture, cognition, and schooling in a single unit. It unites classroom practice with deep understandings of the role culture plays in the social and cognitive development of children (see Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Cole, 1996; Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; Hollins, 1996; Lave, 1988; Portes, 1996; Rogoff, 1990, 2003; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). DPT views the natural connectedness of culture and cognition as key to incorporating multiple factors of diversity in the teaching-learning process. It acknowledges the indissoluble, joint-role of culture and cognition in the human developmental process.

Diversity pedagogy clearly recognizes *the powerful, active role students play in their learning*. In other words, teachers are extremely important; but students can easily and consistently choose to sabotage, ignore, dismiss, or minimize their significance. Unfortunately, sometimes unwillingness to comply to teacher directives—student resistance—can place students at risk.

Children are always learning. It is their nature to actively learn in and out

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of the classroom. It is to your benefit to acquire the pedagogical skills you need to teach children what you want them to learn. You must concede that if the children are not learning in your classroom, you are not teaching, even when you are think you are.

Non-teaching is especially obvious in classrooms where teachers have no control of misbehaving students. However, lack of learning may also be taking place when students appear to be engaged or seem to comply with classroom behavioral standards. Quiet, orderly classrooms do not automatically mean that that students in those settings are learning. DPT will help you better teach what you want your students to learn and to teach well more consistently.

Structural Aspects of DPT

DPT has eight dimensional elements (they are listed in Table 2 and defined in Table 3). Each dimension has two parts:

Part I: *Teacher Pedagogical Behaviors* (TPB), describes how teachers think and act in the classroom, and

Part II: *Student Cultural Displays* (SCD), are the ways children show who they are and what they know.

Table 1 offers definitions of TPB and SCD which provide clarification on teacher and student attitudes and behaviors. Please note that while readers often have a tendency to skip tables, it is important that you read and understand the information in the tables, because this background knowledge will help you gain a greater understanding of how DPT is conceptualized.

TPBs and SCDs Are Interrelated

Notice in Table 1 that the TPBs are listed on the left hand column of the table and the SCDs that correspond with the teacher behaviors are described on the right hand column. It is theorized that if teachers do what is listed on the left hand side of the table, the teacher behavior encourages students to develop and express what is on the right hand side. They go hand-in-hand.

To illustrate, in *Dimension #1: Diversity* (see Table 2), if the teacher respects and is not afraid of differences, she allows children to discuss their differences and includes different perspectives and voices in the lessons. Is more likely for children in this classroom to openly display behaviors common in *Dimension 1: Consciousness of Differences*. The students will be encouraged to become aware of diversity, they will learn to examine their prejudices, and they will be more accepting of differences in themselves and others.

The Eight Dimensions of DPT

DPT has two paired, side-by-side, tightly interconnected dimensional elements in eight dimensions that serve to guide teacher and student behaviors. The teacher pedagogical behaviors go hand in hand with the SCDs. The 8 dimensions are listed in Table 2.

The eight dimensions are not hierarchal in nature. This means that one dimension is not better than another and one dimension does not have to be mastered before another one. Since I had to place them in some order, I chose to group them thematically. The first four are grouped together because they specifically relate to social and cultural development while the remaining

four dimensions address students' learning and knowledge acquisition.

Table 4: *Diversity Pedagogical Dimensions: Teacher Pedagogical Behaviors/ Student Cultural Displays* lists the dimensions and gives a brief description of each dimensional element. Chapters 3 to 10 in the text *Diversity Pedagogy: Examining the Role of Culture in the Teaching-Learning Process* (Sheets, 2006) elaborate each dimension. There is a chapter devoted to each dimension.

The Eight Dimensions Do Not Happen in Isolation

In the classroom, the eight dimensions naturally intersect with each other. They rarely occur in isolation. This means that you do not behave in only one dimension nor will you see children demonstrating a single dimension.

For example, Pedro is, a 5-year old, in Kindergarten. He speaks fluent Spanish; however he speaks almost no English. In this example, please note that all of the teaching acts and Pedro's responses are happening simultaneously and are inseparable. They are separated in this example to make it easier for you to identify and categorize each teacher behavior and student cultural displays in the different dimensions.

While the teacher cannot speak Spanish, she has acquired some skills in English as a Second Language (ESL) strategies. The teacher, in this case, strives to create optimal learning conditions. She understands how to facilitate the learning process. She knows when to provide assistance and how to extend and build on students' cultural practices and experiences. More students have opportunity to learn in these classrooms.

Table 1
Definitions of Teacher Pedagogical Behaviors and Student Cultural Displays

<i>Teacher Pedagogical Behaviors (TPB)</i>	<i>Student Cultural Displays (SCD)</i>
<p>TPBs are actions and attitudes teachers express in classrooms related to the act of teaching. When demonstrated in classrooms, one can observe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they chose to interact with students, including the quality of their interpersonal relationships with specific children, • Ways they arrange their room physically, how they establish the emotional tone of the classroom, and what they expect academically and socially from their students; • What perspectives and teaching strategies they choose, the amount of time they spend on various content areas; • Ways they evaluate/adapt instructional materials to reach diverse learners; and • How they approach self/student assessment. 	<p>SCDs are observable manifestations of the norms, values, and competencies children learn in their homes and communities. These behaviors provide valuable insights to who they are, how they act, and what they know.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children bring culturally mediated, historically developing cultural knowledge, practices, values, and skills to school; • Cultural displays emerge during social interactions, daily rituals, and learning situations and are consequential to their development, achievement, and emotional well-being; • Children may choose to reveal or conceal or can feel encouraged to display or compelled to suppress culturally influenced behaviors, skills, attitudes, and knowledge; • It benefits children psychologically to express their cultural knowledge, strengths and skills.

The relationship between the TPBs and SCDs in this example is shown in Figure 1.

The Eight Dimensions Do Not Occur in a Given Order

Most teachers can identify SCDs. But, sometimes if they are not skilled, if they lack cultural knowledge, or if they do not have strong observational skills, their response may not always be appropriate, or in some cases teachers might even overlook or ignore a cultural display. DPT theorizes that teachers who consistently recognize, interpret, and respond to student cultural displays have more opportunities to respond to students' academic, social, ethnic, and cultural needs. These teachers are more likely to consider the diverse characteristics, strengths, and competencies of their students.

Awareness of SCDs increases the probability of a teacher's potential to support social growth, enhance ethnic identity development, maintain heritage language, and promote self-regulated be-

havior. This type of teacher behavior also makes meaningful connections between students' prior cultural patterns of knowledge to the intended acquisition of new knowledge. Table 3 points out potential positive or negative outcomes of teacher behavior.

Relationship among Culture, Cognition, Teaching, and Learning

Acquiring new knowledge requires a connection between the child's prior cultural knowledge and the new knowledge being taught and learned. Research on cognition shows that when faced with something new, learners:

◆ *Identify the ways they can enter the new learning events.* They figure out how to best understand what is going on and what choice to make so that they can learn (e.g., should they listen, take notes, repeat the activity, manipulate objects if available, watch what the teacher is doing).

For example: I'm teaching my 18-month grandchild how to say, "See you

later alligator." He listened and then chose to watch my mouth. He repeated the phrase, keeping the rhythm of the sounds, adding nonsense sounds for the words he could not remember and ending with a strong 'gater.' His body language encouraged me to repeat this silly phrase over and over. He laughed, expressed delight at learning this phrase.

◆ *Select the most appropriate cultural tool for the context and situation* from their repertoires of prior knowledge (what they know), skills, cultural practices, and life experiences. Children will first try to figure out what you want them to learn and evaluate if it is worthwhile to them. They will assess what they know and what they already know to connect the new information so it makes sense. Then they make a decision to show what they know or to conceal their understandings. Lets consider the use of language as a cultural tool and how it interacts with prior knowledge within a specific situation and context.

For example, my 3-year old grand child, Miguel, and I were playing *Power Rangers*. He was in control. He would announce the arrival of evil monsters and we would quickly hide under the covers until he conquered them with magic, make-believe weapons. Then we would sit up and wait for the next set of monsters.

Although his native language is English, Miguel spoke bits of Spanish and Tagalog. He knew that people speak multiple languages. Since he was the only one who saw the monsters he would give the order to respond. He yelled "Duck, quick gramah duck. Evil's comin." I wanted to see what he would do if I interpreted "duck" as a noun instead of a verb, so I responded, "Miguel, where's the duck? I don't hear a quack, quack, quack." He looked at me perplexed. Then, with disdain, he announced, "Duck is Pino-Pino (Filipino) for put your head down." He giggled and quickly pulled the covers over our heads. I said, "Ok!" and quickly ducked, because I wanted to play.

Cultural Tools

Children use cultural tools to build

Teacher Pedagogical Behaviors		Student Cultural Displays
# 1	Diversity	Consciousness of Difference
# 2	Identity	Ethnic Identity Development
# 3	Social Interaction	Interpersonal Relationships
# 4	Culturally Safe Classroom Context	Self-Regulated Learning
# 5	Language	Language Learning
# 6	Culturally Inclusive Content	Knowledge Acquisition
# 7	Instruction	Reasoning Skills
# 8	Assessment	Self-Evaluation

Recognition and Response to Student Cultural Display	Indifferent or Unaware Responses to Student Cultural Display
Develop diversity consciousness Promote ethnic identity development Provide opportunities for social interactions Create a safe classroom context Encourage language learning Select culturally inclusive resources Adapt specific instructional strategies Use multiple ways to access competency	Promote dualistic reasoning Support assimilation to mainstream culture Control classroom social events Maintain a stressful climate Advance heritage language loss and silence Choose generic instructional content Employ universal instructional methods Adopt limiting assessment criteria

Teacher Pedagogical Behavior	Student Cultural Displays
You speak to Pedro (<i>Dimension 1: Language</i>) and explain that the lesson asked that he cut a red circle and a blue square and glue them on a piece of paper to match the corresponding shape. He used red paper for all of his shapes. You gently remove the red square and give him the blue sheet and ask him to cut blue a blue square. You assure him (<i>Dimension 4</i>) that it is ok to make an error (<i>Dimension 7</i>) because everyone learns through mistakes.	Pedro may not understand everything that you are saying (<i>Dimension 5: Language Learning</i>); but he is able to respond to your kind voice, soft tone, low volume; and, to your showing him physically and verbally what you want him to do. He will realize that while he did something incorrectly you are not angry, thus, he may display the beginnings of <i>Dimension 3: Interpersonal Relationship</i> and experience <i>Dimension 4: Self-Regulated Learning</i> , understanding that it is all right make a mistake. He doesn't have to worry that he does not understand everything you say. Most importantly, he knows that he can maintain his self-dignity in your classroom.

upon their prior knowledge and competencies to construct new knowledge (Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 2003). Cultural tools can be viewed as cultural devices, such as language, prior experiences, and knowledge, which students use in the process of reshaping a situation so they can enter effectively (Dewey, 1916; Luria, 1928). Students learn to use previously acquired cultural tools to supply them with the knowledge and skills needed to perform a new task. Thus, children use cultural tools from their repertoires of prior learning knowledge and skills to gain new understandings

Vignettes

DPT encourages teachers to develop teaching beliefs and pedagogical skills in eight dimensions. It asks that teachers acknowledge that their thinking habits and

classroom behaviors are highly influenced by their personal cultural backgrounds. Teachers who succeed with diverse children realize that they must develop cultural competence. These teachers assume responsibility for student learning. Their practice is characterized by a basic belief the children in their classrooms must be kept harmless and held blameless. These teachers *teach for freedom!* Their mission is to provide children with the strong academic skills needed to reach the *American Dream*. The following vignettes will “see” Diversity Pedagogy in practice.

Vignette 1: Helping with Seatwork

Consider the possible teacher responses to the event described here. Note that each teacher thinks that they are doing the right thing. Sometimes good intentions harm children. This incident takes place in an urban 6th grade classroom. The student

population is ethnically and linguistically diverse. The teacher, Ms. Chavez, cannot speak Spanish. She has just completed a whole group math lesson and has assigned seatwork. During seatwork, she walks around the room checking for understanding and helping individual students. She observes Luis asking questions and Greg quietly explaining a math problem to Luis in Spanish. Which response do you think best exemplifies DPT? Why?

Response A: Hearing and seeing the students’ behavior, Ms. Chavez realizes that Luis is asking Greg for help. Greg is explaining the math seatwork to Luis. She does not approve of Spanish being spoken in the classroom. She believes students should do their own work. English language acquisition and developing independent study skills are classroom goals. She walks over to their desks, nicely and quietly reminds

Table 4
Diversity Pedagogical Dimensions

Definition of Dimensional Elements

Teacher Pedagogical Behaviors	Student Cultural Displays
<p>1. Diversity: Diversity refers to dissimilarities in traits, qualities, characteristics, beliefs, values, and mannerisms present in self and others. It is displayed through (a) predetermined factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, national origin, and sexual orientation; and (b) changeable features, such as citizenship, worldviews, language, schooling, religious beliefs, marital, parental, and socio-economic status, and work experiences.</p> <p>2. Identity: Identity refers to knowledge of who we are and to what groups we belong. A complex developmental process defines self as an individual and as a group member. The explanations and information used to acquire a sense of self and group membership is determined by the biological, cultural, ethnic, social, psychological, and political factors in one’s socialization process.</p> <p>3. Social Interactions: Public and shared contact or communication in dyad or group settings which provide participants opportunity to evaluate, exchange, and share resources.</p> <p>4. Culturally Safe Classroom Context: A classroom environment where students feel emotionally secure, psychologically consistent, and culturally, linguistically, academically, socially, and physically comfortable, both as individuals and as members of the groups to which they belong.</p> <p>5. Language: Human language is a cultural tool used to share, convey, and disclose thoughts, ideas, values, and feelings through words, signals, and/or written symbols. It is also one of the most powerful means to preserve and sustain a cultural heritage and history.</p> <p>6. Culturally Inclusive Content: The culturally influenced substance, meanings, and perspectives present in the instructional resources used in the various fields of study such as literacy, mathematics, science, social studies.</p> <p>7. Instruction: Teacher actions facilitating the construction of students’ new knowledge through: teaching strategies connecting students’ prior cultural knowledge to new understandings, creation of a classroom context enabling student learning, and selection of culturally inclusive content.</p> <p>8. Assessment: Organized, structured, ongoing, varied methods used to observe, document, record, evaluate, and appraise the level and quality of individual and group student work and knowledge gain in a given activity or subject, to: (a) improve student learning, (b) determine what students know and what they are able to do, and (c) evaluate how student performance matches teacher expectations and standards.</p>	<p>1. Consciousness of Difference: Deliberate awareness and thoughtful exploration of diversity in people, ideas, objects, values, and attitudes on a continuum with multiple points of variance. This conceptualization tends to discourage reinforcement of dualistic thinking patterns, minimizes development of stereotypes, and prejudicial attitudes, and decreases the frequency of discriminatory actions towards individuals and groups that differ from self.</p> <p>2. Ethnic Identity Development: Ethnic identity is a dimension of self, as an individual and as a group member. It forms, develops, and emerges from membership in a particular ethnic group. It is a consequence of a distinctive socialization process and is influenced by the degree of personal significance individuals attach to membership in an ethnic group.</p> <p>3. Interpersonal Relationships: Familiar social associations among two or more individuals involving reciprocity and variable degrees of trust, support, companionship, duration, and intimacy.</p> <p>4. Self-regulated Learning: Demonstrations of the self initiated, managed, directed, contained, and restrained conduct required to meet self- determined personal and group goals and to adapt to established classroom standards.</p> <p>5. Language Learning: Linguistic growth evident in listening/speaking skills and literacy skills (reading, writing, and viewing) acquired in informal home and community settings and/or in the formal language experiences and social interactions in school.</p> <p>6. Knowledge Acquisition: The process of connecting prior cultural knowledge to new information in ways that promote new understandings and advance the development of knowledge, skills needed to reason, solve problems, and construct new insights.</p> <p>7. Reasoning Skills: Ability to apply knowledge from personal cultural practices, language, and ethnic experiences to gain command of one’s thinking through the acquisition and development of the thinking tools needed to gain new knowledge and take control of one’s learning.</p> <p>8. Self-evaluation: Self-appraisal through reflection, review of thoughts and analysis of personal and group behavior to: (a) monitor academic and social goals, assess progress, and identify competencies and weaknesses, (b) plan, assume ownership, and take responsibility for one’s learning, and (c) evaluate the strategies used to maximize the acquisition, retention, and performance of new understandings.</p>

Greg to speak only in English. Then she asks Luis to please do his own work.

Response B: Ms. Chavez observes the interaction between the two students. She walks closer so she can hear what they are talking about. She determines that the conversation is productive and is advancing the goals of the lesson. She approves the student-student teaching-learning incident. She chooses to acknowledge the benefits of this students' interaction. She walks over and openly praises Luis for seeking help and Greg for helping Luis.

Response C: Ms. Chavez hears Greg and Luis talking. She insists on complete silence during seatwork. Students who talk, regardless of the purpose, content, language used, or need for discussion, are asked to stop. She concentrates on fairness and strives to treat everyone the same. Compliance to the 'no talking' class rule is important. She is neither aware that Luis does not always understand lessons/directions nor that Greg serves as a language resource to Luis. Lack of observational skills and inability to find multiple ways to help Luis create conditions that interfere with Luis' potential to achieve. Ms. Chavez is thinking of changing the seating arrangement with the intention of separating these two boys.

Issues for Consideration: Consider how teacher-response affects children's experiences in the classroom.

1. How does a teacher behavior help children decide whether to reveal or conceal a cultural display.
2. How is the teacher using the students' linguistic, academic, and social skills?
3. Which response has the greatest potential to advance student learning? Explain.
4. How does teacher stance of treating everybody the same versus treating students fairly affect the learning opportunities of diverse students in classrooms?
5. What would you do in this case? Why?

Vignette 2: Jack-O-Lantern

This vignette is an example of a classroom environment where children were free to use their cultural tools and openly display their cultural knowledge (Sheets, 1998b). This event took place in an all day kindergarten classroom (28 students) in a low-performing, high-poverty public school in the Pacific Northwest. Tanika was the only African American child in the classroom. Seventeen children were Spanish speaking; 12 had one or more parents from Mexico and 5 were from

other countries in South America. The other children included: 6 Asian American (4 Laotian, 1 Hmong, and 1 Vietnamese) and 4 European American. Most of the children were second language learners and all received free or reduced lunch.

Children were asked to complete a single digit addition math handout (12 problems), make Jack-O-Lanterns through a drawing, cutting, and pasting art activity, and then select a choice activity. Short verbal directions were given and the afternoon schedule was posted on the blackboard. Children were directed to a teacher-made sample and chart posted above the art supplies with written directions. The supplies for the art project were: glue, scissors, square orange construction paper (9 1/2 x 9 1/2), small green and black construction rectangles and squares. Children had access to boxes and baskets with colored paper, fabric scraps, yarn, and buttons.

Multiple thin scraps of white construction paper on Tanika's table showed the degree of determination needed to finally produce the six long, thin, white strips that met her criteria of "braid." She carefully cut and glued five small circles, repeating the pattern, at the end of each strip: two orange, one green, and two red. She drew and cut an orange circle shape. She positioned the strips at the top of the orange circle shape, moving them so three were on one side and three on the other. She cut and glued a green stump, securing the ends of all six strips. More cutting and pasting turned her orange circle shape into a Jack-o-Lantern.

I [teacher] was stapling completed Jack-O-Lanterns on the bulletin board when Tanika handed me her finished product. She said, "You think this is an orange pumpkin, right?" I nodded, warily. She laughed, "It's not orange, it's brown like me." Consciously aware of the beauty in her brown skin, I smiled. "Look at the elaboration on these braids. Wow! Look at the detail on the eyes. They even have eyelashes. It's beautiful, Tanika!" While Tanika explained exactly where on the bulletin board she wanted her artwork placed, a few children gathered to admire the only Jack-O-Lantern with braids. Overhearing the activity over the braids, Lisa and Carmen (Tanika's best friends) insisted that Tanika show them how to make braids. Walking toward the art area, Carmen touched Tanika's arm and said, "Your brown is a pretty color, right?" "Right!" they laughed. In her role as expert, Tanika gave her a lesson (Sheets, 1998b).

Issues for Consideration: An analysis of Tanika's behavior shows that she felt comfortable completing the task and an-

nouncing that she and her Jack-O-Lantern were brown. Her friends and teacher acknowledged the beauty of her skin color. While this cultural display signified an expression of ethnic identity and a declaration of a racial marker (skin color), it was also indicative of Tanika's self-regulated behavior, language, social, and academic competence. Through a deliberate cognitive process, Tanika decided what she was going to do and how she was going to personalize this project to make a statement of self, which she and others publicly acknowledged. Her problem-solving skills, control of fine motor skills, and self-regulated determination to produce this type of elaborated art project are indicators of achievement and intelligence. The designing, cutting, and gluing of thin, long strips, small balls, and tiny clumps of eyelashes to her Jack-O-Lantern are difficult tasks for most five-year olds. In addition, her willingness to teach others demonstrated effective and positive interpersonal relationships with peers as well as strong communication skills.

Teacher behavior specific to the Jack-O-Lantern event indicates that awareness of how Tanika's statements and artistic expression may link to her racial and ethnic identity allowed the teacher to respond purposefully. Attentive to her status of one—the only African American child in the class—the teacher was consciously aware that this was an opportunity to promote development of her racial and ethnic identity. "Typically, I read to the children at the end of the day. On that particular day, I chose *Meet Damitra Brown* (Grimes, 1994), a story about an African American girl who always wore purple—the color of royalty—just in case she was a real princess" (Sheets, 1998b, p. 10). The selection of this story is an example of selecting culturally inclusive content. This shared reading activity was a direct response to the children's knowledge building, which developed through their earlier social and collaborative learning experiences. By capitalizing on Tanika's self-awareness of her color and on the children's interest in examining a Jack-O-Lantern with braids and making braids, this story extended and provided opportunity to examine another African American girl-child's expressions of a self and the cultural role of color. A lively discussion about purple underwear, kings, queens, and favorite colors took place. Brian (Laotian American) commented that he thought kings and queens wore yellow. He intended to ask his grandmother. Larry's (European American) addition of popular cultural knowledge—"Barney (children's cartoon character) is purple!" delighted

everybody. Tanika asked to borrow the book overnight, creating a fortuitous home-school connection.

There were conditions in this classroom—instructional and contextual—that encouraged children to express identity factors and prior knowledge during classroom events. For example, the first two weeks children focused on comparing and enjoying color, rather than identifying and labeling colors. They explored and compared the shades and hues of the colors found in skin, hair, clothing, food, leaves, buildings, flowers, and so forth. As a particular color was studied the children and teacher brought objects in various shades, which were displayed, labeled, used for art projects, social studies, science, and sometimes eaten.

For example, the display for the color green included a small Mexican flag, a sage baby blanket, an emerald dime store ring, an olive Army jacket found at Goodwill, a small jade piece of jewelry, pieces of different shades of green construction paper, tissue paper, and samples of wall paper, and multiple pictures of green things made by the children or cut out of magazines. The children tasted fresh leafy green vegetables and green fruit, which were also labeled.

They read *Green Eggs and Ham* (Geisel, 1960), made and ate green eggs and ham. They watched tomatoes and *chile* ripen to a bright red, green bananas turned yellow, hard green avocados softened to a nice brown, and piles of green leaves change to brown, yellow, and red. The children discussed why Granny Smith green apples and *tomatillos* (green tomatoes) remained green. Maria's mother came to school. She brought green enchiladas and a green cake. She made a mild green *chile* sauce and guacamole dip.

Baskets of people crayons with various hues of brown skin tones were available for their use. Black and brown, colors rarely used in primary classrooms, were familiar to these children (Sheets, 1997). Children participated in multiple art experiences using only brown and black paper of various shades, textures, and sizes, such as, paper towels, plastic, packing paper, fabric, corrugated paper, cardboard, tissue paper, textured paper, construction paper, wood, and big boxes. The playhouse had beautiful long, black taffeta, velvet, and silk gowns and various shades and types of brown fabric pieces, which were used creatively as scarves, skirts, capes, and tablecloths.

Children's home-knowledge was valued. For example, it was common for children to teach each other. Most of the children could count from 1-10 in at least three languages—English, Laotian, and

Spanish. Those who knew colors, alphabet letters, and numbers taught those who did not. In the classroom, children freely used their home languages both socially and academically. Since the children's level of English proficiency varied, some children translated assignments and others worked collaboratively with peers. In the traditional, daily morning circle, children choose to share in their home language or in English. In this classroom, children were liked, treated as scholars, and taught to achieve.

When discussing the Jack-O-Lantern vignette you might

1. Choose to identify the children's cultural displays and the teacher's pedagogical behaviors in the eight dimensions listed in Table 4.

2. Identify the teaching strategies you might adapt in your teaching or that you find helpful.

3. Discuss and describe the classroom conditions determining the cultural, academic, and emotional tone of the classroom.

4. What were some of the teaching strategies that linked prior learning to new knowledge?

Classroom Application: Since teachers spend their entire childhood in classrooms, Kennedy (1999) maintains that these personal K-12 classroom experiences are more influential and powerful, than the information gained through teacher preparation courses and field experiences. The knowledge that you internalize during your process of schooling often influences what you believe about teaching and learning. This knowledge shapes what you think the subject matter should be like, how students are supposed to behave, and how they are expected to function in schools.

Most teachers teach the same way they were taught. If this is the case for most teachers, the assumption is that it will be different for you. Your preparation and commitment to learn how to teach diverse children will support your efforts to change this trend. One of the ways to you can succeed with diverse students is to understand and internalize a diversity ideology. This theoretical foundation will help guide your practice. To accomplish this task, you might consider what follows.

Selecting a Diversity Ideology

Select a diversity ideology to help frame your understandings of the relationship among culture, schooling, and your teaching practice. For example:

1. Understand how the application of

culture to learning influences the way you make instructional decisions, select curricular content, and design classroom climate. Make linkages among theoretical orientations, your personal philosophical beliefs, and your behavior in the classroom.

2. Examine how you were shaped by the cultural values promoted in your schooling and examine whose values should be transmitted in a culturally diverse society. Critically analyze your own cultural position, characteristics, and skills and use this knowledge to identify how these personal skills, characteristics, attitudes, and knowledge help you develop professionally.

Centering Students in the Teaching-Learning Process

Center children in the schooling process. For example:

1. Acknowledge your responsibility to provide cultural, emotional, and cognitive conditions in classrooms where students from different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups feel safe to learn what is intended.

2. Place value on the home knowledge students bring to learning events.

3. Maintain a sense of reality of the complexity involved in connecting and applying cultural knowledge to teaching-learning events.

4. Focus on changing your behavior without placing blame on students, their families, or their communities. For example, acknowledge that experiential differences among children and teachers may produce inequity of outcome. These cultural differences may simultaneously and unintentionally disadvantage some children while supporting others.

Conclusion

All teachers can begin and most evolve into culturally competent educators; however, it is important to become conscious that the arduous journey from novice to expert requires hard work, relentless commitment, and a high investment of time and energy. While acknowledging the role of culture in schooling, developing professional skills, and aligning personal values to address diversity are essential; the complexity of the teaching-learning process cannot be minimized. Knowledge of the ways children learn and the ability to apply and translate a diversity ideology to practice is also required.

Teachers, even at a novice level, can

develop strong observational skills to help them notice and respond to students' understandings of teaching-learning events. Becoming conscious of one's own thinking patterns, can help us respond in ways that enable students to achieve.

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Contribute to Voices of Justice the Creative Writing Section of Multicultural Education Magazine

We're seeking submissions of creative writing on topics including diversity, multiculturalism, equity, education, social justice, environmental justice, and more specific subtopics (race, gender/sex, sexual orientation, language, (dis)ability, etc.). Do you write poetry? Short stories or flash fiction? Creative nonfiction? We will consider any style or form, but we prefer prose that is no longer than 750 words and poetry that can fit comfortably onto a single page of text.

Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

And... If you're a teacher, Pre-K through lifelong learning, please encourage your students to submit to us! We would love submissions from the youngsters as well as the not-so-youngsters!

Where to Submit: Submissions may be sent electronically or by postal mail. Electronic submissions should be sent to Paul C. Gorski at pgorski1@gmu.edu with the subject line "ME Submission." Hard copy, mailed submissions should be addressed to: Paul C. Gorski, Integrative Studies, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Format: All submissions should be double-spaced, including references and any other materials. Please send one copy of your submission with the title noted at the top of the page. The title of the manuscript, name(s) of author(s), academic title(s), institutional affiliation(s), and address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the author(s) should all be included on a cover sheet separate from the manuscript. If you are a student or if you are submitting work on behalf of a student, please include age, grade level, and school name.

What to Send: If you are submitting your work via postal mail, we ask that authors send the full text of the submission on a 3-and-one-half-inch High Density PC-compatible computer disk in any common word-processing program. If you wish the manuscript or other materials to be returned after consideration and publication, please also send a stamped and addressed return envelope large enough for that purpose.