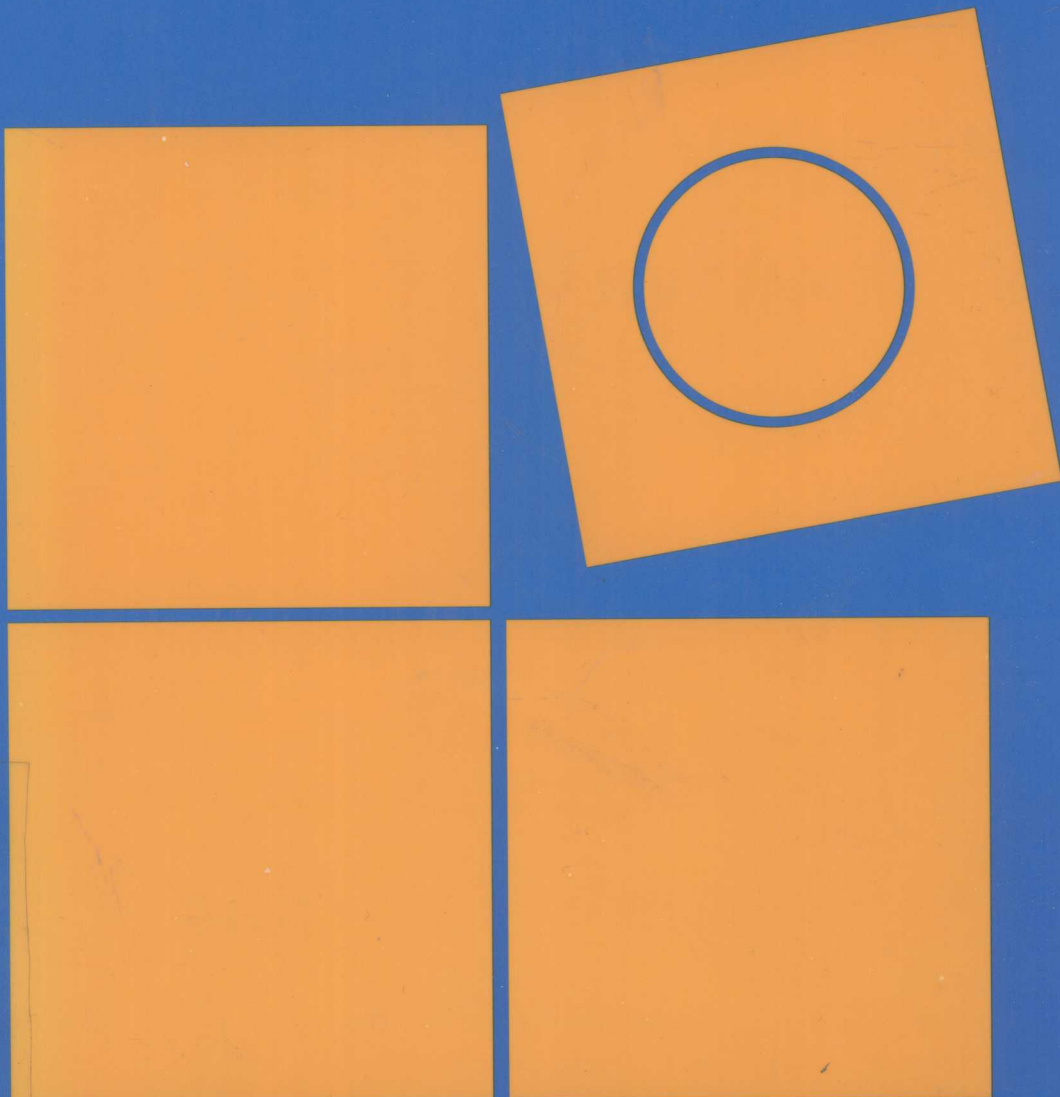# MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION CASES FOR TEACHER PROBLEM SOLVING

RITA SILVERMAN

WILLIAM M. WELTY

SALLY LYON

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION CASES FOR TEACHER PROBLEM SOLVING
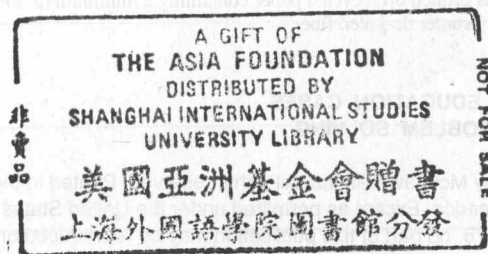
RITA SILVERMAN
Pace University

WILLIAM M. WELTY
Pace University

SALLY LYON
Pace University

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**MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION CASES
FOR TEACHER PROBLEM SOLVING**

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Silverman-Welty-Lyon: Case Studies for Teacher Problem Solving

To the Student

For most of you this collection will be a new experience in education. It is a series of case studies centered on the experiences of elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States. Based on the concept of case study developed in schools of business, these cases present stories told by practicing teachers about their experiences. The stories introduce problems teachers have encountered and require that students preparing to be teachers use their analytic and critical thinking skills, their knowledge of educational theory and research, and their common sense and collective wisdom to identify and analyze problems and to evaluate possible solutions.

At first, case method may seem a strange way of learning. For one thing, cases present stories about real teachers in real schools and ask that *you* go to the theory and try to apply it to understand the stories and the problems they present. Part of the reason for using cases is to help you understand educational theory more completely by thinking about how it applies in actual situations. Case method requires that you interact with the theory; it requires that you decide how to use theory to analyze classroom situations in order to solve problems.

Deciding for yourself—that is really the heart of case-method pedagogy. It is based on the understanding that the most important learning, the most meaningful learning, the most long-lasting learning comes from the work the learner does on his or her own—active learning.

Problem-solving cases require that the learner be active in both the preparation for class and the participation in class. Your preparation for a case class will not be limited by the normal "I've got fifty pages to read tonight." Instead, it will be determined by how much work *you* want to put into the analysis, by the limitations you put on yourself. Usually the cases can be read in a relatively short time, since few are more than ten pages long. But for cases to have any lasting educational value, you must expend much more effort than simply reading them. Because these cases are prob-lem-centered, there will be a more or less obvious "presenting problem." But there will be, as well, some more subtle problems, problems the teacher telling the case story may not have recognized. It will be up to you, in your preparation for class, to identify the problems, apply relevant theory, and develop solutions. There will never be one right solution; often there will be many possible solutions. For sure, there will be better or worse solutions, but better or worse will depend on the analysis you used to understand the problem. That analytic process is the heart of case method. This experience can be both frustrating and exhilarating, as it was for the student who describes her introduction to case method in the following excerpt:

I entered the battle of the case method unarmed. The routines and tools that had allowed me to survive years of schooling no longer helped me; my old study habits were

useless—counterproductive, in fact. For example, I had always been a diligent student, priding myself on completing the assignments I was given. If I was expected to read pages 220–256 of a book, I read them. As a student in a case class, though, my assignments were open-ended: prepare the case and develop recommendations. I was supposed to decide how to approach the material, but it was hard to know how much to do, hard to know where to stop. Was I supposed to consider two alternatives or six? Was I supposed to consult outside sources (textbooks, classnotes, the library)? I had always been an outliner, finding that outlining helped me see the structure of the material. But cases by their very nature could not be outlined. They were not books, logically organized by the author to facilitate my understanding. Just because a particular aspect of the case situation occupied the first three pages of the case booklet did not mean it was more important than an aspect mentioned in one small paragraph on page 17. Just because certain data was not provided did not mean it was not necessary.

Like a "real" [teacher] in a "real" [teaching] situation, it was now my job to impose a meaningful framework on the unruliness of case facts. I had to search for the key nuggets of data, distinguishing central facts from peripheral ones. I had to sort out the conflicting explanations and alternatives presented to me, and arrive at a reasonable recommendation for action.

I understand the importance of these skills in the real world. But that understanding didn't make the skills any easier to develop. . . . Every time I needed to make an assumption, . . . I hesitated and thought, How would I defend my assumption? How could I know what was reasonable? I rarely could walk into class secure in the knowledge that I had "cracked" the case. The uncertainty was frightening. [Robin Hacke, *The Case Method: A Student Perspective,* unpublished working paper, Harvard Business School, 1986, quoted in C. Roland Christensen, "Teaching with Cases at the Harvard Business School," in C. Roland Christensen and Abby Hansen, *Teaching and the Case Method,* Harvard Business School (Boston, 1987), pp. 29–30.]

Cases require active learning in the classroom, as well. Do not expect your instructor to prepare a neat lecture that summarizes the main points of the case, points out the relevant theory, provides a list of sources, and details the correct solution. Instead, the class will be a discussion. You will be asked questions designed to get you and your classmates to compare and build your individual analyses into a collective one. You will be challenged to defend your analysis and your solutions, to listen to and challenge others, and to take away from this collective process a deeper understanding of the case situation than you, your classmates, or your instructor could ever have done alone.

All of this is designed not only to make you an active participant in your own education but to prepare you for the *real* world of the elementary and secondary school teacher. That real world is one of constant action, of making decisions day in and day out. Seldom is there time to consult theory; seldom is one situation exactly like another. Real teachers, therefore, need to be prepared to analyze situations for themselves and to build and evaluate action plans on their own. They need to know how to go to colleagues and friends for help—again, not in seeking the single right answer but in seeking help in problem analysis. They need to learn to take responsibility for the problems encountered in teaching and, by taking responsibility, to develop

a proactive attitude toward those problems. In short, they need to develop critical thinking skills for their profession. We believe that case method education provides a basis for developing these skills and for continuing to use them during one's professional teaching career.

▶ HOW DO I PREPARE A CASE?

For the teacher education student encountering cases for the first time, the following are some concrete, step-by-step suggestions for case preparation:

1. *Understand the assignment in context.* Your instructor will probably assign one case at a time and include in the assignment some study questions or issues to think about while you are preparing it. As well, each case will most likely be accompanied or preceded by traditional textbook assignments. These may alert you to theoretical concepts related to the case. So before you begin to read the case, be sure that you understand the overall framework within which the case is being used and the points your instructor may want to emphasize.

2. *Read the case for an overview.* Try reading the case first rather quickly, to get a general idea of what it is about: what happened, who the main characters are, what the problems are, and how the issues in the case relate to the overall assignment.

3. *Analyze the case.* Go back and read the case again, this time much more carefully. Begin to try to make sense of the study questions assigned by your instructor. Make notes of main characters and their relationships with each other. Try to understand the problems, both obvious and hidden. Try to understand the point of view of the case; that is, determine who is providing the information. Identify what impact this perspective may have on the information in the case. Make a list of questions you have about the material, and identify any other information you would like to have. At the end of this stage you should have a list of problems and an understanding of the causes of these problems.

4. *Seek outside information.* At this point you might want to turn to outside sources for help in understanding the problems you have identified and to develop solutions. Go to the textbook, especially the chapter assigned to accompany the case. Anything that helps you understand the case better at this point is fair game to use.

5. *Develop solutions.* Ultimately, cases call for solutions to problems, not to determine the one right answer but to focus analysis and to prepare you for a real world of teacher action and decision making. Relate your solutions to your analysis of the problems. Since there are no perfect decisions, be sure you understand both the weaknesses and the strengths of your solutions. Every good solution has a downside; it may not negate the solution, but you should at least always understand the negatives as well as the positives of what you are proposing. Prepare to argue for your ideas in class. Come

armed with the relevant theory that supports your position. Be ready to take risks. The case class is a teaching laboratory. The case is the lab experiment, and you are the social scientist seeking to test your ideas.

▶ HOW DO I PARTICIPATE IN CLASS DISCUSSION?

Thoughtful participation in case discussion has two components: you should state your own informed ideas and analysis, and you should listen actively to the contributions of your classmates. The case class is a learning community; collectively you and your classmates are proceeding toward a more complete understanding of the case situation and possible solutions. No one person can do it all. Your instructor will guide the class toward this collective understanding, but your active participation and active listening are necessary to further this process. You must listen actively in order to understand where the discussion is going and where the group is in the process of the case analysis so that your contributions are relevant to the discussion of the moment.

After the discussion is over, go back over your analysis of the case and think about how the discussion changed or added to it. Try to summarize in a few thoughts the main points of the whole case exercise, from original assignment to summary statement at the end of class. Be sure you understand how and where the case related to theory. Think about the questions you still have relating to the case or the general assignment and about the ways you might begin to answer them.

Case method is an exciting new venture in teacher education. Our experiences using case method teaching have demonstrated that new teachers go into their own classrooms more ready to deal with the myriad of problems they must face if as students they have prepared seriously for case discussions by taking the time to analyze the cases and to develop solutions based on the educational theory and have taken part in case discussions with both thoughtful contributions and active listening.

▶ THE SETTING FOR THE CASES

The cases that follow are the true stories of practicing teachers. Each tries to capture an event or experience that was particularly significant or memorable in the teacher's life. As you read the cases and then analyze them, you will need some information about the settings in which they occur. Knowing the socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial makeup of the communities and having information about class size and availability of ancillary services will help you make decisions about the cases. On the other hand, since the cases are true stories, for privacy reasons we have disguised the names of all individuals, both teachers and students, and of all actual places.

Most of the cases in this collection are set in a school district we have named "Littleton," a suburb of a large northeastern city with a population of 75,000. It is large enough to be classified by the state as a small city district, and made up of neighborhoods with a wide range of incomes. While many homes in the area are valued at more than $350,000, the city is also plagued with the problems faced by most urban centers: poverty, decaying public housing, crime, and a recent increase in the homeless population.

Once primarily a bedroom community of its core-city metropolitan area, Littleton has in the last twenty years become a business and local government center. Many residents still commute to the city, but others work in local corporate and government offices. Several companies have moved into the Littleton area, taking advantage of the more affordable space and small-town amenities. In addition, over the past ten years Littleton has become a major shopping hub, and this has created new jobs in the retail and service industries.

There is wide ethnic representation in the district, and that diversity is reflected in the school population: approximately 50 percent of the students are white, 30 percent are black, nearly 20 percent are Hispanic, and about 2 percent are Asian.

The district serves approximately 8000 children in six K–6 elementary schools, one middle school (serving grades 7 and 8), and one high school. The average class size is twenty-two students. There are 500 teachers, 60 school administrators, and more than 300 ancillary (nonteaching) staff. Teachers average fifteen years of experience. Salaries in Littleton are well above the national average, starting at more than $31,000 and reaching $80,000.

The Littleton school budget is more than $75 million. The district spends well above the state average per student per year. As a result of its operating budget, the district is able to offer some unique features. Class sizes are smaller than average. Teacher aides are available in the buildings to work with teachers and small groups of children. There are a variety of services for English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students and for high school students who function best in a smaller, less structured environment. Students classified as eligible for special education services either are served in self-contained special education classes or receive support in a resource room for no more than two periods a day. Prereferral services are available for students whom teachers identify as having problems in the classroom. These students are seen by a Child Study Team (CST) made up of a school psychologist, a learning consultant, and a social worker. Three CSTs serve the six elementary schools (each team is responsible for two schools), and there is a team at the middle school and one at the high school. Students determined by the CST to need further intervention are seen by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) which determines if the students are eligible for special education services.

Gifted students are served in a pullout program of enrichment activities

for two half-days a week. Teachers of the gifted students also work with teachers in regular classrooms, offering enrichment options for all students.

The high school tracks the students into four levels: honors, above average, average, and remedial. Students typically enter one of the tracks in ninth grade and usually remain at the same level throughout their four years of high school.

There is a great deal of cooperation between the school system and the education-oriented local government. Joint programs such as after-school play groups and summer day camps have been successfully established and now operate in the community.

The district also maintains close ties with the local universities. Teachers in all the schools accept student teachers each semester; some of the Littleton teachers and administrators teach as adjunct professors at the local colleges; and professors are involved in the gifted program and action research efforts, and they bring classes to the schools for field experiences.

Two other cases are set in neighboring districts which contrast sharply with Littleton. Raddison is a homogeneous, upper socioeconomic community with a district budget that reflects a per-pupil expenditure of $17,000 (second highest in the state) and the two elementary schools and the junior-senior high school have the equipment, physical plants, and staffing to prove it. Parental support in Raddison is very strong; for instance, more than 80 percent of the parents attend Open School Night each year. The high school groups its students beginning in seventh grade, and movement between the skills, average, and AP honors tracks is minimal. Parental pressure is the most likely reason for a student to be moved across tracks. More than 95 percent of the high school graduates attend post-secondary programs, most at four-year institutions.

Alton represents the other extreme—a school district where more than 70 percent of the students are eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. The racial and ethnic make-up of the community, which is approximately 50 percent white and 50 percent black and Hispanic, is not reflected in the schools; fewer than 25 percent of the students are white. When a school desegregation order required the district to bus children across town to achieve racial balance, many white parents chose instead to put their children in private, often parochial, schools. The town of Alton does not have a strong tax base, passing a school budget every year is difficult, and the schools are underfunded. The per-pupil expenditure is less than $10,000, and teacher salaries in the district are close to the bottom of the pay scale for the area, with starting salaries just above $23,000 and maximum salaries at $60,000.

The cases that do not take place in Littleton, Raddison or Alton are clearly identified, and background information for each setting is provided within the case itself.

CASE STUDY
Julianne Bloom

Julianne Bloom held a cup of coffee out toward her visitor and then paused with it in midair. "I'm sorry, Mary, do you take milk and sugar?" she asked.

"No, this is fine, thanks."

Julianne settled herself in a chair opposite her guest, a friend and colleague whom she had met many years ago at a summer writing institute. Mary Porter was an elementary school writing specialist and had called Julianne recently with a request: She was planning to publish a manuscript on teaching writing to children and wanted to observe Julianne's class.

"I really appreciate your letting me barge in on you like this, Julianne," Mary smiled.

"You're coming at a particularly good time to observe this class, Mary. They're a hardworking group and they've come a long way in just three months." Julianne smiled as she remembered the first few days of this, her eleventh year as a fourth-grade teacher at the Roosevelt Elementary School in Littleton. "You'll also see a wide range of writing abilities. For a few kids, words and ideas just pour out onto the page; for others, expressing their ideas on paper is really difficult."

Mary nodded. "I've had classes like that. Tell me more about the children."

"It's a class of twenty-two. About a third of the students are Hispanic, and most of them are bilingual. Manuel is the exception—his family only recently arrived from Spain, and he's struggling to master English. I also have some children with real learning problems—you know, problems spelling, paying attention, organizing and managing time, those kinds of things."

"So, how's it been going?"

"They've made good progress, but there are still some things that concern me about this class." Julianne's brow furrowed in the attempt to articulate her concerns. "These kids read a lot and most of them seem to enjoy reading. Now I want them to make connections between their reading and writing. Many of them are bright, but their thinking is very superficial."

Mary grinned. "Sounds like most 9-year-olds."

"Yes, but I think this is attitude more than age. They came into my class in September acting like they wanted to just finish every task. Whether it was answering a question or writing a book report, most just wanted to get it done. I'm trying to get them to take more time, to expand their thinking, to think more critically as they read, and to take some risks with their thinking and their writing."

Julianne thought Mary looked a bit skeptical behind her coffee cup. "Tall order," she said. "How are you doing all that?"

"Well, today I'll be focusing on writing dialogue. I'm going to start

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Case Study

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during our writing time and then carry over into our reading time after lunch. This class works well together, so I'll have them work in pairs this morning. Writing dialogue really lends itself to cooperative learning. This afternoon they'll work individually. To follow up on what they did this morning, I'm going to have them to write a paragraph of conversation between two characters from the book they're reading in class. The class is split by ability into three reading groups, but each group is reading a book that gives plenty of opportunity for an imaginary dialogue. I'm hoping to push them into analyzing their characters, to think of how someone might really think and speak." Julianne paused and tipped an ear toward the hall. "Speaking of dialogue, I think I hear the kids now."

The children tumbled into the room, talking and clowning. Smiling, Julianne greeted them at the door, and, with a touch on the shoulder, she calmed the one or two who were still excited and boisterous. "Well, you kids look like you've had plenty of fresh air." Julianne turned to an eager face beside her. "Yes, Katie, I haven't forgotten that you want to talk about your book. But right now I want to get started on something else, so add your name to the chat list and then buzz over to your desk. . . . Joey!" The warning tone in Julianne's voice served notice to a second youngster that his teasing, which had carried over from the playground, had reached her attention.

After introducing Mary, Julianne began her lesson. "OK, everyone, sit down and I'll tell you what I've got planned for today." Julianne positioned herself at the chalkboard, pleased at how quickly the class quieted. "I'm going to read something to you that you've heard before; in fact, it's a section from one of your books." As she spoke, Julianne pointed to the board. "I've written it out so that you can see what it looks like. Does anyone know what this kind of writing is called?"

Joey called out, "Conversation."

"OK. That's right. There's another word for it too." Tanya, who had been sulking much of the morning, raised her hand, and Julianne used this opportunity to do some fence mending. "Tanya?"

"Dialogue."

"Good! What can you tell me about writing dialogue?" She let Tanya continue.

"It's when you use quotation marks."

"Exactly. The quotation marks show you someone's speaking." Julianne read the ten-line passage on the chalkboard aloud to the class, pointing to each beginning and ending set of quotation marks and changing her inflection to demonstrate the alternation of speakers. Then she pointed back to the first indentation. "In writing dialogue, each time the speaker changes, you start a new paragraph."

"Even though there's so much space left over?" Lindsay asked.

"Good question, Lin. Yes, even though there is still plenty of room at the end, you must indent to show that the speaker has changed. See, this

person only says two words. Now, what does the writer do?" The group at Darrell's table was beginning to squirm, so she asked her question of Darrell, one of the better writers in the room.

"You have to jump to the next line."

"Yes, Darrell, that's it. What if a speaker just says one word? Can you think of an example of that?"

Two hands shot up. Laura volunteered the word *Oh*, and Julianne nodded and smiled. "OK, right. The word *Oh* would stand alone by itself on one line." Julianne watched the group for looks of confusion or understanding as she dusted chalk from her fingertips. "Now, please take out your writing notebooks. I want those of you who have been to the conference room or to the library to work with someone who hasn't gone. Select a partner, and I'd like you to write a conversation together. You can write it on anything. Let me give you some suggestions. You could pretend someone is asking you for directions on how to get somewhere, or you can have a conversation with someone about what presents you'd like for the holidays, and why. You can write a dialogue between your parents and you about why you should be allowed to stay up later, or on what you want to do after school. Take about a half hour, and then one partner can read your dialogue to the rest of us."

Predictably, Melissa and Katie, seatmates and fast friends in school and out, went right to work. Julianne could overhear their conversation; they had decided to write about giving directions. Melissa had, as usual, taken the lead and was watching Katie as she struggled to figure out what she wanted to say and how to write it. "Now you try to say something," said Melissa.

"Well," Katie ventured, "I know you go right on Second Avenue and then you make a turn." This thought apparently stimulated others, and Katie started to write so quickly that she filled a page as Julianne watched. She pulled a new page from her notebook so abruptly that it tore down the middle. Only momentarily perturbed, she shoved it into her desk and continued to write, speaking the directions aloud as she worked.

Since Katie often wrote just the bare minimum, Julianne was encouraged to see her so engrossed. "Maybe this sort of assignment will help Katie expand her thinking and writing," Julianne thought. Katie was a child who seemed fearful of making mistakes, who liked closure and usually sought it in the quickest, easiest response. Too often her failure to deliberate prevented her from fulfilling her capabilities.

"And then I say. . . ." Melissa could hardly contain herself long enough to let Katie finish, but Julianne let them work this out alone. She passed by with a simple "very nice."

"Do you like it?" Melissa asked, eager as always to hear some praise from Julianne.

"Wait, I've got more to add." Katie was still hard at her writing, with Melissa now looking over her shoulder.

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Julianne moved on to the next set of desks. Daniel and Thomas were having a fine time, and she savored their pleasure without interrupting. They had apparently decided on a topic very quickly and had made remarkable headway.

Daniel tried out a phrase "I will call for a . . ."

"Backup," interjected Thomas.

"When you go. . . ." Daniel stopped.

". . . in the building to find him." Thomas was all concentration.

"OK, go!" Daniel agreed. "Write it." Daniel, beaming, watched as Thomas wrote.

Since she knew Daniel to be quite a proficient writer, Julianne watched only long enough to observe that he was allowing Thomas, who thought and worked more deliberately, to make an equal contribution to the work. "Boys, I can't wait to hear that read out loud!" They glanced up and smiled, but they were so engrossed that she felt like an intruder.

She looked across the room and noted that Hara was transfixed by the paper project she had brought back from art class. Lindsay, her partner, was trying in vain to elicit her help with their work. "Hara, that goes out of my sight or it goes to the moon." Hara smiled sheepishly at Julianne and stuffed the project reluctantly in her book bag.

Julianne sighed. Hara was the slowest child in the class, and keeping her on track with any assignment was difficult. She was easily distracted, and often, when writing, she would ask permission to work outside in the hall. In addition to two groups of four desks and two groups of five, Julianne included in her room two sets of paired desks, and she had placed a few desks in the hall where children could go when they wanted a quieter environment.

"So what have you two chosen?" Julianne asked as she approached the girls.

"We were going to do directions, but we're sort of stuck." Lindsay had apparently made a start; Julianne could see two sentences at the head of the page.

"How can we get you two unstuck?" Julianne hoped that by phrasing the question in that way she might involve Hara in the problem solving. But Hara just smiled and shrugged.

"Well, would holiday gifts be an easier topic to use? Don't you have wish lists?" Julianne asked.

"Yeah, I do!" Hara suddenly seemed reinvigorated, but Lindsay wasn't so quick to sacrifice her original plan.

"But I wanted to do directions to this place."

"Look, you won't have much time to do the writing if you two don't hurry up and agree on what you're going to write about." Julianne wanted the girls to get going, but she didn't want to arbitrate their final decision, so as she spoke she moved a few feet away and again scanned the room. A steady hum of conversation was evidence of productive work, even though

one child or another occasionally took a break to roam briefly around the room. One pair had gone out in the hall to work at desks facing each other.

Then Julianne's gaze settled on Joey, a chunky boy with a cherubic face, sprawled across his own and his partner's desks. Emily was laughing, but they were clearly involved in the work. As they tried out their dialogue, each reading alternate lines, they stopped frequently to refine their word choices.

Julianne was surprised and pleased to see that they were already at this point, since Joey often had trouble getting started on writing tasks, and complained that he didn't know what to write about. Even when he finally started, he was what she considered a "tight" writer, with trouble expanding his thoughts. His speech flowed smoothly, but his writing did not. Now, perhaps because he was working with Emily, he seemed to be having more success than usual. Joey looked up; catching her eye, he charged over with the pair's paper in hand.

"So, how is it going over there? You sound busy!" She smiled at his enthusiasm.

Joey proudly showed her their work, announcing, "We're suckers for conversations!"

"So I see," Julianne grinned. "Wonderful!" She handed the papers back to him and headed for an open area under the window where she heard, rather than saw, trouble brewing. There, beside the bookcases that lined the perimeter of the room, Charles and Ernesto had stretched out on the floor, trying to concentrate on their project despite Allen's antics. Julianne gave them some minimal coaching, then turned to address the real trouble spot. Angry at having to work with Manuel, Allen had launched a campaign to be as disruptive as possible.

"He acts like a jerk." Allen sank into a chair and glared at Manuel. Julianne recognized immediately that she would need to intervene, as Manuel's command of English was not sufficient for him to resolve this without help.

"So, what are you two guys working on?"

Allen stuck his lip out even farther. "Presents we want."

Julianne turned to Manuel and said, "Did you ask Allen what he wants for the holidays?"

Manuel nodded.

"Well, are you two writing those things down?"

"Too much things he wants," said Manuel.

"Allen, is Manuel right? How many things did you ask for?"

Grinning, Allen shifted his considerable bulk toward Julianne and rattled off a huge list. Julianne let him continue until he paused for breath, then, turning to Manuel she said, "Manuel, now you have to ask him what he *really* wants." Several students working nearby had stopped to listen as Allen rattled off his choices, and their laughter at the teacher's joke seemed to turn the situation around. Manuel and Allen both joined the laughter, and then Manuel announced, "I know what I do now."

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Allen, however, was not so easily tamed. He turned once again to whisper with Ernesto.

"Allen, Ernesto and Charles are still editing. They need quiet just as you did. It's called consideration. Now, what's your part in this assignment? Let's see if we can get you going in this conversation. Are your parents really going to give you all that stuff without a struggle? What will they say?" As she spoke, Julianne became aware that the noise level in the room was increasing. Daniel, Melissa, and Joey were all talking loudly, and Julianne presumed that they had finished. She realized as she checked her watch that forty minutes had gone by and that most of the children had stayed on task remarkably well.

"OK, everyone, let's do some sharing. Who wants to go first?"

Daniel and Thomas were ready and plunged into a fully acted scene. The other pairs of writers remained seated with their writing partners, attentive to the speakers. Daniel and Thomas had written a lively dialogue which ended with a triumphant, "This is the best crime we ever had!"

"You even put an ending on your dialogue," noted Julianne. "By the way, how did you boys decide on your topic?"

"Oh, we like cops and we want to be cops when we grow up," said Daniel.

Next, Julianne introduced Joey and Emily, saying "Ah, a little drama, a little action. The next work is a brother-and-sister routine." In fact, their dialogue was very funny, and after the laughter ceased, Joey announced, "The end. Tomorrow, we're going to do part two."

As Melissa and Katie got up to read their dialogue, Julianne thought about how Melissa had changed since the beginning of the year. Formerly so shy, she was now begging to be allowed to read her writing aloud in class. Their dialogue, directions to a local ice cream store, was long and not as lively as the earlier presentations, but Julianne praised them and agreed that it could be difficult to make directions sound interesting.

Lunchtime was approaching quickly, and Julianne asked the students to clear their desks. She noted that several pairs had not completed their work. "I see that some people had a hard time getting started. Next time, it will probably be easier. Put these papers in a safe place, please, and then let's get ready for lunch."

After the children left, Julianne invited Mary to stay for lunch. "I have an hour with the class in the afternoon before they go to music. I'm going to do math first, but then I thought I would ask them to write a paragraph of dialogue that they think two characters in their book would be likely to have with each other. Do you want to stick around for that?"

"Absolutely. During the math lesson, would you mind if I just wandered around the room a bit? I was admiring some of the writing and editing tips and some of the student work that you put up on your bulletin boards, but I didn't really have a chance to read them."

"Of course! In fact, I have to show you my favorite cartoon." Julianne and Mary walked over to a cartoon entitled "Tips for Better Writing—