

**Multicultural and Multilingual Education in Early  
Childhood (infants to age 8) Programs**

by

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## MULTICULTURAL AND MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

### Introduction

As a logical outgrowth of the civil rights movement that culminated with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, multicultural education developed in K-12 public schools in the United States. First designed to address issues of racial and ethnic inequality, the movement soon spread to include gender, disabilities, and second language-learners. Later, immigrants, economic inequality and sexual orientation were added (Wardle and Cruz-Janzen, 2004). Multicultural education attempts to teach children about the contributions of all Americans to the history and current reality of this country, and to provide all students, but especially those belonging to the aforementioned groups, with equal educational opportunity (Nieto, 2004). In 1989 the publication of the *Anti-Bias Curriculum* (Derman-Sparks et al.,) brought multicultural education to the early childhood community.

With the legal decision, *Lou versus Nichols*, language also became an issue of equal educational access, and is now an important component of early childhood practice, starting in infancy (York, 2003). Over the last several years an increased number of non-English speaking immigrants and the need to teach English speaking American children a second language have fueled the debate about teaching multiple languages in American early childhood programs. Many other countries teach a second (and third) language as a matter of course in their early childhood programs.

This chapter examines a variety of early childhood (infants to age 8) multicultural and multilingual educational issues, models and approaches. The chapter also covers the challenge of the ever-increasing number of multiethnic and multiracial children in our programs (Cortes, 2000).

## **History of Multicultural Education**

### **Civil Rights Legislation**

The groundbreaking civil rights legislation of the early 1960s was a direct result of the mounting civil rights movement. The purpose of this movement was to eliminate discrimination in all public places. Before the legislation, African American and other minorities were legally and practically second-class citizens in the United States. Jim Crow laws and other legislation, along with several specific Supreme Court decisions, limited the rights and freedoms of African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos, and various immigrant groups, including Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos (Wardle and Cruz-Janzen, 2004).

The Second World War saw the integration of the United States armed forces, and after the war the landmark *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka* Supreme Court decision declared that racially separate schools were never equal. But it took the momentous civil rights movement of the 1960s to finally produce positive change, culminating with the federal Civil Rights Law of 1964. And in 1967, in the case of *Loving versus Virginia*, the Supreme Court outlawed state laws that prohibited interracial marriage (Wardle & Cruz-Janzen, 2004).

The new civil rights legislation and overall anti-war and counter-culture climate of the 1960s and 1970s produced a variety of other liberation movements: the women's movement, disability rights, Gray Panthers (seniors), gay rights – and a little later, with the *Lou v. Nichols* court decision, the educational rights of non-English speaking students. All these groups demanded equal access to the American dream, by changing

perceptions and biases, passing specific laws – ADA, anti-discrimination in hiring and firing, voting rights, and bussing for racial equality, etc.

Because, as Horace Mann declared, education in this country is seen as the great equalizer (Katz, 1975), all these diverse equality movements soon found expression in our schools: reform of curriculum, hiring of more minorities, community control, and revision of textbooks to reflect the history and diversity of all the peoples who make-up this country (Banks and Banks, 2004).

### **Multicultural Early Childhood Education**

Multicultural education was one of these school reforms. It describes, “a wide variety of programs and practices related to educational equity, women, ethnic groups, language minorities, low-income groups, and people with disabilities” (Banks and Banks, 2004, p. 7). It began with efforts to include minority issues in schools; later women’s issues and issues of students with disabilities were added; more recently the areas of low-income students, immigrants, English language learners, and children of same-sex parents, were added. The seminal book by Louis Derman-Sparks and the ABC Taskforce, *The Anti-Bias Curriculum*, published by NAEYC in 1989, was soon followed by other early childhood texts, (Kendall, 1993; Ramsey 1987; York, 1991).

### **Single-Group Approach to Multicultural Education**

Early childhood multicultural education is deeply rooted in the overall pedagogy of K-12 approaches to diversity and multicultural education. According to Banks and Banks (2004), the single-group studies approach “seeks to raise the social status of the target group by helping young people examine how the group has been oppressed historically and what its capabilities and achievements have been” (67-68). This approach

focus on a specific group. Because the values, history, and laws of this country are based on Northern European cultures and traditions (especially from England and Germany), and because our schools and early childhood programs have historically reflected this view, a single-group approach provides students with knowledge about their group's contributions to the American society, along with the group's artistic, musical, literate and other cultural attributes. Most early childhood multicultural approaches assume a single group approach, be the group race, ethnicity, second language, gender or disability (Wardle & Cruz-Janzen, 2004).

Contemporary multicultural education is greatly influenced by sociology. According to Banks and Banks (2004), sociologists believe that individual behaviors are strongly influenced by group norms, and that the group prepares individuals with the social, physical and psychological ability to survive and prosper in the greater society. Further, sociologists believe that groups have values, traditions and other important characteristics that go beyond simply a sum of the individuals who make up the group. Sociologists believe that knowing a group's characteristics informs us about the behaviors of individual members of the group. These groups include racial, ethnic, gender, disability, religious affiliation, and social class. What is of most importance in this group view of individual identity is the level of identification a person has with the different groups – racial, gender, disability, religious, and so on. Everyone is a member of more than one group.

This group-affiliation view also maintains that specific group membership effects the way individual students learn: learning styles, interaction preferences,

group/individual learning, and the way the child views the world – the prism through which they function (Bowman, 1994).

### **Race/Ethnicity**

The various groups that multicultural education addresses – gender, race, ethnicity, class, and exceptionality – are social categories (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Mannheim, 1936). This means that belonging to them is largely determined by individuals and society; further, that various characteristics used to determine belonging are defined by people within that group. Even gender, which is biologically determined, is socially and culturally defined - roles, expectations, possibilities – by culture and society.

For years race was defined as a biological category, based on certain essentialist physical traits. In the United States, race was also defined by the one-drop rule. This meant that anyone with any amount of African American heritage was considered to be African American (Daniel, 1992). Today, race is viewed as a socially and politically constructed way of grouping people, which differs from country to country (Wardle and Cruz-Janzen 2004). Ethnicity on the other hand is a shared cultural worldview and/or people with the same geographical origin. Members of ethnic groups, such as Latinos in the U.S., are joined together by the US-designated category based on their region/countries of origin (Wardle & Cruz-Janzen, 2004). In fact, the Latino ethnic group is a construction created by the United States Census Bureau; in Brazil there is no Hispanic or Latino ethnic category – people with these backgrounds are categorized under the European (white) label (Alves-Silva et al, 2000).

Over our history the US Census has used a variety of categories to sort the race and the ethnicity of people who live in the United States. The current process for collecting demographic data is derived from the civil rights legislation that requires the federal government to make sure public resources are equitably distributed, and laws are implemented in a nondiscriminatory manner. The 2004 census for the first time in many years provided the option for citizens to select more than one racial category (Nieto, 2004).

### **Single-Group Curricular Approaches**

Racial/ethnic single-group multicultural approaches focus on curricula, materials, teaching methodologies, and sometimes language. A good example is the *Visions for Childhood Curriculum*, an Afro-centric curriculum for early childhood students developed by Janice Hale (1994). In this curriculum, each week a different African American hero is selected and profiled. These heroes are also used as a vehicle to introduce some of the curricular content. For example, Washington Carver provides an entry into the discussion of plants and biology; and Paul Roberson into songs, drama and social protest. Pictures of these African American heroes, especially women, are presented on the bulletin board (Hale, 1994). The curriculum reflects African American history and contributions to the world and to America, instilling in children a sense of racial and ethnic pride and cultural identification in their racial group. The US census categories are the groups addressed by the school or early childhood program in the group approach to race and ethnicity. Further, since historically non-European groups were invisible in our schools – curricular content, celebrations, teaching methods, teachers, etc – their contributions are highlighted in multicultural education.

For teachers of young children to be able to respond appropriately to a child's racial and ethnic identity, it is critical they have a clear understanding of the complex process of racial identity development in children, beginning in infancy. Racial identity development differs from society to society, depending on how the society categorizes race and ethnicity. Figure 1 outlines children's racial/ethnic identity development in the United States.

### **Figure 1 Development of Racial and Ethnic Identity in Children**

Learning a sense of racial and ethnic identity is a complex developmental process. In the United States children progress through the following stages (Aboud, 1987),

**Infancy.** Infants can discriminate between dark and light stimuli, dark and light faces.

**Ages 3-5.** Children can recognize Black and white children, but not their racial or ethnic identity. Children are very interested in physical similarities and differences, such as hair color, skin color, and eye shape.

**Age 5-9.** Children learn to recognize their own racial identity label and develop beginning awareness of group affiliation. Awareness of group belonging comes after learning group similarities

**Age 7.** Recognition by white children of a Black child, Black children of a white child, racially.

**Age 8.** Recognition by children of peers from other racial/ethnic groups (Native American, Asian, Hispanic). Apparently, the salient features of these groups are less clear to children than those of White and Black children. This is even more difficult for

children of mixed-race heritages. Children use physical characteristics to discriminate racial/ethnic categories.

**Age 8-11.** Development of racial and ethnic constancy and a stronger sense of racial group belonging. A true understanding of the political and social construction of race and ethnicity does not occur until about age 11 or older.

## **Gender**

The women's movement of the 1960s was a continuation of the suffragette movement of the turn of the century that produced woman's right to vote. As with other liberation movements, the movement soon found its way into our schools. Until fairly recently studies of gender inequality focused on late elementary, middle school, high school and college programs. Studies of programs for students this age revealed a climate in which girls and boys are treated unequally, as a result of curricular materials, instructional approaches and program administration (Sadker and Sadker, 1994).

- *Curricular Materials*

Myra and David Sadker identified 6 forms of gender bias in curriculum material used in schools. These biases should be considered when evaluating classroom and curricular materials: 1) *linguistic bias*, where male terms, such as cavemen, forefathers, mankind, and mailman, along with the use of the word 'he' are used to represent all people; 2) *stereotyping*, in which men and boys are represented as ingenious, creative, brave, intelligent and achieving, and girls and women are viewed as dependent, passive, fearful and docile; 3) *invisibility*, where women are often invisible; 4) *imbalance*, in which textbooks do not provide as much

coverage of important issues where females are involved, such as books that give the history of fashion more coverage than the suffragette movement (Trecker, 1977); 5) *unreality*, where curricular materials do not provide a realistic presentation of history and contemporary life, and 6) *fragmentation*, or tokenism, in which women's contributions are presented as diversions, rather than direct contributions to society (Sadker and Sadker, 1994).

- *Instruction*

While research has documented that, starting at about 4<sup>th</sup> grade, teachers tend to call on boys more than girls, and provide boys with more praise (Sadker, Sadker and Long 1997), there is growing evidence documenting that the only way younger boys can get a teacher's attention is to be loud and to engage in aggressive and often disruptive behaviors (Wardle, 2004).

- *School Administration*

Ninety seven percent of early childhood teachers are women and almost 70% of elementary school teachers in the United States are women (Cunningham and Dorsey, 2004), yet 70% of K-12 school administrators are men (Sadker, Sadker & Long 1997).

## **Gender and Early Childhood**

Early childhood typically covers the ages of infants through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, which is a period characterized by a female culture. For example, in addition to the 97% of teachers of young children being women, 96% of childcare directors are also women (Neugebauer, 1999). Infant girls tend to talk before boys, and their language continues to be more advanced throughout the early childhood years (Fenson et al, 1994; Leaper,

Anderson and Sanders, 1998). More boys than girls are born with birth defects, and more young boys die of accidents, have learning disabilities, and are diagnosed with AD/HD and autism (Berk, 2006). Girls are not only more advanced than boys in vocabulary, language, memory and perception, but also in sustained attention and emotional regulation (self-control) (Corneyer, Solomon and Trudel, 1998; Rothbart, 1989). And boys are more physical and active – a trend documented across cultures (Whiting and Edwards, 1988).

Thus, in general – there are always exceptions - early childhood programs favor girls, largely because they reflect a female culture, including:

- Women teachers prefer female behaviors and interacting with girls;
- Book themes – especially in early readers - tend to reflect female themes of fantasy and topics of more interest to girls;
- Women are not as active and demonstrative as men, while boys are much more active than girls;
- The teaching style of women tends to match girls' advanced verbal abilities and overall advanced social behaviors, because women tend to be more verbal and more social;
- Most early childhood dramatic play areas are rich with stereotypical female props, but lack stereotypical male props (Wardle, 2004).

Further, as academic and behavioral expectations are pushed to younger and younger ages, boys, who tend to be delayed in verbal and academic abilities, need more active learning and struggle with emotional regulation, will continue to be at a disadvantage.

Figure 2 provides some suggestions to help early childhood programs meet the needs of boys.

**Figure 2 Meeting the Needs of Boys in Early Childhood Programs.**

1. Add typically male props to the dramatic or fantasy play area, and encourage all students to play in these areas. (I prefer to use the term dramatic or fantasy play area). Added props can include hard hats, tools, a tool box, tool belt, phone books, a brief case, and car fixing equipment and old wheels (clean).

Add props to the block area to increase the variety and range of play. This might include dolls; animals and miniature people to suggest miniature fantasy play, and art materials to encourage children to make doors, windows, store signs, and billboards.

Project various backgrounds behind the area to increase the type of play (Wurm, 2005).

When weather permits, move some dramatic play props to the outdoor area.

Add lots of constructive play props – loose parts – to the outside play area.

Help children select learning centers they usually avoid, for whatever reason.

Train teachers in using skills and approaches that boys prefer, such as woodwork skills, hands-on learning, physical activities and play.

Encouraged all children to use all of the learning centers and to engage in a variety of activities. For example, if a girl wants to play in the block area, and a child says, “You can’t play there, that’s just for boys,” respond with something like, “No, it’s not – it’s for everyone, and I like to play with blocks, too.” Invite a reluctant boy to play with you in the dramatic-play area. Modeling works wonders!

Include books, posters, artwork, and other curricular materials that challenge and contradict gender stereotypes.

Challenge children's own stereotypically thinking. "Only girls play in the housekeeping area" should produce a response, "That's not true. My husband has great fun cooking in our kitchen."

Have a colleague chart your movements in the classroom. Do you spend as much time in the block and woodwork area as you do the art and literacy centers? Do you spend as much time on the ground as you do sitting in a chair by a table (Wardle, 2003)?

Many teachers expect boys to be good at science and math, and girls in art, dance, music and literacy. We must counteract these biases by being aware of our own behaviors and modeling: when we choose a child to demonstrate a math problem or a scientific concept, we need to choose girls as well as boys; when we ask a child to read to the whole class we must select boys as well as girls. However, developmentally children at this age are struggling to understand their gender and society's expectations for their gender (behavior, clothes, and hairstyles, etc). Thus children this age use lots of specific gender terms (boy, girl, daddy, mommy, brother, sister), and often appear to think in very sexist ways (Berger, 2006).

### **Approaches to Multicultural Education**

#### **Overall Approaches**

James Banks has described four different approaches to multicultural education that progress from merely superficial to analyses, critical thinking, and action.

### **Contributions Approach**

This is the heroes and holidays approach, also called the tourist approach, because it presents information about each group much like a tourist would experience it when visiting another country. Programs that focus on single-day celebrations, such as Cinco de Mayo, Martin Luther King Day, and Chinese New Year, and focus on food, dance and costumes, employ this approach. Since contributions from diverse groups are only covered in a superficial way, students don't learn the group's significant contributions to history, culture and society. Further, the approach teaches stereotypes: all Latinos dance and eat tacos, all African Americans are athletic and eat collard greens, and all Native Americans wear headdresses and do war dances, etc. Members of each group are viewed as experts of knowledge regarding everything there is to know about their group, and member so each group are expected to inform and teach curious people from other groups.

### **Ethnic Additive Approach**

With the ethnic additive approach, content from various groups is added to the traditional curriculum. Thus, in studying manifest destiny and western movement of Europeans across the United States, the plight of Indians, the roles of Black cowboys, and the importance of Japanese and Chinese in building the railroad and mining gold, are added. African American and women composers are added to a study of classical music; and folk art from Africa, Native American sand paintings, and Zimbabwe beadwork are included in a unit on art. However, the overall theme of the curricular unit is not fundamentally changed.

### **Transformative Approach**

This approach begins to alter the overall focus of curricular themes and units, while also including significant contributions of people from non-European backgrounds. Thus Sacagawea's involvement in the Lewis and Clark expedition is shown as critical to its ultimate success; the westward movement of white Americas is viewed from the viewpoint of its devastating impact on Native Americans and Mexican Americans. Loren Katz (2002) writes about Mary Fields, an African American woman who delivered United States mail and drove a stagecoach in Montana during westward expansion. The inclusion of this biography shows the important role African Americans had in US history and in the exploration and settling of the West.

### **Decision Making and Social Action Approach**

Based on the critical pedagogy analysis of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire (1970), this approach empowers students to systematically and critically think about issues of inequality and injustice in their schools and communities, while also gaining a basic education. Freire believed both could occur at the same time, and that each approach complements the other. The purpose of this approach is to study and understand different groups and find ways to engage in positive change at the same time. For example, a preschool class might take action to make the playground accessible to a classmate in a wheelchair; a first grade class might pressure the school to reject the invitation of a celebrity because of his beliefs about women.

### **Early Childhood Multicultural Approaches**

The anti-bias approach to multicultural education – also called culturally relevant, anti-bias education (York, 2003) – is the most popular of many approaches to

multicultural education used in the early childhood field. It comes out of the decision-making and social action approach, and of the work of several early childhood educators (Derman-Sparks 1989; Kendall, 1993; Ramsey 1987). According to York, (2003) this approach includes:

- Care giving (and teaching) practices that compliment the parent’s style for caring for and educating their children;
- Classroom environments that reflect the children’s home cultures, use teaching strategies common within the children’s home cultures, incorporate children’s home language into the life of the classroom, and implement activities that help each child learn more and gain greater appreciation of their home culture;
- Approaches that help children learn about human diversity, gain respect and appreciation for diversity, learn to recognize and resist stereotypes and unfair behaviors, and learn to work together to stand up for oneself or to challenge bias;
- Is fully integrated and implemented throughout the curriculum, classroom activities, and planned activities.

This approach is based on the belief that traditional early childhood programs are part of the overall social fabric that perpetuates the power of the European group and discriminates against oppressed groups (York, 2003). Goals for the anti-bias approach to multicultural education are presented in figure 3.

**Figure 3 Four Curriculum Goals for Young Children’s Anti-Bias Education**

**Goal I** Develop a positive, knowledgeable, and confident self-identity within a cultural context. This means a child should fully self-identify with the cultural group to which she belongs, use her home language in public, and demonstrate pride in her cultural group.

**Goal II** Demonstrate comfortable, empathetic interaction with a diversity of people.

Understand and appreciate cultural similarities and differences, and learn to appreciate the cultures of others in the classroom and that make up United States society and culture.

**Goal III** Think critically about bias. This involves recognizing and doing something about unfair treatment, discrimination and prejudice, especially in the early childhood program or community, and in teaching children about right and wrong, fair and unfair, and including and excluding.

**Goal IV** Stand up for oneself and others in the face of bias. Act responsibly in the classroom and community, participate in group membership and decision-making, and defend oneself and others who are wronged (York 2003, paraphrased).

Because the anti-bias approach heavily focuses on children's cultural groups and is committed to changing the power relationships of groups within United States society, it is very much a single group approach to multicultural education.

### **Multicultural Education and Multiethnic and Multiracial Children**

The multicultural movement has always taken a single group, structuralist approach to racial and ethnic diversity (Banks and Banks, 2004; Grant and Sleeter, 1998; Nieto, 2004; York, 2003;). However, as Cortes suggests, "Schools that examine racial and ethnic diversity, yet avoid the theme of racial mixture, distort the American experience. Furthermore, such schools do serious if unintended injuries to students of all backgrounds who need to be weaned from their rigid reliance on the old categories when grappling with changing realities" (1999, p 3). And, as the 2000 census has shown, 6.8 million Americans identified with more than one race (Root & Kelly, 2004). Thus a

single-group, structuralist approach to multicultural education does not work for the increasing number of multiethnic and multiracial children and families in our programs.

### **History of Multiethnic and Multiethnic Children**

There have always been multiracial and multiethnic children in the United States and the world. In the early days of colonial America, multiethnic and multiracial children were viewed as examples of 'new Americans', symbols of people who challenged the ridged racial and class lines of Europe (Spickard, 1989). However, European racism soon took over, and sexual relationships between people of different races became taboo. In other colonies of the New World, notably Brazil, interracial sexual relationships were encouraged, first between Portuguese and Indians, and later Portuguese and Blacks. Furthermore, children from these relationships had a mixed-race heritage, and were given a variety of names to describe their various racial mixtures (Fish 2002).

As a result of the 1967 U.S. Supreme Court decision of Loving versus Virginia (prohibiting laws against interracial marriage), the civil rights movement, increased interaction between the races on college campuses and in the workplace, and immigration of people from other countries, interracial relationships and multiracial children have greatly increased in this country (Root, 1996). This swelling of interracial families lead to the establishment of many support groups nationwide in the 1970s and 1980s (Brown & Douglass, 1996). The new multiracial community challenged many existing racial concepts in the United States, including the taboo against interracial marriage, and the concept of one-drop rule, which stipulates that a person with any nonwhite heritage must identify only with their nonwhite parent, and a person with two minority heritages must identify with their parent of lowest social status (Daniel, 1992).

## **Identity of Multiethnic and Multiracial Children**

For a variety of reasons, the issue of the racial and ethnic identity of multiethnic and multiracial children has been of great concern to researchers, educators and psychologists in the United States (Wardle and Cruz-Janzen, 2004). The debate is whether multiracial children should be raised with a single minority identity, with no racial label, or with a proud multiracial and multiethnic identity (Daniel, 1992). The contemporary multiracial movement has generally support the position that these children should be raised with an identity and pride that includes their full cultural and genetic heritage and a multiracial label (Bowles, 1993; Brandell, 1988; Root, 1996).

This view directly challenges the single-race, structuralist approach of multicultural education as practiced in the United States. For early childhood programs that support the development of a full, inclusive identity of multiethnic and multiethnic children, Wardle and Cruz-Janzen suggest these practices,

- Work closely with multiracial and multiethnic families and staff in the program to determine how to best meet the needs of their children;
- Utilize interracial support groups in the community for advice and support;
- Research all possible resources, including books and Internet sites;
- Make sure that any diversity training, conference sessions, and educational activities include issues important to multiethnic and multiracial children and their families;
- Advocate for the unique needs of these children and families with educational supply companies, book publishers, and creators of school data collection forms;

- Immediately address any biases or prejudice against these children or their families, from staff, specialists, parents or other children (2004).

Figure 4 lists some specific goals for serving multiethnic and multiracial children in early childhood programs, beginning with infants.

**Figure 4 Goals for Meeting the Needs of Multiethnic and Multiracial Children in Early Childhood Programs**

Explore his/her unique physical characteristics;

Explore how each child is alike and different from other children;

Learn to talk about their full identities;

Use specific terms when talking about their identities (biracial, multiethnic, brown, etc.);

Read/view/listen to books that honor and celebrate interracial families and multiethnic and multiracial children and people; and maybe create their own books since so few are commercially available;

Engage in a variety of creative activities to explore and express their own unique identities, including use of mirrors, dress-ups, narratives and pictures of their families;

Be exposed to multiethnic and multiracial role models and biographies;

Have a positive attitude about the diversity of their family;

Be able to defend themselves against harassment from adults and children;

Have a primitive understanding that their physical characteristics come from both parents, and sets of grandparents (Wardle and Cruz-Jansen, 2004, p150).

The classroom must include visual images, books, dolls, miniature people, etc., that reflect a range of multiethnic and multiracial families, and people of mixed-race heritage.

Further, provide a variety of curricular content that conveys to children that mixing races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, languages and national origins is normal, accepted, and rich in possibilities. Cortez (1999) further suggests programs should, 1) cover the racial and ethnic diversity that makes up the United States, including mixed-race people; 2) discuss the ethnic and racial diversity that comprises many other countries in the world today, such as England, the Netherlands, Brazil, South Africa, Germany, Costa Rica, Mexico and so on; and, 3) cover the concept that multiracial and multiethnic people have existed throughout the history of the United States and the world (1999).

### **A New Approach to Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education has progressed to the point where the traditional, single-group approach – race, ethnicity, gender, disability, income, sexual orientation, language, and so on, can no longer accurately and honorably embrace each child’s rich diversity (Cortes, 2000; Root, 2003; Wardle & Cruz-Janzen, 2004; West, 2001). The reasons for this are many, including the fact that each individual comprises a complex and unique interaction of diverse contexts, or groups, and that each individual is a unique person (Root, 2003; West, 2001). Adopting a new approach does not mean we should go back to a ‘color blind’ approach; it means that now we must view each child and each family in our program as an individual, with race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, income and culture as interlocking parts of their unique identity (West, 2001). Other reasons to move to this new approach, include,

- Increased numbers of immigrants. These new immigrant groups challenge our single-group approach. For example, Mayas from Guatemala who have recently immigrated to places like Houston refuse to be lumped into the Latino category,

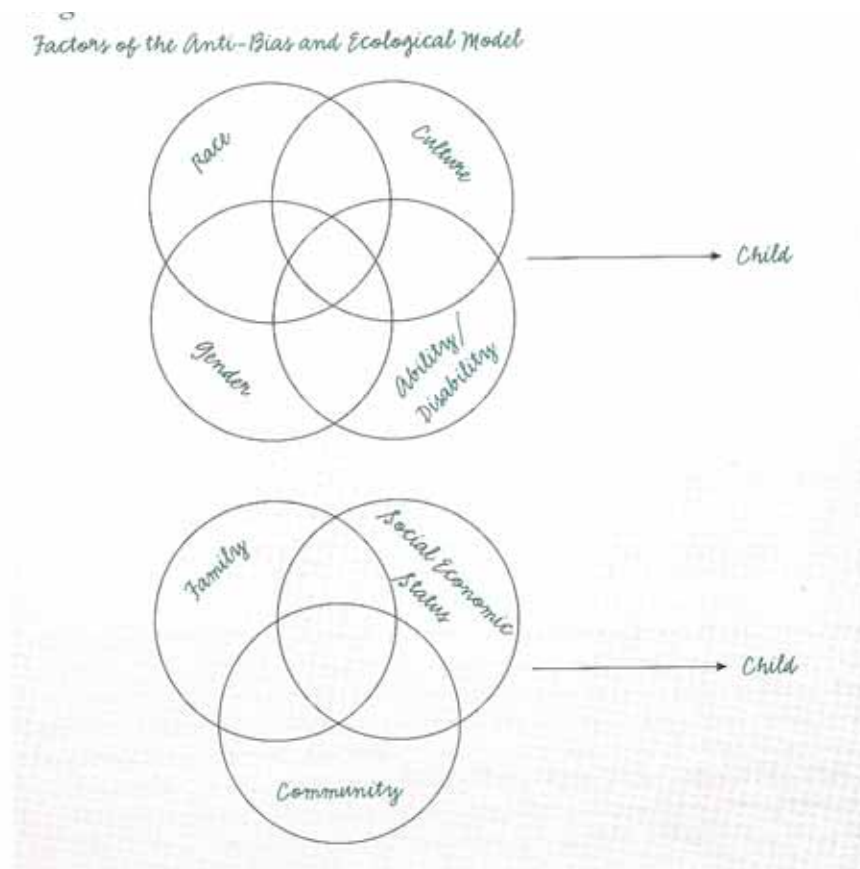
- because the Latino minority in Guatemala has historically oppressed them in their own country for centuries (Wardle, 1976). African immigrants from diverse countries in that huge continent – many from countries other than the West African countries of African American origins, and some who are white – do not fit within the African American category. And increased immigrant groups from Eastern Europe – Russia and the old Iron Curtain countries- have little, if any, similarities and connections with past European immigrants – even the Irish and Italians. And many of today’s Europeans are people of color themselves.
- Diversity of diversity. We are finally acknowledging the tremendous diversity within traditional United States ethnic and racial groups (Zack, 2002). Maybe the broad Latino group is the best example, including conservative Cubans living in Florida, radical Chicanos from California and New Mexico, and Spanish Americans in Northern New Mexico who view themselves as direct descendants from Castilian Spain (Wardle & Cruz-Jansen, 2004). But we also know of the diversity within other groups, such as the white group that includes Germans, English, Welsh, Italians, Russians, Slavs, etc., and Asians that include historical enemies Japan, Korea and China. The result of acknowledging this tremendously rich diversity within each of our large census groups – not to mention within other groups, such as the disability community and women – is to view individuals in more accurate and complex ways.
  - Challenging stereotypes. One result of a single group approach to diversity is that it fosters stereotyping – all black students, all students with disabilities, all girls, etc. Ironically, destroying stereotype is one of the major goals of multicultural

- education (Banks & Banks, 2004), yet a single-group approach to diversity tends to reinforce stereotypical thinking (West, 2001).
- The increased popularity of marriage across traditional group boundaries destroys single-group identity. More and more of our children do not come from a single racial/ethnic group, a single cultural group, a single religious group, or even from two racial or ethnic groups.
  - The ecological context of race, ethnicity, gender, disability and other single-group identities is far more complex than once assumed. York suggests that, “in order to understand the development of children of color in the US we must understand and look at how systems of racism, prejudice, and discrimination impact their development” (2003; p 39). This is the structuralist view that comes from a sociological perspective. But it is far too simplistic. What does a white child experience in an all-Black early childhood program, a Jehovah Witness child in an all Catholic, Latino Head Start program, or a Korean/Crow Indian child growing up in the Crow reservation of S. Montana (Wardle & Cruz-Janzen, 2004)? As Bronfenbrenner has shown, the inner circles of his ecological model – family, early childhood program, and community – have far more impact on the child than the wider circles of society and institutional racism (1979; 1989).

### **Anti-Bias and Ecological Model for Multicultural Education**

Thus we need to view the development of children within their total experiential and ecological contexts. One model that describes this approach is the Anti-Bias and Ecological Model, which is presented in figure 5 (Wardle, 1996). The Anti-Bias and Ecological Model for Multicultural Education proposes an approach to synthesizing the

various and complex experiences each child brings to the early childhood program. The model places the child at its center, with seven factors interacting to define the child's world-view. These distinctly different factors are: race/ethnicity, culture, gender, ability/disability, community, family and socio-economic status. The weight and influence of each of these factors differs and interacts uniquely to define each child we serve (West, 2001). For example, for some children family is the most important influence on their identity, for others its race or ethnicity, for others its gender and for still others it is their disability.



**Figure 5 Anti-Bias and Ecological Model for Multicultural Education**

Further, the weight of these factors differs depending on a child's age, and of course, all seven interact in different ways. But maybe most importantly, since children

construct their own mental structures and create their own unique view of the world, each child with process each factor and their interrelationships in their own unique way (West, 2001).

### **Race/Ethnicity**

Scientists and anthropologists have long recognized that racial and ethnic categories have no biological basis (Fish, 2002). Further, there are obvious overlaps, such as some Puerto Ricans who fit into both the Black and Latino category, and many Hispanics who are mestizo. The Hispanic/Latino category specifically emphasizes Spanish culture and Latin American origin, yet almost 50% of South Americans reside in Brazil, who's language and culture is Portuguese (National Geographic, 1993). And, finally, there is no place in these broad groups for people of multiethnic and multiracial heritage, including African Americas with significant Native American and Asian heritage, and Latinos with some Native Americans heritage.

Despite these problems with the concept of race and ethnicity, race and ethnicity are still very powerful concepts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century America and the world. The racial and ethnic group that a family belongs to has a profound impact on a child's experiences and values. These include a common history, including a history of persecution and oppression; a position within their country's mainstream, and a specific government status, such as official membership in an Indian tribe. Further, belonging to a racial or ethnic group also includes certain expectations from within the group and from outside of the group (Zack 2000).

## **Culture**

Stacey York defines culture as, “The shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and rules for behavior of a group of people. It is who we are on the inside, and how we live our lives” (2003, p. 262). Culture defines how individuals see themselves and provides the values and rules they use in their daily lives. Having a separate cultural category in the anti-bias and ecological model allows for the distinction between African Americans and first generation Blacks from specific tribes and countries in Africa and the Caribbean; Spanish-Americans living in the mountains of northern New Mexico, Puerto Rican immigrants in New York, first generation immigrants from Peru, and mestizos from Mexico; and third generation Chinese Americans and first generation Hmongs, Cambodians and Vietnamese. It also allows us to appreciate the rich differences in customs, religion, art, homes and languages of various Native American Nations in this country and throughout Central and South America, such as the Maya from Guatemala, Pueblo from S.W. United States, and various Amerindians tribes of Brazil (Sample, 1993).

A central component of a child’s cultural experience is religion. Do they attend a synagogue, mosque or church regularly? Are their parents active members in their religious community, and do they attend a religious early childhood program?

Culture really is about the way the child views the world. This includes the family’s child-rearing practices, ideas, expectations, beliefs, the different groups the family associates with, and the family’s involvement in local and national politics, etc. Talking to an Amish child about the importance of a college education will not be effective, because Amish children finish school at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade; trying to use rap

and hip-hop music with a young gifted African American student studying cello at a local college may not work, either.

### **Gender**

The gender category is obvious. What is not so obvious, but very powerful, is how infant/toddler programs, preschools, schools, parents, toy and materials marketers, and teachers respond differently to children based on their gender. The category is also very important in combination with other categories, such as ability/disability (more boys are in special education than girls), culture and family. A child's sexual orientation is also covered under this category.

### **Ability/disability**

A child's unique strengths and challenges are covered here. Strengths include artistic and musical abilities, excellence in dance and physical activities, specific academic strengths, and other unique abilities covered under Gardner's 9 Intelligences (1983). A child might be learning ballet and gymnastics, be on a soccer or track team, or may be identified through a gifted and talented screening. Challenges include diagnosed special needs, potential special needs, and behavioral and social problems that jeopardize the child's success in school.

### **Community**

The category of community includes small towns, suburbs, inner cities, Native American reservations, rural communities, segregated and integrated neighborhoods, ethnic sections of town, and religious communities like the Amish and Hutterites. The influence of community also includes mobility. For example, many low-income families move from one community to another within the school year; many Latino families travel

to Mexico once a year; and migrant families follow the crops. Some families, such as new Maya immigrants in Houston, recent Mexican immigrants, and third culture children, have two communities – in their native country, and in the United States (West, 2001).

Communities include a variety of components that directly impact families: schools, early childhood programs, athletic club activities and recreational centers; services and supports for the whole family, such as health clinics, book stores, and playgrounds; and, finally, a variety of different media outlets and services. And, of course, religious intuitions are a vital part of each community. Both the availability and the quality of these community opportunities impact the child.

### **Family**

The family is the most critical influence on young children and the first influence in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979; 1989). Family diversity includes two working parents, teen parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, single parents (male or female), blended families, interracial and interethnic families (including transracial adoption), families that combine different religious beliefs, grandparents raising grandchildren, gay and lesbian families, and the level of extended family support (Berns, 2007). Parenting styles – authoritative, authoritarian and permissive (Baumrind, 1971) and various forms of family struggles, such as alcoholism, domestic violence, unemployment and drug use, also influence a child's family experience. And, of course, all these configurations interact and overlap each other. For example, a child could come from a teen family with lots of extended family support, a permissive parenting style, and a hard-working, motivated single parent.

The family component also includes media and computer use at home. Homes where TV is used as the primary babysitter are very different from homes where the TV is carefully monitored, or where there is no TV at all. Homes that have computers and Internet access not only enable their school-age children to do sophisticated homework assignments, but parents of these children often pressure early childhood and school programs to provide computers and Internet access at the early childhood program and school.

### **Social-Economic Status**

A family's social-economic status has a powerful impact on the development of children. Lack of health insurance, poor food, homelessness, welfare, crime, and a lack of recreational choices are all results of poverty. Even the kind of childcare programs and schools a child attends is largely a function of the income of the family. Poor families use subsidized non-profit programs, Head Start, relative care, or home-based care. Middle and upper-income children stay at home with a parent or a nanny, or attend university early childhood programs, commercial programs, home-based programs, or tuition-based preschool programs (Neugebauer, 1999). A family's early childhood choices are not just a function of tuition cost, but also of availability, location, transportation, hours of service, and whether the parents feel comfortable and welcome.

### **Using the Model as a Guide**

Using this model enables early childhood programs and school to respond to the complexity and dynamic nature of each child's full identity and background. Curricular materials, classroom activities, and community fieldtrips are used help each child learn about diversity, and to help each child construct and support his/her own unique identity

(West, 2001). Of most importance, programs must start with the child and the child's family, consider how each of these factors interact to make the child a unique individual with unique needs, and then finally determine how best to meet those needs in the program. Figure 6 provides a case study of how the model can be used.

### **Figure 6 Case Study of the Use of the Anti-Bias and Ecological Model**

Joao Meira, father of first grader Isabella, scheduled a conference with her teacher. He told the teacher that Isabella had few friends at school, disliked the teacher, and was struggling with reading and math. Isabella complained that the teacher used her as an example when teaching some Spanish words, and expected her to be friends with the local girls from the neighborhood. The teacher gave Isabella basic instructions in computer use, and seemed confused when she wanted to do a computer search for a project. Isabella couldn't find books of interest to her in the classroom. She wanted books about female doctors, dentists and lawyers, but only found books about athletes and African American and Hispanic American heroes. And she got very upset when the teacher would not allow her to paint and draw until she finished her reading and math assignments.

Below is a brief use of the model to explore this situation.

*Race/ethnicity.* The teacher assumed Isabella was Hispanic; the reality is that she is Brazilian/Portuguese.

*Culture.* Again the teacher assumed she was from a low income, Hispanic background and spoke Spanish. The reality is that Isabella is from a professional Brazilian background and speaks Portuguese.

*Gender.* The teacher assumed Isabella's role models for women were mothers, aunts and older sisters who primarily care for children – an inaccurate assumption even for the other children in the class. Isabella comes from a home that expects girls to become professionals – preferably doctors, lawyers or teachers.

*Ability/disability.* The teacher believed Isabella is not good at anything in particular, and knows she struggles with math and reading. In reality Isabella is quite competent in computer skills and is very gifted artistically. Unknown to the teacher, she has a significant learning disability that affects her ability to read.

*Community.* Unlike her classmates, Isabella comes from a middle-class, integrated, professional community.

*Family.* Isabella belongs to a professional family where education is stressed, and children are expected to go to college. Homework is an important expectation.

*Socio-economic status.* Isabella's father is a doctor who recently immigrated to this country. He practices and teaches at the local university hospital.

Clearly Isabella is going to continue to struggle in school, and may even drop out, if the teacher does not change her instruction, expectations, and approach (Wardle, 2003).

### **A Brief Review of Multilingual History**

Before being colonized by English speaking peoples, Native Americans in the United States spoke a variety of Indian languages. This, of course, was also true in other countries, such as those countries conquered by Spain, Portugal and other European countries. Today in the United States there are 175 Native languages still being used (Krauss, 1995). Many of these languages are being written down and preserved for future

generations; some are being taught and used in Tribal schools. Successive groups of non-English immigrants to the United States brought their own native languages, such as French, German, Japanese, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Philippine, etc., as they did to other countries around the world. Immigrants always bring with them their cultures, religions and languages.

Gullah is a language spoken in South Carolina since the 1700s. It is derived from languages brought by slaves from West African countries. Gullah is structurally and linguistically different from English. In Louisiana French Creole is another local language that came to Louisiana at the same time as Gullah, also via West African slaves (Ovando, 1997). Structurally it is similar to Gullah; linguistically it is like French. However, even though French is a formal part of the Louisiana school curriculum, French Creole is not (Ovando, 1997). Hawaiian Creole dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and is an English dialect with Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese and Ilocano (Ovando, 1997). As with other languages in American schools, Hawaiian Creole was initially banned in schools (Ovando, 1997).

### **Legal Issues**

In 1974, a class action suit on the part of Chinese children against the San Francisco School Board came before the United States Supreme Court. The parents of the Chinese students argued that the school board deprived children who could not speak English of equal educational opportunity, based on title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the equal protection clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the US Constitution (Gollnick and Chinn, 1994). In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the Supreme Court agreed, and declared that schools must provide special language programs for non-English speaking

students (Gollnick and Chinn, 1994). This decision triggered the beginning of the modern bilingual education movement in the United States. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (reauthorized in 1974, 1978 and 1984) provided federal funds to assist schools in implementing bilingual programs.

### **Reasons to Teach Multilingual Education**

Clearly there are a variety of reasons to teach second and third languages in early childhood programs and schools. Like multicultural education, multilingual education has also become a worldwide phenomenon, driven by immigration, the increase of public education in many countries, and the ever-shrinking global marketplace.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, nearly 50 million people are non-English native language speakers (Synder & Hoffman, 2001). Further, the number of students with limited English proficiency in 2001-2002 was 4.7 million (9.8 % of the school population). In urban areas, language minority students make up 21% of the students (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), and there are over 400 different languages spoken by American students (Kindler, 2002). The current rich language diversity in the United States is a result of the increased number of students from Mexico, Central and South America, and immigrants from other non-English speaking countries, such as African countries, Eastern Europe and Russia (Wardle and Cruz-Jansen, 2004).

Many American corporations are now global: Pepsi, Exxon/Mobil, Starbucks, McDonalds, major car companies, Microsoft, etc. To compete globally these companies need to employ people who speak the local language. To remain competitive in the global marketplace, many developed country and some of the developing countries teach a second – and sometimes third - language in their public schools. American parents are

beginning to see the need for the children to also learn a second language. And the early years are the best time to begin to teach a second language (Berger, 2006). Canada has accepted the need to provide second language learning to their young children. Starting at age 3, children in Alberta and other Western provinces learn French, while children in Quebec learn English (Met, 1993).

My own children learned French, beginning in preschool. Now two of my children live and work in Paris, France.

### **Supporting Brain Development**

Brain research supports teaching a second language when children are young (age two through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) in at least two ways: young children have the brain capacity and neural flexibility to understand the challenging task of second language learning, and second language learning during these early childhood years develops and creates new neural networks that increase the brain's capacity for all sorts of future learning (Genesee, 2001). Soon after the onset of fast mapping – the language explosion that begins at about age two and continues through to about age 6, children can master extensive vocabularies and two distinctive grammars, using the proper word order, pauses and gestures for each language (Bates, Devescovi and Wulfeck, 2001; Mayberry and Nicoladis, 2000). Further, these early years are the best time to learn correct native language pronunciations. This is because during the early years neurons and dendrites adjust to the different pronunciations that children hear. Every year of maturation (age) makes it more difficult to distinguish and express the correct pronunciations of a second or third language (Berger, 2006).

Since the 2-6 year-old time period is a sensitive period for language acquisition – vocabulary, grammar and pronunciations are learned rapidly and easily - it is also an ideal time to learn a second or even third language (Berger, 2006).

**Recommendations of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

To assist early childhood professionals in addressing the language needs of the every-increasing number of children entering our programs who do not speak English, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) published *Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity – Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Programs* (1996). “For the optimal development and learning of all children, educators must accept the legitimacy of children’s home language, respect (hold in high regard) and value (esteem, appreciate) the home culture, and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families, including extended and nontraditional family units” (p. 5). Specifically this document recommends,

1. Recognize that all children are cognitively, linguistically, and emotionally connected to the language and culture of their home.
2. Acknowledge that children can demonstrate their knowledge and capabilities in many ways.
3. Understand that without comprehensive input, second –language learning can be difficult.
4. Actively involve parents and families in early learning programs and settings. Parent involvement should be encouraged, with parents being invited into the program.

5. Encourage and assist parents to understand the value of their children knowing more than one language, and help them preserve their home-language learning.
6. Recognize that parents and families must rely on caregivers and educators to support their children in the cultural values and norms of the home.
7. Provide early childhood educators with professional preparation and development in the areas of culture, language and diversity.
8. Recruit and support early childhood educators who are trained in languages other than English.
9. Recognize that children can and will acquire the use of English even when their home language is used and respected.
10. Support and preserve home language usage. The child's home language should be used throughout the early childhood environment.
11. Develop and provide alternative and creative strategies for young children's learning. Provide a variety of ways for children to learn and to demonstrate what they have learned. Collaborative teacher, parent, and expert committees should come together to learn about the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, and how to best meet their needs in the program (NAEYC, 1996).

### **Approaches to Teaching Second and Third Language Learners**

According to York (2003), bilingual education programs are “programs designed to help English language learners acquire English and function at their grade level in all subject areas. Further, the overall category includes a variety of approaches” (p. 260). In this text we expand this definition to include more than two languages (multilingual), and to address all children who have to learn the official language of their country's public

schools, be it English (United States), French (Quebec, Canada and France), Spanish (Guatemala,) Portuguese (Brazil), etc. In many countries there are students who do not speak the country's official language

Most of the children who do not speak their country's official language also belong to a racial or ethnic minority group. Thus, from a multicultural perspective, a child's home language is an integral and essential part of the child's cultural identity. The belief is that weakening the home language will result in weakening the child's cognitive development, first language abilities, social competence and racial/cultural identity (York, 2003). Home language and racial/ethnic culture are, therefore, deeply intertwined (Nieto, 2004).

### **Approaches to Teaching a Second Language: Additive and Subtractive**

The area of second and third language instruction is fraught with controversy and multiple terms. In general, all approaches are categorized under two broad labels, additive and subtractive (Nieto, 2004). According to Nieto, the additive approach builds the new language onto the child's home language, while the subtractive approach teaches a second language at the expense of the child's home language. Many approaches, of course, fall somewhere between these two opposite concepts.

The additive approach is viewed as a preferential approach because it strengthens or complements the child's cognitive, language, and social development while continuing to support his/her first language (York, 2003). It is believed that learning a second language while supporting the child's home language not only teaches cultural and ethnic dignity, but also enables the child to learn school-related skills and concepts in their home language, while learning the new language at the same time. In contrast, the

subtractive approach both it believed to retard a child's academic success, and produce a disconnect between the child and his/her home culture (Nieto, 2004). There is considerable evidence that second and third language acquisition transfers to and enhances overall cognitive development while also increasing proficiency in the child's first language (Genesee, 2001). Multilingualism, it is believed, promotes learning in a variety of domains (Portes and Rumbant, 2001).

Because early literacy has become the cannon of the national educational effort in the United States, parents of non-English speaking children should continue to support their young children's literacy development in their home language, while also supporting the learning of a second language (Snow, 1997). However, while teaching children who cannot speak English in American schools has always been a part of our history, the nature of bilingual approaches in early childhood programs and schools today has political ramifications and causes considerable emotional response by the public and educators alike (Nieto, 2004). In many countries teaching a second language, beginning in preschool or the early grades, is the norm.

### **ESL or Submersion Approach**

According to York (2003) and Nieto (2004), ESL (English as a Second Language) or the submersion approach to learning English is a subtractive approach. In this approach, non-English-speaking children are placed in classrooms where all the instruction, classroom routines, and peer interactions occur only in English. The goal is to learn the second language as quickly as possible. Sometimes the child's first language is lost or suppressed, depending on whether it is supported at home or in the neighborhood, and whether the program values the child's home language. While both Nieto and York

believe this is a very destructive approach to teaching children English, Cazden (1990) believes it can be effective, if teachers,

1. Engage children in lots and lots of one-on-one conversations;
2. Adapt their conversation to the child's level of English language knowledge (within the child's language ZPD);
3. Include children in structured activities with English speaking peers: rhymes, songs and finger plays, reading and picture-book reading and dramatic play;
4. Follows this sequence of acquisition: when their first languages does not work, the child simply guesses; they begin to communicate, using gestures and language approximations; they learn specific labels and phrases – “bathroom”, “good morning”, “how are you?” - and then they try these phrases out with their peers. If these efforts at second language usage are supported and encouraged, the children will keep trying.

Also, teachers must work and communicate closely with parents, support each child's home culture, and learn about each child's unique background (Cazden, 1990). Several states in the United States have passed laws to move non-English speaking children into English speaking classroom as soon as possible. Some of these are transition programs, while others essentially use an ESL approach.

### **The Pullout ESL Approach**

The pullout approach to teaching a second language is a variation of ESL. In this approach the non-English speaking child is taken out of the regular classroom to attend ESL classes. Direct language instruction is, of course, the traditional way a second language is taught in the United States and many other countries, albeit usually during the

middle and high school years. This approach is also used in special education to teach a variety of specific skills. As one might expect, this approach is considered a subtractive approach because students miss important academic content when they are pulled out of the classroom for their language instruction (York, 2003).

### **Immersion Approach**

The goal of the Immersion approach to language acquisition is for young children to learn basic concepts in two or more languages: to become fully bilingual and bicultural, or multilingual and multicultural (York, 2003). This approach is used to teach another language to children whose first language is English. Since these children are continually exposed to the English language at home, in their neighborhoods, and through the media, they do not lose their speaking ability and majority culture.

Many believe total immersion is the most effective way to learn a new language. The model was pioneered in Canada, and is an approach in which the regular school curriculum is taught in the new, targeted language (Met, 1993). All schooling in the initial years is conducted in the targeted language, including reading and language arts. The school's official language – i.e. English in the United States – is introduced usually in the second grade (usually 20%), with increased instruction until a 50:50 balance is achieved in later elementary school. However, some programs maintain the 80:20 ratio (targeted language/official language) because students in these programs continue their mastery of the new language without any drop-off in the proficiency of their home language (Met, 1993).

Most full immersion programs start in preschool, kindergarten, or first grade. Age 2 to 6 appears to be the ideal age to learn second and third languages. Students who

attend these programs become fluent in the new, targeted language by grades two or three. While many educators, psychologists, and speech therapists in the United States deeply believe that learning the school's curriculum in another language will limit the child's English language learning and core subject proficiency, research continues to show students in full immersion programs do as well in core classes (Met, 1993; Swain & Lapkin, 1991). Apparently children who learn the grammar and vocabulary rules of one language can then apply them to another language.

### **Transitional Approach**

Initially the child is taught in his/her home language, and also taught English as a second language. These children may also be integrated with the main school population for classes such as art, PE, and music. They are moved as quickly as possible into full English language learning, and once they pass a language proficiency test they are placed in the regular classroom. However, there is considerable research to show that the ability to succeed in academic instruction and learning requires more advanced knowledge of a language than conversational language usage (Nieto, 2004; York; 2003). Thus, many children are moved too quickly into English-only classrooms. The transition approach is used in more and more public school programs, such as those in Colorado and California.

### **Maintenance Approach**

Children receive instruction both in content areas and specific language lessons in their home language and the school's official language, thus increasing their language proficiency in both languages. Often pullout instruction in the targeted language is also included. Children continue to develop their native language proficiency, learn a new language, and also learn the school's subject matter, content and skills in their native

language. This additive approach allows children to maintain progress in school content areas, enhance their home language, and learn the official language of the school.

### **Dual Language Approach**

The dual language approach is used to teach children who do not know the school's official language, and children who speak the official language. In the United States, this approach is used most often to teach Spanish-speaking children English, and English speaking children Spanish. Classes are taught in one language for half of the day and the second language for the other half of the day. Or two teachers are used, one teaching in English, and one teaching in the second language. This approach combines the immersion concept with promoting positive attitudes to culture and language (York, 2003). According to De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998, there are 6 specific ways to implement the dual language approach. Figure 7 describes these six methods. Another dual language approach is called Los Campaneros, in which children are taught in English one week, and then in Spanish the next (this could be any two languages). Parents choose whether to enroll their children in these classes.

The Chicago Public Schools has a dual language program in which children are immersed for at least 50% of the day in the target (new) language, for approximately 5,000 students, a program that is implemented from pre K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (Soltero, 2001). The core curriculum is taught in both languages, and the two groups of children – English language learners and native English speakers learning a new language – interact together most of the day, because of the powerful impact of socialization on language learning (Soltero, 2001). While dual language immersion programs usually use a 50:50 model of instruction, some of the individual Chicago public schools immerse children in the target

language 80% of the time, because they recognize that children's language interactions outside school are almost totally in their native language. In the Chicago programs students learn to read and write first in their native language, with formal literacy instruction in the second language beginning in second grade.

There are, of course, a number of variations of dual language immersion programs, but in all programs the targeted language is used at least 50% of the time (Soltero, 2001

### **Figure 7 Six Ways to Implement a Dual Language Approach**

**Translation.** The teacher translates everything said in the classroom

**Preview-review.** Each activity is introduced in the child's home language, the activity is conducted in the official language (English in the US), and then the wrap-up is done again in the home language.

**Alternating days.** For one day activities are conducted in the child's home language, the next in the school's official language.

**Second language instruction.** Children who don't know the official language (English in the US) are instructed in small groups; conversely, children who don't speak the second language are taught in small groups in that language.

**Concurrent.** The teacher – who must be fully bilingual – shifts comfortably between the two languages throughout the day, as needed.

**Sister Classrooms.** Each classroom speaks one of the two languages; at different times students switch classrooms, thus being instructed in the second language. These two classrooms also play and work together on some projects and cooperative activities. (De Gaetano, Williams, & Volk, 1998)

## **Teaching Second Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs**

### **Teaching Children English to Non-English Speaking Children**

A first step in providing a program that teaches children English while supporting their home language is the deep understanding and recognition that young children will acquire the use of English even when their home language is used and respected (Tabors, 1997). This fact is based on two important ideas,

- Young children can and will learn a second language in a supportive social setting;
- Children do not have to give up their first language in order to learn a second.

Research is clear that typically developing children can successfully acquire a second language in a preschool classroom, without ignoring the home language (Tabors, 1997).

According to Tabors (1997), while a child learning a second language will use cognitive structures and knowledge gained from the first language to learn the second one, learning the second language does not interfere with the development of the first. Tabors uses the model of the single or multiple glasses to illustrate this concept. “In this model the two glasses can continue to be filled depending on exposure to and use of the languages” (p. 181). Thus learning in either language does not negatively impact the other one.

A major challenge for programs in providing multilingual education is the lack of teachers and other staff who speak the home languages of their children. This is a particular problem for programs with children who speak a variety of languages, and when these second languages are not Spanish. Thus, when York (2003) suggests that the emphasis of multilingual education in early childhood programs should be to establish a

solid base for speaking, reading, and writing in the child's home language, this is often extremely difficult to do.

Use of the child's home language does not just affect the care and teaching of the child. It involves verbal and written communication with parents (brochures, suggestions for home support of learning, announcements for field trips, policies and procedures, parent handbooks, etc.), screening and test items and test application in the home language, and a variety of books and other curricular materials. Further, if specialists are needed (i.e. special education) they also need to be able to speak the child's home language. This dilemma is a particular challenge for family childcare providers. They do not have the resources that centers and early childhood programs have, and they often must rely on friends and the parents themselves. However, parents often select family childcare providers who speak their home language.

Below are some strategies that can be used to support second and third language learners, according to York (2003):

*Work with Parents.* Encourage parents to use their home language with their child(ren), read to them in their home language, and volunteer in the classroom in their home language (Tabors, 1997). Use questionnaires, conferences and informal methods to determine the child's home culture. Introduce parents who speak the same language to each other. Provide parent training about the critical importance of reading to their children and about other methods parents can use to support literacy development at home.

*Teacher-Child Communication.* For people who do not speak the child's home language, listen carefully to the child, support the child's efforts in their home language and the

school's language, use short, clear, simple sentences and many nonverbal cues when speaking, and correctly pronounce the child's name.

*Child-Child Relationships.* Pair children who don't speak the second language together with children who do speak the second language. Soto adds that children should be given many opportunities to try out their new language with other children without mistakes being corrected by the teacher or other students (1991). Play, of course, is ideal. Use of graphics and picture cues (icons) are also effective methods in working with children learning a new language. Allow children multiple ways to construct their own knowledge, process information, and understand a topic, including using enactive and iconic representation (Tabors. 1997).

*Daily Routines.* Establish and maintain a daily routine so children don't have to listen to directions they don't understand every day. Schedules and classroom rules with icons to represent activities and rules are also very helpful.

*Classroom Environment.* The classroom should be a language-rich environment, with environmental print and visual labels in each of the languages spoken in the classroom. Each language should be color-coded. The classroom should provide areas for dramatic play, books, and tape-recorded stories in each language, and should be a place where culturally and linguistically diverse children all feel welcome.

*Small-Group Time.* Small group time allows for adults to provide attention to individual children. Introduce new concepts/skills in the child's home language, and use a variety of real objects and photographs of objects as cues. Allow children to explore the new concepts through play, drawing, etc., and avoid drill and practice methods for learning either language.

*Language-Group Time.* For group time activities, group children who do not know the official language with children who do, use as many visual props as possible (pictures, concrete props, gestures, facial expressions), limit just verbal instructions, and incorporate the child's home language into circle-time activities. Read some books, sing songs and do finger plays in the child's home language.

*Curriculum.* Introduce new concepts within a context that makes sense to each child, and find ways to relate content to the child's home experience. Because language is both a social communicative skill and is very context-specific, this is very important (Berger, 2006). Further, the curriculum should be developmentally appropriate, with lots and lots of opportunities for language usage in both languages (Soto, 1991; Tabors, 1997).

*Observations and Assessment.* When using observations to assess a child's progress, make sure that the child's progress both in the second language and the child's home language is evaluated, along with their attitude towards both languages. Also assess how familiar they are with their home culture and the culture of the classroom.

*Staffing and Staff Development.* Bilingual or multilingual teachers, paraprofessionals and volunteers should be used. If the program or school has an ESL teacher, the classroom teacher should learn some simple words, songs, and phrases in the child's home language from them. Further, if the program or school teaches other languages, there should be interaction between both programs and their staffs. Probably the best method for family home providers is to learn some basic phrases, words, and songs from their children's parents.

Children should not be rushed into learning a second language and individual differences in learning should be carefully considered and respected (Soto 1991).

### Figure 8 Denver International School

This is the home of the Denver International School - a 25-year-old French-English immersions school that is substantially subsidized by the French Ministry of Education. However, many non-French children also attend the school.

Seven four-year olds are sitting around a large table in the middle of the room, working on Christmas cards and worksheets. There are two girls and five boys; one child is absent. Two of the children have French family backgrounds, and thus speak French, while the rest do not. Vicky, a young French Canadian from Quebec City talks to the children in rapid, conversational French. Occasionally she switches to English, then back to French, but 90% of her conversation is in French. She provides feedback in French, gives instructions in French, and praises the children in French.

One child asks in English to go to the bathroom, but, after modeling by the teacher, repeats his request in French before leaving the classroom.

The room is a high-ceilinged old classroom, with high windows, old oak wood trim, and large blackboards at each end. Various learning centers radiate out from the central table. French songs, *les regles de la classe* (classroom rules), numbers and letters in French, and days of the week and months of the year in French are all displayed on the walls. There is a huge world map with the message, "Christmas Tour of the World (in French) and a *les continents* map. There are French tapes, books, and computer programs.

The teacher comfortably switches between the children working at the table and different children rehearsing for the evening's school-wide Christmas program. All the dialogue for the program is in French. Children converse with each other in French and

English. While the teacher speaks primarily in French, she does not admonish the children when they speak in English. When they ask a question in English, she responds in French.

Vicky tells the children its recess, so they hustle out into the hallway to retrieve their outdoor clothes. The whole class then leaves for the snow-covered playground, basking in the bright winter sun (Wardle, 2003).

### **Recommendations for Implementing an Immersion or Dual Language Program**

Here are a few ideas for early childhood programs considering implementing a full immersion or dual language program (Wardle, 2005b).

- Poll parents to determine which second/third language you will teach. Since parents will have to support your program, their buy-in is essential. Also determine the resources parents and the community can provide.
- Find creative ways to attract teachers who speak the target language. International students, foreign exchange programs, and language associations are all possibilities. Also use foreign language associations in your community and local college language associations for support and joint community events.
- Educate parents that full immersion second/third language programs do not negatively affect a child's learning of their first language and basic academics.
- Emphasize the culture(s) of the country(s) whose languages are being taught in the program.
- Optimally, start your second/third language immersion program in preschool or kindergarten.

- If you have a dual language program, make sure children from each language group have ample opportunity to learn with each other, since social interaction is the heart of all language learning, including second language acquisition.
- If you have a dual language program, consider providing more than 50% of instruction in the targeted language, since this results in more effective acquisition of the second language with no reduction of learning basic skills in the child's first language.
- Work with educators to encourage and support second language immersion programs during the early years.
- Create a dual-language community in the classroom: posters, environmental print, books, classroom rules, literacy props in the dramatics play and block area, directions/instructions, puzzles, workbooks, music, etc. that are in both languages, along with artifacts and pictures that represent the cultures of both languages.

## **Conclusion**

Multicultural and multilingual education in the United States grew out of the Civil Rights Movement and legislation of the 1960s. The purpose of multicultural and multilingual education is to make sure that every child in the United States has equal opportunity for school success, and thus to the American dream. In the late 1980s, early childhood programs joined in multicultural and multilingual education movement. While there are several approaches to multicultural and multilingual education, the best approaches involve starting with the individual child at the center, and providing teaching and learning that builds on each child's unique identity, language, home and cultural background.

## Resources

### **ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics**

(ERIC/CLL)

4646 40<sup>th</sup> Street, NW

Washington, DC 20016-1859

### **Advocates for Language Learning**

American Council on Immersion Education (ACIE)

<http://carla.acad.umn.edu/ACIE.html>

Kansas City, MO 64111

### **Center for the Study for Biracial Children.**

[www.http://csbchome.org](http://www.csbchome.org)

### **US Census**

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/meta/lomng>

### **National Association for the Education of Young Children**

(Position statement on teaching second language learners)

[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

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