Culture, Teaching, and Learning

GUIDING QUESTIONS

? *How are high expectations especially critical for culturally and linguistically diverse learners?*

? *How can teachers learn about students' home cultures?*

? *How can teachers use their understanding of students' home cultures to teach in culturally relevant ways?*

It is important for all students that schooling become linked with their worlds and experiences in significant ways. For students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, this often does not occur, and the overt consequences can be tragic, including high absenteeism, poor performance on standardized testing, failing grades, and high dropout rates. Most important, students are denied an opportunity to learn. This forecloses important life opportunities for large portions of our student populations.

"I assume that amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience . . ." (Dewey, 1938)

How Are High Expectations Especially Critical for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners?

Gay (2000) suggests that test scores, grade-point averages, course enrollments, and other indicators of school achievement are symptoms, not causes, of problems for students of color. In fact, there are many other indicators of school success or failure. Ultimately, school failure is what students of color experience, but it is not their identity or net worth.

The current standards-based reform movement demands that *all* students gain proficiency in specific skills and content areas. Before standards, two levels of practice existed. One level provided for basic skill development for all learners. The other level accommodated college-bound students with higher order skill development. Standards promote the belief that all children can learn at high levels given appropriate time and resources. While there is a small but growing body of research regarding the problems and promises of standards-based reform for culturally and linguistically diverse students, it has become clear from results in many states with new standards and assessements that large percentages of culturally and linguistically diverse students are not being adequately prepared in school. This highlights the need to transform

schooling for diverse learners in ways that will ensure their academic progress and success. On the most basic level, teachers must now refocus their beliefs about culturally and linguistically diverse students, transforming low expectations to high expectations.

When teachers form low expectations of students based on a perceived lack of intellect or cultural sophistication, these expectations become a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, and student performance falls (Villegas, 1991). This ill-informed notion, also known as the "cultural deficit theory," assumes that some students cannot achieve because of their culture, ethnicity, language, or race.

The notion of the minority student who "doesn't care" is all too often a misconception of both dominant and minority teachers, who have assimilated the values of the dominant culture through their schooling (Delpit, 1995). It conveniently attributes a student's struggles to the student, her family, and her community, leaving school structures and teacher practices unscrutinized. While specific communication breakdowns may heighten teachers' stereotyped beliefs regarding students' home cultures, the views found in the classroom generally mirror the pervasive prejudice towards minority groups that is often found in the dominant culture. Educators' views of minority and poor students' home cultures as culturally and intellectually deficient have resulted in great harm to a large number of students. Cultural deficit theory has had far-reaching ramifications in classrooms and schools (Delpit, 1995; Villegas, 1991).

"A child cannot be taught by anyone whose demand, essentially, is that the child repudiate his experience and all that gives him sustenance and enter into a limbo in which he will no longer be black" (James Baldwin cited in Gay, 2000, p. 85).

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ACTIVITY: Honoring Cultural Identity

In her book *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice,* Geneva Gay (2000) quotes James Baldwin, who informs us of the importance of recognizing and valuing students' language and culture in a way that honors students' personal identities.

Reflect on the Baldwin quotation on page 33 and discuss the following questions.

- *What do you think Baldwin means by "repudiate his experience and all that gives him sustenance"? How might this occur in a classroom?*
- *What does "enter into a limbo in which he will no longer be black" mean?*
- *What other identities might substitute for black in the setting in which you work?*
- *What parts of the teaching and learning process might diminish instead of build on what students bring with them from home to school?*

VIGNETTE: Challenging Cultural Assumptions: Mr. Stivale

Recently, a faculty meeting was held in a middle school in a small city with a large population of students from Puerto Rico. One of the participants at the meeting, Mr. Stivale, has been a math and technology teacher for about 20 years. Mr. Stivale regularly makes comments to Puerto Rican students such as, "I bet you never saw a computer until you came to the United States," and "I know you have trouble with English, so let's see if someone can translate this into Puerto Rican." At one point during the meeting Mr. Stivale asserted that "some of these kids [referring to the Puerto Rican students] just don't want to learn, and you can't make them. I'm not interested in them." He then looked around the table, assuming that other participants would be in agreement. Other participants looked uncomfortable, but no one challenged his statement.

DISCUSSION

- **How do you think Mr. Stivale's cultural deficit approach impacts students?**
- **What kind of information do you think Mr. Stivale needs in order to change his approach?**
- **Why do you think no one challenged Mr. Stivale's statements at the faculty meeting?**
- **As a colleague of Mr. Stivale's, how might you have responded?**

It is likely that Mr. Stivale would claim that he treats all students fairly. Upon observing his class, however, it became clear that Mr. Stivale communicated his belief that Puerto Rican students, many of whom come from working-class families, have a cultural deficit. This teacher's beliefs and lack of knowledge about students' cultures translated into overt disrespect for students and their cultures. We might consider this a kind of worst-case scenario but not an uncommon one.

Cultural deficit assumptions often appear more subtly as well. Many well-intentioned teachers seek to assist low-performing minority and ELL students by making the curriculum less cognitively challenging so that students can "get it." Sometimes teachers assume that culturally diverse and poor students don't have the cultural prerequisites teachers view as precursors to higher order thinking. For example, often a teacher who has students from backgrounds that do not privilege literacy will assume that students will be unable to process sophisticated narrative structures in texts. The teacher thus places these students into "lower" reading groups.

Official and informal ability grouping and tracking communicates to students the teacher's belief that they are not intelligent enough to succeed academically. This assumption is dangerous for several reasons. First, it does not consider that such students may come from home cultures with highly complex oral traditions—traditions that might, in fact, make them better able to relate to complex narrations within texts (Delpit, 1995). Second, it ignores the mission promised by standards-based reform to ensure high academic achievement for all students. Third, and most fundamental, it exemplifies the hazardous but common practice of substituting suppositions (or prejudices) for knowledge about students' and families' circumstances. This results in limited opportunities after high school (Anyon, 1981; Delpit, 1995). Gay (2000) notes that students of color, especially in poor and urban areas, receive less instructional attention. They are also

- called on less frequently,
- praised less often,
- reprimanded more often and punished more severely,
- given answers more frequently by teachers,
- not encouraged to develop higher order thinking,
- not encouraged to elaborate on statements,
- rewarded for following rules and regulations and for being "nice".

The self-fulfilling prophecy referred to earlier holds true in the other direction as well; when educators hold out high standards to students while simultaneously communicating a respect for their home cultures, student performance increases. In addition, Gay (2000) reports that caring relationships have the following qualities:

- patience
- persistence
- facilitation
- validation
- empowerment for participants

Uncaring relationships, on the other hand, are characterized by

- impatience
- intolerance
- dictations
- control

Caring teachers hold students accountable for high-quality academic, social, and personal performance and ensure that this can happen. Kleinfeld refers to these teachers as "warm demanders" (in Gay, 2000, p. 50).

VIGNETTE: Constructing a Community of Learners: Mr. Díaz

On Thursday mornings, each child in Mr. Raphael Díaz's fourth-grade class at the Alfred Lima Sr., Elementary School has an adult mentor all to him- or herself. Mr. Díaz has set up the mentor-student pairs in collaboration with a professor of teachers-in-training at a local college. For the next hour, the 23 students in this Spanish, bilingual classroom engage with their mentors in a variety of reading, writing, and conversation activities in English. For the remaining 4 hours of the school day, the class maintains its high level of enthusiasm, with one change: the focus of their engagement shifts to their teacher, Mr. Díaz, who is proficient in both Spanish and English.

The principles of culturally responsive teaching abound in Mr. Díaz's teaching practice. Perhaps the best example of his practice is the efficacy with which he communicates high expectations to each student. This message is personalized for individual students at every opportunity. Mr. Díaz might remark, "Ricky, in a couple of years you will come back and teach me," or "You see, Alexi? You are doing so well on your own, pretty soon you won't need me anymore," or "Ashley, you know so much about this topic, soon you'll be able to write a book about it."

In much of his teaching, Mr. Díaz serves as mediator, encouraging his fourth-grade students to become independent learners. For instance, in math classes, rather than simply giving them set problems to learn, he encourages students to identify and analyze the data presented in problems. He asks them to frame relevant questions and to determine appropriate tasks and their sequence. In this way, students learn to express themselves in an environment of academic discourse. Trained to make their own choices, they are then encouraged to defend these choices to their peers. After a reading activity, students write in their journals and then share their thoughts by presenting them to the whole class. In a similar manner, during math class, students are required to show their work and explain the process to others. This creates an

ethic of sharing and responsibility, promoting Mr. Díaz's belief that learning is a serious endeavor with many rewards and demands.

The students have a constant stream of support in their teacher. Born in Cuba, Mr. Díaz attended New York City public schools. Now a successful artist as well as a teacher, he knows firsthand the strengths and gifts his students bring to school and what it takes to succeed, both in school and in the world. His ongoing message of respect and belief in his students is heard and respected in turn because students know that this message is informed and comes from the heart.

"What is the one thing you remember most about the Dominican Republic?" Mr. Díaz asks a girl who has just read a journal entry about what she did over the weekend. Several times during the day, Mr. Díaz asks similar questions about home or country, demonstrating not only a personal awareness of each student's cultural origin but also an understanding that each student carries his/her home and homeland with him/her throughout the day. These are elements of a student's situational past, of present academic and social development, and of future potential.

Mr. Díaz's classroom is wealthy by many standards. Sun pours through many windows lining two walls of the large, corner room. More than 30 posters on the walls and over 100 books in the classroom library reflect a wide diversity of cultures, ages, periods of history, and interests. Art supplies, computers, containers for tools, and completed work all make it possible for students and teacher to do the job they are asked to do. But resources do not come easily. Mr. Díaz writes proposals for books and materials to supplement those provided by the school.

Mr. Díaz joins with his students in constructing a community of learners in his classroom. Together, they shape the classroom into an inspiring home for learning and create a space in which Spanish, English, and a wide range of cultural heritages are named and respected. They also share what they do

well, offering to inform the community of educators about the wealth of diversity in their school community (Knowledgeloom, 2001).

DISCUSSION

- **What makes Mr. Díaz a "warm demander"?**
- **What does Mr. Díaz do to convey high expectations to students?**
- **What strategies does Mr. Díaz use to engage his students and foster academic growth? What kinds of higher order thinking does he require of students?**
- **How does Mr. Díaz affirm and incorporate students' home cultures in the classroom? How do you think this might affect student learning?**
- **How can setting high expectations and affirming and incorporating students' home cultures work to improve student outcomes?**

Gay (2000) notes five strong trends in teacher expectations:

- Teacher expectations significantly influence the quality of students' learning opportunities.
- Teacher expectations are affected by factors that have no basis in reality and may persist in the face of contrary evidence.
- There are pervasive expectations about intellectual capacity based on ethnicity and gender of students; these lead to the self-fulfilling prophecy phenomenon.
- There are higher, universal, academic achievement expectations for European-American students than for students of color, except for some Asian American students.
- Teachers' expectations for students and their sense of professional efficacy are interrelated. Teachers who have low expectations for students do not feel confident they can teach those students, and as a result attribute students' failure to lack of intellect and deficient home lives. Teachers with strong self-confidence and feelings of efficacy in their teaching abilities have high expectations for all students.

How Can Teachers Learn about Students' Home Cultures?

It stands to reason that teachers need to know the values, practices, and learning styles of the cultural groups from which their students come. However, Zeichner (1996) warns that generalized studies about cultures can lead to stereotypes. Thus, it is best not to engage solely in text-based research about students' cultures. The alternative is to engage in amateur ethnographic inquiry about one's own students (Heath, 1983).

Briefly, ethnography refers to the systematic inquiry into how members of a group make meaning of the world. What constitutes a "good job," an "important tradition," the "responsibilities of a daughter," or even the "value of homework" in a student's domestic priorities can all be investigated ethnographically. Ethnography conducted in sufficient detail should illustrate not only cultural trends but intracultural differences. That is, not everyone within a culture has the same views on a given topic or

has exactly the same habits. Villegas (1993) offers these methods of collecting information:

- Home visits
- Conversations with community members
- Consultations with other teachers
- Observations of students in and out of school

In addition, an ethnographic investigation would also include conversations with the students.

One source for better understanding the students' culture is household "funds of knowledge." "Funds of knowledge" is the term researchers use to include (1) information, (2) processes of thinking and learning, and (3) useful skills associated with a community's normal life (Leighton, Hightower, Wrigley, 1995). All three of these elements must be understood in relation to specific, diverse, sociocultural practices. Believing that students of Mexican origin possess specific "funds of knowledge," researchers Luis Moll, Norma González, and their colleagues helped Arizona teachers make connections between these students' school and homes. These connections resulted in teachers gaining access to information that helped them make academic material more relevant to students (Moll, 1992; McLaughlin & McLeod, 1996). Their work had two goals: (1) to form relationships among home, teachers, and school by tapping into the family's strengths and (2) to allow the teacher to learn about the family's funds of knowledge so that the information could be used as a resource and complement to classroom curriculum (González, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, & Amanti, 1993; Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez, 1997).

"Funds of knowledge" expresses the belief that students bring valuable home knowledge to the learning environment. In addition, what students bring may differ according to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and their individual circumstances. This gives teachers the opportunity to consider how students learn to construct knowledge in social contexts. In many instances, schools and teachers are not aware of the abundant knowledge that families have or that this

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knowledge can be incorporated in order to teach academic skills. Funds of knowledge, then, refers to understanding, discovering, and appreciating the many cultural practices of students and their families. Consider the following example of how teachers used the knowledge acquired from home visits.

VIGNETTE: Funds of Knowledge—Learning about the Community

(adapted from McLaughlin & McLeod, 1996)

Teachers visited students' homes as if they were anthropologists, gaining an understanding of their Latino students' cultural backgrounds as well as gathering material for their curriculum. One teacher drew on the expertise of parents employed in construction occupations to create a mathematics curriculum based on building a house. Another found that many of her students' families had extensive knowledge of the medicinal value of plants and herbs, so she taught scientific concepts in that context. Still another based a curriculum unit on the discovery that some students regularly returned from Mexico with candy to sell. Students investigated the economics of marketing, compared Mexican and American candy, did a nutritional analysis of candy, studied the process of sugar processing, and conducted a survey on favorite candies, for which they graphed data and wrote a report.

The example on page 43 illustrates how teachers used cultural knowledge not simply to talk about superficial things like foods, clothes, and holidays but to develop classroom practice. These findings and understandings led to in-depth information about the accumulated bodies of knowledge in the various households (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992).

Discovering students' funds of knowledge entails finding out and understanding the social history of the households—their sources, evolution, and most important, their work history. For example, some children from migrant families might possess knowledge about farming or agriculture (a domain of knowledge) because that is what their parents do for a living. These students would have knowledge of crop planting and harvesting. Moll (1992) observed that families had material and scientific knowledge about carpentry, masonry, electrical wiring, fencing, and building codes, just to name a few areas.

Traditionally, teachers have made home visits for several reasons: to discuss a student's behavior or problems with subject areas or to provide information on how parents can help the student at home. In the funds of knowledge approach, home visits have a different purpose. Teachers develop skills in observing and interviewing before they do home visits; they participate in study groups, reflect on their journals or field notes after home visits, and then use what they have learned to build and enhance their curriculum. The aim is to identify and document knowledge that exists in the student and use that knowledge to develop, transform, and enrich classroom practice (González et al., 1993). Teachers implementing the model may initially be reluctant to visit their students' homes and to report their observations as a researcher. But as they become familiar with the process, teachers begin to see that the effort is worthwhile. In addition, when visits and ethnographic reflection are connected, they bring about significant changes not only in teachers but in all parties involved (González et al., 1993). The example on page 43 illustrates how one teacher discovered the resources within her students' families and how she became a learner in the process.

VIGNETTE: From Martha Floyd-Tenery, Bilingual Resource Teacher

As I reread some of the early journal entries I made for this project, I realize how I have changed my views of the household. As I read these entries, I realize that I had discussed my students in terms of low academics, home-life problems, alienation, and SES [socioeconomic status], and that I was oriented towards a deficit model. I no longer see the families I visited that way. Since I am looking for resources, I am finding resources, and I recognize the members of the families for who they are and for their talents and unique personalities. We now have a reciprocal relationship where we exchange goods, services, and information. I have also discarded many myths that are prevalent in our region and that I myself used to believe.

DISCUSSION

- **What are some myths related to the education, values, and responsibilities of diverse students? How might these myths be reflected in your teaching?**
- **Short of being personally involved in a collaborative ethnographic analysis of the household dynamics of all your students, what could you do to improve your knowledge of your students' worlds?**
- **To what extent would you incorporate funds of knowledge in your classroom? What benefits do you think your non-minority students would receive?**

How Can Teachers Use Their Understanding of Students' Home Cultures to Teach in Culturally Relevant Ways?

Curriculum and instruction that attempt to build on students' cultural knowledge are part of what is called "culturally responsive pedagogy" (Bartolomé, 1995; Villegas, 1991). When culturally responsive teaching occurs, students' home cultures and experiences are drawn upon as resources for teaching and learning instead of being viewed as barriers to education. The importance of understanding students' particular cultural backgrounds and skills was elaborated upon in our discussion about funds of knowledge.

Ladson-Billings (1995) extends the concept of culturally responsive teaching to culturally *relevant* teaching. "A next step for positing effective pedagogical practice is a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. I term this pedagogy culturally relevant pedagogy" (p. 469).

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Ladson-Billings (1995) outlines three criteria for culturally relevant teaching:

- An ability to develop students academically. This means effectively helping students read, write, speak, compute, pose and solve higher order problems, and engage in peer review of problem solutions.
- A willingness to nurture and support cultural competence in both home and school cultures. The key is for teachers to value and build on skills that students bring from the home culture. For example, teachers of African American students can use the lyrics of rap songs to teach elements of poetry before they proceed to a study of more conventional poetry.
- The development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness. Teachers help students recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities. Ladson-Billings offers the following vignette.

VIGNETTE: Exposing Inequities through Education

"A class of African American middle school students in Dallas identified the problem of their school being surrounded by liquor stores (Robinson, 1993). Zoning regulations in the city made some areas dry while the students' school was in a wet area. The students identified the fact that schools serving white, upper middle-class students were located in dry areas while schools in poor communities were in wet areas. The students, assisted by their teacher, planned a strategy for exposing this inequity. By using mathematics, literacy, social, and political skills, the students were able to prove their points with reports, editorials, charts, maps, and graphs...students' learning became a form of cultural critique." (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 477)

DISCUSSION

- **How does Ladson-Billings' vignette demonstrate the first criterion for culturally relevant teaching—developing students academically—and the third criterion—developing a sociopolitical or critical consciousness?**
- **How might the teacher in the vignette have drawn on students' cultural competence in order to accomplish the project?**
- **Think about your own teaching. What kind of project might you and your students develop that would employ culturally relevant teaching? How could you assess your project based on Ladson-Billings' three criteria?**

Nieto (1999) adds to this pedagogy her Five Principles of Learning. These are explained below:

- **Learning is actively constructed**
  This challenges the banking concept of education, in which learning is conceived of as a process of receiving, filing, and storing deposits of information (Freire, 1970). This principle acknowledges learner agency and works against the reproduction of socially sanctioned knowledge. It presupposes that all students have the ability to think and reason and that learning is more than rote memorization of facts.

- **Learning emerges from and builds on experience**
  Everyone has important experiences, attitudes, and behaviors to bring to the process of education. Some bring oral stories instead of written ones; while some experiences appear to possess more cultural capital, they are not inherently more valuable.

- **Learning is influenced by cultural differences**
  The work of Vygotsky (1978), Greenfield et al. (1996), and other cultural psychologists has demonstrated the cultural basis of learning. One example is Trumbull et al.'s (2001) work on collectivism and individualism, which refers to the degree to which a society values individual versus collective learning. This was elaborated in the previous section on Culture, Identity, and Development in *The Diversity Kit*.

- **Learning is influenced by the context in which it occurs**
  Social, political, and economic contexts all affect learning in significant, though not always obvious or predictable, ways. Nieto (1999) cites Kinchloe and Steinberg's proposition that cognition is always interactive with the environment and that schools are never ideology-free zones.

- **Learning is socially mediated and develops within a culture and community**
  Schools organize themselves in ways that are welcoming of particular groups and individuals, based on theories about what human development looks like, what is worth knowing, and what it means to be educated. Teachers act as sociocultural mediators, responsible for assisting their students through their zones of proximal development. Nieto (1999) cites Cummins' work on identity, affective development, and power relationships as issues that are involved in helping students move through their ZPD's to become successful learners.

Finally, Gay (2000) outlines Diamond and Moore's work regarding teacher roles and responsibilities. Culturally relevant teaching requires that teachers act as

- cultural organizers—understanding how culture operates in the classroom, creating learning environments that emanate cultural and ethnic diversity, and facilitating high performance for all students;
- cultural mediators—giving students opportunities to have critical conversations about cultural conflicts, analyzing mainstream cultural ideals realities and comparing them to other cultural ideals realities, clarifying ethnic identities, honoring other cultures, developing strong cross-cultural relationships, and combatting prejudices of all kinds;
- orchestrators of social contexts—making teaching compatible with the socio-cultural contexts of ethnically diverse students and helping students adapt their cultural competencies to school learning resources.

Most teachers would rightly comment that the above roles and responsibilities are daunting without a sound framework or strategies. The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, (CREDE) presents findings from research in this area. Their work suggests that there are several core principles that can be used as an organizing structure for programs for all at-risk children (Center for Research on Education, 2001). The CREDE principles include:

- **I.** Joint Productive Activity: Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teachers and students.
- **II.** Language Development: Develop students' competence in the language and literacy of instruction throughout all instructional activities.
- **III.** Contextualization: Contextualize teaching and curriculum using the experiences and skills of home and community.
- **IV.** Challenging Activities: Challenge students towards cognitive complexity.
- **V.** Instructional Conversation: Engage students through dialogue.

Below we consider each principle, its potential contribution to creating a culturally relevant classroom, and some classroom indicators of the principle.

Principle I states "Facilitate learning through joint productive activity among teachers and students." The sociocultural view of learning espoused by Vygotsky (1978) and elaborated upon by Rogoff (1990) and Tharp & Gallimore (1988) posits that learning occurs when an adult or expert peer assists a learner through his or her ZPD. This happens most effectively when the novice and the expert are working together towards a common goal or product that connects "schooled" or "scientific" ideas with practical problems. When joint productive activity occurs, teachers and students create a common context of experience within school, even when they do not share the same home culture. In addition, conversation around the shared experience helps students learn relevant communicative and academic language (see **Table 2**, Center for Research on Education, 1997; 2001).

TABLE 2

TEACHER INDICATORS OF JOINT PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY
Plans instructional activities requiring student collaboration in the creation of a joint product.
Matches the demands of joint productive activity with time available for completion.
Arranges seating to accommodate individual and group needs to talk and work together.
Participates with students in joint productive activity.
Organizes students in a variety of groupings based on friendship, mixed academic ability, language, project, and interests or in any other way that promotes interaction.
Plans with students how to work in groups and how to make transitions from one activity to another, such as from large-group introduction to small-group activity, clean-up to dismissal, and the like.
Manages student and teacher access to materials and technology to facilitate joint productive activity.
Monitors and supports student collaboration in positive ways.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

Principle II states "Develop students' competence in the language and literacy of instruction throughout all instructional activities." This means that everyday social language, formal academic language, and subject matter lexicons (for example, the "language" of math) must all receive explicit attention through purposeful instructional conversations and reading and writing across the curriculum. The language of school is often unfamiliar to English language learners and other students with diverse needs, but linking children's ways of talking with academic subject matter will build the context necessary for children to acquire school discourse (**Table 3**).

TABLE 3

TEACHER INDICATORS OF DEVELOPING LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
Listens to student talk about familiar topics such as home and community.
Responds to students' talk and questions, making "in-flight" changes during conversation that directly relate to students' comments.
Assists written and oral language development through modeling, eliciting, probing, restating, clarifying, questioning, praising, etc., in purposeful conversation and writing.
Interacts with students in ways that respect communication styles that differ from the teacher's, such as wait time, eye contact, turn taking, or spotlighting.
Connects student language with literacy and content area knowledge through speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities.
Encourages students to use content vocabulary to express their understanding.
Provides frequent opportunity for students to interact with each other and the teacher during instructional activities.
Encourages students' use of first and second languages in instructional activities.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

Principle III states "Connect teaching and curriculum to students' experiences and skills of home and community." Children will become literate within everyday, culturally meaningful contexts. Teachers must show students how abstract concepts (or "schooled concepts") are derived from and can be applied to the everyday world. In order for teachers to fully understand children's experiences and skills, it is necessary to collaborate with students' families and communities in order to understand patterns of participation, conversation, knowledge, and interests. With such understanding, teachers can transform instruction in the subject areas into meaningful activity for students (**Table 4**).

TABLE 4

TEACHER INDICATORS OF CONTEXTUALIZATION
Begins activities with what students already know from home, community, and school.
Designs instructional activities that are meaningful to students in terms of local community norms and knowledge.
Acquires knowledge of local norms and knowledge by talking to students and family and community members and by reading pertinent documents.
Helps students connect and apply their learning to home and community.
Plans jointly with students to design community-based learning activities.
Provides opportunities for parents or families to participate in classroom instructional settings.
Varies activities to include students' preferences, from collective and cooperative to individual and competitive.
Varies styles of conversation and participation to include students' cultural preferences, including co-narration, call-and-response, choral, and others.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

Principle IV states,"Challenge students toward cognitive complexity." All students must be provided with high academic standards and with meaningful assessment that allows feedback and responsive assistance. Instruction must be provided that requires higher order thinking, not simply drill exercises. It is often wrongly assumed that diverse and English language learners are of limited ability and cannot meet academic challenges (**Table 5**).

TABLE 5

TEACHER INDICATORS OF CHALLENGING ACTIVITIES
For each instructional topic, assures that students see the whole picture as a basis for understanding the parts.
Presents challenging standards for student performance.
Designs instructional tasks that advance student understanding to more complex levels.
Helps students accomplish more complex understanding by building from their previous success.
Gives clear, direct feedback about how student performance compares with challenging standards.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

Principle V states "Engage students through dialogue, especially the instructional conversation." The instructional conversation between teachers and students is based on the idea that students have something to say beyond a presupposed answer that the teacher possesses. Therefore, it is the teacher's role to listen carefully, make guesses about the intended meaning of the student, and adjust responses to assist the student's efforts. This conversation reveals the knowledge, skills, and values (the culture) of the learner, which provides the information necessary for the teacher to contextualize instruction to accommodate the student's experience and knowledge (**Table 6**).

TABLE 6

TEACHER INDICATORS OF INSTRUCTIONAL CONVERSATION
Arranges the classroom to accommodate conversation between the teacher and a small group of students on a regular and frequent basis.
Has a clear academic goal that guides conversation with students.
Ensures that student talk occurs at a higher rate than teacher talk.
Guides conversations to include students' views, judgments, and rationales using text evidence and other substantive report.
Ensures that all students are included in the conversation according to their preferences.
Listens carefully to assess levels of students' understanding.
Assists students' learning throughout the conversation by questioning, restating, praising, encouraging.
Guides the students to prepare a product that indicates that the instructional conversation's goal was achieved.

(adapted from Center for Research on Education, 2001)

In this section of *The Diversity Kit* we have explored several important concepts relating to culture, teaching, and learning. We have argued that holding high expectations for culturally and linguistically diverse students is crucial to ensuring high academic achievement. We have also challenged teachers and educators to question cultural deficit theories of learning and to replace them with ideas that value students' diverse cultural backgrounds, including the concept of funds of knowledge. Finally, we have presented five principles that can guide school-wide efforts to organize programs for all students. In the following section we expand upon the role of the community and explore the role of family in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students.