

Educating Young Children in a Diverse Society



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*To the memory of Dorothy Berke
Edith King*

*To my children, David, Michael, and Sarena;
my husband, Aaron; and my mother, Lois.
Thank you for your love throughout the years.
Marilyn Chipman*

*To all my elementary school teachers in Puerto Rico
who taught me to believe in myself.
To my husband, John, and daughter, Eva,
whose love, faith, and encouragement keep me going.
¡Gracias!
Marta Cruz-Janzen*



Foreword

Nothing inherent in culture itself, or in other forms of human diversity, creates pedagogical problems. Diversity is the norm in human society, even where homogeneity appears on the surface. It is *that attitude of the educator* toward diversity that creates problems in the education setting. When educators do not notice diversity, when they give negative notice, or when they lose the opportunity to give positive notice of the natural diversity that is always there, they create a bogus reality for teaching and learning.

Politicizing diversity contributes to practices of inequity in education. The two primary areas of inequity are in the *process* and in the *content* of education. The content problem in education is primarily a validity problem. Will the curriculum faithfully reflect the truth of the human experience—the *whole* truth? Will the experience of any segment of the society be ignored, falsified, or defamed? Neither chauvinism nor shame is a natural outcome of a truthful rendition of the human experience. Pluralism is the norm and will be unavoidable if the truth is to be told. Critical thinking about the content of education is dependent on the accuracy and completeness of the content.

The primary process issue is that of equal access to school services, and this begins in the first years of schooling. The distribution of high-quality teaching and support services should be equitable for all groups beginning with these first years of schooling. Exemplary programs should not be a refuge for the wealthy or an exclusive preserve for any one racial, ethnic, or gender group. Conscious and sophisticated moni-

toring of education services to locate and eliminate inequities is the responsibility of every educator from the preschool on.

Awareness of diversity within human society is a necessity for anyone interested in the knowledge base of early childhood education. The strength of this book lies in the presentation of diverse cultural experiences as a natural source of ideas and stimulating creativity and, for many, a natural source of the variety that enhances the environment. The world is now and always has been an environment of physical and social diversity. A respect for that and an appropriate response to it can enhance education for all. King, Chipman, and Cruz-Janzen raise many issues for early childhood educators and propose plausible practices to respond to the reality of diversity.

Asa G. Hilliard, III, Ed.D.
Georgia State University



Preface

Living in our contemporary world grows vastly more complex with each day, with each new event, with each change in technology. As in every aspect of society, early childhood education experiences these impacts. For more than two decades, the authors of this volume have been deeply involved in and committed to the education of young children, their parents, their teachers, and their care givers. Moreover, all three authors were drawn into education that centered on young children and on multicultural issues because, as mothers and educators, their offspring had been affected profoundly by the early childhood education process. Just as early childhood education has experienced dramatic changes in recent years, the field of multicultural education has been redefined and reorganized continually in the light of societal upheavals. As educators, we recognized an urgent need to provide a text that would infuse “the diversity perspective,” into the teaching of all young children.

CHILDREN’S SELF-PORTRAITS: A MULTICULTURAL PROJECT FOR THE CLASSROOM

Many positive comments have been received regarding the children’s self-portraits included in this text. We thought the reader might want to know how they were created. Nancy Gallavan, whose students produced the self-portraits, gives the following account:

The changing enrollment has transformed our school over the last five years from a predominantly middle class, white suburban neighborhood school to one that reflects wide diversity. The students now come from all social classes and many ethnic groups. The spirit of friendship and harmony is a result of concerted efforts by the administration, staff, students, parents, and community to join together in the pursuit of education of the highest quality.

Much thought has been given to educating this diverse student body so that multicultural education has been integrated into all areas of the curriculum. It is not presented as a separate subject area, but as an extension of activities and discussions vital to every aspect of learning. Staff members have discovered a wealth of resources and information through the incorporation of materials on diversity and the help of committed adults from the community.

The children's self-portrait project arose in my class from interest in human diversity and the danger of stereotyping individuals and groups of people. The project was first explained to the children and a letter was sent home describing the educational purposes and outcomes of such a project. While creating their self-portraits the children spent considerable time studying their own features in front of a large mirror I had placed in the room. They spent much time viewing their eyes, noses, and mouths from several angles.

I encouraged all the students to use differing colors as they cut out and attached their features with paste to the large paper which formed the base for their self-portraits. These activities presented opportunities to discuss the physical attributes associated with different ethnic groups and the need to avoid stereotyping individuals. They finished the creation of the self-portraits by adding a simple piece of clothing, choosing their own favorite colors. Some students then attached jewelry such as earrings or necklaces to their portraits. A few others constructed eyeglasses if they wore them regularly. Other children who needed to wear eyeglasses would not include them in their self-portraits because they felt they were not as attractive when wearing glasses. This reminded me that these children, as most people, need constant reassurance of the acceptability of their personal appearance.

This self-portrait adventure was integrated into a combined reading, writing, and social studies unit presented during the month of December. This was a particularly fruitful time since so many celebrations emphasizing multicultural and global customs, traditions, and holidays occur in this month. Every December I have opportunities to visit the children's homes and meet with their families. A home visit with a family of a student I had taught in the previous year empha-

sized the value of the self-portrait project. My former student, now quite a young lady, eagerly took me to see her room and her study area. There, placed on the wall above her desk in an elegant frame hung her self-portrait. I knew then that I should repeat the self-portrait project in my classroom every year so the children could learn from the efforts of this type of self-expression.

Acknowledgments

In writing this book, the authors were continually inspired and encouraged by the students enrolled in their education courses, seminars, and programs over the past years. Some were in preservice education, while others included experienced early childhood teachers, administrators, consultants, school psychologists, parents, and undergraduates and graduates with majors other than education.

We wish to specifically cite by name some of these students, colleagues, and associates whose contributions to this volume were invaluable. We want to thank Margaret Huxley of Manchester, England, for the models and insights into the importance of gender socialization in early childhood; Janice Luellen for her outstanding research on young Native-American children; and Robin Glaser, officer of the U.S. Air Force Academy, for his insights as a father in a culturally-different setting. Others whose input provided unique aspects of early childhood education and research were Seng Seok Hoon of Singapore, Nasma Hussein of Kuwait, and Peter Woods of the Open University, England. Our thanks also go to Nancy P. Gallavan of the Cherry Creek, Colorado, public schools and her students, whose lively and unique self-portraits illustrate the book, and to Marjorie Milan and Janette Astacio and their staff and students in the Denver public schools.

We want to thank our editors at Allyn and Bacon, Nancy Forsyth and Christine Nelson, as well as Jim Ruppel, who continually provided us with encouragement and counsel. We thank the educators who reviewed the manuscript: Gail Bollin, Westchester University and Linda Medearis, East Central University. Finally, much of the inspiration and commitment to bring this project to fulfillment came from our own children.



About the Authors

The senior author of this text, Edith W. King, is Professor in the School of Education, University of Denver, where she specializes in sociological, multicultural, and comparative education. Her teaching includes courses on the child in society; on ethnicity, social class, and gender in education; and on qualitative research methods. For the past fifteen years, King has organized travel seminars for educators to study early childhood and elementary education in international settings. Additionally, she has investigated the effects of ethnicity, gender, and social class on education in nations around the globe, including doing field work in schools and universities in Singapore, Kuwait, Hong Kong, Britain, and Canada. As a senior faculty member at the University of Denver, King has been the major adviser for a growing number of dissertation research studies of young children that combine aspects of ethnicity, gender, and social class. Throughout her professional career she has authored numerous articles, as well as developed monographs, pamphlets, and media materials on child socialization, multicultural education, sociological theory, and cross-cultural perspectives in education. Among the books she has authored are *Teaching Ethnic and Gender Awareness: Methods and Materials for the Elementary School*; *Administering Early Childhood Education* (with Joseph Stevens, Jr.); *Twentieth Century Social Thought* (with R. P. Cuzzort); *Educating Young Children . . . Sociological Interpretations*; *The World: Context for Teaching in the Elementary School*; and *The Sociology of Early Childhood Education*.

Marilyn Chipman is a professor in the Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, and the past Area Coordinator of the

Early Childhood Teacher Certification Program at Metropolitan State College of Denver, Colorado. She has been appointed as the Race Coordinator for the federally-funded Rocky Mountain and Northern Plains States Desegregation Assistance Center, an outreach of the college. In this capacity, she provides assistance and training for K-12 school districts in a six-state region. Dr. Chipman's background includes teaching young children in public schools in California and in Colorado, where she was nominated for the Teacher of the Year Award. In addition to her commitment to early childhood education, Dr. Chipman develops curriculum, teaches courses, and conducts seminars in the area of cultural diversity for both preservice and experienced teachers, administrators, support staff, and for parents and community leaders. A recognized consultant in multicultural education, she speaks on the local, state, and national levels to audiences from both inner-city and rural areas. Her research and prior publications have addressed the impact of the educational experience on students of color from pre-school through the graduate level in academe. She has received numerous awards. Dr. Chipman holds a B.A. degree in Sociology and Psychology from the University of Denver; a M.A. degree in Early Childhood Education from California State University, and a Ph.D. in Education Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Denver.

Marta Cruz-Janzen is the principal of Remington Elementary School, Denver Public Schools. She is a doctoral candidate in the College of Education, University of Denver, specializing in curriculum leadership and multicultural education. Cruz-Janzen was the Gender and Race Equity Consultant at the Colorado Department of Education, where she provided technical assistance to K-12 education districts in the state of Colorado. Her career with the Denver Public Schools has also included teaching, advising, and providing technical assistance in bilingual/English as a second oral language (ESOL) education. Before coming to Colorado, Cruz-Janzen taught bilingual education in the New York City schools. She received her B.S. from Cornell University and her M.A. and M.Ed. from the Columbia University Teachers College. She has been selected Vice-Chair of the National Coalition for Sex/Race Equity in Education (NCSEE). Marta is also a member of the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) and a member of the Board of Directors for the Colorado Association for Bilingual/Bicultural Education (CABE). She has conducted presentations on gender and race equity, and the interface of gender and race issues, at conferences across the country. Cruz-Janzen's research and field work have focused on young children and gender/race issues in bilingual/bicultural settings.



Contents

Foreword x
(by Asa Hilliard, III, Ed.D.)

Preface xii
Children's Self-Portraits xii
Acknowledgments xiv

About the Authors xv

- 1 Recognizing Diversity in Early Childhood Education** 1
The Authors' Purpose in Writing This Text 3
 The Use of Accounts and Anecdotes of
 Childhood Experiences 4
Organization of the Chapters 5
Features of the Text to Promote Teacher Development 6
Summary and Overview 7
References and Suggested Readings 8
- 2 The Impact of Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Class on Young Children** 11
Socialization in Early Childhood 13
 Gender Stereotypes Start Early 13
 Race and Ethnic Awareness 14
 Awareness of Social Class 15
 Where Does Social Class Come into the Scene? 17

<i>A Study of Interactions in a Bilingual Early Childhood Classroom</i>	18
The Classroom Setting	19
Some Comments on the Observer's Role	21
Initial Visits to the ECE Classroom	21
Later Visits to the ECE Classroom	31
<i>Summary</i>	35
<i>Key Concepts</i>	36
<i>Issues and Actions</i>	37
<i>Endnotes</i>	38
<i>References and Suggested Readings</i>	38
3 Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Multicultural Instruction	41
<i>Theoretical Bases for Developmentally Appropriate Practice</i>	42
The Ascendancy of Emergent Literacy	42
The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Education	44
Piagetian Theory of Cognitive Development	45
The British Primary School Approach	45
<i>Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Curriculum</i>	46
<i>Areas of the Early Childhood Curriculum and Developmentally Appropriate Practice</i>	48
Emergent Literacy and Language Arts	48
Motor Skills	49
Social/Emotional Aspects	49
Cognitive/Perceptual Aspects	50
<i>More Ideas for Incorporating Diversity into Developmentally Appropriate Practice</i>	56
Language Activities that Encompass Diversity	56
An Important Project by a Teacher Concerned with Multicultural Education	56
Social/Emotional Aspects	59
Cognitive/Perceptual Activities	59
<i>Summary</i>	60
<i>Key Concepts</i>	61
<i>Issues and Actions</i>	62
<i>Endnotes</i>	63
<i>References and Suggested Readings</i>	64
4 The Young Child's Curriculum and Multiculturalism	65
<i>Three Major Views of the Young Child's Curriculum</i>	66
Some General Comments	66

The Stimulus-Response View	67
The Cognitive-Interactionist View	71
The Maturationist or Classic View	73
<i>Curriculum Materials and the Three Views of the Curriculum</i>	76
The Relationship of Curriculum Materials to the Program	77
<i>Curriculum Materials from the Multicultural Perspective</i>	79
<i>Defining a Multicultural Atmosphere in the Classroom</i>	81
Summary	84
Key Concepts	85
Issues and Actions	86
References and Suggested Readings	86
 5	
The Significance of Ethnic and Gender Identity in Childhood	89
Ethnic and Gender Identity: Some Definitions	90
<i>Rosa's School Socialization: On Being Black and American in a German Kindergarten</i>	91
The Commitment to Our World Society	96
<i>The Significance of Early School Experience in Childhood Socialization</i>	97
The Social Construction of Ethnic and Gender Identity	97
<i>Girlhood in Puerto Rico</i>	98
The Town	99
Family Life	100
The School in the Community	102
The Hidden Social Agenda	104
A Portrait of the Construction of Gender Identity	105
<i>Ethnicity, Gender, and Social Class: Important Awareness for Teachers</i>	106
Summary	109
Key Concepts	109
Issues and Actions	110
Endnotes	112
References and Suggested Readings	112
 6	
The Concept of Culture and Early Childhood Education	113
<i>The Concept of Culture</i>	114
Culture and Language	116
<i>The Study of a Native American PreSchool Program: The Concept of Culture as Applied in Early Childhood Education</i>	117

The Setting	119
Population	122
"The Circle Never Ends" Curriculum	122
Observing "The Circle Never Ends" Curriculum	129
Use of Time	131
Results and Implications of This Study	139
<i>Summary</i>	140
<i>Key Concepts</i>	140
<i>Issues and Actions</i>	141
<i>Endnotes</i>	142
<i>References and Suggested Readings</i>	142

7 Forms of Bias in the Early Childhood Classroom 145

<i>Gender Socialization</i>	146
<i>The Subtle Nature of Gender Stereotyping</i>	147
<i>How Socialization Affects Our Lives</i>	150
<i>Socialization Agents</i>	151
<i>Perpetuation of Biases and Stereotypes</i>	153
<i>Forms of Bias in Classrooms, Curriculum Materials and Schools</i>	155
Exclusion and Tokenism	156
Stereotyping	156
Biased Language	157
Imbalance and Inequality	157
Unreality	158
Isolation and Segregation	159
<i>An Incident on the Playground</i>	160
<i>Summary</i>	163
<i>Key Concepts</i>	164
<i>Issues and Actions</i>	165
<i>References and Suggested Readings</i>	166

8 A Sociological View of the Young Child 169

<i>Applying Forms of Drama to Early Childhood Classrooms</i>	171
Others Join in the Performance	173
Regions: The Setting for the Performance and Its Staging	174
<i>The Young Child with Special Needs</i>	175
<i>The Teacher and a Curriculum of "Inclusion"</i>	177
<i>The Realization of Social Class Inequity in the Young Child</i>	178
<i>Summary</i>	182
<i>Key Concepts</i>	182

<i>Issues and Actions</i>	183
<i>References and Suggested Readings</i>	183

9 The Importance of Research for Teachers of Young Children 185

<i>The Concept of Naturalistic Research</i>	186
Naturalistic Research Strategies as Practiced in England	188
<i>Naturalistic Research in a Bilingual Early Childhood Classroom</i>	189
Background and Plan of the Small-Scale Study	189
Procedures for Data Collection	190
Results and Outcomes	191
Implications for Naturalistic Research in Early Childhood Classrooms	192
<i>Summary</i>	193
<i>Key Concepts</i>	193
<i>Issues and Actions</i>	194
<i>References and Suggested Readings</i>	195

10 Young Children and Education for an Interdependent World 197

<i>Early Childhood Education and the Need for World Awareness</i>	198
Some Sources of the World Awareness Curriculum	199
Margaret Mead's Contributions to World Awareness	200
Education for an Interdependent World: Elise Boulding	201
<i>World Awareness and Early Childhood Education in Other Nations</i>	202
Young Children in the Multicultural Nation of Singapore	203
Early Childhood Education in Kuwait before the Gulf War of 1990	205
<i>Implications of a World View for Early Childhood Education</i>	207
Three Stages of Cultural Continuities	207
<i>Summary</i>	209
<i>Key Concepts</i>	210
<i>Issues and Actions</i>	211
<i>References and Suggested Readings</i>	211

Index 213

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RECOGNIZING DIVERSITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

