CHAPTER 5

Culture and Diversity

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What Would You Do?

Teachers’ Casebook

Your high-school classes this year are about equally divided among three groups—African Americans, Asians, and Latinos/as. Students from each of the three groups seem to stick together, rarely making friends with students from “outside.” When you ask people to select partners for projects, the divisions are usually on ethnic lines. At times, there are insults exchanged between the groups and the atmosphere of the class is getting tense. Often the Asian or Latino students communicate in their native language—one you don’t understand—and you assume that the joke is on you because of the looks and laughs directed your way.

The cultural composition of American classrooms is changing. The same can be said for many countries today. In a talk to the American Educational Research Association, Frank Pajares, one of the wisest educational psychologists I know, said, “The critical questions in education involve matters that cannot be settled by universal prescription. They demand attention to the cultural forces that shape our lives” (Pajares, 2000, p. 5). I believe he is right. In this chapter, we examine the many cultures that form the fabric of our society. We begin by tracing the schools’ responses to different ethnic and cultural groups and consider the concept of multicultural education. With a broad conception of culture as a basis, we then examine three important dimensions of every student’s identity: social class, ethnicity, and gender. Then, we turn to a consideration of language and bilingual education. The last section of the chapter presents three general principles for teaching every student.

Critical Thinking

- What is the real problem here?
- How would you handle the situation?
- How would you teach the class to help the students feel more comfortable with each other?
- What are your first goals in working on this problem?
- How will these issues affect the grade levels you will teach?

Collaboration

With 4 or 5 other members of your class, brainstorm as many reasonable ways as you can to address this situation. Come to a consensus on the two best solutions and present them to the class, with your rationale for why these are good choices.

By the time you have completed this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

- What is the difference between the melting pot and multicultural education?
- What is culture and what groups make up your own cultural identity?
- Why does the school achievement of low-income students often fall below that of middle- and upper-income students?
- What are some examples of conflicts and compatibilities between home and school cultures?
- What is the school’s role in the development of gender differences?
- What is effective teaching in bilingual classrooms?
- What are examples of culturally relevant pedagogy that fit the grades and subjects you will teach?
- How can you create a resilient classroom?
Today's Diverse Classrooms

Who are the students in American classrooms today? Here are a few statistics (taken from Banks, 2002; Children's Defense Fund, 2005; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Grant & Sleet, 1989; Halford, 1999; McLoyd, 1998; Meece & Kurtz-Costes, 2001; Payne & Biddle, 1999):

- 1 in 6 American children lives in poverty and 1 in 14 lives in extreme poverty. Nearly 50% of all African American children are poor.
- The number of children in poverty in the United States is almost 50% higher than in any other developed Western nation and 5 to 8 times higher than in many prominent industrialized nations.
- Children growing up in poverty are twice as likely to be retained in a grade, drop out of school, or experience a violent crime.
- 1 child in 3 is born to unmarried parents. 1 in 5 is born to a mother who did not graduate from high school. 1 child in 3 lives with a single parent, usually a working mother.
- 1 in 3 children will be in state or federal prison before age 20. 1 in 1,339 will be killed by guns before age 20.
- 18% of the United States population speaks a language other than English at home—half of these families speak Spanish.
- By the year 2020, over 66% of all school-age children in the United States will be African American, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American, and many will be the children of new immigrants.
- By 2050, there will be no majority race or ethnicity in the United States; every American will be a member of a minority group.

Even though students in classrooms are increasingly diverse in race, ethnicity, language, and economic level, teachers are less diverse—the percentage of White teachers is increasing (now about 91%), while the percentage of Black teachers is falling, down to about 7%. Clearly, it is important for all teachers to better understand and work effectively with all their students.

Individuals, Groups, and Society

Since the beginning of the 20th century, a flow of immigrants has entered the United Kingdom, Western Europe, Canada, Australia, the United States, and many other developed countries. These new (mostly European) immigrants were expected to assimilate—that is, to enter the cultural melting pot and become like those who had arrived earlier. For years, the goal of American schools was to be the fire under the melting pot. Immigrant children who spoke different languages and had diverse religions and cultural heritages were expected to come to the schools, master English, and learn to become mainstream Americans. Of course, most schools were designed to serve European American middle-class children, so the immigrant children rather than the schools were expected to do the adapting and changing. Involuntary immigrants, descendants of the slaves forced to the United States, often were not welcome in the cultural melting pot.

In the 1960s and 1970s, some educators suggested that students of color and poor students had problems in school because they were "culturally disadvantaged" or "culturally handicapped." The assumption of this cultural deficit model was that the students' home culture was inferior because it had not prepared them to fit into the schools. Today, educational psychologists reject the idea of cultural deficits. They believe that no culture is deficient, but rather that there may be incompatibilities between the student's home culture and the expectations of the school (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001).

Also during the 1960s and 1970s, there was growing concern for civil and human rights and an increasing sense among many ethnic groups that they did not want to assimilate completely into mainstream American society. Rather, they wanted to maintain their culture and identity while still being a respected part of the larger society. Multiculturalism was the goal.
Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is "a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students" (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. xii). Multicultural education is one response to the increasing diversity of the school population as well as to the growing demand for equity for all groups. An examination of the alternative approaches to multicultural education is beyond the scope of an educational psychology text, but be aware that there is no general agreement about the "best" approach.

James Banks (2006) suggests that multicultural education has five dimensions, as shown in Figure 5.1. Many people are familiar only with the dimension of content integration, using examples and content from a variety of cultures when teaching a subject. Because they believe that multicultural education is simply a change in curriculum, some teachers assume that it is irrelevant for subjects such as science and mathematics. But if you consider the other four dimensions—helping students understand how knowledge is influenced by beliefs, reducing prejudice, creating social structures in schools that support learning and development for all students, and using teaching methods that reach all students—then you will see that this view of multicultural education is relevant to all subjects and all students.

Multicultural education rejects the idea of the melting pot and supports a society that values diversity—more a salad bowl of many contributions (Banks, 1997, 2006; Sleeter, 1995). Let's take a closer look at the differences that make up the mosaic of cultural diversity.
American Cultural Diversity

STOP | THINK | WRITE  Take a quick break from reading and turn on the television. (Don't do this if you won't come back to reading until next Tuesday!). Find a channel with commercials (I know, it is harder to find one without). Listen about to 15 commercials. For each one, is the voice or the character in the ad a male or a female? Old or young? Economically privileged or poor? What is the character's ethnicity or race? Do a quick tally of how many instances you observe in each category.

In this text we take a broad interpretation of culture and multicultural education, so we will examine social class, race, ethnicity, and gender as aspects of diversity. We begin with a look at the meaning of culture. Many people associate this concept with the “cultural events” section of the newspaper—art galleries, museums, Shakespeare, classical music, and so on. Culture has a much broader meaning; it embraces the whole way of life of a group of people.

Culture and Group Membership.  There are many definitions of culture. Most include the knowledge, skills, rules, traditions, beliefs, and values that guide behavior in a particular group of people as well as the art and artifacts produced and passed down to the next generation (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993; Pai & Alder, 2001). The group creates a culture—a program for living—and communicates the program to members. Groups can be defined along regional, ethnic, religious, racial, gender, social class, or other lines. Each of us is a member of many groups, so we all are influenced by many different cultures. Sometimes, the influences are incompatible or even contradictory. For example, if you are a feminist but also a Roman Catholic, you may have trouble reconciling the two different cultures’ beliefs about the ordination of women as priests. Your personal belief will be based, in part, on how strongly you identify with each group (Banks, 1994).

There are many different cultures within every modern country. In the United States, students growing up in a small rural town in the Great Plains are part of a cultural group that is very different from that of students in a large urban center or students in a Florida suburb. In Canada, students living in the suburbs of Toronto certainly differ in a number of ways from students growing up in a Vancouver high-rise apartment or on a farm in Quebec. Within those small towns in the Great Plains or Quebec, the son or daughter of a convenience store clerk grows up in a different culture from the child of the town doctor or dentist. Individuals of African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, or European descent have distinctive histories and traditions. The experiences of males and females are different in most ethnic and economic groups. Everyone living within a particular country shares many common experiences and values, especially because of the influence of the mass media. But other aspects of their lives are shaped by differing cultural backgrounds.

Cautions in Interpreting Cultural Differences.  Before we examine the bases for cultural differences, two cautions are necessary. First, we will consider social class, ethnicity, and gender separately, because much of the available research focuses on only one of these variables. Of course, real children are not just African American, or middle class, or female; they are complex beings and members of many groups.

The second caution comes from James Banks (1993), who has written several books on multicultural education:

Although membership in a gender, racial, ethnic, social-class, or religious group can provide us with important clues about an individual’s behavior, it cannot enable us to predict behavior. Membership in a particular group does not determine behavior but makes certain types of behavior more probable. (pp. 13–14)

Keep this in mind as you read about characteristics of economically disadvantaged students or Asian Americans or males. The information we will examine reflects tendencies and probabilities. It does not tell you about the specific students you will teach. For example, if a minority group student in your class consistently arrives late, it may be
that the student has a job before school, must walk a long distance, is responsible for getting younger siblings to school, or even that he or she dreads school.

Economic and Social Class Differences

Even though most researchers would agree that social class is one of the most meaningful cultural dimensions in people's lives, those same researchers have great difficulty defining social class (Liu et al., 2004). Different terms are used—social class, socioeconomic status (SES), economic background, wealth, poverty, or privilege. Some people consider only economic differences; others add considerations of power, influence, mobility, control over resources, and prestige.

Social Class and SES

In modern societies, levels of wealth, power, and prestige are not always consistent. Some people—for instance, university professors—are members of professions that are reasonably high in terms of social status, but provide little wealth or power (believe me). Other people have political power even though they are not wealthy, or they may be members of the social register in a town, even though their family money is long gone. Most people are generally aware of their social class—that is, they perceive that some groups are above them in social class and some are below. They may even show a kind of "classism" (like racism or sexism), believing that they are "better" than members of lower social classes and avoiding association with them.

There is another way of thinking about class differences that is commonly used in research. Sociologists and psychologists combine variations in wealth, power, control over resources, and prestige into an index called socioeconomic status, or SES. In contrast to social class, most people are not conscious of their SES designation. SES is usually ascribed to people by researchers; different formulas for determining SES might lead to different assignments (Liu et al., 2004). No single variable, not even income, is an effective measure of SES. Most researchers identify four general levels of SES: upper, middle, working, and lower classes. The main characteristics of these four levels are summarized in Table 5.1. As you watched the commercials (Stop/Think/Write on page 164), how many people did you see who appeared to be lower SES?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5.1</th>
<th>Selected Characteristics of Different Social Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>Upper Class</strong> $160,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
<td>Corporate, professional, family money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Prestigious colleges and professional schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home ownership</strong></td>
<td>At least one home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health coverage</strong></td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighborhoods</strong></td>
<td>Exclusive or comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afford children's college</strong></td>
<td>Easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political power</strong></td>
<td>National, state, or local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Economic and Social Class Differences
Poverty and School Achievement

About one in six Americans under the age of 18 lives in poverty, defined in 2005 by the United States Department of Health and Human Services as an income of $19,350 for a family of four ($24,190 in Alaska and $22,260 in Hawaii). That means about 13 million children. The United States has the highest rate of poverty for children of all developed nations, as much as five to eight times higher than other industrialized countries. And almost half of these children can be classified as living in deep poverty—in families with incomes 50% below the poverty threshold. For a while, there were improvements. In 2000, the number of families in poverty was the lowest in 21 years—about 6.2 million (U.S. Census Bureau, September 25, 2001), but rates have been rising again since then.

In 2003, the absolute number of children living in poverty was about the same for non-Hispanic White children (4.2 million), Latino/a children (4.1 million), and Black children (3.9 million). But the rate of poverty is higher for Black and Latino children—34% of Black and 30% of Latino children lived in poverty in 2003, while 12.5% of Asian and 9.8% of non-Hispanic White children were poor. Contrary to many stereotypes, more poor children live in suburban and rural areas than in central cities, and poor families have only 2.2 children on average (Children’s Defense Fund, 2005).

High-SES students of all ethnic groups show higher average levels of achievement on test scores and stay in school longer than low-SES students (Gutman, Sameroff, & Cole, 2003; McLoyd, 1998). Poor children are at least twice as likely as non-poor children to be kept back in school. Poverty during a child’s preschool years appears to have the greatest negative impact. Unfortunately, families with young children are the most likely to be poor because young parents have the lowest paying jobs or no jobs at all. And the longer the child is in poverty, the stronger the impact is on achievement. For example, even when we take into account parents’ education, the chance that children will be retained in grades or placed in special education classes increases by 2% to 3% for every year the children live in poverty (Ackerman, Brown, & Leard, 2004; Bronfenbrenner, McCall, Wethington, Moen, & Cicci, 1996; Sherman, 1994).

What are the effects of low socioeconomic status that might explain the lower school achievement of these students? Many factors maintain a cycle of poverty—no one cause is to blame (Evans, 2004). Poor health care for mother and child, dangerous or unhealthy environments, limited resources, family stress, interruptions in schooling, exposure to violence, overcrowding, homelessness, discrimination, and other factors lead to school failures, low-paying jobs—and another generation born in poverty. García (1991), Evans (2004), and McLoed (1998) describe other possible explanations. Let’s take a closer look at each of them.

Health, Environment, and Stress. Poor children breathe more polluted air and drink more contaminated water (Evans, 2004). Children who live in older houses with lead paint and lead-soldered pipes, which exist in many inner city areas, have greater concentrations of lead in their blood. Poor children are at least twice as likely as non-poor children to suffer lead poisoning, which is associated with lower school achievement and long-term neurological impairment (McLoyd, 1998). Pedro Nogueria (2005) believes “If we focused on removing lead from the environment, we could boost achievement ten points on the Stanford 9,” a commonly used standardized test (p. 13). About 55% of poor Americans experience serious deprivations and stress during the year—lack of food, utility shutoffs, crowded or substandard housing, or lack of a stove or refrigerator. Poor children are more than 15 times as likely to experience hunger (Children’s Defense Fund, 2005). Families in poverty have less access to good prenatal and infant health care and nutrition. Over half of all adolescent mothers receive no prenatal care at all. Poor mothers and adolescent mothers are more likely to have premature babies, and prematurity is associated with many cognitive and learning problems. Children in poverty are more likely to be exposed to both legal drugs (nicotine, alcohol) and illegal drugs (cocaine, heroin) before birth. Children whose mothers take drugs during pregnancy can have problems with organization, attention, and language skills.
Low Expectations—Low Academic Self-Concept. Because poor students may wear old clothes, speak in a dialect, or be less familiar with books and school activities, teachers and other students may assume that these students are not bright. The teacher may avoid calling on them to protect them from the embarrassment of giving wrong answers or because they make the teacher uncomfortable. Thus, low expectations become institutionalized and the educational resources provided are inadequate (Borman & Overman, 2004). Ultimately, the children come to believe that they aren’t very good at schoolwork (Ellich, 1994). The following true story shows how powerful this effect on academic self-concept can be. Terrence Quinn, principal of an elementary school in New York, spends his mornings serving coffee and doughnuts in a welfare hotel six blocks from his school, trying to convince parents to send their children to school.

Last spring, Jacqueline, a 6th-grader who had lived at the hotel, was selected as the school’s valedictorian. One month before the official announcement, she entered Quinn’s office and asked to speak to him in private. “Can someone on welfare actually be the valedictorian?” she asked. (Reed & Sutter, 1990, p. K2)

Low expectations, along with a lower-quality educational experience, can lead to a sense of helplessness, described in the previous chapter. That is, economically disadvantaged students (or any students who fail continually) may come to believe that doing well in school is impossible. In fact, about one-fourth of children from poor families drop out of school (Bennett, 1995). Without a high-school diploma, these students find few rewards awaiting them in the work world. Many available jobs barely pay a living wage. If the head of a family of three works full time at the minimum wage, the family’s income will still be below the poverty line. Low-SES children, particularly those who also encounter racial discrimination, “become convinced that it is difficult if not impossible for them to advance in the mainstream by doing well in school” (Coleman, 1988).

Peer Influences and Resistance Cultures. Some researchers have suggested that low-SES students may become part of a resistance culture. To members of this culture, making it in school means selling out and trying to act “middle class.” In order to maintain their identity and their status within the group, low-SES students must reject the behaviors that would make them successful in school—studying, cooperating with teachers, even coming to class (Bennett, 1995; Ogbu, 1987, 1997). John Ogbu linked identification in a resistance culture to poor Latino American, Native American, and African American groups, but similar reactions have been noted for poor White students both in the United States and in England (Willis, 1977) and high-school students in Papua New Guinea (Woodfolk Hoy, Dementhal, & Pape, 2002). This is not to say that all low-SES students resist achievement. Adolescents whose parents value academic achievement tend to select friends who also share those values (Berndt & Keefe, 1995). Many young people, like Jacqueline described above, are high achievers in spite of either their economic situation or negative peer influences (O’Connor, 1997). And we should not forget that some aspects of schooling—competitive grading, public reprimands, stressful testing and assignments, and repetitive work that is too hard or too easy—can encourage resistance in all students (Okagaki, 2001).

Tracking: Poor Teaching. Another explanation for the lower achievement of many low-SES students is that these students experience tracking and therefore have a different academic socialization; that is, they are actually taught differently (Oakes, 1990b). If they are tracked into “low-ability” or “general” classes, they may be taught to memorize and be passive. Middle-class students are more likely to be encouraged to think and be creative in their classes (Anyon, 1980). When low-SES students receive an inferior education, their academic skills are inferior and their life chances are limited. Adam Gamoran (1987) found that the achievement differences between low-track and high-track students were greater than the differences between high-school dropouts and graduates. In an interview with Marge Scherer (1993), Jonathan Kozol described the cruel predictive side of tracking:

[Tracking is so utterly predictive. The little girl who gets shoved into the low reading group in 2nd grade is very likely to be the child who is urged to take cosmetology instead]
Connect and Extend to Other Chapters

Related information on the effects of ability grouping and tracking appears in Chapter 4.

of algebra in the 8th grade, and most likely to be in vocational courses, not college courses, in the 10th grade, if she hasn’t dropped out by then. (p. 8)

Even if they are not tracked, low-income students are more likely to attend schools with inadequate resources and less-effective teachers (Evans, 2004).

Home Environment and Resources. Families in poverty seldom have access to high-quality preschool care for their young children. Research has shown that such high-quality care enhances cognitive and social development (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Poor children read less and spend more time watching television; they have less access to books, computers, libraries, trips, and museums (Evans, 2004). These home and neighborhood resources seem to have the greatest impact on children’s achievement when school is not in session—during the summer or before students enter school. For example, Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson (1997) found that low-SES and high-SES students made comparable gains in reading and math when schools were open, but the low-SES students lost ground during summer while the high-SES students continued to improve academically. Another study found that lack of cognitive stimulation in the home accounted for one-third to one-half of the disadvantages in verbal, reading, and math skills of poor children in a national study (Korenman, Miller, & Sjaastad, 1995).

Again, not all low-income families lack resources. Many of these families provide rich learning environments for their children. When parents of any SES level support and encourage their children—by reading to them, providing books and educational toys, taking the children to the library, making time and space for learning—the children tend to become better, more enthusiastic readers (Morrow, 1983; Peng & Lee, 1992; Shields, Gordon, & Dupree, 1985).

Ethnic and Racial Differences

Ethnicity is used to refer to “groups that are characterized in terms of a common nationality, culture, or language” (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993, p. 651). We all have some ethnic heritage, whether our background is Italian, Jewish, Ukrainian, Hmong, Chinese, Japanese, Navajo, Hawaiian, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Hungarian, German, African, or Irish—to name only a few. Race, on the other hand, is defined as “a category composed of men and women who share biologically transmitted traits that are defined as socially significant,” such as skin color or hair texture (Macan, 2003, p. 534). Depending on the traits you measure and the theory you follow, there are between 3 and 300 races. In effect, race is a label people apply to themselves and to others based on appearances. There are no biologically pure races (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). In fact, as you saw in Chapter 4, for any two humans chosen at random, an average of only .012% (about one-hundredth of one percent) of the alphabetic sequence of their genetic codes is different due to race (Myers, 2005). Still, race is a powerful construct. At the individual level, race is part of our identity—how we understand ourselves and interact with others. At the group level, race is involved with economic and political structures (Omi & Winant, 1994).

Sociologists sometimes use the term minority group to label a group of people that receives unequal or discriminatory treatment. Strictly speaking, however, the term refers to a numerical minority compared to the total population. Referring to particular racial or ethnic groups as “minorities” is technically incorrect in some situations, because in certain places, such as Chicago or Mississippi, the “minority” group—African Americans—is actually the majority. This practice of referring to people as “minorities” because of their racial or ethnic heritage has been criticized because it is misleading.

The Changing Demographics: Cultural Differences

Between 1981 and 1990, the number of immigrants entering the United States was the largest ever. By the year 2020, almost two-thirds of the school-age population will be from
African American, Asian, Latina/Latino, or other ethnic groups (Meece & Kurtz-Costes, 2001). So many different cultures are represented in the United States.

Ricardo Garcia (1991) compares culture to an iceberg. One-third of the iceberg is visible; the rest is hidden and unknown. The visible signs of culture, such as costumes and marriage traditions, reflect only a small portion of the differences among cultures. Many of the differences are “below the surface.” They are implicit, unstated, even unconscious biases and beliefs (Casanova, 1987; Sheets, 2005). Cultures differ in rules for conducting interpersonal relationships, for example. In some groups, listeners give a slight affirmative nod of the head and perhaps an occasional “uh huh” to indicate they are listening carefully. But members of other cultures listen without giving acknowledgment, or with eyes downcast, as a sign of respect. In some cultures, high-status individuals initiate conversations and ask the questions, and low-status individuals only respond. In other cultures, the pattern is reversed.

Cultural influences are widespread and pervasive. Some psychologists even suggest that culture defines intelligence. For example, physical grace is essential in Balinese social life, so the ability to master physical movements is a mark of intelligence in that culture. Manipulating words and numbers is important in Western societies, so in these cultures such skills are indicators of intelligence (Gardner, 1983). But it would be wrong to assume that every member of a cultural group is identical in beliefs, actions, or values. Eugene Garcia (2002) suggests that culture is “attributes that are made available to members of a group, but may not be shared by all members” (p. 93).

Cultural Conflicts. The differences between cultures may be very obvious, such as holiday customs, or they may be very subtle, such as how to get your turn in conversations. The more subtle and unconscious the difference, the more difficult it is to change or even recognize (Casanova, 1987). Cultural conflicts are usually about below-the-surface differences, because when subtle cultural differences meet, misunderstandings are common. These conflicts can happen when the values and competencies of the dominant, mainstream culture are used to determine what is considered “normal” or appropriate behavior in schools. In these cases, children who have been socialized in a different culture may be perceived as acting inappropriately, not following the rules, or being rude and disrespectful.

Rosa Hernandez Sheets (2005) describes a 5-year-old Mexican American girl who tried to bring a bread roll, part of her school cafeteria lunch, home to give to her little brother every day. Her parents were proud of her for sharing, but the school officials made her throw the roll away, because it was against school rules to take food from the cafeteria. The girl was conflicted about following school rules versus honoring her family’s cultural values. The
teacher in this case solved the problem by talking to the cafeteria cook, getting the roll in a baggie, and putting the baggie in the girl's backpack to be taken home after school.

**Cultural Compatibility.** Not all cultural differences lead to clashes in school, however. A study comparing mothers in the People's Republic of China, Chinese American mothers, and Caucasian American mothers found dramatic differences in beliefs about motivation and the value of education (Hess, Chih-Mei, & McDevitt, 1987). For example, the mothers from the Republic of China attributed school failure to lack of effort more often than the Caucasian American mothers. The Chinese American mothers were in the middle, attributing failure to lack of effort more often than the Caucasian American mothers, but less often than the Republic of China mothers.

This does not mean that all Chinese American children are perfectly equipped for the American school, however. Children may perform well on tests and assignments, but feel uncomfortable in social situations, where subtle rules for interacting are not second nature to them (Casarino, 1987; Yee, 1992). Later in this chapter, we will explore other ways to make classrooms compatible with the home cultures of students. First, however, we need to examine some of the effects of cultural conflicts and discrimination on student achievement.

**Ethnic and Racial Differences in School Achievement**

A major concern in schools is that some ethnic groups consistently achieve below the average for all students (Byrnes, 2003; Ulline & Johnson, 2003). This pattern of results tends to hold for all standardized achievement tests, but the gaps have been narrowing over the past two to three decades. Level of educational attainment is improving too, as you can see in Figure 5.2. In 2000, 94% of White, 87% of African American, and 63% of Hispanic adults between ages 25 and 29 had graduated from high school.

![Educational Attainment](chart.png)

**FIGURE 5.2**

Educational Attainment

This figure compares the educational attainment levels of 25- to 29-year-old Whites, African Americans, and Latinos in March 1971 and March 2000.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinosos</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there are consistent differences among ethnic groups on tests of cognitive abilities, most researchers agree that these differences are mainly the legacy of discrimination, the product of cultural mismatches, or a result of growing up in a low-SES environment. Because many students from minority groups are also economically disadvantaged, it is important to separate the effects of these two sets of influences on school achievement. When we compare students from different ethnic and racial groups who are all at the same SES level, then their achievement differences diminish (Gleitman, Frilund, & Reisberg, 1999). For example, in an analysis of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics test results, James Byrnes (2003) found that less than 5% of the variance in math test scores was associated with race, but about 50% of the variance came from differences in SES, motivation, and exposure to learning opportunities (course work, calculator use, homework, etc.).

The Legacy of Discrimination

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?**

As part of your interview for a job in a very diverse middle school, the lead teacher for one of the home-based sections asks: "Describe how your life experiences will contribute to our goal to create an active anti-racist school system."

When we considered explanations for why low-SES students have trouble in school, we listed the low expectations and biases of teachers and fellow students. This has been the experience of many ethnic minority students as well. Imagine that the child described below is your own. What would you do?

(In the city of Topeka, Kansas, a minister walked hand in hand with his seven-year-old daughter to an elementary school four blocks from their home. Linda Brown wanted to enroll in the 2nd grade, but the school refused to admit her. Instead, public school officials required her to attend another school two miles away. This meant that she had to walk six blocks to a bus stop, where she sometimes waited half an hour for the bus. In bad weather, Linda Brown would be soaking wet by the time the bus came; one day she became so cold at the bus stop that she walked back home. Why, she asked her parents, could she not attend the school only four blocks away? (Macioris, 2003, p. 355)

Her parents' answer to this question, with the help of other concerned families, was to file a suit challenging the school policy. You know the outcome of the 1954 Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka ruling. "Separate but equal" schools for Black children were declared inherently unequal. Even though segregation in schools became illegal over 50 years ago, about two-thirds of all African American students still attend schools where members of minority groups make up at least 50% of the student body. Segregation in housing and neighborhoods persists and some areas have drawn school boundary lines deliberately to separate school enrollments along racial lines (Kantor & Lowe, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Schofield, 1991).

Years of research on the effects of desegregation have mostly shown that legally mandated integration is not a quick solution to the detrimental effects of centuries of racial inequality. In part because White students left integrated schools as the number of students of color increased, many urban schools today are more segregated than they were before the Supreme Court ordered busing and other desegregation measures. The schools in Los Angeles, Miami, Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Memphis, Houston, and Detroit have fewer than 11% non-Hispanic White students. And in almost 90% of the schools that have mostly African American and Latinx students, at least half of the students live in poverty, so racial segregation becomes economic segregation as well (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Orfield & Frankenberg, 2005).

Too often, even in integrated schools, minority-group students are resegregated in low-ability tracks. Simply putting people in the same building does not mean that they will come to respect each other or even that they will experience the same quality of education (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Pettigrew, 1998).
What Is Prejudice? The word prejudice is closely related to the word prejude. Prejudice is a rigid and irrational generalization—a prejudgment—about an entire category of people. Prejudice is made up of beliefs, emotions, and tendencies toward particular actions. For example, you are prejudiced against people who are overweight if you believe they are lazy (belief), feel disgusted (emotion), and refuse to date them (action) (Myers, 2005). Prejudice can be positive or negative; that is, you can have positive as well as negative irrational beliefs about a group, but the word usually refers to negative attitudes. Targets of prejudice can be based on race, ethnicity, religion, politics, geographic location, language, sexual orientation, gender, or appearance.

Racial prejudice is pervasive. The United States is a racist society, and this racism is not confined to one group (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999). Blatant prejudice has decreased in the past 50 years. For example, in 1970, over 50% of Americans agreed that it was all right to keep minorities out of their neighborhoods. By 1995, the number had dropped to about 10% (Myers, 2005). But subtle, below-the-surface racism continues. After several police shootings of unarmed Black men, researchers created a videogame that showed a series of White or Black men holding either a gun or a non-weapon such as a flashlight or wallet. Participants in the research were told to “shoot” whenever the person in the videogame held a weapon. Race was not mentioned. Nevertheless, participants shot armed targets more quickly and more frequently when those targets were Black, rather than White, but decided not to shoot unarmed targets more quickly and more frequently when they were White (Greenwald, Oakes, & Hoffman, 2003). When the participants in another study were actual police officers, they were more likely to mistakenly shoot unarmed Black suspects compared with unarmed White suspects (Plant & Perruche, 2005).

The Development of Prejudice. Prejudice starts early. By about age 6, over half the White children in a United States sample and 85% of students in a Canadian sample had significant pro-White, anti-Black biases. Two popular beliefs are that young children are innocently color-blind and that they will not develop biases unless their parents teach them to be prejudiced. Although these beliefs are appealing, they are not supported by research. Even without direct coaching from their parents, many young children develop racial prejudice. Current explanations of the development of prejudice combine personal and social factors (Katz, 2003).

One source of prejudice is the human tendency to divide the social world into two categories—us and them, or the in-group and the out-group. These divisions may be made on the basis of race, religion, sex, age, ethnicity, or even athletic team membership. We tend to see members of the out-group as inferior and different from us, but similar to each other—“they all look alike” (Aboud, 2003; Lambert, 1995). Also, those who have more (more money, more social status, more prestige) may justify their privilege by assuming that they deserve to “have” because they are superior to the “have-nots.” This can lead to blaming the victims: People who live in poverty or women who are raped are seen as causing their problems by their behavior—“they got what they deserved.” Emotions play a part...
as well. When things go wrong, we look for someone or some whole group to blame. For example, after the tragic events of 9/11, some people vented their anger by attacking innocent Arab Americans (Myers, 2005).

But prejudice is more than a tendency to form in-groups, a self-justification, or an emotional reaction—it is also a set of cultural values. Children learn about valued traits and characteristics from their families, friends, teachers, and the world around them. Think back to your analysis of commercials—did you observe many women or people of color? For years, most of the models presented in books, films, television, and advertising were middle- and upper-class European Americans. People of different ethnic and racial backgrounds were seldom the “heroes” (Ward, 2004). This is changing. In 2002, the Oscar awards for best actress and best actor went to African Americans, but Denzel Washington won for his portrayal of a villain. In 2005, Jamie Foxx won for his remarkable portrayal of Ray Charles—a hero.

STOP | THINK | WRITE  List 3 traits most characteristic of:

- College freshmen
- Politicians
- Athletes
- Buddhists
- Members of the National Rifle Association

Prejudice is difficult to combat because it can be part of our thinking processes. You saw in Chapter 2 that children develop schemas—organized bodies of knowledge—about objects, events, and actions. We have schemas that organize our knowledge about people we know, the meaning of words, how to drink from a straw, and all our daily activities. We can also form schemas about groups of people. When I asked you to list the traits most characteristic of college freshmen, politicians, athletes, Buddhists, and members of the National Rifle Association, you probably could generate a list. That list would show that you have a stereotype—a schema—that organizes what you know (and believe) about the group (Wyler, 1988).

As with any schema, we use our stereotypes to make sense of the world. You will see in Chapter 7 that having a schema allows you to process information more quickly and efficiently, but it also allows you to distort information to make it fit your schema better (Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994). This is the danger in racial and ethnic stereotypes. We notice information that confirms or agrees with our stereotype—our schema—and miss or dismiss information that does not fit. For example, if a juror has a negative stereotype of Asian Americans and is listening to evidence in the trial of an Asian American, the juror may interpret the evidence more negatively. The juror may actually forget testimony in favor of the defendant, and remember more damaging testimony instead. Information that fits the stereotype is even processed more quickly (Anderson, Klatzky, & Murray, 1990; Baron, 1998).

Connect and Extend to PRAXIS II™

Racial Bias (IV, B4)
Describe the possible effects of racial discrimination and bias on minority students. What can teachers and schools do to address the lingering effects of this discrimination?

Stereotype  Schema that organizes knowledge or perceptions about a category.

Discrimination  Treating or acting unfairly toward particular categories of people.

Ethnic and Racial Differences
school. They are chosen less often for gifted classes and acceleration or enrichment programs. They are more likely to be tracked into "basic skills" classes. As they progress through junior high, high school, and college, their paths take them farther and farther out of the pipeline that produces our scientists. If they do persist and become scientists or engineers, they, along with women, will still be paid less than White employees for the same work (National Science Foundation, 1996).

There is another problem caused by stereotypes and prejudice that can undermine academic achievement—stereotype threat.

**Stereotype Threat**

*Stereotype threat* is an "apprehensiveness about confirming a stereotype" (Aronson, 2002, p. 282). The basic idea is that when individuals are in situations in which a stereotype applies, they bear an extra emotional and cognitive burden. The burden is the possibility of confirming the stereotype, either in the eyes of others or in their own eyes. Thus, when girls are asked to solve complicated mathematics problems, for example, they are at risk of confirming widely held stereotypes that girls are inferior to boys in mathematics. It is not necessary that the individual even believe the stereotype. All that matters is that the person is aware of the stereotype and cares about performing well enough to disprove its unflattering implications (Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, Steele, & Brown, 1999). What are the results of stereotype threat? Recent research provides answers that should interest all teachers.

**Short-Term Effects: Test Performance.** In the short run, the fear that you might confirm a negative stereotype can induce test anxiety and undermine performance. In a series of experiments, Joshua Aronson, Claude Steele, and their colleagues have demonstrated that when African American or Latino college students are put in situations that induce stereotype threat, their performance suffers (Aronson, 2002; Aronson & Salinas, 1998; Aronson & Steele, 2005; Aronson, Steele, Salinas, & Lustina, 1999). For example, African American and White undergraduate subjects in an experiment at Stanford University were told that the test they were about to take would precisely measure their verbal ability. A similar group of subjects was told that the purpose of the test was to understand the psychology of verbal problem solving and not to assess individual ability. As shown in Figure 5.3, when the test was presented as diagnostic of verbal ability, the African American students solved about half as many problems as the White students. In the non-threat situation, the two groups solved about the same number of problems.

All groups, not just minority-group students, can be susceptible to stereotype threat. In another study, the subjects were White male college students who were very strong in mathematics. One group was told that the test they were taking would help experimenters determine why Asian students performed so much better than Whites on that particular test. Another group just took the test. The group that faced the stereotype threat of confirming that "Asians are better in math" scored significantly lower on the test (Aronson et al., 1999).

Being vulnerable to stereotype threat varies among individuals. In one study, Aronson and Inzlicht (2004) found that African American college students who were more vulnerable to stereotype threat were less accurate in assessing their performance on a test. In addition, their sense of academic competence varied more widely from day to day. And who is most vulnerable? Those who care the most and who are most deeply invested in high performance. The pressures of *No Child Left Behind* testing are likely to increase vulnerability.

Why does stereotype threat affect test performance? One link is anxiety. Jason Osborne (2001) studied a large, representative national sample of White, African American, and Latino high school seniors who took achievement tests and tests of anxiety at the same time. The White students scored significantly higher, but anxiety played a role in those differences. Even after controlling for prior achievement in school, anxiety explained almost one-third of the racial differences in the scores. Anxiety and distraction appeared to be the main problems in the studies of college students, too. The African American stu-

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*Stereotype threat* The extra emotional and cognitive burden that your performance in an academic situation might confirm a stereotype that others hold about you.
Long-Term Effects: Disidentification. As we will see in Chapter 10, students often develop self-defeating strategies to protect their self-esteem about academics. They withdraw, claim to not care, exert little effort, or even drop out of school—they psychologically disengage from success in the domain and claim “math is for nerds” or “school is for losers.” Once students define academics as “uncool,” it is unlikely they will exert the effort needed for real learning. There is some evidence that Black male students are more likely than Black female students and White students to disidentify with academics—that is, to separate their sense of self-esteem from their academic achievement (Cokley, 2002; Major & Schmader, 1998; Steele, 1992). Other studies have questioned this connection, however. Historically, education has been valued among African American communities (Walker, 1996). One study found that African American adolescents who had strong Afrocentric beliefs also had higher achievement goals and self-esteem than adolescents who identified with the larger White culture (Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001). The message for teachers is to help all students see academic achievement as part of their ethnic, racial, and gender identity.

Combating Stereotype Threat. Stereotypes are pervasive and difficult to change. Rather than wait for changes, it may be better to acknowledge that these images exist, at least in the eyes of many, and give students ways of coping with the stereotypes. In Chapter 10, we will discuss test anxiety and how to overcome the negative effects of anxiety. Many of those strategies are also appropriate for helping students resist stereotype threat.

Aronson (2002) demonstrated the powerful effects of changing beliefs about intelligence. African American and White undergraduates were asked to write letters to “at-risk” middle-school students to encourage them to persist in school. Some of the undergraduates were given evidence that intelligence is improvable and encouraged to
communicate this information to their pen pals. Others were given information about multiple intelligences, but not told that these multiple abilities can be improved. The middle-school students were not real, but the process of writing persuasive letters about improving intelligence proved powerful. The African American college students, and the White students to a lesser extent, who were encouraged to believe that intelligence can be improved had higher grade-point averages and reported greater enjoyment of and engagement in school when contacted at the end of the next school quarter. Thus, believing that intelligence can be improved might inoculate students against stereotype threat.

Girls and Boys: Differences in the Classroom

**WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?**

You are interviewing for a job in a 2nd/3rd grade in an affluent district. After a few questions, the principal asks, “Do you believe that boys and girls learn differently?” How would you answer? ■

While I was proofreading this very page for a previous edition, riding cross-country on a train, the conductor stopped beside my seat. He said, “I’m sorry, dear, for interrupting your homework, but do you have a ticket?” I had to smile at his (I’m sure unintended) sexism. I doubt that he made the same comment to the man across the aisle who was writing on his legal pad. Like racial discrimination, messages of sexism can be subtle.

In this section, we examine the development of two related identities that can be the basis for discrimination—sexual identity and gender-role identity. We particularly focus on how men and women are socialized and the role of teachers in providing an equitable education for both sexes.

**Sexual Identity**

The word gender usually refers to traits and behaviors that a particular culture judges to be appropriate for men and for women. In contrast, sex refers to biological differences (Brannon, 2002; Deaux, 1993). Sexual identity includes gender identity, gender-role behaviors, and sexual orientation (Patterson, 1995). Gender identity is a person’s self-identification as male or female. Gender-role behaviors are those behaviors and characteristics that the culture associates with each gender, and sexual orientation involves the person’s choice of a sexual partner. Relations among these three elements are complex. For example, a woman may identify herself as a female (gender identity), but behave in ways that are not consistent with the gender role (play football), and may be heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual in her orientation. So sexual identity is a complicated construction of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

**Sexual Orientation.** During adolescence, about 8% of boys and 6% of girls report engaging in some same-sex activity or feeling strong attractions to same-sex individuals. Males are more likely than females to experiment with same-sex partners as adolescents, but females are more likely to experiment later, often in college. Fewer adolescents actually have a homosexual or bisexual orientation—about 4% of adolescents identify themselves as gay (males who chose male partners), lesbian (females who chose female partners), or bisexual (people who have partners of both sexes). This number increases to about 8% for adults (Savin-Williams & Diamond, 2004; Steinberg, 2005).

Scientists debate the origins of homosexuality. Most of the research has been with men, so less is known about women. Evidence so far suggests that both biological and social factors are involved. For example, sexual orientation is more similar for identical twins than for fraternal twins, but not all identical twins have the same sexual orientation (Berk, 2005). There are quite a few models describing the development of sexual orientation. Most focus on how adolescents develop an identity as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Generally, the models include the following or similar stages (Berk, 2005; Yarhouse, 2001):
### Reaching Out to Help Students Struggling with Sexual Identity

These ideas come from The Attic Speakers Bureau, a program of The Attic Youth Center, where trained peer educators reach out to youth and youth service providers in schools, organizations, and healthcare facilities.

**Reaching Out**

If a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender youth or a youth questioning his or her own sexual orientation should come to you directly for assistance, remember the following simple, 5-point plan:

- **LISTEN** It seems obvious, but the best thing that you can do in the beginning is allow that individual to vent and express what is going on in his or her life.
- **AFFIRM** Tell them, “You are not alone.”—this is crucial. A lot of L/g/b/t/q youth feel isolated and lack peers with whom they can discuss issues around sexual orientation. Letting them know that there are others dealing with the same issues is invaluable. This statement is also important because it does not involve a judgment call on your part.
- **REFER** You do not have to be the expert. A referral to someone who is trained to deal with these issues is a gift you are giving to that student, not a dismissal of responsibility.
- **ADDRESS** Deal with harassers—do not overlook issues of verbal or physical harassment around sexual orientation. It is important to create and maintain an environment where all youth feel comfortable and welcome.
- **FOLLOW-UP** Be sure to check in with the individual to see if the situation has improved and if there is anything further you may be able to do.

There are also some things that you as an individual can do to better serve L/g/b/t/q youth and youth dealing with issues around sexual orientation:

- Work on your own comfortability around issues of sexual orientation and sexuality.
- Get training on how to present information on sexual orientation effectively.
- Dispel myths around sexual orientation by knowing facts and sharing that information.
- Work on setting aside your own personal biases to better serve students dealing with issues around sexual orientation and sexuality.

*Source: From Figure 3. Copyright © The Attic Speakers Bureau and Carrie E. Jacobs, Ph.D. Reprinted with permission.*

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- **Feeling different**—Beginning around age 6, the child may be less interested in the activities of other children who are the same sex. Some children may find this difference troubling and fear being “found out.” Others do not experience these anxieties.
- **Feeling confused**—In adolescence, as they feel attractions for the same sex, students may be confused, upset, lonely, unsure of what to do. They may lack role models and try to change to activities and dating patterns that fit heterosexual stereotypes.
- **Acceptance**—As young adults, many of these youth sort through sexual orientation issues and identify themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. They may or may not make their sexual orientation public, but might share the information with a few friends.

The problem with phase models of identity development is that the identity achieved is assumed to be final. Actually, newer models emphasize that sexual orientation can be flexible, complex, and multifaceted; it can change over the lifetime. For example, people may have dated or married opposite-sex partners at one point in their lives, but have same-sex attractions or partners later in their lives, or vice versa (Garnets, 2002).

Parent and teachers are seldom the first people to hear about the adolescent’s sexual identity concerns. But if a student does seek your counsel, Table 5.2 has some ideas for reaching out.

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### Gender-Role Identity

Gender-role identity is the image each individual has of himself or herself as masculine or feminine in characteristics—a part of self-concept. Erikson and many other earlier

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Gender-role Identity | Beliefs about characteristics and behaviors associated with one sex as opposed to the other.
Recognizing gender schemas as potential barriers to success may allow children's choices to become less gender driven. The 2002 film, Bend It Like Beckham, in which a teenaged girl from a traditional Indian family aspires to succeed as a professional soccer player, explores how society and different cultures define appropriate activities for girls and boys.

Connect and Extend to the Research
For a lively debate on the terminology of gender and sex, see the March 1995 issue of Psychological Science.

Psychologists thought that identifying your gender and accepting gender roles were straightforward; you simply realized that you were male or female and acted accordingly. But today, we know that some people experience conflicts about their gender identity. For example, transsexuals often report feeling trapped in the wrong body; they experience themselves as female, but their biological sex is male or vice versa (Berk, 2005; Yarhouse, 2001).

How do gender-role identities develop? As early as age 2, children are aware of gender differences—they know whether they are girls or boys and that mommies are girls and daddies are boys. It is likely that biology plays a role. Very early, hormones affect activity level and aggression, with boys tending to prefer active, rough, noisy play. By age 4, children have a beginning sense of gender roles—they believe that some toys are for boys (trucks, for example) and some are for girls (dolls) and that some jobs are for girls (nurse) and others are for boys (police officer) (Berk, 2005). Play styles lead young children to prefer same-sex play partners with similar styles, so by age 4, children spend three times as much play time with same-sex playmates as with opposite-sex playmates; by age 6, the ratio is 11 to 1 (Benenson, 1993; MacCoby, 1998). Of course, these are averages and individuals do not always fit the average. In addition, other factors—social and cognitive—affect gender-role identity.

Parents are more likely to react positively to assertive behavior on the part of their sons and emotional sensitivity in their daughters (Brody, 1999; Fagot & Hagan, 1991). Through their interactions with family, peers, teachers, and the environment in general, children begin to form gender schemas, or organized networks of knowledge about what it means to be male or female. Gender schemas help children make sense of the world and guide their behavior (see Figure 5.4). So a young girl whose schema for "girls" includes "girls play with dolls and not with trucks" or "girls can't be scientists" will pay attention to, remember, and interact more with dolls than trucks, and she may avoid science activities (Berk, 2005; Leaper, 2002; Liben & Signorella, 1993).

Gender schemas are organized networks of knowledge about what it means to be male or female.

Gender-Role Stereotyping in the Preschool Years. Different treatment of the sexes and gender-role stereotyping continue in early childhood. Researchers have found that boys
are given more freedom to roam the neighborhood, and they are not protected for as long a time as girls from potentially dangerous activities such as playing with sharp scissors or crossing the street alone. Parents quickly come to the aid of their daughters, but are more likely to insist that their sons handle problems themselves. Thus, independence and initiative seem to be encouraged more in boys than in girls (Brannon, 2002; Fagot, Hagan, Leinbach, & Kronberg, 1985).

And there are the toys! Walk through any store's toy section and see what is offered to girls and boys. Dolls and kitchen sets for girls and toy weapons for boys have been with us for decades, but what about even more subtle messages? Margot Mifflin went shopping for a toy for her 4-year-old that was not gender-typed and found a Wee Waffle farm set. Then she discovered that "the farmer plugged into a round hole in the driver's seat of the tractor, but the mother—literally a square peg in a round hole—didn't" (Mifflin, 1999, p. 1). But we cannot blame the toy makers alone. Adults buying for children favor gender-typed toys and fathers tend to discourage young sons from playing with "girl's" toys (Brannon, 2002).

By age 4 or 5, children have developed a gender schema that describes what clothes, games, toys, behaviors, and careers are "right" for boys and girls—and these ideas can be quite rigid (Brannon, 2002). Many of my student teachers are surprised when they hear young children talk about gender roles. Even in this era of great progress toward equal opportunity, a preschool girl is more likely to tell you she wants to become a nurse than to say she wants to be an engineer. After she had given a lecture on the dangers of sex stereotyping in schools, a colleague of mine brought her young daughter to her college class. The students asked the little girl, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The child immediately replied, "A doctor," and her professor/mother beamed with pride. Then the girl whispered to the students in the front row, "I really want to be a nurse, but my Mommy won't let me." Actually, this is a common reaction for young children. Preschoolers tend to have more stereotyped notions of sex roles than older children, and all ages seem to have more rigid and traditional ideas about male occupations than about what females do (Barry, 2005).

Gender Bias in the Curriculum. During the elementary school years, children continue to learn about what it means to be male or female. Unfortunately, schools often foster these gender biases in a number of ways. Most of the textbooks produced for the early grades before 1970 portrayed both males and females in stereotyped roles. Publishers have established guidelines to prevent these problems, but it still makes sense to check your teaching materials for stereotypes. For example, even though children's books now have an equal number of males and females as central characters, there still are more
males in the titles and the illustrations, and the characters (especially the boys) continue to behave in stereotypic ways. Boys are more aggressive and argumentative, and girls are more expressive and affectionate. Girl characters sometimes cross gender roles to be more active, but boys characters seldom show “feminine” expressive traits (Bramon, 2002; Evans & Davies, 2000). Videos, computer programs, and testing materials also often feature boys more than girls (Meece, 2002).

Another “text” that students read long before they arrive in your classroom is television. Remember the commercial count break I asked you to take earlier? (No—you can’t take another one here.) A content analysis of television commercials found that white male characters were more prominent than any other group. Even when only the actor’s voice could be heard, men were 10 times more likely to narrate commercials. And the same pattern of men as the “voice of authority” on television occurred in the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, and Asia. Women were more likely than men to be shown as dependent on men and often were depicted at home (Bramon, 2002). So, before and after going to school, students are likely to encounter texts that overrepresent males.

**Sex Discrimination in Classrooms.** There has been quite a bit of research on teachers’ treatment of male and female students. You should know, however, that most of these studies have focused on White students, so the results reported in this section hold mostly for White male and female students. One of the best-documented findings of the past 25 years is that teachers have more overall interactions and more negative interactions, but not more positive interactions, with boys than with girls (Jones & Dindia, 2004). This is true from preschool to college. Teachers ask more questions of males, give males more feedback (praise, criticism, and correction), and give more specific and valuable comments to boys. As girls move through the grades, they have less and less to say. By the time students reach college, men are twice as likely to initiate comments as women (Bailey, 1993; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). The effect of these changes is that from preschool through college, girls, on the average, receive 1800 fewer hours of attention and instruction than boys (Sadker, Sadker, & Klein, 1991). Of course, these differences are not evenly distributed. Some boys, generally high-achieving White students, receive more than their share, whereas high-achieving girls receive the least teacher attention.

The imbalances of teacher attention given to boys and girls are particularly dramatic in math and science classes. In one study, boys were questioned in science class 80% more often than girls (Baker, 1986). Teachers wait longer for boys to answer and give more detailed feedback to the boys (Meece, 2002; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Boys also dominate the use of equipment in science labs, often dismantling the apparatus before the girls in the class have a chance to perform the experiments (Rennie & Parker, 1987).

Stereotypes are perpetuated in many ways, some obvious, some subtle. Boys with high scores on standardized math tests are more likely to be put in the high-ability math group than girls with the same scores. Guidance counselors, parents, and teachers often do not protest at all when a bright girl says she doesn’t want to take any more math or science courses, but when a boy of the same ability wants to forget about math or science, they will object. More women than men are teachers, but men tend to be the administrators, coaches, and advanced math and science teachers. In these subtle ways, students’ stereotyped expectations for themselves are reinforced (Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

**Sex Differences in Mental Abilities**

Only 23% of the scientists and engineers and just 10% of the physicists in the United States are women, even though women earn about half of the bachelor’s degrees in chemistry, biology, and mathematics and about 20% of the bachelor’s degrees in physics and engineering (Angier & Chang, 2005; Bleeker & Jacobs, 2004). But let’s not overlook the boys. There are areas when boys lag behind girls. For example, women earn 30% more bachelor’s degrees overall than men and 50% more master’s degrees. And African American women now earn twice as many college degrees as African American men (Hubert, 2005). The International Comparisons in Fourth-Grade Reading Literacy: Findings from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (Mullis, Martin,
Gonzalez, & Kennedy, 2003) revealed that in 34 countries, 4th grade boys scored below girls in reading literacy. Are there differences due to ability, interest, culture, social pressure, discrimination . . . ? Let's see if we can make sense of this issue.

From infancy through the preschool years, most studies find few differences between boys and girls in overall mental and motor development or in specific abilities. During the school years and beyond, psychologists find no differences in general intelligence on the standard measures—these tests have been designed and standardized to minimize sex differences. However, scores on some tests of specific abilities show sex differences. For example, from elementary through high school, girls score higher than boys on tests of reading and writing, and fewer girls require remediation in reading (Berk, 2005; Halpern, 2000). But academically gifted boys in the United States perform better than girls on advanced mathematics tests. In 2001, twice as many boys as girls scored over 700 on the math SATs, but boys also were more likely than girls to get all the answers wrong (Angier & Chang, 2005). In fact, the scores of males tend to be more variable in general, so there are more males than females with very high and very low scores on tests (Berk, 2005; Willingham & Cole, 1997). There are also more boys diagnosed with learning disabilities, ADHD, and autism. Diane Halpern (2004) summarized the research:

Females and males show different average patterns of academic achievement and scores on cognitive ability tests. Females obtain higher grades in school, score much higher on tests of writing and content-area tests on which the questions are similar to material that was learned in school, attain a majority of college degrees, and are closing the gap in many careers that were traditionally male. By contrast, males score higher on standardized tests of mathematics and science that are not directly tied to their school curriculum, show a large advantage on visuospatial tests (especially those that involve judgments of velocity and navigation through three-dimensional space), and are much more knowledgeable about geography and politics. (p. 135)

There is a caution, however. In most studies of sex differences, race and socioeconomic status are not taken into account. When racial groups are studied separately, African American females outperform African American males in high school mathematics, there is little or no difference in the performance of Asian American girls and boys in math or science (Grossman & Grossman, 1994; Yee, 1992). And girls in general tend to get higher grades than boys in mathematics classes (Halpern, 2004). Also, international studies of 15-year-olds in 41 countries show no sex differences in mathematics for half of the countries tested. In fact, in Iceland, girls significantly outperformed boys on all the math tests, just as they usually do on their national math exams (Angier & Chang, 2005).

What is the basis for the differences? The answers are complex. For example, males on average are better on tests that require mental rotation of a figure in space, prediction of the trajectories of moving objects, and navigating. Some researchers argue that evolution has favored these skills in males (Buss, 1995; Geary, 1995, 1999), but others relate these skills to males' more active play styles and to their participation in athletics (Linn & Hyde, 1989; Newcombe & Bemninger, 1990; Stumpf, 1995). The cross-cultural comparisons suggest that much of the difference in mathematics scores comes from learning, not biology. And studies showing that adults rated a math paper attributed to "John T. McKay" a full point higher on a 5-point scale than the same paper attributed to "Joan T. McKay" suggests that discrimination plays a role as well (Angier & Chang, 2005).

Eliminating Gender Bias

There is some evidence that teachers treat girls and boys differently in mathematics classes. For example, some elementary school teachers spend more academic time with boys in math and with girls in reading. In one study, high-school geometry teachers directed most of their questions to boys, even though the girls asked questions and volunteered answers more often. Several researchers have found that some teachers tend to accept wrong answers from girls, saying, in effect, "Well, at least you tried." But when boys give the wrong answer, the teachers are more likely to say, "Try harder! You can figure this out!" These messages, repeated time and again, can convince girls that they just aren't...
Guidelines: Avoiding Sexism in Teaching

Check to see if textbooks and other materials you are using present an honest view of the options open to both males and females.

**Examples**
1. Are both males and females portrayed in traditional and nontraditional roles at work, at leisure, and at home?
2. Discuss your analyses with students, and ask them to help you find sex-role biases in other materials—magazine advertising, TV programs, news reporting, for example.

Watch for any unintended biases in your own classroom practices.

**Examples**
1. Do you group students by sex for certain activities? Is the grouping appropriate?
2. Do you call on one sex or the other for certain answers—boys for math and girls for poetry, for example?
3. Monitor your metaphors. Ask students to "tackle the problem" and also to "cook up a solution."

Look for ways in which your school may be limiting the options open to male or female students.

**Examples**
1. What advice is given by guidance counselors to students in course and career decisions?
2. Is there a good sports program for both girls and boys?
3. Are girls encouraged to take advanced placement courses in science and mathematics? Boys in English and foreign languages?

Use gender-free language as much as possible.

**Examples**
1. Do you speak of "law-enforcement officer" and "mail carrier" instead of "policeman" and "mailman"?
2. Do you name a committee "head" instead of a "chairman"?

Provide role models.

**Examples**
1. Assign articles in professional journals written by female research scientists or mathematicians.
2. Have recent female graduates who are majoring in science, math, engineering, or other technical fields come to class to talk about college.
3. Create electronic mentoring programs for both male and female students to connect them with adults working in areas of interest to the students.

Make sure all students have a chance to do complex, technical work.

**Examples**
1. Experiment with same-sex lab groups so girls do not always end up as the secretaries, boys as the technicians.
2. Rotate jobs in groups or randomly assign responsibilities.

If you witness sexism as a student teacher? See this site for ideas: http://www.tolerance.org/teach/magazine/features.jsp?u=0&i=363&ar=503#

Some popular authors have argued that boys and girls learn differently and that schools tend to reward the passive, cooperative behaviors of girls (Gurian & Henley, 2001). Other people believe that schools "shortchange" girls and "fail to be fair" (American Association of University Women [AAUW], 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1995). The Point/Counterpoint examines these issues.

Language Differences in the Classroom

In the classroom, quite a bit happens through language. Communication is at the heart of teaching, but as we have seen in this chapter, culture affects communication. In this section, we will examine two kinds of language differences—dialect differences and bilingualism.
Point/Counterpoint

Do Boys and Girls Learn Differently?

As we have seen, there are a number of documented sex differences in mental abilities. Do these translate into different ways of learning and thus different needs in the classroom?

**Point** Yes, boys and girls learn differently.

Since at least the 1960s, there have been questions about whether schools serve boys well. Accusations that schools were trying to destroy “boys culture” and forcing “feminine, frilly content” on boys caused some public concern (Connell, 1996).

Discrimination against girls has ended, the argument runs. Indeed, thanks to feminism, girls have special treatment and special programs. Now, what about the boys? It is boys who are slower to learn to read, more likely to drop out of school, more likely to be disciplined, more likely to be in programs for children with special needs. In school it is girls who are doing better, boys who are in trouble—and special programs for boys that are needed. (Connell, 1996, p. 207)


Our schools seem to be creating overt depression in girls and covert depression in boys. Through violence, male hormones and brains cry out for a different school promoting closer bonding, smaller classes, more verbalization, less male isolation, better discipline, and more attention to male learning styles. Most of all, boys need men in their schools. (90% of elementary teachers are female.) They need male teachers, male teaching assistants, male volunteers from the parents or grandparents, and older male students. Peer mentoring across grades helps everybody involved.

For girls, Gurian and Henley recommend developing their leadership abilities, encouraging girls to enjoy healthy competition, providing extra access to technology, and helping them understand the impact of the media on their self-images.

**Counterpoint** No, differences are too small or inconsistent to have educational implications.

Many of Gurian and Henley’s claims about sex differences in learning are based on sex differences in the brain. But John Bruer (1999) cautions that

Although males are superior to females at mentally rotating objects, this seems to be the only spatial task for which psychologists have found such a difference. Moreover, when they do find gender differences, these differences tend to be very small. The scientific consensus among psychologists and neuroscientists who conduct these studies is that whatever gender differences exist may have interesting consequences for the scientific study of the brain, but they have no practical or instructional consequences.

In fact, there are boys who thrive in schools and boys who do not; girls who are strong in mathematics and girls who have difficulties; boys who excel in languages and those who do not. There is some evidence that the activities used to teach math may make a difference for girls. Elementary-age girls may do better in math if they learn in cooperative as opposed to competitive activities. Certainly, it makes sense to balance both cooperative and competitive approaches so that students who learn better each way have equal opportunities (Fennema & Peterson, 1988).

It also makes sense to offer a variety of ways to learn, so that all students have access to the important outcomes of your teaching. Your attitude and encouragement may make the difference for students, male or female, who need a persuasive boost to believe in themselves as writers, or mathematicians, or painters, or athletes.

**What do you think?**

Vote online at www.mylabschool.com

Dialects

**Stop | Think | Write** When you want a soft drink, what do you call it? Do you think people in other parts of the United States use the same term?

Growing up in Texas, we always asked, “Do you want a coke?” If the answer was yes, the next question was, “What kind—cola, root beer, lemon-lime, orange?” When I moved to New Jersey, I had to ask for a soda—if I asked for a coke, then that is just what I got. Twenty years later, at our moving-to-Ohio party, my colleague who had grown up in Columbus, Ohio, said, “You are going to have to learn to speak Midwestern and ask for...”
a 'bottlapop.'” Different regions have different ways of speaking—both in their accents and in their word usage.

A dialect is any variety of a language spoken by a particular group. Eugene Garcia (2002) defines a dialect as “a regional variation of language characterized by distinct grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation” (p. 218). The dialect is part of the group's collective identity. Actually, every person reading this book speaks at least one dialect, maybe more, because there is no one absolute standard English. The English language has several dialects, for example, Australian, Canadian, British, and American. Within each of these dialects are variations. A few examples for American English are Southern, Bostonian, Cajun, and African American Vernacular (Garcia, 2002).

Dialects differ in their rules about pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, but it is important to remember that these differences are not errors. Each dialect is logical, complex, and rule-governed. An example of this is the use of the double negative. In many versions of American English, the double negative construction, such as “I don’t have no more,” is incorrect. But in many dialects such as some varieties of African American Vernacular English, and in other languages (for instance, Russian, French, Spanish, and Hungarian), the double negative is part of the grammatical rules. To say “I don’t want anything” in Spanish, you must literally say, “I don’t want nothing,” or “No quiero nada.”

Dialects and Pronunciation. Another area in which dialects differ is pronunciation, which can lead to spelling problems. In some varieties of African American Vernacular English and in Southern dialects, for instance, there is less attention paid to pronouncing the ends of words. A lack of attention to final consonants, such as s, can lead to failure to indicate possession, third-person singular verbs, and plurals in the standard way. So John’s book might be John book, and the singular and plural will sound the same for words such as thinks, wasps, and lists. When endings are not pronounced, there are more homonyms (words that sound alike but have different meanings) in the student’s speech than the unknowing teacher may expect. spent and spend might sound alike, for example. Even without the confusions caused by dialect differences, there are many homonyms in English. Usually, special attention is given to words such as these when they come up in spelling lessons. If teachers are aware of the special homonyms in student dialects, they can teach these differences directly.

Dialects and Teaching. What does all of this mean for teachers? How can they cope with linguistic diversity in the classroom? First, they can be sensitive to their own possible negative stereotypes about children who speak a different dialect. Second, teachers can ensure comprehension by repeating instructions using different words and by asking students to paraphrase instructions or give examples.

But what about the use of home language in the classroom? The best teaching approach seems to be to focus on understanding the children and to accept their language as a valid and correct system, but to teach the alternative forms of English (or whatever the dominant language is in your country) that are used in more formal work settings and writing so that the students will have access to a range of opportunities. For example, Lisa Delpit (1995) describes Martha Demientieff, a Native Alaskan teacher of Athabaskan children in a small village. Her teacher’s goal is for her students to become fluent in both their dialect, which she calls “Heritage English,” and the “Formal English” of employers and others outside the village. She explains to her students that people outside the village will judge them by the way they talk and write. She goes on to explain:

We have to feel sorry for them because they have only one way to talk. We’re going to learn two ways to say things. One will be our Heritage way. The other will be Formal English. Then when we go to get jobs, we’ll be able to talk like those people who only know and can only listen to one way. Maybe after we get the jobs we can help them to learn how it feels to have another language, like ours, that feels so good. We’ll talk like them when we have to, but we’ll always know our way is best. (p. 41)

Moving between two speech forms is called code-switching—something we all have learned to do. Sometimes, the code is formal speech for educational or professional communication. Sometimes, the code is informal speech for talk among friends and family. And
sometimes, the codes are different dialects. Even young children recognize variations in
codes. Delpit (1995) describes the reaction of one of her first grade students to her very
first reading lesson. After she carefully recited the memorized introduction from the
teacher's manual, a student raised his hand and asked, "Teacher, how come you talkin'
like a white person? You talkin' just like my momma talk when she get on the phone."

Learning the alternative versions of a language is easy for most children, as long as
they have good models, clear instruction, and opportunities for authentic practice.

Bilingualism

Bilingualism is a topic that sparks heated debates and touches many emotions. One
reason is the changing demographics discussed earlier in this chapter. About 18% of the
United States population speaks a language other than English at home-half of these families
speak Spanish. In the past 10 years, there has been a 65% increase in the number of
Spanish-speaking students and almost 100% increase in the number of students who speak
Asian languages. In some states, almost one-fourth of all students speak a first language other
than English—usually Spanish (Gersten, 1996a). By 2050, about one-fourth of the entire
United States population is expected to be Latino/ (Yetman, 1999). Right now, there is one
qualified teacher for every 100 English language learners (Hawkins, 2004).

Two terms that you will see associated with bilingualism are English language learners (ELLs),
describing students whose primary or heritage language is not English, and
English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, where these students learn English.

What Does Bilingualism Mean? There are disagreements about the meaning of bi-
lingualism. Some definitions focus exclusively on a language-based meaning: Bilingual
people, or bilinguals, speak two languages. But this limited definition minimizes the sig-
nificant problems that bilingual students face. Consider the words of these two students:

A 9th-grade boy, who recently arrived in California from Mexico: "There is so much dis-

A 10th-grade Chinese-American girl who had been in America for several years: "I don't
know who I am. Am I the good Chinese daughter? Am I an American teenager? I always
feel I am letting my parents down when I am with my friends because I act so American,
but I also feel that I will never really be an American. I never feel really comfortable with
myself anymore." (Olsen, 1988, p. 36)

The experiences of these two students show that there is more to being bilingual than
just speaking two languages. You must also be able to move back and forth between
two cultures while still maintaining a sense of your own identity (Hakuta & Garcia, 1989).
Being bilingual and bicultural means mastering the knowledge necessary to communi-
cate in two cultures as well as dealing with potential discrimination. As a teacher, you will
have to help your students learn all these skills.

Becoming Bilingual. Proficiency in a second language has two separate aspects: face-to-
face communication (known as basic or contextualized language skills) and academic
uses of language such as reading and writing about school subjects (known as academic
English) (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Garcia, 2002). It takes students about two to three
years in a good-quality program to be able to communicate face-to-face in a second lan-
guage, but mastering academic language skills in the new language takes five to seven
years. So students who seem in conversation to "know" a second language may still have
great difficulty with complex schoolwork in that language (Cummins, 1994; Ovando,
1989). Here is how one Spanish-speaking international student, who went on to earn a
doctoral degree and teach at a university, described her struggles with texts in college:

I could not understand why I was doing so poorly. After all, my grammar and spelling
were excellent. It took me a long time to realize that the way text is organized in English
### TABLE 5.3

**Myths about Bilingual Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Truth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning a second language (L2) takes little time and effort.</td>
<td>Learning English as a second language takes 2–3 years for oral and 5–7 years for academic language use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) transfer from L1 to L2.</td>
<td>Reading is the skill that transfers most readily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching is an indication of a language disorder.</td>
<td>Code-switching indicates high-level language skills in both L1 and L2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All bilinguals easily maintain both languages.</td>
<td>It takes great effort and attention to maintain high-level skills in both languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children do not lose their first language.</td>
<td>Loss of L1 and underdevelopment of L2 are problems for second language learners (semilingual in L1 and L2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to English is sufficient for L2 learning.</td>
<td>To learn L2, students need to have a reason to communicate, access to English speakers, interaction, support, feedback, and time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn English, students' parents need to speak only English at home.</td>
<td>Children need to use both languages in many contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in L1 is detrimental to learning English.</td>
<td>Literacy-rich environments in either L1 or L2 support development of necessary prereading skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language disorders must be identified by tests in English.</td>
<td>Children must be tested in both L1 and L2 to determine language disorders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* From The Hispanic Child: Speech, Language, Culture and Education by Alejandro E. Brice. Published by Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA. Copyright © 2002 by Pearson Education. Adapted by permission of the publisher.

is considerably different from the way text is organized in a romance language, Spanish. The process involved a different set of rhetorical rules which were grounded in cultural ways of being. I had never heard of the thesis statement, organizational rules, cohesion, coherence, or other features of discourse. (Sotillo, 2002, p. 280)

There are a number of misconceptions about becoming bilingual. Table 5.3 summarizes a few of these taken from Brice (2002). Because they may be struggling with academic English, even though they are very knowledgeable, bilingual students may be overlooked for gifted and talented programs. The next section tells you how to avoid this situation.

### Reaching Every Student: Recognizing Giftedness in Bilingual Students

To identify gifted bilingual students, you can use a case study or portfolio approach in order to collect a variety of evidence, including interviews with parents and peers, formal and informal assessments, samples of student work and performances, and student self-assessments. This checklist from Castellano and Diaz (2002) is a useful guide. Watch for students who:

- Learn English quickly
- Take risks in trying to communicate in English
- Practice English skills by themselves
- Initiate conversations with native English speakers
- Do not frustrate easily
- Are curious about new words or phrases and practice them

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*Semilingual* Not proficient in any language; speaking one or more languages inadequately.
- Question word meanings; for example, “How can a bat be an animal and also something you use to hit a ball?”
- Look for similarities between words in their native language and English
- Are able to modify their language for less capable English speakers
- Use English to demonstrate leadership skills; for example, use English to resolve disagreements and to facilitate cooperative learning groups
- Prefer to work independently or with students whose level of English proficiency is higher than theirs
- Are able to express abstract verbal concepts with a limited English vocabulary
- Are able to use English in a creative way; for example, can make puns, poems, jokes, or original stories in English
- Become easily bored with routine tasks or drill work
- Have a great deal of curiosity
- Are persistent; stick to a task
- Are independent and self-sufficient
- Have a long attention span
- Become absorbed with self-selected problems, topics, and issues
- Retain, easily recall, and use new information
- Demonstrate social maturity, especially in the home or community

**Bilingual Education**

Virtually everyone agrees that all citizens should learn the official language of their country. But when and how should instruction in that language begin? Here, the debate is bitter at times, but it is clear the United States has not solved the problem. For example, “Spanish-speaking students—even when taught and tested in Spanish—still score at the [bottom] 32nd percentile in relation to a national comparison group (taught and tested in English)” (Goldenberg, 1996, p. 353).

Is it better to teach English Language learners (ELL) to read first in their native language or should they begin reading instruction in English? Do these children need some oral lessons in English before reading instruction can be effective? Should other subjects, such as mathematics and social studies, be taught in the primary (home) language until the children are fluent in English? On these questions there are two basic positions, which have given rise to two contrasting teaching approaches, one that focuses on making the transition to English as quickly as possible and the other that attempts to maintain or improve the native language and use the native language as the primary teaching language until English skills are more fully developed.

Proponents of the transition approach believe that English ought to be introduced as early as possible; they argue that valuable learning time is lost if students are taught in their native language. Most bilingual programs today follow this line of thinking. Proponents of native-language maintenance instruction, however, raise four important issues (Gersten, 1996b; Goldenberg, 1996; Hakuta & Garcia, 1989). First, children who are forced to try to learn math or science in an unfamiliar language are bound to have trouble. What if you had been forced to learn fractions or biology in a second language that you had studied for only a semester? Some psychologists believe students taught by this approach may become semilingual: that is, they are not proficient in either language. Being semilingual may be one reason the dropout rate is so high for low-SES Latino students (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Second, students may get the message that their home languages (and therefore, their families and cultures) are second class. You saw the seeds of these feelings in the stories of the two students at the beginning of this section. Third, the academic content (math, science, history, etc.) that students are taught in their native language is learned—they do not forget the knowledge and skills when they are able to speak English.

Fourth is what Kenji Hakuta (1986) calls a “paradoxical attitude of admiration and pride for school-attained bilingualism on the one hand and scorn and shame for home-brewed immigrant bilingualism on the other” (p. 229). Ironically, by the time students have mastered academic English and let their home language deteriorate, they reach
Even though most people agree that all citizens should learn the official language of their country, how this should be accomplished in school remains a very controversial question.

Connect and Extend to Professional Journals

Connect and Extend to PRAXIS II™
Bilingual Issues (IV, B4)
Identify the major issues related to the debate over bilingual education. Explain the major approaches to bilingual education, and describe steps that a teacher can take to promote the learning and language acquisition of non-English-speaking students.

Secondary school and are encouraged to learn a second language. Hakuta (1986) suggests that the goals of the educational system could be the development of all students as functional bilinguals. The United States is “one of the few countries in the world that takes pride in the fact that we speak only one language” (Noguera, 2005, p. 13).

One approach to reaching this goal is to create classes that mix students who are learning a second language with students who are native speakers. The objective is for both groups to become fluent in both languages (Sheets, 2005). My daughter spent a summer in such a program in Quebec and was ahead in every French class after that. For truly effective bilingual education, we will need many bilingual teachers. If you have a competence in another language, you might want to develop it fully for your teaching.

Research on Bilingual Programs. It is difficult to separate politics from practice in the debate about bilingual education. It is clear that high-quality bilingual education programs can have positive results. Students improve in the subjects that were taught in their native language, in their mastery of English, and in self-esteem as well (Crawford, 1997; Hakuta & Gould, 1987; Wright & Taylor, 1995). English as a second language (ESL) programs seem to have positive effects on reading comprehension (Fitzgerald, 1995). But attention today is shifting from debate about general approaches to a focus on effective teaching strategies. As you will see many times in this book, a combination of clarity of learning goals and direct instruction in needed skills— including learning strategies and tactics, teacher- or peer-guided practice leading to independent practice, authentic and engaging tasks, opportunities for interaction and conversation that are academically focused, and warm encouragement from the teacher— seems to be effective (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996; Gersten, 1996b; Goldenberg, 1996). Table 5.4 provides a set of constructs for promoting learning and language acquisition that capture many of these methods for effective instruction.

We have dealt with a wide range of differences in this chapter. How can teachers provide an appropriate education for all their students? One answer is culturally inclusive classrooms.

Creating Culturally Inclusive Classrooms

Sheets (2005) uses the term “culturally inclusive” to describe classrooms that provide culturally diverse students with equitable access to the teaching-learning process. The goal of creating culturally inclusive classrooms is to eliminate racism, sexism, classism, and
TABLE 5.4

Ideas for Promoting Learning and Language Acquisition

Effective teaching for students in bilingual and ESL classrooms combines many strategies—direct instruction, mediation, coaching, feedback, modeling, encouragement, challenge, and authentic activities.

1. Structures, frameworks, scaffolds, and strategies
   - Provide support to students by "thinking aloud," building on and clarifying input of students
   - Use visual organizers, story maps, or other aids to help students organize and relate information

2. Relevant background knowledge and key vocabulary concepts
   - Provide adequate background knowledge to students and informally assess whether students have background knowledge
   - Focus on key vocabulary words and use consistent language
   - Incorporate students' primary language meaningfully

3. Mediation/feedback
   - Give feedback that focuses on meaning, not grammar, syntax, or pronunciation
   - Give frequent and comprehensible feedback
   - Provide students with prompts or strategies
   - Ask questions that press students to clarify or expand on initial statements
   - Provide activities and tasks that students can complete
   - Indicate to students when they are successful

4. Involvement
   - Assign activities that are reasonable, avoiding undue frustration
   - Allow use of native language responses (when context is appropriate)
   - Be sensitive to common problems in second language acquisition

5. Challenge
   - Implicit (cognitive challenge, use of higher-order questions)
   - Explicit (high but reasonable expectations)

6. Respect for—and responsiveness to—cultural and personal diversity
   - Show respect for students as individuals, respond to things students say, show respect for culture and family, and possess knowledge of cultural diversity
   - Incorporate students' experiences into writing and language arts activities
   - Link content to students' lives and experiences to enhance understanding
   - View diversity as an asset, reject cultural deficit notions


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prejudice while adapting the content and methods of instruction to meet the needs of all students. In the past, discussions of teaching low-income students from racial, ethnic, or language minority groups have focused on remedying problems or overcoming perceived deficits. But thinking today emphasizes teaching to the strengths and the resilience of these students. In this section, we look at two positive approaches—culturally relevant pedagogy and fostering resilience.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Several researchers have focused on teachers who are especially successful with students of color and students in poverty (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Sidle Walker, 2001). The work of Gloria Ladson-Billings (1990, 1992, 1995) is a good example. For three years, she studied excellent teachers in a California school district that served an African American community. In order to select the teachers, she asked parents and principals for nominations. Parents nominated teachers who respected them, created enthusiasm for learning in their children, and understood their children's need to operate successfully in two different worlds—the home community and the White world beyond. Principals nominated teachers who had few discipline referrals, high attendance rates, and high standardized test scores. Ladson-Billings was able to examine in depth 8 of the 9 teachers who were nominated by both parents and principals.

Based on her research, Ladson-Billings developed a conception of teaching excellence. She uses the term culturally relevant pedagogy to describe teaching that rests on three propositions. Students must:

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Connect and Extend to the Research

See the Summer 2003 issue of Theory into Practice on Teacher Reflection and Race in Cultural Contexts (Vol. 42, No. 3) Guest Editor: H. Richard Milner.

Connect and Extend to Your Teaching Portfolio

Menkart, D. J. (1999). Deepening the meaning of heritage months. Educational Leadership, 56(7), 19–21. This article discusses how to get past foods and festivals to increase students' understandings of heritage.

Culturally relevant pedagogy

Excellent teaching for students of color that includes academic success, developing/maintaining cultural competence, and developing a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo.

Creating Culturally Inclusive Classrooms

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Experience Academic Success. "Despite the current social inequities and hostile classroom environments, students must develop their academic skills. The ways those skills are developed may vary, but all students need literacy, numeracy, technological, social, and political skills in order to be active participants in a democracy" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160).

Develop/Maintain Their Cultural Competence. As they become more academically skilled, students still retain their cultural competence. "Culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 161). For example, one teacher used rap music to teach about literal and figurative meaning, rhyme, alliteration, and onomatopoeia in poetry. Another brought in a community expert known for her sweet potato pies to work with students. Follow-up lessons included investigations of George Washington Carver's sweet potato research, numerical analyses of taste tests, marketing plans for selling pies, and research on the educational preparation needed to become a chef.

Develop a Critical Consciousness to Challenge the Status Quo. In addition to developing academic skills while retaining cultural competence, excellent teachers help students "develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the social norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 162). For example, in one school, students were upset that their textbooks were out of date. They mobilized to investigate the funding formulas that allowed middle-class students to have newer books, wrote letters to the newspaper editor to challenge these inequities, and updated their texts with current information from other sources.

Ladson-Billings (1995) noted that many people have said her three principles "are just good teaching." She agrees that she is describing good teaching, but questions "why so little of it seems to be occurring in classrooms populated by African American students" (p. 159). Geneva Gay (2000) uses the term culturally responsive teaching to describe a similar approach that uses the "cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming" (p. 29).

Lisa Delpit (2003) describes three steps for teaching students of color that are consistent with culturally relevant pedagogy: (1) Teachers must be convinced of the inherent intellectual capability, humanity, and spiritual character of their students—they must believe in the children. There are many examples around the country of schools where...
low-income African American students are reading well above grade level and doing advanced math. When scores are low, the fault is not in the students but in their education. (2) Teachers must fight the foolishness that high test scores or scripted lessons are evidence of good learning and good teaching. Delpit says that successful instruction is "constant, rigorous, integrated across disciplines, connected to students’ lived cultures, connected to their intellectual legacies, engaging, and designed for critical thinking and problem solving that is useful beyond the classroom" (p. 18). (3) Teachers must learn who their students are and the legacies they bring. Then, students can explore their own intellectual legacies and understand the important reasons for academic, social, physical, and moral excellence—not just to "get a job" but also "for our community, for your ancestors, for your descendents" (p. 19).

The qualities of good teachers and the descriptions of best practices described by Ladson-Billings and Gay are evident in the characteristics of schools that were valued by African American families during the time of segregation in the South (Siddle Walker, 2001). Exemplary African American teachers are described repeatedly by their students as having high expectations and a demanding teaching style. They insisted that students learn and refused to lower their standards, even if it meant working extra hours with students after school. Consistent with the research on teacher quality described in Chapter 1, these exemplary teachers often had more education than White teachers in the same states. The teachers also were respected members of the community who cared deeply about the children in their classes, as you can see in the story of Vivian Gunn Morris, now a professor of education, in the Stories of Learning/Tributes to Teaching feature.

Fostering Resilience

In any given week, the 12% to 15% of school-age children who have urgent needs for social and emotional support are not getting help. Community and mental health services often don’t reach the students who are at the highest risk. But many children at risk for academic failure not only survive—they thrive. They are resilient students. What can we learn from these students? What can teachers and schools do to encourage resilience?

For me, caring was personified by MRS. WILLIE MAE THOMPSON, my home economics teacher. Mrs. Thompson was like a third mother to me—third only to my biological mother and favorite aunt (Earline). As with my friends, we lived in the same neighborhood (as did most of our teachers and principals). Most families attended one of the four Black churches in the community.

Hence, many of the teachers also taught us in Sunday school as well. We were welcome to Mrs. Thompson’s anytime and could visit without calling. It is no surprise that home economics was probably my favorite subject. (If I had to choose a favorite). I liked being able to immediately apply what I learned. Because of home economics, my family enjoyed (or suffered) my preparation of foods in new and different ways. School broadened my horizons about different ways of doing things. Thanks to Mrs. Thompson, I made most of my own clothes after taking home economics in seventh grade. But I was also fortunate to have many other outstanding and caring teachers as well.

At the risk of painting an overly idyllic portrait of my school experience, let me point out that children were pretty much the same as they are today. Bullying seems to be a common school experience and is part of my memories as well. In first grade, some of my classmates decided to bully me and threw rocks at me on my way home from school. I reported the incident to Mrs. Magnolia Watkins, my first-grade teacher. Mrs. Watkins intervened and it never happened again.

Resilient Students. People vary in their capacity to be resilient. Students who seem able to thrive in spite of serious challenges are actively engaged in school. They have good interpersonal skills, confidence in their own ability to learn, positive attitudes toward school, pride in their ethnicity, and high expectations (Borman & Overman, 2004; Lee, 2005). Also, students who have high intelligence or valued talents are more protected from risks. Being easy-going and optimistic is associated with resilience as well. Factors outside the student—interpersonal relationships and social support—matter, too. It helps to have a warm relationship with a parent who has high expectations and supports learning by organizing space and time at home for study. But even without such a parent, a strong bond with someone competent—a grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher, mentor, or other caring adult—can serve the same supportive function. Involvement in school, community, or religious activities can provide more connections to concerned adults and also teach lessons in social skills and leadership (Berk, 2005).

Resilient Classrooms. You can’t choose personalities or parents for your students. Even if you could, stresses can build up for even the most resilient students. Beth Doll and her colleagues (2005) suggest that we have to change classrooms instead of kids because “alternative strategies will be more enduring and most successful when they are integrated into naturally occurring systems of support [like schools] that surround children” (p. 3). In addition, there is some evidence that changes in classrooms—such as reducing class size and forming supportive relationships with teachers—have a greater impact on the academic achievement of African American students compared to Latino and White students (Borman & Overman, 2004). So how can you create a classroom that supports resilience?

Borman and Overman (2004) identified two characteristics of schools associated with academic resilience: a safe, orderly environment, and positive teacher–student relationships. In their book on resilient classrooms, Doll and her colleagues (2005) draw on research in education and psychology on best practices for children in poverty and children with disabilities to describe the characteristics of resilient classrooms. There are two strands of elements that bind students to their classroom community. One strand emphasizes the self-agency of students—their capacity to set and pursue goals; the second strand emphasizes caring and connected relationships in the classroom and the school.

Self-Agency Strand

- **Academic self-efficacy**, a belief in your own ability to learn, is one of the most consistent predictors of academic achievement. As you will see in Chapters 9 and 10, self-efficacy emerges when students tackle challenging, meaningful tasks with the support needed to be successful and observe other students doing the same thing. Accurate and encouraging feedback from teachers also helps.

- **Behavioral self-control**, or student self-regulation, is essential for a safe and orderly learning environment. Chapters 6, 9, and 12 will give you ideas for helping students develop self-regulation knowledge and skills.

- **Academic self-determination**, making choices, setting goals, and following through, is the third element in the self-agency strand. As you will see in Chapter 10, students who are self-determined are more motivated and committed to learning.

Relationship Strand

- **Caring teacher–student relationships** are consistently associated with better school performance, especially for students who face serious challenges. We saw the power of caring teachers in Chapter 3 and will return to this theme in Chapter 11.

- **Effective peer relations**, as we saw in Chapter 3, are also critical in connecting students to school.

- **Effective home–school relationships** are the final element in building a caring, connected network for students. In the School Development program, James Comer has
Guidelines: Building Learning Communities

Joyce Epstein (1995) describes six types of family/school/community partnerships. The following guidelines are based on her six categories:

Parenting partnerships: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Offer workshops, videos, courses, family literacy fairs, and other informational programs to help parents cope with parenting situations that they identify as important.
2. Establish family support programs to assist with nutrition, health, and social services.
3. Find ways to help families share information with the school about the child's cultural background, talents, and needs—learn from the families.

Communication: Design effective forms for school-to-home and home-to-school communication.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Make sure communications fit the needs of families. Provide translations, visual support, large print—whatever is needed to make communication effective.
2. Visit families in their territory after gaining their permission. Don't expect family members to come to school until a trusting relationship is established.
3. Balance messages about problems with communications of accomplishments and positive information.

Volunteering: Recruit and organize parent help and support.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Do an annual postcard survey to identify family talents, interests, times available, and suggestions for improvements.
2. Establish a structure (telephone tree, etc.) to keep all families informed. Make sure families without telephones are included.
3. If possible, set aside a room for volunteer meetings and projects.

Learning at home: Provide information and ideas for families about how to help children with schoolwork and learning activities.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Provide assignment schedules, homework policies, and tips on how to help with schoolwork without doing the work.
2. Get family input into curriculum planning—have idea and activity exchanges.
3. Send home learning packets and enjoyable learning activities, especially over holidays and summers.

Decision-making partnerships: Include families in school decisions, developing family and community leaders and representatives.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Create family advisory committees for the school with parent representatives.
2. Make sure all families are in a network with their representative.

Community partnerships: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

**EXAMPLES:**
1. Have students and parents research existing resources—build a database.
2. Identify service projects for students—explore service learning.
3. Identify community members who are school alumni and get them involved in school programs.

For more ideas on partnerships with parents, see http://www.sstask.ca/EducationServices/EducationalIssues/ParentSchoolPartnership/Types.htm


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Connect and Extend to Your Teaching Portfolio

Use the Family and Community Partnerships Guidelines to brainstorm ideas for family involvement in helping your students "take their learning home."

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Constructing a Resilient Classroom. In order to build student self-agency and relationships, the two strands of resilience, Doll and her colleagues (2005) provide student questionnaires for gathering data about your classroom. Figure 5.5 on the next page is an example of the "teacher relationship" part of the student questionnaire. One teacher found that when parents stay involved, their children's grades and test scores improve (Comer, Haynes, & Joyner, 1996). The Family and Community Partnerships Guidelines give some ideas for connecting with families.
Creating a Resilient Classroom

Here is an example of a student questionnaire about perceptions of relationships with the teacher. Using results from this questionnaire, one teacher, Ellie, made plans to improve her relationships with her students using the Plan Record Worksheet below.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**
Ellie's students circled YES, SOMETIMES, or NEVER in answer to these questions:

1. My teacher listens carefully to me when I talk.
2. My teacher helps me when I need help.
3. My teacher respects me.
4. My teacher believes that I am an important member of this class.
5. My teacher makes it fun to be in class.
6. My teacher is fair to me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NEVER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
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<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>NEVER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PLAN RECORD WORKSHEET**

Classroom: Ellie's third grade  
Record for week of:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 1</th>
<th>What will be done?</th>
<th>Who will do it?</th>
<th>When?</th>
<th>Where?</th>
<th>Did this happen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take turns giving &quot;special time&quot; at lunch to the three kids that are struggling most: Matthew, Ben, and Ari</td>
<td>Ellie</td>
<td>Every Tuesday and Thursday at lunch period</td>
<td>In the classroom</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2</td>
<td>What will be done?</td>
<td>Who will do it?</td>
<td>When?</td>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>Did this happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan a fun learning game for the mid-morning break</td>
<td>Ellie and the class</td>
<td>Every day from 10 to 10:20</td>
<td>In the classroom</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3</td>
<td>What will be done?</td>
<td>Who will do it?</td>
<td>When?</td>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>Did this happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make friendship bracelets to remind us to be kind to classmates</td>
<td>Classroom students</td>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>In the classroom</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Used this questionnaire and found that almost half of her students did not listen carefully or have any fun in class. They said the teacher was not fair and did not help, respect, or believe in them. Figure 5.5 shows the plan the teacher developed based on the results of the questionnaire.
Family and Community Partnerships

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**EXAMPLES**

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Creating Culturally Inclusive Classrooms
### QUESTIONNAIRE

Ellie’s students circled YES, SOMETIMES, or NEVER in answer to these questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NEVER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1. My teacher listens carefully to me when I talk.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My teacher helps me when I need help.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My teacher respects me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My teacher believes that I am an important member of this class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My teacher makes it fun to be in class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My teacher is fair to me.</td>
<td></td>
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Record for week of: ____________

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<tr>
<th>Activity 1</th>
<th>What will be done?</th>
<th>Who will do it?</th>
<th>When?</th>
<th>Where?</th>
<th>Did this happen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take turns giving “special time” at lunch to the three kids that are struggling most. Matthew, Lissette, Don.</td>
<td>Ellie</td>
<td>Every Tuesday and Thursday at lunch period.</td>
<td>in the classroom</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 2</th>
<th>What will be done?</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity 3</th>
<th>What will be done?</th>
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used this questionnaire and found that almost half of her students did not listen carefully or have any fun in class. They said the teacher was not fair and did not help, respect, or believe in them. Figure 5.5 also shows the plan the teacher developed based on the results of the questionnaire.
Diversity and Convergences

This entire chapter has been about diversity, so here I want to focus on four areas where diversity among students can affect their learning in classrooms: social organization, cultural values and learning preferences, sociolinguistics, and the digital divide. The chapter will conclude with ideas that apply to all students.

Diversity in Learning

Roland Tharp (1989) outlines several dimensions of classrooms that reflect the diversity of the students. The dimensions—social organization, cultural values and learning styles, and sociolinguistics—can be tailored to better fit the background of students.

Social Organization. Tharp (1989) states that “a central task of educational design is to make the organization of teaching, learning, and performance compatible with the social structures in which students are most productive, engaged, and likely to learn” (p. 350). Social structure or social organization in this context means the ways people interact to accomplish a particular goal. For example, the social organization of Hawaiian society depends heavily on collaboration and cooperation. Children play together in groups of friends and siblings, with older children often caring for the younger ones. When cooperative work groups of four or five boys and girls were established in Hawaiian classrooms, student learning and participation improved (Okagaki, 2001). The teacher worked intensively with one group while the children in the remaining groups helped each other. But when the same structure was tried in a Navajo classroom, students would not work together. These students are socialized to be more solitary and not to play with the opposite sex. By setting up same-sex working groups of only two or three Navajo students, teachers encouraged them to help each other. If you have students from several cultures, you may need to provide choices and variety in grouping structures.

Cultural Values and Learning Preferences. Rosa Hernandez Sheets (2005) describes three characteristics of teachers who design culturally inclusive classrooms. The teachers (1) recognize the various ways all their students display their capabilities; (2) respond to students’ preferred ways of learning; and (3) understand that a particular group’s cultural practices, values, and learning preferences may not apply to everyone in that group.

Results of some research suggest that Hispanic American students are more oriented toward family and group loyalty. This may mean that these students prefer cooperative activities and dislike being made to compete with fellow students (Garcia, 1992; Vasquez, 1990). Four values shared by many Latina/o students (not all—remember Sheets’s 3rd characteristic cited above) are:

- Familismo—tightly knit families. Discussing family problems or business may be seen as disloyal.
- Simpatia—value of interpersonal harmony. Assertively voicing personal opinions or arguing may be seen as inappropriate.
- Respeto—respect for people in authority, for example, teachers and government officials.
- Personalismo—valuing of close interpersonal relationships; discomfort with distant, cold, professional relationships. (Dingfelder, 2005)

The learning styles of African Americans may be inconsistent with teaching approaches in most schools. Some of the characteristics of this learning style are a visual/global approach rather than a verbal/analytic approach; a preference for reasoning by inference rather than by formal logic; a focus on people and relationships; a preference for energetic involvement in several activities simultaneously rather than routine.
step-by-step learning; a tendency to approximate numbers, space and time; and a greater dependence on nonverbal communication. Students of color who identify with their traditional cultures tend to respond better to open-ended questions with more than one answer, as opposed to single, right-answer questions. Questions that focus on meaning or the “big picture” may be more productive than questions that focus on details (Bennett, 1999; Gay, 2000; Sheets, 2005).

Native Americans also appear to have a more global, visual style of learning. For example, Navajo students prefer hearing a story all the way through to discussing the parts of the story. Teachers who stop to ask questions seem odd to these students and interrupt the learning process (Tharp, 1989). Also, these students sometimes show strong preferences for learning privately, through trial and error, rather than having their mistakes made public (Vasquez, 1990).

There has been little research on the learning styles of Asian Americans, perhaps because they are seen as “successful minorities.” Some educators suggest that Asian children tend to value teacher approval and to work well in structured, quiet learning environments where there are clear goals and social support (Manning & Baruth, 1996). But there are dangers in stereotyping both Asian and Asian American students as quiet, hardworking, and passive. Suzuki (1983) suggests that this practice “tends to reinforce conformity and stifle creativity. Asian and Pacific American students, therefore, frequently do not develop the ability to assert and express themselves verbally and are channeled in disproportionate numbers into the technical/scientific fields. As a result, many Asian and Pacific American students are overly conforming, and have their academic and social development narrowly circumscribed” (p. 9).

Suzuki’s cautions are echoed by many critics of the research on ethnic differences in learning styles (Yee, 1992).

Cautions about Learning Styles Research. In considering this research on learning styles, you should keep two points in mind. First, the validity of some of the learning styles research has been strongly questioned, as we saw in the previous chapter. Second, there is a heated debate today about whether identifying ethnic group differences in learning styles and preferences is a dangerous, racist, sexist exercise. In our society, we are quick to move from the notion of “difference” to the idea of “deficits” and stereotypes (Gorden, 1991; O’Neil, 1990). I have included the information about learning style differences because I believe that, used sensibly, this information can help you better understand your students.

It is dangerous and incorrect, however, to assume that every individual in a group shares the same learning style. The best advice for teachers is to be sensitive to individual differences in all your students and to make available alternative paths to learning. Never prejudge how a student will learn best on the basis of assumptions about the student’s ethnicity or race. Get to know the individual.

Sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics is the study of “the courtesies and conventions of conversation across cultures” (Tharp, 1989, p. 351). A knowledge of sociolinguistics will help you understand why communication sometimes breaks down in classrooms. The classroom is a special setting for communicating; it has its own set of rules for when, how, to whom, about what subject, and in what manner to use language. Sometimes, the sociolinguistic skills of students do not fit the expectations of teachers or counselors, as we saw earlier.

In order to be successful, students must know the communication rules; that is, they must understand the pragmatics of the classroom—when, where, and how to communicate. This is not such an easy task. As class activities change, rules change. Sometimes you have to raise your hand (during the teacher’s presentation), but sometimes you don’t (during story time on the rug). Sometimes it is good to ask a question (during discussion), but other times it isn’t so good (when the teacher is reprimanding you). These differing activity rules are called participation structures, and they define appropriate participation for each class activity. Most classrooms have many different participation structures. To be competent communicators in the classroom, students sometimes have to read very subtle, nonverbal cues telling them which participation structures are currently in effect. For example, in one classroom, when the teacher stood in a particular area of the room,
put her hands on her hips, and leaned forward at the waist, the children in the class were signaled to "stop and freeze," look at the teacher, and anticipate an announcement (Schulz & Flores, 1979).

**Sources of Misunderstandings.** Some children are simply better than others at reading the classroom situation because the participation structures of the school match the structures they have learned at home. The communication rules for most school situations are similar to those in middle-class homes, so children from these homes often appear to be more competent communicators. They know the unwritten rules. Students from different cultural backgrounds may have learned participation structures that conflict with the behaviors expected in school. For example, one study found that the home conversation style of Hawaiian children is to chim in with contributions to a story. In school, however, this overlapping style is viewed as "interrupting." When the teachers in one school learned about these differences and made their reading groups more like their students' home conversation groups, the young Hawaiian children in their classes improved in reading (An, 1980; Tharp, 1989).

The source of misunderstanding can be a subtle sociolinguistic difference, such as how long the teacher waits to react to a student's response. While and Tharp (1988) found that when Navajo students in one class paused in giving a response, their Anglo teacher seemed to think that they were finished speaking. As a result, the teacher often unintentionally interrupted students. In another study, researchers found that Pueblo Indian students participated twice as much in classes where teachers waited longer to react. Waiting longer also helps girls to participate more freely in math and science classes (Grossman & Grossman, 1994).

It seems that even students who speak the same language as their teachers may still have trouble communicating, and thus learning school subjects, if their knowledge of pragmatics does not fit the school situation. What can teachers do? Especially in the early grades, you should make communication rules for activities clear and explicit. Do not assume students know what to do. Use cues to signal students when changes occur. Explain and demonstrate appropriate behavior. I have seen teachers show young children how to use their "inside voice," "six-inch voice," or "whisper voice." One teacher said and then demonstrated, "If you have to interrupt me while I'm working with other children, stand quietly beside me until I can help you." Be consistent in responding to students. If students are supposed to raise their hands, don't call on those who break the rules. In these ways you teach students how to learn in school.

Sources of misunderstanding can be very subtle. The families of racial and ethnic minority students often have to be vigilant about discrimination to protect their children. They may teach their children to notice and resist possible discrimination. Teachers may unintentionally offend these families if they are not sensitive to possible messages of discrimination. Carol Orange (2005) described a teacher who sent home a holiday worksheet that featured an alphabetical list of all the students in the class. Three students' names were not in the typed list, but were handwritten, out of order, and on the side of the sheet. Two of these students were Latino and one was African American. The mother of the African American student was very upset that her son was truly "marginalized" (written in the margin) on the list. These three students were added to the class (and hence, the list) later in the year, after the list was set up, but the teacher could have simply been absent or not paying attention to the list. The children may have avoided this insult (unintended on her part) by redoing the list to give every student a place—a small but important symbol that she valued each one of them.

**The Digital Divide.** One area of teaching that often places students at risk is the use of technology. Many students have limited access to technology at home or in their communities. For example, in 2003, almost 26% of White individuals ages 3 and older lived in a household with broadband access, compared to about 14% for African Americans, 34% for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and 13% for Latino Americans. When the family income was $24,000 or less, the number was under 10%, whereas a household income of greater than $150,000 had 58% with broadband in their homes (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 2004). This split in access to technology has been called the digital divide.
Convergences: Teaching Every Student

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?
As the interview continues for the middle-school position, the next question is, "Describe the things you do for students to indicate you have feelings for them." What would you say?

The goal of this chapter is to give you a sense of the diversity in today's and tomorrow's schools and to help you meet the challenges of teaching in a multicultural classroom. How will you understand and build on all the cultures of your students? How will you deal with many different languages? Here are three general teaching principles to guide you in finding answers to these questions.

Know Your Students. We must learn who our students are and the legacies they bring (Delpit, 2003). Nothing you read in a chapter on cultural differences will teach you enough to understand the lives of all your students. If you can take other courses in college or read about other cultures, I encourage you to do it. But reading and studying are not enough. You should get to know your students' families and communities. Elba Reyes, a successful bilingual teacher for children with special needs, describes her approach:

Usually I find that if you really want to know a parent, you get to know them on their own turf. This is key to developing trust and understanding the parents' perspective. First, get to know the community. Learn where the local grocery store is and what the children do after school. Then schedule a home visit at a time that is convenient for the parents. The home environment is not usually as laden with failure. Sometimes observed the child being successful in the home, for example, riding a bicycle or helping with dinner. (Bos & Reyes, 1996, p. 349)

Try to spend time with students and parents on projects outside school. Ask parents to help in class or to speak to your students about their jobs, their hobbies, or the history and heritage of their ethnic group. In the elementary grades, don't wait until a student is in trouble to have the first meeting with a family member. Watch and listen to the ways that your students interact in large and small groups. Have students write to you, and write back to them. Eat lunch with one or two students. Spend some non-teaching time with them.

Respect Your Students. From knowledge ought to come respect for your students' learning strengths—for the struggles they face and the obstacles they have overcome. We must believe in our students (Delpit, 2003). For a child, genuine acceptance is a necessary condition for developing self-esteem. Sometimes the self-image and occupational aspirations of minority children actually decline in their early years in public school, probably because of the emphasis on majority culture values, accomplishments, and history. By presenting the accomplishments of particular members of an ethnic group or by bringing that group's culture into the classroom (in the form of literature, art, music, or any cultural knowledge), teachers can help students maintain a sense of pride in their cultural group. This integration of culture must be more than the "tokenism" of sampling ethnic foods or wearing costumes. Students should learn about the socially and intellectually important contributions of the various groups. There are many excellent references that provide background information, history, and teaching strategies for different groups of students (e.g., Banks, 2002; Gay, 2000; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Jackson-Billings, 1995).

Teach Your Students. The most important thing you can do for your students is teach them to read, write, speak, compute, think, and create—through constant, rigorous, culturally connected instruction (Delpit, 2003). Too often, goals for low-SES or minority group students have focused exclusively on basic skills. Students are taught words and sounds, but the meaning of the story is supposed to come later. Knapp, Turnbull, and Shields (1990, p. 5) make these suggestions:

- Focus on meaning and understanding from beginning to end—for example, by orienting instruction toward comprehending reading passages, communicating important ideas in written text, or understanding the concepts underlying number facts.
- Balance routine skill learning with novel and complex tasks from the earliest stages of learning.
- Provide context for skill learning that establishes clear reasons for needing to learn the skills.
- Influence attitudes and beliefs about the academic content areas as well as skills and knowledge.
- Eliminate unnecessary redundancy in the curriculum (e.g., repeating instruction in the same mathematics skills year after year).

And finally, teach students directly about how to be students. In the early grades, this could mean directly teaching the courtesies and conventions of the classroom: how to get a turn to speak, how and when to interrupt the teacher, how to whisper, how to get help in a small group, how to give an explanation that is helpful. In the later grades, it may mean teaching the study skills that fit your subject. You can ask students to learn “how we do it in school” without violating principle number two above—respect your students. Ways of asking questions around the kitchen table at home may be different from ways of asking questions in school, but students can learn both ways, without deciding that either way is superior. And you can expand ways of doing it in school to include more possibilities. The Guidelines give more ideas.

### Guidelines: Culturally Relevant Teaching

Experiment with different grouping arrangements to encourage social harmony and cooperation.

**EXAMPLES**

1. Try “study buddies” and pairs.
2. Organize heterogeneous groups of four or five.
3. Establish larger teams for older students.

Provide a range of ways to learn material to accommodate a range of learning styles.

**EXAMPLES**

1. Give students verbal materials at different reading levels.
2. Offer visual materials—charts, diagrams, models.
3. Provide tapes for listening and viewing.
4. Set up activities and projects.

Teach classroom procedures directly, even ways of doing things that you thought everyone would know.

**EXAMPLES**

1. Tell students how to get the teacher’s attention.
2. Explain when and how to interrupt the teacher if students need help.
3. Show which materials students can take and which require permission.
4. Demonstrate acceptable ways to disagree with or challenge another student.

Learn the meaning of different behaviors for your students.

**EXAMPLES**

1. Ask students how they feel when you correct or praise them. What gives them this message?

2. Talk to family and community members and other teachers to discover the meaning of expressions, gestures, or other responses that are unfamiliar to you.

**Emphasize meaning in teaching.**

**EXAMPLES**

1. Make sure students understand what they read.
2. Try storytelling and other modes that don’t require written materials.
3. Use examples that relate abstract concepts to everyday experiences; for instance, relate negative numbers to being overdrawn in your checkbook.

**Get to know the customs, traditions, and values of your students.**

**EXAMPLES**

1. Use holidays as a chance to discuss the origins and meaning of traditions.
2. Analyze different traditions for common themes.
3. Attend community fairs and festivals.

**Help students detect racist and sexist messages.**

**EXAMPLES**

1. Analyze curriculum materials for biases.
2. Make students “bias detectives,” reporting comments from the media.
3. Discuss the ways that students communicate biased messages about each other and what should be done when this happens.
4. Discuss expressions of prejudice such as anti-Semitism.

For ways to use technology for culturally relevant teaching, see: http://preservice.tech.edreform.net/techniques/culturallyrelevantpedagogy
Today's Diverse Classrooms (pp. 162–165)

Distinguish between the “melting pot” and multiculturalism. Statistics point to increasing cultural diversity in American society. Old views—that minority group members and immigrants should lose their cultural distinctiveness and assimilate completely in the American “melting pot” or be regarded as culturally deficient—are being replaced by new emphases on multiculturalism, equal educational opportunity, and the celebration of cultural diversity.

What is multicultural education? Multicultural education is a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students. According to the multicultural ideal, America should be transformed into a society that values diversity. James Banks suggests that multicultural education has five dimensions: integrating content, helping students understand how knowledge is influenced by beliefs, reducing prejudice, creating social structures in schools that support learning and development for all students, and using teaching methods that reach all students.

What is culture? There are many conceptions of culture, but most include the knowledge, skills, rules, traditions, beliefs, and values that guide behavior in a particular group of people: Culture is a program for living. Everyone is a member of many cultural groups, defined in terms of geographic region, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, social class, and religion. Membership in a particular group does not determine behavior or values, but makes certain values and kinds of behavior more likely. Wide variations exist within each group.

Melting pot A metaphor for the absorption and assimilation of immigrants into the mainstream of society so that ethnic differences vanish.

Cultural deficit model A model that explains the school achievement problems of ethnic minority students by assuming that their culture is inadequate and does not prepare them to succeed in school.

Multicultural education Education that promotes equity in the schooling of all students.

Culture The knowledge, values, attitudes, and traditions that guide the behavior of a group of people and allow them to solve the problems of living in their environment.

Economic and Social Class Differences (pp. 165–168)

What is SES, and how does it differ from social class? Social class reflects a group’s prestige and power in a society. Most people are aware of the social class that they share with similar peers. Socioeconomic status (SES) is a term used by sociologists for variations in wealth, power, control over resources, and prestige. Socioeconomic status is determined by several factors—not just income—and often overpowers other cultural differences. No single variable is an effective measure of SES, but most researchers identify four general levels of SES: upper, middle, working, and lower classes. The main characteristics of these four levels are summarized in Table 5.1.

What is the relationship between SES and school achievement? Socioeconomic status and academic achievement are closely related. High-SES students of all ethnic groups show higher average levels of achievement on test scores and stay in school longer than low-SES students. Poverty during a child’s preschool years appears to have the greatest negative impact. And the longer the child is in poverty, the stronger the impact is on achievement. Why is there a correlation between SES and school achievement? Low-SES students may suffer from inadequate health care, teachers’ lowered expectations of them, low self-esteem, learned helplessness, participation in resistance cultures, school tracking, and understimulating home environments. A striking finding is that low-SES children lose academic ground outside school over the summer, while higher-SES children continue to advance.

Socioeconomic status (SES) Relative standing in the society based on income, power, background, and prestige.

Resistance culture Group values and beliefs about refusing to adopt the behaviors and attitudes of the majority culture.

Tracking Assignment to different classes and academic experiences based on achievement.

Ethnic and Racial Differences (pp. 168–176)

Distinguish between ethnicity and race. Ethnicity (biologically transmitted behavior) and race (biologically transmitted physical traits) are socially significant categories people use to describe themselves and others. Minority groups (either numerically or historically unempowered) are rapidly increasing in population.

How can differences in ethnicity of teachers and students affect school performance? Conflicts can arise from differences between teachers and students in culture-based beliefs, values, and expectations. Cultural conflicts are usually about below-the-surface differences, because when subtle cultural differences meet, misunderstandings are common. Students in some cultures learn attitudes and behaviors that are more consistent with school expectations. Differences among ethnic groups in cognitive and academic abilities are largely the legacy of racial segregation and continuing prejudice and discrimination.

Distinguish among prejudice, discrimination, and stereotype threat. Prejudice is a rigid and irrational generalization—a prejudgment or attitude—about an entire category of people. Prejudice may target people in particular racial, ethnic, religious, political, geograhic, or language groups, or it may be directed toward the gender or sexual orientation of the individual. Discrimination is unequal treatment of or actions to-
ward particular categories of people. Stereotype threat is the extra emotional and cognitive burden that your performance in an academic situation might confirm a stereotype that others hold about you. It is not necessary that the individual even believe the stereotype. All that matters is that the person is aware of the stereotype and cares about performing well enough to disprove its unflattering implications. In the short run, the fear that you might confirm a negative stereotype can induce test anxiety and undermine performance. Over time, experiencing stereotype threat may lead to disidentification with schooling and academic achievement.

Ethnicity A cultural heritage shared by a group of people.
Race A group of people who share common biological traits that are seen as self-defining by the people of the group.
Minority group A group of people who have been socially disadvantaged—not always a minority in actual numbers.
Prejudice Prejudgment or irrational generalization about an entire category of people.
Stereotype Schema that organizes knowledge or perceptions about a category.
Discrimination Treating or acting unfairly toward particular categories of people.
Stereotype threat The extra emotional and cognitive burden that your performance in an academic situation might confirm a stereotype that others hold about you.

Girls and Boys: Differences in the Classroom (pp. 176–182)

What are the stages for achieving a sexual orientation for gay and lesbian youth? Stages of achieving a sexual orientation for gay and lesbian students can also follow a pattern from discomfort to confusion to confusion to acceptance. Some researchers contend that sexual identity is not always permanent and can change over the years.

What is gender-role identity and how do gender-role identities develop? Gender-role identity is the image each individual has of himself or herself as masculine or feminine in characteristics—a part of self-concept. Biology (hormones) plays a role, as does the differential behavior of parents and teachers toward male and female children. Through their interactions with family, peers, teachers, and the environment in general, children begin to form gender schemas, or organized networks of knowledge about what it means to be male or female. Research shows that gender-role stereotyping begins in the preschool years and continues throughout gender bias in the school curriculum and sex discrimination in the classroom. Teachers often unintentionally perpetuate these problems.

Are there sex differences in cognitive abilities? Some measures of achievement and SAT tests have shown sex-linked differences, especially in verbal and spatial abilities and mathematics. Males seem to be superior on tasks that require mental rotation of objects and females are better on tasks that require acquisition and use of verbal information. Research on the causes of these differences has been inconclusive, except to indicate that academic socialization and teachers’ treatment of male and female students in mathematics classes do play a role. Teachers can use many strategies for reducing gender bias.

Sexual identity A complex combination of beliefs and orientations about gender roles and sexual orientation.
Gender-role identity Beliefs about characteristics and behaviors associated with being female or male.
Gender schemas Organized networks of knowledge about what it means to be male or female.
Gender biases Different views of males and females, often favoring one gender over the other.

Language Differences in the Classroom (pp. 182–188)

What are the origins of language differences in the classroom? Language differences among students include dialects, bilingualism, and culture-based communication styles. Dialects are not inferior languages and should be respected, but formal English should be taught for academic contexts. Dialects often affect the pronunciation of words, so teachers must be able to distinguish a mistake from a dialect difference in oral language. Students who speak in dialect and students who are bilingual often use code-switching to communicate in different groups.

What is bilingual education? Bilingual students speak a first language other than English, learn English as a second language, and may have some degree of limitation in English proficiency, and also must often struggle with social adjustment problems relating to biculturalism. Although there is much debate about the best way to help bilingual students master English, studies show it is best if they are not forced to abandon their first language. The more proficient students are in their first language, the faster they will master the second. Mastering academic language skills in any new language takes five to seven years.

Dialect Rule-governed variation of a language spoken by a particular group.
Code-switching Successful switching between cultures in language, dialect, or nonverbal behaviors to fit the situation.
Bilingualism Speaking two languages fluently.
English Language Learners (ELL) Students whose primary or heritage language is not English.
English as a Second Language (ESL) Designation for programs and classes to teach English to students who are not native speakers of English.
Semilingual Not proficient in any language; speaking one or more languages inadequately.
Creating Culturally Inclusive Classrooms (pp. 188–194)

What is culturally relevant pedagogy? “Culturally relevant pedagogy is an approach to teaching that uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of references, and learning styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students” (Gay, 2000). Gloria Ladson-Billings describes culturally relevant teaching that rests on three propositions: Students must experience academic success, develop/maintain their cultural competence, and develop a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo.

What are the elements of a resilient classroom? There are two strands of elements that bind students to their classroom community. One strand emphasizes the self-agency of students— their capacity to set and pursue goals. This includes academic self-efficacy, self-control, and self-determination. The second strand emphasizes caring and connected relationships with the teacher, peers, and the home.

Culturally Inclusive Classrooms: Classrooms that provide culturally diverse students equitable access to the teaching-learning process.

Resilience: The ability to adapt successfully in spite of difficult circumstances and threats to development.

Diversity and Convergences (pp. 195–199)

Sociolinguistics The study of the formal and informal rules for how, when, about what, to whom, and how long to speak in conversations within cultural groups.

Pragmatics The rules for when and how to use language to be an effective communicator in a particular culture.

Participation structures The formal and informal rules for how to take part in a given activity.

Culturally relevant pedagogy Excellent teaching for students of color that includes academic success, developing/maintaining cultural competence, and developing a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo.

Digital divide The disparities in access to technology between poor and more affluent students and families.
Teachers' Casebook: Connections to PRAXIS II™

A classroom should be a community of learners, and the community described in the Teachers' Casebook is fractured along several lines. Divisions and attitudes that undermine the goal of that community—learning—must be addressed fairly, firmly, and tactfully. As the leader of that community, your practices and attitudes will be major factors that determine whether that community moves toward your goal.

What Would They Do?

Here is how some practicing teachers responded to the teaching situation presented at the beginning of this chapter about bringing together a class that was divided along ethnic lines.

Jamaal Allan  Language Arts Teacher, Seventh Grade, J. W. Poynter Middle School, Hillsboro, Oregon

Working in a middle school, social issues are often deemed more important than academics. The biggest issue is that each student has an identity within his or her group, but fears that identity is lost when communicating cross-culturally. Teaching Language Arts, there are numerous activities to cultural awareness that would assist team and community building within this diverse classroom. Students at this age must be taught to celebrate differences, not shun them. Rather than ignoring the problem, or placing it at the back of their minds, we as teachers must be attacked head-on and a dialogue opened between students to discuss these cultural issues. Each student needs to understand that his or her identity and cultural background will be preserved when they become a member of a larger, more diverse community. To “fit in” integration in seating and groups, write each student's name on a popsicle stick and draw lots to randomly assign groups.

Deborah P. Reed  Darby Woods Elementary School, Galloway, Ohio

Thomas G. Reed  Beechcroft High School, Columbus, Ohio

Cultural differences, whether rooted in ethnicity, social class, or geography, lend to feelings of alienation and student disengagement. Although such feelings may be symptomatic of a larger school, or community-wide problem, you can minimize cultural tension and promote greater understanding of individual and cultural differences. For example, early in the school year carefully assign all pairings or groupings of students, and require them to work collaboratively in short activities for no longer than 10 or 15 minutes. During these activities, use team-building exercises that allow students to learn about each other as individuals rather than as a members of a larger cultural group. Invite adults from the community to come into the classroom to model teamwork and demonstrate ways they gain cultural understanding.

As the class breaks through the cultural barriers and biases, begin to allow groupings of students from the same cultures to work collaboratively on standards-based classroom projects and present their work in ways specific to their culture. Further, as you conference with different groups about their projects, ask them to teach you common words and phrases from their native languages that show respect. This builds rapport with students and shows them that you value their contributions to the classroom.

Debbie Youngblood  Sixth Grade Wellness and Physical Education Teacher, Hilliard City Schools, Hilliard, Ohio

In PRAXIS II™, you will be presented with scenarios and questions that will test your knowledge of the increasingly complex learning communities that teachers and students inhabit. You will be challenged to implement strategies and practices that foster learning for each of the varied students who are in that community with you.

Randall G. Sampson  Assistant-Principal, Ghana Middle School, Westerville, Ohio

The collaboration of educational leader and teacher is essential. As an educational leader, I would suggest that the teacher provide multiple ways for students to personalize the content standards and academic indicators with the students’ culture, providing personal relevance for the students. The teacher should attempt to help the students create a personal comfort and pride about their individual cultures through implementation of writing, research and various mediums of presentation. The teacher is providing an opportunity for students to respect their own cultures, thereby simultaneously establishing the foundation of academic efficacy and mastery of academic content. With such a foundation students will be more likely to understand the experiences of their classmates, leading to a more respectful peer culture.

W. Sean Kearney  Former Assistant Principal, Galien R. Elio Elementary School, Converse, Texas

What an asset this is to have a variety of language and cultures in one classroom! People are comfortable with the familiar. Consider changing the way students are grouped to mix up the peer groups, or providing opportunities for students to present different aspects of their cultures with their classmates. These could include music, food, clothing, or customs. Many schools will dedicate one day out of the year to various cultures. Consider broadening this approach to incorporate various cultures throughout the year. If there are multiple languages spoken in your classroom, consider asking bilingual students to teach the class some basic words. Use these “experts” to increase the knowledge base of all your students.