'Kids like Malik, Carlos, and Kiana':
Culturally Responsive Practice in Culturally and Racially Diverse Schools

Aisha Ray, Ph.D.
Erikson Institute

Lynette Aytch, Psy.D.
North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (Smart Start)

Sharon Ritchie, Ed.D.
FPG Child Development Institute

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Ms. Smith, a European American teacher with three years of teaching experience, sat at a table with 6-year old African American children Malik, Tynesha, and Kiana, and Carlos a Dominican-American 6-year old boy. Her first grade classroom is in a working poor urban African American and Latino community. Ms. Smith handed out worksheets with 15 incomplete sentences and vocabulary words from a story the children had read. She said, "I want you to complete each sentence using the word list. For example, 'I like _____ and _____ in the story.' What words would you put in the blanks?" The children, who were familiar with Ms. Smith's worksheets, gave answers that met her criteria and got to work. As Ms. Smith left to work with another table she said, "No talking, work alone." Kiana turned to Malik and asked softly about the story. He said something funny about Mr. Burns, a character on the Simpsons, as he wrote answers on his paper. Carlos, said, "Doh!" imitating Homer Simpson. The children smiled. Kiana said, "My Mama, told my brother LaShan not to say bad words. He got in to trou—ble!" "It's a sin to say bad words", Carlos offered. Malik nodded and said, "We be rappin', we be tappin'," in a rhythmic sing song. Malik worked quickly selecting the answers from the word list. Kiana asked, "Tynesha, you see American Idol *last night? My Gran' Mama say Jennifer gonna win?" They appeared not to want to draw Ms. Smith's attention. Malik, Carlos, and Tynesha gave their opinions. The children proceeded to talk about characters in the story and on television. Their conversation was lively and animated. From across the room Ms. Smith reminded them to work alone, and to be quiet. Malik, Carlos, and Kiana were keen observers of the story they had read and the television shows they watched. Their speech became more animated, louder, and excited—Malik and Kiana did a little dance in their seats to a hip-hop song, their speech mirroring the rhythm and lexicon of their home languages. Malik and Carlos finished their work sheets. Tynesha said to the group, "What you' all got for this question?" Malik and Carlos got up and moved to Tynesha's side. They enthusiastically suggested answers. Ms. Smith called Malik, Carlos and Kiana over to her, and said sternly, "Haven't I told you not to help the other children? Didn't I tell you to not talk to each other? Stand still Malik. She [Tynesha] will not learn the right answers if you tell her." Malik and Carlos began to protest, but Ms. Smith told them both to take seats in separate corners and to finish their work. Carlos said emphatically, "We finished." Ms. Smith ignored this. Each boy at in a corner. After 15 minutes Ms. Smith told Carlos to come join her table, but Malik sat for over 25 minutes and observed other children complete table work. He appeared bored and tried to engage other children who moved in his direction. He kicked his legs, turned in his chair, looked out the window, and when he picked up a book near him Ms. Smith told him to put it away. At the end of the day a teacher educator (TE) who had been observing writing activities in this class for several weeks asked Ms. Smith about the interaction with the four children, and shared her observation that the two boys in particular spent a lot of time exiled from the class. An observation the TE had shared before. "These children need structure, drill, and routine", Ms. Smith stated. "They're poor. They don't have good vocabularies and language skills. Malik*

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[1] This term refers to children who are native born including African American, Alaskan Native, Asian American, Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islanders; and recent immigrants from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central America, Europe, and South America. I acknowledge that pan-ethnic terms, e.g., Asian American, are problematic because they imply cultural continuities that may not exist between different cultural and national groups (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodians).

and Carlos really need to be sat on, Kiana too. Did you see how they could not sit still? They would lead the class if I let them. I tried to talk with Malik's parents, and told them about his behavior. His mother complained to the principal and said I didn't understand Black boys." Ms. Smith did not appear to think the children in her class were capable of more challenging work. To her their behavior was a discipline problem, not a problem rooted in her teaching practices. The TE commented that the vocabulary activity might be more interesting to them if Ms. Smith let them talk among themselves, worked together on writing activities, and used the popular literacies children talked about so expertly. Ms. Smith rolled her eyes and stated emphatically, "If I let them do that it would be chaos. These kids can't sit still. They need structure and to learn what they need to succeed in the next grade. Kids like Malik, Carlos and Kiana are not going to do well in school."

Introduction

"*Kids like Malik, Carlos, and Kiana*"— children of color. Children of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds; children from cities, towns, suburbs across the country; children of working poor families living in economically impoverished urban centers, *ghettos*, *barrios*, reservations—communities frequently described as dead end, deprived, and dangerous. Children often viewed by too many early educators, like Ms. Smith, as challenging, demanding, 'at-risk', in need of control—children who must be "sat on" and who are "not going to do well in school". Their intelligence suspect, life experience devalued, competence inadequate, cultures impediments to learning and achievement in 'mainstream' America. Their families and communities perceived as not up to the task of providing rich experiences that develop sufficient academic skills necessary for school success.

This perspective situates the problem of educational achievement and school failure in children, families and communities of color and poverty, rather than in society or the culture of schools. This perspective justifies an *apartheid* system of education in the U.S., separate and unequal. The first system, well financed and resourced, is primarily for the education of White[2], middle class, monolingual children; and the second, decaying, resource-starved, and under

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[2] European American and White are used interchangeable to refer to people who are primarily descendants of European immigrants to the U. S.

funded, is for the warehousing of children of color[3], the poor, and children who speak a dialect or language other than English[4] (Kozol, 1991; Orfield & Lee, 2005; Peske & Haycock, 2006). Early childhood programs[5] reproduce these same class and racial inequalities. For example in comparison to White children, racial minority children and children in poverty are more likely to attend programs with teachers who lack subject content knowledge, have lower academic achievement, and are inexperienced (Peske & Haycock, 2006). In addition, researchers (Dupree et al., 1997; Garcia Coll et al, 1990; McLoyd, 1990, 1998) have shown that inadequate schools are part of a larger ecology that includes poverty, racism, low-wage jobs, unsafe housing—all factors that jeopardize children's development and family functioning (Garcia Coll et al. 1990; McLoyd, 1990, 1998). Fundamental transformation of schools may not be possible without significant systemic change that addresses institutionalized racism and economic injustice (Kozol, 1991; Murrell, 2002; Nieto, 1999).

Early Childhood: The Beginning of Schools Failing Children of Color and in Poverty

The reality of schools segregated by race and class is contrary to the promise of American education, which guarantees fairness and equity for children regardless of characteristics or circumstances. An 'even playing field' is supposed to provide the context in which every child may have a chance to achieve through effort, study, and perseverance; the cultural currency of American education has been individual effort, hard work, and equal opportunity. Despite these powerful cultural messages American schools have failed to deliver on this promise, especially in educating children of color and children from economically

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[3] 'Children of color' refers to children who are African American, Asian American, Alaskan Native, Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islanders. I recognize that these terms suggest similarity where there is great variation. For example, there are over 300 distinct tribes that fall under the term 'Native American'; similarly 'Asian-Americans' represents may different cultural and language traditions.
[4] See chapter authored by Espinosa for a discussion of the educational needs of second language learners.
[5] Refers to early education programs serving children 3 to 8 years of age.

disadvantaged families. On average racial and cultural minority children, compared to European American children are not achieving in almost every major urban school system (Murrell, 2002). Many factors have been used to explain the relative poorer educational outcomes of racially marginalized children and the poor—teacher education (Sleeter, 2001); low teacher expectations (Gay, 2004); limited exposure to 'school' language and discourse patterns (Au, 1980; Brice Heath, 1983; Delpit, 1995); negative stereotypes internalized by children (Steele, 1999); parent/guardian/family involvement (Comer, 1986; Epstein, 1992; U. S. Department of Education, 2001); need for multicultural education (Banks, 1996; Gay, 2004); and school curriculum (Apple, 1990).

In the earliest years of schooling a process is set in motion that leads, by 4th grade, to the disengagement and lower achievement of racial and cultural minority children, especially African American[6] and Latino males (Chall & Snow, 1988; Dupree, Spencer & Bell, 1997; Garcia Coll & Magnuson, 2000; Murrell, 2002). Racial and cultural minority children and children from low-income families are more likely to enter kindergarten behind their middle class European American peers, to have lower educational achievement in reading and math (Riegle-Crumb, 2006); to be assigned disproportionately to special education classrooms (Bondy & Ross, 1998; Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001; Garcia, 2005; Knapp & Associates, 1995); and even when their incomes are similar African Americans and Latinos/as fare more poorly on standardized tests than do Whites (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). Further, in the last decade Latino children have not shown the same reduction in dropout rates and educational achievement gains experienced by other racial/cultural minority groups, including African American students (Liontos, 1992).

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[6] African American and Black are used interchangeably to refer to people who are primarily descendents of Africans enslaved in the U. S.

Race, class and gender are especially pernicious factors for Black and Latino boys in school—Black boys are more likely to be expelled from preschools than other children (Gilliam, 2005); Black and Latino boys have higher rates of grade failure than other groups (Liontos, 1992; The Twenty-First Century Foundation, 2005); while Black boys are less than 9 percent of children enrolled in U. S. elementary and secondary schools, they account for over one-fifth of total school expulsions (The Twenty-First Century Foundation, 2005, p. 6); and Latino boys have one of the highest school dropout rates in the U. S. (Liontos, 1992; Valdivieso & Nicolau, 1992).

The vignette from Ms. Smith's classroom suggests some factors related to teacher behavior and classroom practices (e.g., low expectations for African American and Latino children, unimaginative curricula, lack of understanding of children's cultures, and arbitrary punishment) that may contribute to disengagement of racial and cultural minority children. Steele (1992) argues that disengagement on the part of African American, Latino, and other racially and culturally marginalized students is a reasonable outcome of persistent messages that they are inadequate. He asserts, "For too many Black students (*Latinos and others* [emphasis added]) school is simply the place where, more concertedly, persistently, and authoritatively than anywhere else in society, they learn how little valued they are" (p. 78).

Early Childhood Classrooms—Culturally Unequal. Early education pedagogies, instructional practices, and administrative policies implicitly or explicitly attempt to marginalize, even eradicate, the ancestral cultures, languages, and experiences of children from non-White communities (Baugh, 1999; Moll, 2001). European American *cultural knowledge* is institutionalized through language (e.g., 'standard' English, norms of speech and grammar, tone and volume of voice); what is taught (e.g., literature, social studies); social norms (e.g., notions of politeness, physical distance, eye-contact); expression of emotion (e.g., anger, aggression);

policies (e.g., expectation of parent involvement); and curriculum choices (Sheets, 2005).

Because most European American children[7] have the cultural knowledge privileged in

U. S. schools they may experience less cognitive dissonance in teaching and learning than do

children who are not European American (Irvine, 2003).

Cultures shape who children are and how they experience the world (Kağitçibaşi, 1996;

Rogoff, 2003). Through participation in everyday cultural practices (e.g., feeding, bedtime, and

engaging in family traditions) children learn meaning systems, identity, language, values, beliefs,

behavioral norms, and roles intended to develop the competencies appropriate to their culture

(LeVine, Dixon, LeVine, Richman, Leiderman, Keefer, & Brazelton, 1994; Rogoff, 2003;

Whiting & Edwards, 1988). Cultural patterns of thinking and behaving are internalized,

becoming part of individual and group identity. The cultural repertoires racially, culturally and

economically marginalized children bring to classrooms may be misunderstood, even punished

by teachers. For example, research (Baugh, 1999; Boykin & Tom, 1985; Delpit, 1995) suggests

that African American expressive styles, behavior, and language may be stigmatized because

they do not conform to the cultural model of behaving, learning, and language schools demand.

African American, Latino, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Alaskan Native and Native

American children have the same genetic capacities for language and cognition all children have,

but they may be more likely to be judged as inferior learners and socially disruptive, this

problem is particularly acute for Black and Latino boys (Boykin & Tom, 1985; Fergueson, 2001;

Nieto, 1999). The problem is not children's culture; it is that schools require children to comply

with different cultural expectations (Nieto, 1999, p. 67.). Ms. Smith's belief that Malik, Carlos,

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[7] Sheets (2005) suggests that not all European Americans may have learned the norms of the dominant culture, " such as those who have experienced generational poverty and substandard schooling, new immigrants, and individuals with diverse religious affiliations, do not necessarily experience a mainstream socialization process." (p. 9).

and Kiana must be "sat on" may reflect racial bias, cultural misunderstanding, and/or cultural ignorance. More importantly, the implications of her teaching and behavioral management choices may have dire effects on Carlos', Malik's, and Kiana's engagement in school.

In order to understand how culture may influence children's development teachers must understand their own identity formation in terms of culture, race, language, privilege and power. In addition, their ability to understand children's cultural knowledge, the implications of it for teaching and learning, and how to teach through it, are critical particularly in light of changing demographics. The U. S. is becoming increasingly Black, Brown and younger (Maharidge, 1996; Hernandez, 2004). By 2020 it is projected that nearly 50 percent of all children in the U. S. will be African American and Latino/a. Forty percent of American children live in low-income families, with 18 percent of those families below the poverty line, and poverty effects Black and Latino children disproportionately (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2006). As early childhood classrooms become increasingly multiracial, multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic, the majority of teachers remain White, female, monolingual and middle class. Only 10 percent of teachers in U. S. classrooms are Black, Latino/a, Alaskan Native, Native American, Asian American or Pacific Islander (Darling-Hammond, Pittman & Ottinger, 1987; National Education Association, 2004; Saluja, Early & Clifford, 2002).

Teachers' knowledge and understanding of children who are culturally and racially different from themselves cannot be reduced to simple formulas and prescriptions for educating particular populations of children. In fact an unintended consequence of focusing teachers' attention on discrete characteristics of children (e.g., race, or race and social class) may contribute to their inability to view minority children as whole individuals with unique identities, capacities and interests that may influence developmental and educational outcomes. In actual

early childhood classrooms teachers encounter young children who define themselves in multiple ways—for example, a classroom may include a Puerto Rican-Black American girl who speaks both English and Spanish, maneuvers through the classroom in a wheelchair, and has a best friend who is a second-generation Hmong-American boy with mild dyslexia. It is this complexity, multiplied across thousands of U. S. classrooms, that challenges early childhood teachers, teaching, and learning in our schools. Teachers have to be able to successfully educate children who are not *just* African American vernacular speakers or *just* Dominican-American or *just* boys or *just* low-income, but children who bring to school complex capacities, abilities, needs, and identities.

The critical early years of schooling should build on the curiosity, wonder, intelligence, and abilities all young children bring to classrooms and lay a solid foundation for life and school success. But, for many children they may not. Instead, early education programs may set them on a trajectory that leads to a history in which schools fail them, and possibly contribute to lives of reduced opportunity and achievement.

An Alternative View: Culture, Schooling and Child Development

This paper argues that effective early childhood education for culturally, racially and economically marginalized children must be grounded in and responsive to children's cultures (Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings 1994; Murrell, 2002). The rationale for the role of culture in children's development and early education is related to cognitive theory (e.g., Piaget, 1969; Vygotsky, 1978) that posits new knowledge is built on prior knowledge and experience. Before formal schooling all children have gained an enormous amount of understanding of the world, through observation, participation, and explicit instruction from adults and older children. When children are introduced to new information they use their repertoires of established knowledge,

language, and cultural practices to make sense of the new (Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 2003). In order to support optimal learning in young children teachers need to have a deep understanding of the knowledge children bring to school.

Research that shows all child development occurs in the context of culture (Kağitçibaşi, 1996; Nsamenang, 1992; Rogoff, 2003), and research on culturally responsive pedagogy (see for example, Delpit, 1995; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Native Hawaiian Education Council, 2002; Pewewardy, 1994; Sheets, 2005) have important implications for creating schools in which all culturally and racially diverse children and children in poverty achieve and develop as whole individuals. Early education is not a silver bullet for everything that ails this society and its children, but high quality early education programs have a record for improving children's educational outcomes, especially for culturally and racially diverse children and for those economically disadvantaged (Heckman, 2007; Reynolds, Magnuson & Ou, 2006). This paper addresses three questions:

- What evidence in research and practice literatures suggests that teacher preparation that addresses teachers' awareness, attitudes and beliefs about cultural and racial differences can contribute to teachers' effective practice with young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children?

- What evidence in research and practice literatures indicates that culturally responsive teaching practices contribute to improvements in educational outcomes for young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children?

- What additional research needs to be conducted to help develop appropriate and effective early education pedagogy for young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children?

Teacher Preparation for Effective Practice with Culturally and Racially Diverse Children

Despite research and practice literatures on preparing teachers who are successful educators of young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children there is little

agreement on the depth and breath of knowledge teachers need to have to work with specific

groups of children (e.g., economically marginalized Black, Puerto Rican, Navajo children), how

that knowledge should be mastered, how it should be integrated into teaching, and whether it

actually makes a lasting difference in child outcomes (Nieto, 1999; Ray, Bowman & Robbins,

2006; Zeichner, 1996).

Research (Ray et al., 2006) has shown that early childhood teacher preparation programs

may not sufficiently address the complex educational and developmental needs of young

racially, culturally and economically marginalized children. In a national study of diversity

content in course requirements in 226 undergraduate teacher education programs, Ray et al.

found that on average only 25 percent of required semester hours of professional course work

focus on the development and education of children who are low-income, racial and cultural

minorities, second language/dialect speakers, and children with disabilities. This suggests that

perhaps 75 percent of the professional curricula in bachelor's degree teacher education programs

are primarily concerned with the development and education of White middle class, monolingual

children without disabilities.

It is important to distinguish between research on pre-service teachers of color and

European-Americans. The former has been less a target of research inquiry than the latter. Pre-

service teachers of color, in comparison to White pre-service teachers, report having had broader

multicultural and multiracial experiences prior to entering higher education, express greater

commitment to social justice, want to provide children of color with challenging curriculum, and

expect to hold children to high standards (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Sleeter, 2001; Su, 1996, 1997).

European American pre-service teachers in contrast have little knowledge of the families and

communities that have nurtured children in their classrooms (Pang & Sablan, 1998; Vàldes,

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1996); express ideologies that support the social, political, and racial status quo (Fergueson, 2001; Howard, 1999; Sleeter, 1993); doubt their ability to effectively teach African American and Latino children (Pang & Sablan, 1998; Vàldes, 1996); and feel unprepared to teach in multicultural and multilingual classrooms (Ray & Bowman, 2003; Valli & Rennaert-Ariev, 2000). A majority of White pre-service student teachers prefer student placement in White suburban schools, rather than with Latino or Black children (Terrill & Mark, 2000). Further, in-service teachers report that their pre-service and in-service preparation for the children in their classrooms, specifically children in poverty and culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse children, was inadequate; and that the knowledge and skills they have gained has come through primarily listening to colleagues, parents/guardians/families, and the children in their classrooms (Ray & Bowman, 2003).

Sleeter (2001) suggests that higher education teacher training programs have been slow to respond to the need to prepare teachers who can effectively educate diverse students. Pre-service programs may discriminate against students of color through screening and admission practices which contribute to a predominately European American student enrollment (Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). African Americans comprise only 7 percent of teacher education faculty in higher education (Irvine, 2003). The majority of faculty members are White Americans, the majority of students in teacher training institutions of higher education are White, and the majority of placement and field supervisors in teacher training internships are White (Sleeter, 2001). Pre-service teachers of color represent only a small fraction of college students and a significant portion of them are still educated in historically Black and Latino/a institutions of higher education (Sleeter, 2001, p. 95). Ray et al. (2006) argue that early childhood teacher education programs convey an unambiguous message to future teachers—professional competence requires

weak and uneven knowledge and practice skills in educating racial/cultural/ethnic minority children, children with disabilities, children in poverty, immigrant children and second language/dialect speakers.

Teacher education programs have used a variety of strategies to help pre-service teachers become more effective educators of children of color and others including immersion and multicultural classes (Sleeter, 2001; Zeichner, 1996). White female students are the primary participants in these studies. In immersion programs students live for a time, such as a semester, in communities different from their own. These programs generally have a powerful and significant effect on student teachers who report they learn new knowledge, develop positive attitudes towards the people with whom they live, and when they become teachers try to connect their classrooms to communities (Mahan, 1982; Mahan & Stachowski, 1990; Zeichner, 1996). While these experiences appear to have desired effects they may not be feasible for all programs, require considerable organizational commitment, may be resisted by faculty, and may not be workable for all students (e.g., married students, single parents) (Sleeter, 2001).

Multicultural coursework has been added to many teacher education programs on subjects ranging from multicultural education, Black child psychology, working with parents, and teaching second language learners. Research on pre-service teacher education (see Grant & Secada, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Grant & Tate, 1995) has methodological shortcomings and mixed results. Experimental research designs generally using pre-and post-test questionnaires with predominately White female students found that student attitudes changed slightly, but changes were not lasting (Sleeter, 2001). When multicultural coursework has been combined with fieldwork in an attempt to increase awareness, results are mixed. In some studies student stereotypes of racial minorities are reaffirmed (Murtadha-Watts, 1998) and in others students

became more aware of their own biases, stereotypes, and culture (Aaronsohn, Carter, & Hoyle, 1995; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Murtadha-Watts, 1998). LeCompte (1985) reported that training that provides only cursory knowledge can reinforce stereotypes and increase hostility toward culturally and racially diverse students. Further, Yoa (1985) found that teachers who took some multicultural courses still felt unprepared to teach culturally and racially diverse children. According to Sleeter (2001) there is a dearth of research that has examined whether integrating content knowledge (e.g., multicultural, anti-bias, social justice) throughout teacher education programs improves teacher practice with culturally and racially diverse children.

Implications for Early Childhood Practice. Perhaps the most salient issue in research on teacher preparation for young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children is whether coursework, immersion workshops, or any other strategy have made pre-service and in-service teachers effective educators and improved educational outcomes for children. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of research that systematically follows graduates or in-service teachers into classrooms and assesses the relationship between their undergraduate training or professional development on multicultural and multiracial issues and improved child outcomes. Research on the capacity of immersion programs to breakdown barriers and biases does suggest that teachers' intimate exposure to communities and residents may contribute to improvements in teachers' insights and perhaps practice. But, while full immersion is probably not realistic for all pre-service or in-service teachers, aspects of these programs may be adapted. For example, traditionally early education programs have used home visits to help teachers gain greater understanding of family perspectives on the child and to build teacher-family partnerships. The most fundamental practice interventions may be to:

- Require teachers and other school staff visit families in their homes regularly;

- Require and support teachers to develop knowledge of and meaningful relationships with organizations and individuals in the communities in which their children live;

- Provide time, resources, and support for on-going teacher-to-teacher meetings within schools that help teachers critically reflect on their work with children, parents/guardians/families, and communities, and

- Provide on-going professional development and support tailored to particular teachers, schools, children, and parents/guardians/families constraints and resources.

Research on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Pedagogy

Teaching practices (e.g., activities, strategies) and curricula responsive to young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children have been recommended for bridging between the knowledge children bring with them to school and what schools want them to learn. This literature identifies five characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy:

- All students are involved in the construction of knowledge;
- Student's prior knowledge, interests and personal and cultural strengths form the foundation for learning;
- Student's examine the curriculum from a variety of perspectives;
- Teacher's use multiple assessment practices;
- Classroom culture is inclusive of all children[8] (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, pp. 91-123).

Culturally responsive teachers, according to research (Foster & Peele, 1999; Irvine, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002)

- Recognize that social-ecological factors such as race, social class and culture locate people within a social order which may influence how they understand the world;
- Advocate for children and engage in systemic reform within schools;
- Are anti-racist, anti-bias, and social justice advocates;

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[8] The term 'all children' refers to children typically described as 'diverse' or 'minorities' including but not limited to children of color, immigrant children, second language and dialect speakers, low-income children, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender children, and children from all cultural and ethnic traditions. In addition, this term includes, but does not privilege, the developmental and educational needs of European American middle class, monolingual children without disabilities. This term implies equity, inclusion, social justice, and investment in all children's developmental and educational needs in teaching and learning in early childhood classrooms, and at all levels of professional development and training (Ray, Bowman & Robbins, 2006, p. 1).

- Are responsive to the context in which they teach and individual and group needs;
- Possess an array of strategies and techniques for engaging students effectively, and create instruction that integrates the knowledge and experience children have with the knowledge children are learning in school;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the necessity to learn about their students and have strategies to do so; and design instruction to draw on students' strengths and address their needs. (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 121).

This section of the paper examines three factors thought to be related to the educational achievement of young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children: 1) practices that connect children's culture and experience to the classroom, specifically cooperative learning, culturally responsive curriculum change, and discourse patterns; 2) teachers' personal capacities and attitudes necessary for children's school success; and 3) teachers' use of culturally responsive behavior management styles. Because the majority of research on culturally responsive teaching practice has focused on K-12 schools each of these factors will be discussed in relation to research evidence and feasibility for use with 3 to 8 year old children.

Teaching Practices that Connect Children's Experience to the Classroom. Research on teaching practices distinguishes between *transformative* approaches that dismantle institutionalized Euro-centric pedagogy (see for example McCarty, 2002; Murrell, 2002; Native Hawaiian Education Council, 2002); and *additive* approaches in which culturally responsive practice is infused in classroom curriculum, but may not alter a fundamentally Euro-centric pedagogy. The former, which Murrell (2002) refers to as culturally explicit pedagogy, requires transformation of schools at all levels—classroom practice, policies, philosophy and so forth. It is usually created by a partnership of educators, community leaders, and parents. The development of culturally explicit pedagogy for Native Hawaiian (Native Hawaiian Education Council, 2002), Navajo (McCarty, 2002), and Alaskan Native children (Alaskan Native

Knowledge Network, 1998) indicates that these programs have contributed to greater educational success for children, family and community engagement, and teacher efficacy. These efforts differentiate between teaching and learning *about* the child's culture, and teaching and learning *through* the child's culture (Native Hawaiian Education Council, 2002, p. 12).

Scheurich's (1998) research on highly successful elementary schools serving economically disadvantaged racial minority students, largely Latino, is instructive. Children in these public schools perform at or above their more economically advantaged peers on standard achievement measures. These schools are generally not developed by university experts in partnership with school personnel, but appear to have evolved from dedicated parents/guardians/families, teachers, and principals who craft over time a shared vision for the education of children in a particular school. Scheurich's data suggests that all partners share four beliefs, specifically: 1) all children can succeed at high academic levels; 2) relationships with children must be based on love, appreciation, and respect; 3) the child's culture and first language are highly valued; and 4) the school exists for and serves families and the community.

Research on additive approaches suggests that particular practices do improve outcomes for children of color and children in poverty. Specifically, early elementary children who have teachers who help them build connections between school and home culture show significant improvement in literacy and mathematics achievement. Knapp and Associates (1995) studied 140 high-poverty early elementary school classrooms in 15 schools and identified two dimensions of teachers' instructional responses to the diversity of children in their classrooms. The first dimension involves *constructive* and *nonconstructive* teacher responses. Essentially, constructive teachers believe that regardless of home culture characteristics (e.g., parent's marital status, poverty) children can learn, while nonconstructive teachers assume that students'

backgrounds determine educational outcomes. The second dimension involves the degree of *responsiveness* (*active* versus *passive*) that teachers exhibit in dealing with student differences. Active teachers believe that they understand the cultural backgrounds of the children they teach and use teaching strategies and curricula that support their beliefs. Passive teachers do not respond to differences either because they do not perceive differences or do not recognize them as significant in the child's educational performance. The researchers caution that active responses should not be perceived as automatically positive. Active teachers can incorrectly assume that they understand children's home culture, and as a result, may develop teaching strategies based on erroneous assumptions.

Cooperative Learning. Cooperative learning takes many forms, but generally involves three elements, student interdependence, achievement, and interaction. The majority of the research on cooperative learning is directed at middle school and high school education. The goal is to increase understanding and class cohesion through students working together on school-related assignments that cannot be completed without the help of all. Students learn to listen to others, to build consensus, to cooperate, and other social skills that are presumably transferable throughout other classroom activities. Cooperative learning not only improves academic achievement, but also teaches social skills and improves classroom climate (Johnson & Johnson, 1991), in part because it gives individual students immediate cognitive and social support (Brown & Palincsar, 1989). In middle and high school classrooms cooperative learning is used to develop analytical skills regarding literature, history, math and science with children from minority communities (Rosebery, Warren & Conant, 1992). This teaching strategy requires significant pre-planning on the part of teachers, monitoring of group progress, and teacher's individual assessment of each student. Implementation of cooperative learning is critical to its

success and according to Slavin (1990) must include individual accountability and positive interdependence. It also requires that teachers scaffold student learning regarding management of emotion, staying on task, and effective communication.

Small-scale studies, ethnographies, and case studies of teachers who employ cooperative learning with African American children appear to use this teaching practice, in part, because they believe it reflects home cultural practices. Foster & Peele (1999) report that effective teachers of African American boys use practices that support collectivity, mutual support, and collaborative study. Also, effective teachers use cooperative practice to develop a sense of family-like relationships within the classroom. In a qualitative study of effective African American teachers of African American children Ladson-Billing's (1994) found that teachers reported using cooperative work with elementary and high school students. But she concedes, "what teachers deem cooperative behavior more accurately falls under the category of compliance and conformity" (p. 70). There are conceptual and methodological problems with interpreting the value of this practice for children in poverty and children of color. Knapp et al. (1995) questions whether cooperative learning can be applied in a variety of school settings and populations and whether it has lasting effects on children's development. There is a dearth of research that indicates that it does. Ladson-Billings (1994) suggests that teachers may falsely assume that children's cultures support cooperative learning when they may not; application of the construct depends on individual interpretations; and children's confidence in their individual abilities may be jeopardized (p. 66). Nieto (1999) asserts that cooperative learning may be beneficial in improving classroom climate, but there is little evidence that it improves educational outcomes over time.

In early childhood classrooms from preschool through early elementary grades group learning activities are a staple of instruction. Through projects and interest groups on particular curriculum content (e.g., plant growth) to art projects that require group work (e.g., quilt making) children ages 3 to 8 frequently work in groups. The use of groups as centers for learning may be based on teacher's beliefs about child development, and/or about cultural practices familiar to children. But there may be a difference in group work activities and cooperative learning activities, particularly in the degree to which teachers plan for individual learning, support the group, and assess and monitor each child's progress. In addition, children's age may be a factor in their ability to work together to complete a task, and their need for greater participation and scaffolding by teachers.

Mixed-age grouping and cross-age tutoring may be strategies that contribute to greater school success for racially, culturally, and economically marginalized children. Mixed-age grouping (e.g., children 6 and 7 years of age or 1st and 2nd graders are taught in the same classroom) and cross-age tutoring (e.g., an older child tutors a younger child) are based on the notion that individual patterns of development in early childhood vary greatly, that chronological age is not always a sufficient indicator of a child's abilities, and that cognitive and social gains can be achieved through collaboration between younger children and older children who model behaviors and knowledge more advanced than those younger can exhibit alone. Mixed-age classrooms, in contrast to single-age classrooms, presumably provide young children with a greater range of ability, maturity, and competency models from which to learn. In addition, research (Evangelou, 1989) suggests that that mixed-age grouping may foster prosocial behaviors, reduce age-mate aggression, and encourage older child instruction of younger peers in classrooms. Cross-age tutoring (e.g., an older child tutors a younger child) appears to benefit

culturally, racially, and economically marginalized children's development of social skills, mathematics and literacy skills, peer relations, and classroom climate (Kalkowski, 1995). Both mixed-age grouping and cross-age tutoring can be used by teachers of 3-8 year old children, but like all teaching strategies require planning and skill in execution. Teachers must be adept at classroom management, individual child assessment, recognize the value of these strategies for child outcomes, and have sufficient knowledge of child development. But, the successful adoption of mixed-age grouping in schools must be done within a school or school system; teachers generally do not have sufficient authority to use this approach with out administrative support.

Culturally Responsive Curricula. Curriculum change to improve educational outcomes for culturally and racially diverse children has been a significant target of school reform proposals (Dyson, 2003; Nieto, 1999). Irvine (2003) cautions that curriculum changes that attempt to merely infuse diversity content across the curriculum will "not lead to sustaining outcomes or significant changes in teacher's attitudes and instructional behaviors" (p. 16). Curriculum change without attention to other factors, especially school and classroom climate, and teacher-child relationships may not have lasting effects. Unfortunately, teachers may have limited control over determining school curricula, pedagogical, and policies. In large urban systems district administrators and principals may determine curriculum choices or limit schools to a few pre-selected choices. In addition, federal mandates (e.g., *No Child Left Behind*) may place enormous pressure on school systems to further regulate classroom curriculum, practices and pedagogy.

Individual teachers may have more control over some aspects of their own classroom's curriculum, including the use of formally published multicultural children's literature, anti-bias

curriculum, and popular literacies (e.g., hip hop songs). Within their classrooms the essential ideas of culturally responsive curriculum reform can be applied by teachers, namely: 1) build on what children know, think and value to enrich the classroom curriculum; 2) build on children's strengths; 3) build bridges between what children know and school educational goals; 4) create a caring community grounded in children's cultures, anti-bias/anti-racist values and practices; 5) engage parents/guardians/families in meaningful respectful, ethical partnerships that support home and school cultures; and 6) respect and use children's languages/dialects.

Discourse Patterns. Children enter school with differences in oral and nonverbal communication due to culture, language, gender, social class, and age. They have learned an established communication system complete with grammatical rules, vocabulary, and communication norms, but not all languages and skills are equal in school-based learning. Many children in poverty and culturally diverse children may not have clear expectations about behaviors expected in schools, and expectations for classroom participation. Teachers may have little understanding of nonverbal communication norms (e.g., body language, interpersonal space, frequency of touching, tone of voice) children bring to class, or the logic, grammar, and lexicon of children's home languages and dialects. Classrooms require unique communication knowledge, including particular discourse patterns. Typical discourse patterns in school are teacher-led, for example, the teacher initiates-child responds-teacher evaluates (IRE) sequence, which accounts for a significant portion of classroom discourse. The IRE discourse pattern may contribute to passivity and conformity in learning exchanges (Silliman & Wilkinson, 1994). Using cross-age tutoring may support children's greater engagement in classroom activities, provide opportunities for alternative discourse patterns (e.g., child-to-child), and help young children gain a sense of discourse competence with more accepting school-peers. Read aloud

time, show and tell, and other teacher driven activities convey to children expected patterns of communication. Familiarity with school-required communication patterns and norms facilitates student learning, and conversely, unfamiliarity may inhibit learning, limit participation in classroom activities, effect teachers' assessment of child knowledge and abilities, and ultimately negatively affect school achievement. Assessment of children's abilities may be hampered because assessment strategies often require school-required communication skills children do not have.

Research suggests that African American children come to school with rich linguistic knowledge and abilities that schools generally problematize and stigmatize (Baugh, 1999; Perry & Delpit, 1998; Smitherman, 2000; Woodson, ([1933] 1969). African American Vernacular English, a language that is spoken by an estimated 70-80 percent of Black Americans, is little understood by teachers and rarely used as a platform for learning (Smitherman, 2000). Black, Latino, Asian American, and Native American children may also have substantial popular literacies and languages (Compton-Lilly, 2003; Dyson, 2003; Zentrella, 1997) not valued in classrooms, and insufficient access to literacies necessary for school success. Dyson's (2003) rich ethnography documents African American, Latino/a, and Asian American 1st grade students' extensive use of popular literacies (e.g., hip hop songs, church sermons and music, radio deejays, movies, jump rope rhymes, television, sports). The children and their teacher use these literacies in writing, art projects, problem solving, relationship building, and classroom activities. Further, the teacher uses children's language and knowledge to build bridges to school content, both she and parents want children to master. Together children's literacy and writing capacities were strengthened throughout the school year. This use of the cultural knowledge children bring to school is a fine example of how teachers of young children can develop rich discourse, writing

and early literacy skills and connect home and school. It requires that teachers recognize children's communicative abilities, embrace their linguistic traditions, build on their strengths, and understand parental goals regarding maintaining home culture and the development of school competence.

Teachers' attitudes, beliefs and expectations of young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children. Teachers may perceive African American, Latino, and other children of color as "walking sets of deficiencies" (Nieto, 1999, p. 85). In our vignette Ms. Smith's explanation for her teaching strategies with African American and Latino children in her classroom is, "They're poor" and "They are not going to do well in school." In these two sentences she sums up her low expectations for them as learners now and in the future, and most importantly *she teaches to her own low expectations*.

Research (Casey, 1990; Foster, 1997; Haberman, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1999; Skinner, Bryant, Coffman & Campbell, 1998) on effective teachers of economically disadvantaged and racial minority children, including African American and Latino boys, identify teachers' attitudes, personal capacities and behaviors as critical factors in children's learning. Foster and Peele (1999) found that successful teachers have, "emotional stamina, persistence, and resilience that enable them to negotiate the school bureaucracy, solve difficult problems, and help their students cope with day-to-day setbacks and misfortunes as well as more serious hardships" (p. 10). Haberman's (1992, 1995) research suggests that while content knowledge and best practice are important, the critical factor in successful teaching with children in poverty and racial minority children is the teacher's capacity to do so in a particular school setting given its constraints and resources, to a particular group of children given their experiences, and in a particular community given its characteristics, stresses, and realities. An

ethnography (Skinner, et al., 1998) of 21 Head Start children's transition to kindergarten reported that, teachers' high expectations for every child appeared to be associated children's social and academic adjustment. Children who expressed their love of school were more likely to have teachers who praised and redirected them with kindness than teachers who punished them. Further, early childhood teacher's biases and low expectations for racial, cultural, and low-income minority children may contribute to their inability or unwillingness to confront children's racist speech and behavior in schools directed at children of color (Rizvi, 1993; VanAusdale & Feagin, 2001), which may in turn contribute to racial and cultural minority children's belief that schools do not value them (Kozol, 1991; Steele, 1992, 1999).

Our earlier discussion of teacher preparation indicates that changing teachers' biases, stereotypes, and low expectations of young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children cannot be solved by a single strategy, such as professional development or course work. Irvine (2003) recommends that teachers engage in critical reflection. But, in order to interrogate his/her practice regarding bias, prejudice and racism a teacher has to be willing to confront her/his own privilege, power, beliefs and behavior. This type of inquiry is best done with others willing to or engaged in similar introspection. On-going professional development (PD) tailored to teachers in a particular school that supports reflection, examines research on teacher biases, combines observation in teachers' classrooms by the PD leader, and challenges teachers to examine their practice, expectations, and attitudes is essential.

Teachers' Use of Culturally Responsive Behavior Management Styles. Every teacher must choose how to design limits within the classroom and determine consequences and rewards for behavior. Behavior management systems, when well designed and implemented supports the development of positive teacher-child relationships (Pianta, 1999). Children are more likely to

experience teachers as predictable, responsive and available if teachers are able to maintain effective behavior management systems within their classrooms, which in turn contribute to teachers' sense of effectiveness and influence. On the other hand, behavior management systems that are inconsistent or developmentally inappropriate can erode teacher-child relationships (Pianta, 1999).

Teachers' use of culturally grounded behavior management styles with children of color and poor children may be more successful in building trusting relationships and learning (Ballenger, 1999; Delpit, 1995; Irvine & Fraser, 1998). In the case of African American children Irvine and Fraser (1998) describe successful teachers as "warm demanders", that is individuals who replicate the parental style of effective African American parents. They caution that this is not a harsh, punitive or arbitrary parenting style, but rather one that combines affection and warmth with high standards and clear expectations. Delpit's (1995) work identified a non-authoritarian classroom management style as ineffective with many African American students. Sunia and Smolkin's (1994) research on Pueblo Indian schooling indicates that teachers with a deep knowledge of Pueblo culture are more likely to use classroom management styles that reflect consensus, collective decision making, Pueblo language, and Pueblo ways of knowing in order to reduce discontinuities between school, home, and community. Similarly, Ballenger (1999), a European American teacher of Haitian immigrant early elementary children, describes learning from Haitian-American teachers and parents the culturally grounded repertoire of behavior management practices used by Haitian families. Ballenger learned to use these strategies successfully with children to support teaching and learning in her classroom. Haitian American parents and teachers stress group responsibility, clear expectations, and moral

persuasion. Ballenger's work suggests that culturally responsive behavior management styles can be learned and taught inter-culturally teacher-to-teacher, and parent-to-teacher.

Moving the Field Forward: Suggestions for Future Areas of Research

This paper argues that culturally responsive teachers and classroom practice may contribute to significantly better educational outcomes for young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children. Research reviewed suggests that culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching practices may benefit children, especially in terms of math achievement, literacy achievement, and social adjustment. Results are uneven and research methodology is typically qualitative (e.g., ethnographies, case studies, and small select samples). Whether results can be generalized to most classrooms and children is unclear. Many questions remain unanswered. What then are research and practice issues that, if addressed might contribute to significantly improved and lasting educational outcomes for children in poverty and cultural and racial minority children? The following areas of research, if examined, may provide greater clarity on the value of culturally responsive pedagogy for children.

Research that examines parent and community involvement in and attitudes toward culturally responsive early education. Research on culturally responsive pedagogy endorses building partnerships with parents/guardians/families, but generally does not examine what chronically poor and racial and cultural minority parents/guardians/families want from schools and teachers. The parent involvement model commonly found in many early education programs has been criticized for maintaining the power of administrators and teachers at the expense of low-income and cultural and racial minority parents, and offering culturally unresponsive parent education and training (Vàldes, 1996). Just as children in poverty and racial and cultural minority children are marginalized in schools their parents may be as well

(Compton-Lilly 2003; Fine, 1991). Few studies attempt to assess parents' knowledge of and commitment to the goals of culturally responsive education, parents' views of bias and prejudice and ways to eliminate them, parents' views of what schools should do to eliminate biases and promote diversity, and parents' interests in aligning with teachers and schools to advance culturally responsive education. Research (McCarty, 2002; Murrell, 2002; Native Hawaiian Education Council, 2002; Scheurich, 1998) does suggest that when parents, families and communities are engaged in deep and meaningful ways in actually shaping, defining and developing their children's schools and educational experiences, child outcomes improve. Systematic investigation of these little understood issues would help to identify ways in which teachers and schools might work cooperatively with parents to support the education of children.

Research that examines the culture of specific groups of children (e.g., African American, Dominican, Puerto Rican, Navajo, Hmong), parenting practices of families from specific cultures, and how this knowledge may be used to support educational achievement, early schooling, and effective teaching. There is insufficient research onall of the cultural minority groups present in U. S. classrooms. Absence of knowledge of cultural practices used by specific families, groups and communities hampers the development of culturally responsive education. There is perhaps more research on African American children and families, albeit much of it from deficit perspectives, than many other groups in the U. S. The research that has identified cultural practices central to childrearing and parenting in specific groups may not be understood by teachers or inadequately incorporated into classroom practice. For example, African American parents use a particular parenting practice, namely racial socialization, to develop child competence. This practice is associated with school achievement (Thornton, 1997). Can teachers be taught to use racial socialization to support and enhance learning of Black children?

Other important lines of inquiry include: how teachers' knowledge of and use of the logic, grammar, lexicon, and communication norms of racial and cultural minority children contribute to improved child educational outcomes; specific relational interventions teachers can employ to help anchor and engage African American and Latino boys to schooling; and how early childhood school policies contribute to African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian American children's disengagement from schools?

Research that examines the value of culturally responsive early education for significantly improving the educational outcomes of young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children. Can we demonstrate that preschool through 3rd grade culturally responsive practice makes a difference in either child outcomes, quality of instruction, child engagement, or school environment? The research reviewed for this paper suggests that teachers are critical in this process, but curriculum, instructional practices, and school climate also matter. Teachers' use of culturally responsive practices is not an end in itself. In order to support the claim that culturally responsive pedagogy makes a significant contribution to child outcomes, research using multiple methodologies to explore related questions is needed. There is a dearth of longitudinal research that examines how culturally responsive content, teaching practices, and so forth contribute to sustainable educational outcomes for children in poverty and culturally and racially diverse children. Further, there is a dearth of research on how teachers are supposed to determine what 'cultural' content is, whether a particular 'cultural' practice is representative of all children from a culture, how a cultural practice may specifically contribute to classroom learning, and how to balance the interests of children from different cultural traditions (e.g., African American, Puerto Rican, and White) who may be in the same classroom. Further, there is insufficient research that systematically examines how other aspects of schools and schooling

(e.g., school leadership, school policies, school climate, policies of boards of education) can support or hinder the development of culturally responsive education and schools.

Research that examines the role of teacher education institutions and professional development in creating teachers who are culturally responsive early educators of young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children. The development of a body of research, conducted with scientific rigor that assesses what is effective undergraduate, graduate, and professional development regarding diversity is essential. What are the necessary knowledge base,s practices, and supports needed by student teachers in order to enter the field as competent practitioners able to work ethically and effectively with children in poverty and racial and cultural minority children? What do undergraduate and graduate education programs teach regarding race, class, Whiteness, ethnicity, social justice, and other forms of diversity, privilege and power? What is the nature of student teacher supervision regarding issues of effective work with diverse populations during practicum experiences? What knowledge base, personal self-reflection, experiences, and values related to racial, cultural and social class diversity do faculty have in undergraduate and graduate schools of education? Research suggests that pre-service teachers of color and pre-service White teachers training needs may be different. What are the critical pre-service and in-service needs of African American, Mexican American, Navajo and other teachers of color?

What is necessary to create professional development (including content, structure, classroom observation) that supports veteran and novice teacher development regarding the education of young racially, culturally and economically marginalized children? What is the professional developmental pathway for creating teachers who meet Knapp et al.'s description of active-constructive teachers? Will case studies of their professional and personal development

illuminate factors that can inform the design of effective professional development interventions with less culturally responsive teachers? What types of support contribute to more effective teaching and learning in classrooms in which in-service teachers meet the criteria of culturally responsive teachers?

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