

# **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Excerpts from  
The Knowledge Loom: Educators Sharing and Learning Together  
Web site  
(<http://knowledgeloom.org>)

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# The Knowledge Loom: Educators Sharing and Learning Together

<http://knowledgeloom.org>

The attached document is a user-generated download of selected content found on The Knowledge Loom Web site. Content on The Knowledge Loom is always being updated and changed. **Check online for the most current information.**

## What is The Knowledge Loom?

The Knowledge Loom is an online professional development resource featuring specially organized spotlights on high-priority education issues, including:

- a list of promising practices (including an explanation of each practice and a summary of the research or theories that support the practice)
- stories about the practices in action in actual education settings
- lists of related resources found on other web sites.

The site is designed to help educators facilitate decision-making, planning, and benchmarking for improved teaching and learning through collaborative activities.

## Are there other resources on The Knowledge Loom?

In addition to printable content, the site features interactive tools that allow users to share information and knowledge, read what panels of practitioners have to say about selected topics, ask questions of content experts, and print custom documents like this one. A companion guidebook, *Using The Knowledge Loom: Ideas and Tools for Collaborative Professional Development* (<http://knowledgeloom.org/guidebook>), can be downloaded. It offers activities and graphic organizers to support collaborative inquiry about what works in teaching and learning in support of school improvement.

## What spotlight topics are currently available?

- Adolescent Literacy in the Content Areas
- Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Elementary Literacy
- Good Models of Teaching with Technology
- Leadership Principles in Technology
- Middle School Mathematics
- Principal as Instructional Leader
- Redesigning High Schools to Personalize Learning
- School, Family, and Community Partnerships
- Successful Professional Development
- Teaching for Artistic Behavior: Choice-Based Art



# Overview of Spotlight: Culturally Responsive Teaching

This overview provides an outline of all content components of this spotlight that are published on The Knowledge Loom Web site. The creator of this document may have printed only selected content from this spotlight. View complete content online (<http://knowledgeloom.org/>).

## What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

The notion of culturally responsive education is premised on the idea that culture is central to student learning. According to Gloria Ladson–Billings, "It is an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes." The use of cultural referents in teaching bridges and explains the mainstream culture, while valuing and recognizing the students' own cultures.

This link between culture and classroom instruction is derived from evidence that cultural practices shape thinking processes, which serve as tools for learning within and outside of school (Hollins, 1996). Thus, culturally responsive education recognizes, respects, and uses students' identities and backgrounds as meaningful sources (Nieto, 2000) for creating optimal learning environments.

This topic documents case studies of culturally responsive practice. It makes explicit the work of teachers who use and respect their students' languages, cultures, and life experiences through the following principles:

## Practices

Each practice includes an explanation, a summary of each story that exemplifies the practice, a research summary (review of the literature), a reference list of the literature, and a short list of related Web resources (URLs and full annotations provided online or in the Related Web Resources section if it has been printed).

- **Communication of High Expectations** – There are consistent messages, from both the teacher and the whole school, that students will succeed, based upon genuine respect for students and belief in student capability.
- **Active Teaching Methods** – Instruction is designed to promote student engagement by requiring that students play an active role in crafting curriculum and developing learning activities.
- **Teacher as Facilitator** – Within an active teaching environment, the teacher's role is one of guide, mediator, and knowledgeable consultant, as well as instructor.
- **Positive Perspectives on Parents and Families of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students** – There is an ongoing participation in dialogue with students, parents, and community members on issues important to them, along with the inclusion of these individuals and issues in classroom curriculum and activities.
- **Cultural Sensitivity** – To maximize learning opportunities, teachers gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms and translate this knowledge into instructional practice.
- **Reshaping the Curriculum** – A reshaped curriculum is culturally responsive to the background of students.
- **Culturally Mediated Instruction** – Instruction is characterized by the use of culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued

knowledge in curriculum content.

- **Student–Controlled Classroom Discourse** – Students are given the opportunity to control some portion of the lesson, providing teachers with insight into the ways that speech and negotiation are used in the home and community.
- **Small Group Instruction and Academically–Related Discourse**  
Instruction is organized around low–pressure, student–controlled learning groups that can assist in the development of academic language.

## Stories

The Stories correspond to the summaries printed as part of each practice published on The Knowledge Loom. These are detailed examples of how the practices look in action in educational settings.

Catherine Carney's ESOL Class, Dedham High School, Dedham, MA  
Mary–Fran Honeyman's second grade classroom  
Mr. Diaz's Fourth Grade Class, Alfred Lima Sr. Elementary School  
Ms. Patalano's 1st Grade Class

## Related Web Resources: 25

This is an annotated list of resources found on other Web sites that relate to the spotlight topic on The Knowledge Loom.

The Education Alliance at Brown University



# Practices

This section presents the Knowledge Loom practices for the spotlight you selected.

Each practice includes an explanation, a summary of each story that exemplifies the practice, a research summary (review of the literature), a reference list of the literature, and a short list of related Web resources (URLs and full annotations provided online or in the Related Web Resources section of this document).

For an overview of additional content presented on The Knowledge Loom Web site that may not have been selected for this print document, see the Overview of Spotlight located earlier in the document.

## **Communication of High Expectations – There are consistent messages, from both the teacher and the whole school, that students will succeed, based upon genuine respect for students and belief in student capability.**

High expectations influence teacher–student relations and affect student performance, motivation, and self–concept. Positive measures on the part of teachers and schools reflect the attitudinal prerequisites for effective teaching in a multicultural society.

Examples of positive measures for

- teachers are: calling on students frequently, giving ample feedback, and praising.
- schools are: de–tracking, offering challenging curriculum, and providing intensive time on task.

Teachers understand student behavior in light of the norms of the communities in which they are raised and respect all students as learners with knowledge and experience.

### **Questions to Think About**

- Do teachers or schools send subtle messages to students that convey low expectations?
- How can schools test themselves to make sure they are communicating high expectations?
- How do we create an environment of academic discourse?

### **Story Summaries**

#### *Mr. Diaz's Fourth Grade Class, Alfred Lima Sr. Elementary School*

- Teacher conveys belief that learning is a serious endeavor, with many rewards and demands.
- Students are required to show their work and explain their processes to others.
- Students frame relevant questions and help determine appropriate tasks and sequence.
- Students are trained to make their own choices and express themselves in an environment of academic discourse.

The principles of culturally responsive teaching abound in Mr. Diaz's teaching practice in his 4th grade class at Alfred Lima, Sr., Elementary School. Perhaps the best example of his practice is the efficacy with which he communicates high expectations to each student. This message is personalized for individual students at every opportunity. Mr. Diaz might remark, "Ricky, in a couple of years you will come back and teach me," or "You see, Alexi? You are doing so well on your own, pretty soon you won't need me any more!" or "Ashley, you know so much about this topic; soon you'll be able to write a book about it."

His ongoing message of respect and belief in his students is heard and respected in turn. Students know that this message is informed and comes from the heart.

## Research Summary

### References

Gay, G. (2000). **Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice.** New York, Teachers College Press.

Hollins, E. R., & Oliver, E. I. (1999). **Pathways to success in school: Culturally responsive teaching.** Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). **The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children.** San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

Nieto, S. (1999). **The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning opportunities.** New York: Teachers College.

Oakes, J., & Lipton, M. (1999). **Teaching to change the world.** Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). **The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners.** Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Villegas, A. M. (1991). **Culturally responsive pedagogy for the 1990's & beyond.** ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, Washington, DC.

Williams, B. (1996). **Closing the achievement gap.** Virginia: ASCD.

## Related Web Resources

Critical Behaviors and Strategies for Teaching (2)

Expectations for Students (13)

## **Teacher as Facilitator – Within an active teaching environment, the teacher's role is one of guide, mediator, and knowledgeable consultant, as well as instructor.**

Within the classroom community, teachers develop learning activities that are relevant to their students' cultural experiences. At the same time, students are encouraged to stretch beyond the familiar.

Teachers have at their command a repertoire of teaching approaches to reach students in a range of culturally appropriate ways. Teachers have knowledge about the language and culture of their students, as well as a firm understanding of the roles which language and culture play in an individual's identity.

Teachers scan continually for feedback from students, looking for indications of understanding or confusion. Through effective classroom management, teachers develop procedures and routines, so that students develop confidence in working successfully with their classmates.

## **Story Summaries**

### *Mary–Fran Honeyman's second grade classroom*

- Teacher communicates clear expectations to students.
- Students have a voice in the classroom: a share in decision–making and in the construction of knowledge.
- Teacher is an attentive, responsive listener to students when they speak.
- Teacher facilitates student independence in action and in thinking.

As they sit attentively on a comfortable rug in front of Ms. Honeyman's chair, students related things that happened to them at home or on their way to school. To promote cultural sensitivity, Ms. Honeyman has students integrate this activity with writing letters to pen pals in Canada. She facilitates a brief discussion by raising the question of whether these everyday things her students talk about are the same for children everywhere. Excitement grows as students talk about the first draft of letters they started the day before to their pen pals. The teacher's question prompts students to consider inquiries about life in Canada for the second draft they are about to begin. Prior to their return to writing, Ms. Honeyman guides a discussion reviewing the parts of a letter.

## **Research Summary**

### References

Banks, J.A., McGee, B., & Cherry, A. (2001). **Multicultural education: Issues & perspectives** (4th Ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Ladson–Billings, G. (1994). **The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children.** San Francisco, CA: Josey–Bass.

Nieto, S. (1999). **The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning opportunities.** New York: Teachers College.

Villegas, A. M. (1991). **Culturally responsive pedagogy for the 1990's & beyond.** ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, Washington, DC.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). **Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes** (M. Cole, V. John–Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds. and Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

## Related Web Resources

Critical Behaviors and Strategies for Teaching (2)

Incorporating Student Voice into Teaching Practice (12)

Oral Language Development across the Curriculum, K–12. (6)

Profile of an Equitable Mathematics and Science Classroom and Teacher (1)

## **Cultural Sensitivity – To maximize learning opportunities, teachers gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms and translate this knowledge into instructional practice.**

Children whose language and culture correspond more closely to that of the school have an advantage in the learning process. Children whose experiences are devalued or unrecognized become alienated and disengaged from the learning process.

How people are expected to go about learning may differ across cultures. To maximize learning opportunities, teachers gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms and translate this knowledge into instructional practice. Thus, instruction that is culturally sensitive recognizes that students are not blank slates. Instead, students are seen as having knowledge and experiences that, if tapped, will accelerate their learning.

Cultural sensitivity is not equated with a focus on easily stereotyped artifacts of the culture, such as food and art. Instead, it is based on ways of communicating and learning that are familiar to the student, along with themes that are of interest to them.

Cultural sensitivity requires that teachers interpret their students' behaviors within the cultural context of the student. They understand the cultures represented in their classrooms, and reflect on the instructional implications brought about by this cultural knowledge. Then, they develop learning tasks that are meaningful to the student.

### **Story Summaries**

#### *Ms. Patalano's 1st Grade Class*

- Classroom is filled with reading materials about families and children from different walks of life.
- Teacher maintains frequent communication with family members.
- Teacher attempts to relate all stories to the personal lives of the students.
- Learning math is linked to learning about families, backgrounds, and cultures.

Resourceful practices are combined with deep cultural sensitivity to the varied backgrounds. Ms. Patalano's ethnically diverse first grade class at the Veazie Street Elementary School consists of Latinos, African–Americans, Caucasians, Portuguese, and Pacific Islanders. Through constant communication with the parents, Ms. Patalano learns about the specific background of each child, and brings this information into the classroom to create an atmosphere rich in sharing diverse experiences — such as differing accents, a vacation in Hawaii, or a grandparent who speaks another language.

#### *Catherine Carney's ESOL Class, Dedham High School, Dedham, MA*

- Suburban district
- Students allowed to bring their own stories into the classroom discussion, thereby broadening everyone's understanding of their diverse experiences
- Open dialogue around differences and student strengths

- Rapidly changing student demographics
- Demographics of school staff unchanged
- Program recently created for English language learners

The feature story for this example of best practice in action is an essay by a high school teacher in Dedham, Massachusetts. In it, the author explains how at first she becomes uncomfortable when her students—an ethnically mixed group—begin to openly acknowledge their differences in a classroom discussion. However, once the teens express their genuine interest in one another and share their true, often painful experiences with trying to fit in, the teacher's perspective shifts. She begins to wonder whether the "celebrate diversity" conversations that she and fellow white teachers have are ultimately superficial. The feature story presents an important question: What does it mean to have an authentic conversation about diversity?

## Research Summary

### References

Banks, J.A., McGee, B., & Cherry, A. (2001). **Multicultural education: Issues & perspectives** (4th Ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Nieto, S. (1999). **The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning opportunities**. New York: Teachers College.

Villegas, A. M. (1991). **Culturally responsive pedagogy for the 1990's & beyond**. ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, Washington, DC.

Williams, B. (1996). **Closing the achievement gap**. Virginia: ASCD

## Related Web Resources

Asian–American Children: What Teachers Should Know. (11)

Bridging Cultures in Our Schools: New Approaches That Work (25)

# **Culturally Mediated Instruction – Instruction is characterized by the use of culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content.**

**Culturally mediated cognition** has to do with the ways of knowing, understanding, and representing information within a given culture.

**Culturally appropriate social situations** (McCarty, Lynch, Wallace, & Benally, 1991) have to do with the relationships among students and between teachers and students. These relationships are congruent with the culture of each student.

**Culturally valued knowledge** has to do with the inclusion of knowledge that is relevant to the student's life.

## **Research Summary**

### References

Banks, J.A., McGee, B., & Cherry, A. (2001). **Multicultural education: Issues & perspectives** (4th Ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Hollins, E. R. (1996). **Culture in school learning**. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

McCarty, T.L., Lynch, R.H., Wallace, S., & Benally, A. (1991). Classroom inquiry and Navajo learning styles: A call for reassessment. **Anthropology and Education Quarterly**, **22**, 42–59.

Nieto, S. (1999). **The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning opportunities**. New York: Teachers College.

Oakes, J., & Lipton, M. (1999). **Teaching to change the world**. Boston: McGraw–Hill.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). **Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes** (M. Cole, V. John–Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds. and Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

## **Related Web Resources**

Effects of Sheltered Instruction on the Achievement of Limited English Proficient Students (16)

Play and Cultural Diversity (18)

Bridging Cultures in Our Schools: New Approaches That Work (25)

Critical Behaviors and Strategies for Teaching (2)

School Practices To Promote the Achievement of Hispanic Students (23)



## Reshaping the Curriculum – A reshaped curriculum is culturally responsive to the background of students.

To reshape curriculum so that it becomes culturally responsive requires that the changes challenge students to develop higher-order knowledge and skills (Villegas, 1991). Ismat Abdal-Haqq (1994) states that "Curriculum that is culturally responsive capitalizes on students' cultural backgrounds rather than attempting to override or negate them."

According to researchers, an effective, culturally responsive curriculum would encompass the following characteristics:

- Is integrated and interdisciplinary (Scherer, 1991–1992; Spears, Oliver, & Maes, 1990; Banks, 2001)
- Is meaningful, child centered, and connected to the child's real life (Chion-Kenny, 1994; Dickerson, 1993)
- Develops higher-order knowledge and skills (Villegas, 1991; Hilliard, 1991–1992)
- Utilizes a variety of learning strategies, such as cooperative learning, whole language, and diverse learning styles (Gay, 2000)

### Story Summaries

#### *Catherine Carney's ESOL Class, Dedham High School, Dedham, MA*

- Suburban district
- Students' interest in each others' backgrounds helps to direct course of curriculum
- Native English speakers try their hands at alphabets and symbols from other cultures
- Rapidly changing student demographics
- Demographics of school staff unchanged
- Program recently created for English language learners

The feature story for this example of best practice in action is an essay by a high school teacher in Dedham, Massachusetts. In it, the author explains how at first she becomes uncomfortable when her students—an ethnically mixed group—begin to openly acknowledge their differences in a classroom discussion. However, once the teens express their genuine interest in one another and share their true, often painful experiences with trying to fit in, the teacher's perspective shifts. She begins to wonder whether the "celebrate diversity" conversations that she and fellow white teachers have are ultimately superficial. The feature story presents an important question: What does it mean to have an authentic conversation about diversity?

### Research Summary

#### References

Abdal-Haqq, I. (1994). **Culturally responsive curriculum** (ERIC Digest ED 370936). Washington, DC: Educational Resources Information Center.

Banks, J.A., McGee, B., & Cherry, A. (2001). **Multicultural education: Issues & perspectives** (4th Ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Chion-Kenny, L. (1994). Weaving real-life images and experiences into Native education. Comment. **RDPreview**, 9(1), 4-5.

Dickerson, S. (1993). The blind men (and women) and the elephant. A case for a comprehensive multicultural education program at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. In T.A. Perry & J.W. Fraser (Eds.), **Freedom's plow. Teaching in the multicultural classroom** (pp. 65-89). New York: Routledge.

Gay, G. (2000). **Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice**. New York, Teachers College Press.

Hilliard, A. (1991-1992). Why we must pluralize the curriculum. **Educational Leadership**, 49(4), 12-16. (EJ 437 548)

Scherer, M. (1991-1992). School snapshot: Focus on African-American culture. **Educational Leadership**, 49(4), 17-19. (EJ 437 550)

Spears, J.D., Oliver, J.P., & Maes, S.C. (1990). **Accommodating change and diversity: Multicultural practices in rural schools**. A Report of the Ford Western Taskforce. Manhattan, KS: Kansas State University, Rural Clearinghouse for Lifelong Education and Development. (ED 328 392)

Villegas, A. M. (1991). **Culturally responsive pedagogy for the 1990's & beyond**. ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, Washington, DC.

## Related Web Resources

Integrating Language and Culture in a Middle School American History Class (17)

Promoting Reading among Mexican American (22)

Selecting Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Materials (7)

## **Student–Controlled Classroom Discourse – Students are given the opportunity to control some portion of the lesson, providing teachers with insight into the ways that speech and negotiation are used in the home and community.**

Children who experience discontinuity in the use of language at home and at school are often misunderstood in classrooms. For example, rules for turn–taking at home may encourage multiple simultaneous speakers, as opposed to the one speaker at a time rule in school.

Students' prior experiences cannot form the basis of new learning, if their ways of communicating and making sense of new material are not considered acceptable in school. Once teachers understand home and community norms, they can help students expand their discourse repertoire.

### **Story Summaries**

*Catherine Carney's ESOL Class, Dedham High School, Dedham, MA*

- Suburban district
- Bilingual students take turns teaching group
- Language and customs of other cultures brought into a range of lessons
- Students allowed to bring their own stories into the classroom discussion, thereby broadening everyone's understanding of their diverse experiences
- Rapidly changing student demographics
- Demographics of school staff unchanged
- Program recently created for English language learners

The feature story for this example of best practice in action is an essay by a high school teacher in Dedham, Massachusetts. In it, the author explains how at first she becomes uncomfortable when her students—an ethnically mixed group—begin to openly acknowledge their differences in a classroom discussion. However, once the teens express their genuine interest in one another and share their true, often painful experiences with trying to fit in, the teacher's perspective shifts. She begins to wonder whether the "celebrate diversity" conversations that she and fellow white teachers have are ultimately superficial. The feature story presents an important question: What does it mean to have an authentic conversation about diversity?

### **Research Summary**

References

Gay, G. (2000). **Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice**. New York, Teachers College Press.

Ladson–Billings, G. (1994). **The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children.** San Francisco, CA: Josey–Bass.

Nieto, S. (1999). **The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning opportunities.** New York: Teachers College.

Williams, B. (1996). **Closing the achievement gap.** Virginia: ASCD.

## **Related Web Resources**

Enhancing Student Thinking through Collaborative Learning (9)

Incorporating Student Voice into Teaching Practice (12)

Instructional Conversations (10)

Oral Language Development across the Curriculum, K–12. (6)

Profile of an Equitable Mathematics and Science Classroom and Teacher (1)

Teaching Language Minority Students in Elementary (15)

## Small Group Instruction and Academically–Related Discourse

**Instruction is organized around low–pressure, student–controlled learning groups that can assist in the development of academic language.**

Children who are reluctant to participate verbally in class have been found to be most reluctant to speak during whole–class activities. When working in small groups in which they control interaction, children have been noted to speak more freely with peers.

Student–controlled time can serve as a bridge between the oral language that students have developed and the academic language that is decontextualized and centered around complex concepts.

### Story Summaries

#### *Mr. Diaz's Fourth Grade Class, Alfred Lima Sr. Elementary School*

- Students have weekly one–to–one time with mentors.
- Students are required to show their work and explain their processes to others.
- Students frame relevant questions and help determine appropriate tasks and sequence.
- Students are trained to make their own choices and express themselves in an environment of academic discourse.

In much of his teaching, Mr. Diaz serves as mediator, encouraging his fourth grade students at the Alfred Lima, Sr., Elementary School to become independent learners. For instance, in math classes, rather than simply learning set problems, he encourages students to identify and analyze the data presented in problems. He asks them to frame relevant questions and to determine appropriate tasks and their sequence. In this way, students learn to express themselves in an environment of academic discourse. Trained to make their own choices, they are then encouraged to defend these choices to their peers. After a reading activity, students write in their journals and then share their thoughts by presenting them to the whole class. In a similar manner, during math class, students are required to show their work and explain the process to others. This creates an ethic of sharing and responsibility, promoting Mr. Diaz's belief that learning is a serious endeavor, with many rewards and demands.

### Research Summary

#### References

Oakes, J., & Lipton, M. (1999). **Teaching to change the world**. Boston: McGraw–Hill.

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). **The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners**. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

## **Related Web Resources**

Typical CFL Classroom (14)

Enhancing Student Thinking through Collaborative Learning (9)

Integrating Language and Culture in a Middle School American History Class (17)

## **Active Teaching Methods – Instruction is designed to promote student engagement by requiring that students play an active role in crafting curriculum and developing learning activities.**

Active teaching methods require teachers to shift their practice from the traditional teacher-centered format to one in which students are empowered to direct their own learning.

One example of active pedagogy, the inquiry-based curriculum, encourages students to work together on content which is socially and culturally relevant to them. Questions, activities and actions, which extend to parents and community, are consistent with ways in which students have been socialized to learn outside of school and link directly to real life issues.

### **Questions to Think About**

- What are some proven effective ways for teachers to learn about their students' cultural backgrounds and experiences?
- How can teachers learn about their students' languages? Do they have to take courses in every language represented in their classrooms?
- How can teachers receive feedback from new students who are experiencing a "silent period"?

### **Story Summaries**

#### *Ms. Patalano's 1st Grade Class*

- Teacher uses call and response style during story time.
- "Good deeds" journal brings personal stories into the classroom.
- Students share good deeds and quotes on a "kindness tree."
- Through lessons, children bring into focus their own interactions and what they hold dear.

Ms. Patalano extends the concept of relating stories to the personal lives of her first grader students at the Veazie Street Elementary School even into math class, where she asks each child draws a picture of his or her own family. Basic math is thus taught using the number of people in each picture. The children then frame their pictures by creating patterns. They draw symbols on a sheet of paper and determine the number of diamonds, squares or circles in a row. The exercise includes graphing the pictures framed by shapes and symbols. This is an innovative way to make math more interesting and personalized, as well as link learning math to learning about families, backgrounds and cultures.

### **Research Summary**

#### References

Banks, J.A., McGee, B., & Cherry, A. (2001). **Multicultural education: Issues & perspectives** (4th

Ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Gay, G. (2000). **Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice.** New York, Teachers College Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). **The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children.** San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

Oakes, J., & Lipton, M. (1999). **Teaching to change the world.** Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). **The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners.** Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Williams, B. (1996). **Closing the achievement gap.** Virginia: ASCD.

## **Related Web Resources**

Typical CFL Classroom (14)

Directions in Language and Education (5)

Enhancing Student Thinking through Collaborative Learning (9)

Incorporating Student Voice into Teaching Practice (12)

Instructional Conversations (10)



## **Positive Perspectives on Parents and Families of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students – There is an ongoing participation in dialogue with students, parents, and community members on issues important to them, along with the inclusion of these individuals and issues in classroom curriculum and activities.**

Parents are a child's first teacher and are critically important partners to both students and teachers. To help parents become aware of how they can be effective partners in the education process, teachers engage in dialogue with parents as early as possible about parents' hopes for their child, their sense of what the child needs, and suggestions about ways teachers can help.

Teachers explain their own limitations and invite parents to participate in specific ways. Attention to verbal and body language are important in communicating acceptance of parents as partners. Interpreters make parents more comfortable about expressing complex concepts in a new language.

### **Story Summaries**

#### *Mary–Fran Honeyman's second grade classroom*

- Parents' expectations are a significant element in promoting school success for children.
- Many parents are successfully involved in parent–school collaboration at home.
- Successful schools develop programs that recognize parents as partners with schools in educating children.

Ms. Honeyman knows all her students' families. In the natural course of the first few weeks of school, a father picks up a child for a dentist visit or a mother comes by to help a student carry something home. Ms. Honeyman asks parents to come a little early on these occasions, to give parents an opportunity to get to know the classroom closely. By the end of the year, parents are cooking hot dogs in the school courtyard and dropping by the classroom to leave off materials for school projects. Family involvement develops casually at first, building into investment which is ongoing and rewarding to teachers, parents and children.

### **Research Summary**

#### References

Delgado–Gaitan, C., & Trueba, H. (1991). **Crossing cultural borders: Education for immigrant families in America**. London: Falmer Press.

Hollins, E. R. (1996). **Culture in school learning**. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Ladson–Billings, G. (1994). **The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American**

**children.** San Francisco, CA: Josey–Bass.

Oakes, J., &Lipton, M. (1999). **Teaching to change the world.** Boston: McGraw–Hill.

## **Related Web Resources**

Bridging Cultures in Our Schools: New Approaches That Work (25)

Parent Involvement and the Education of Limited English Proficient Students (24)

Parent Power: A Positive Link to School Success (8)

# Stories

This section presents Knowledge Loom stories about classrooms, schools, or districts that exemplify one or more of the practices in the spotlight.

Each story contains a full feature article and a set of facts about how the practice was put into action. Each story lists the practices it exemplifies and the name of the content provider.

For an overview of additional content presented on The Knowledge Loom Web site that may not have been selected for this print document, see the Spotlight Map located earlier in the document.





# Mr. Diaz's Fourth Grade Class, Alfred Lima Sr. Elementary School

## Mr. Diaz's 4th Grade Class, Alfred Lima, Sr., Elementary School

Providence, RI

**School Type:** Public

**School Setting:** Urban

**Level:** Elementary

**School**

**Design:** Traditional

**Content Presented By:**

The Education Alliance at Brown University



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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Diaz joins with his students in constructing a community of learners in his classroom. Together, they shape the classroom into a beautiful, inspiring home for learning. Together, they create a space in which Spanish, English and a wide range of cultural heritages are named and respected. Together, they share what they do well and offer to inform the community of educators about the wealth of diversity in their school community.

## **Demographics**

## **Background**

## **Design & Implementation**

## **Results**

## **Replication Details**

## **Costs and Funding**

## **Contact Information**

For more information about this school or the issue of cultural relevance in teaching, contact: The Education Alliance 222 Richmond Street Suite 300 Providence, RI 02903-4226 401/274-9548 x289 or x275

## **Rating Criteria**

### **This story exemplifies the following practices:**

**Communication of High Expectations** – There are consistent messages, from both the teacher and the whole school, that students will succeed, based upon genuine respect for students and belief in student capability.

### **Small Group Instruction and Academically-Related Discourse**

Instruction is organized around low-pressure, student-controlled learning groups that can assist in the development of academic language.

# Mary–Fran Honeyman's second grade classroom

## Mary–Fran Honeyman's second grade classroom

**School Type:**

**Level:** Elementary

**Content Presented By:**

**School Setting:**

**School Design:**

Mary–Fran Honeyman's second grade classroom has the appearance of a workshop. There is no teacher's desk in the classroom; Ms. Honeyman has replaced it with a table filled with fascinating supplies for classroom activities: markers, glitter, and materials for weaving. She encourages students to enjoy this colorful environment through the different activities she assigns as well. Each day begins with students sharing anecdotes. As they sit attentively on a comfortable rug in front of Ms. Honeyman's chair, students relate things that happened to them at home or on their way to school. To promote cultural sensitivity, Ms. Honeyman has students integrate this activity with writing letters to pen pals in Canada. She facilitates a brief discussion by raising the question of whether these everyday things her students talk about are the same for children everywhere. Excitement grows as students talk about the first draft of letters they started the day before to their pen pals. The teacher's question prompts students to consider inquiries about life in Canada for the second draft they are about to begin. Prior to their return to writing, Ms. Honeyman guides a discussion reviewing the parts of a letter. Students spin round to face in the direction of each classmate who speaks. "Face the speaker" is a rule in this classroom, another instance of Ms. Honeyman's innovative teaching style.

Following this large group activity, it's time for students to hurry back to their desks, arranged in five groups. Each group has four or five students. In one group, R\_ begins to speak to his classmates about what will be in his next draft. He considers what questions to ask and what information to give about his school. By now, adults as audience/partners have arrived in each group. Some have come routinely as part of the school day; others come for specific reasons.

Ms. Honeyman knows all her students' families. In the natural course of the first few weeks of school, a father picks up a child for a dentist visit or a mother comes by to help a student carry something home. Ms. Honeyman asks parents to come a little early on these occasions, to give parents an opportunity to get to know the classroom closely. By the end of the year, parents are cooking hot dogs in the school courtyard and dropping by the classroom to leave off materials for school projects. Family involvement develops casually at first, building into investment which is ongoing and rewarding to teachers, parents and children.

In this classroom, one student with special needs has a teacher to assist him in this inclusive classroom. The school's writing coach individually conferences with selected students about their writing during her scheduled time in this classroom. A college student, with prior arrangements to spend the morning in this classroom, joins a group. She is working on a project for her art education course. The project focuses on designing children's furniture for interactive classrooms. A university staff person documents the classroom activities for professional development purposes. The principal of the school walks through the classroom. She joins a group of student writers. The students are proud to read their letters to her. Ms. Honeyman moves from group to group assisting students with current drafts of their work. Thus, students get the benefits of an attentive teacher, plus input from



their own peer group, as well as from various adults with diverse expertise.

Other activities that display student-centered learning include making Thanksgiving cards for their families and working with what they call the "weaving center." These activities naturally lead to integrated projects that involve reading. For instance, the round table is covered with books/multicultural literature. One girl takes a book from the table on her way to begin the Thanksgiving project. She explains, "It's my favorite and I want it first today, to read it again, when I finish my work this morning." In this way, this culturally responsive classroom is both print-rich and activity-centered. Literacy develops here through multiple projects which engage students, their families, and guests in a community of active learning cutting across race, language, culture and age.

## **Demographics**

## **Background**

## **Design & Implementation**

## **Results**

## **Replication Details**

## **Costs and Funding**

## **Contact Information**

## **Rating Criteria**

**This story exemplifies the following practices:**

**Teacher as Facilitator** – Within an active teaching environment, the teacher's role is one of guide, mediator, and knowledgeable consultant, as well as instructor.

**Positive Perspectives on Parents and Families of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students** – There is an ongoing participation in dialogue with students, parents, and community members on issues important to them, along with the inclusion of these individuals and issues in classroom curriculum and activities.

# Catherine Carney's ESOL Class, Dedham High School, Dedham, MA

## Catherine Carney's ESOL Class, Dedham High School, Dedham, MA

Dedham, MA,

**School Type:** **School Setting:** Suburban

**Level:** High **School Design:**

### **Content Presented By:**

The story of Catherine Carney's ESOL class at Dedham High School was first featured in "Voices from the Field," (2001) an online periodical produced by the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory, a program of The Education Alliance at Brown University. The purpose of this free publication is to present issues from the perspectives of teachers experiencing change, challenges, and growth as education reform takes shape. Read about Catherine Carney's experiences and her students at: <http://www.lab.brown.edu/public/voices/1qtr2001/mixcomp.shtml>.

### **Demographics**

#### Town Information:

Dedham is a suburban town of 23,782. It borders Boston, Massachusetts and is situated 10 miles south of Boston proper. The high school serves 962 students in grades 8–12. Established in 1636, Dedham is the site of the first public school in America.

#### Classroom Information:

High school ESOL class

20 students

10 different languages spoken

some students can speak 5 or more languages

many students come to Dedham either from urban cities in other states or directly from other countries.

### **Background**

### **Design & Implementation**

### **Results**

### **Replication Details**

### **Costs and Funding**

### **Contact Information**

Catherine Carney  
Dedham High School  
Dedham, MA  
Phone: (781) 326 – 4773

### **Rating Criteria**

The story of Catherine Carney's class at Dedham High School was first featured in "Voices from the Field," an online periodical produced by the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory, a program of The Education Alliance at Brown University. The purpose of this free publication is to present issues from the perspectives of teachers experiencing change, challenges, and growth as education reform takes shape. The LAB believes that teachers are the best experts on what goes on in today's classrooms. The teachers featured in "Voices from the Field" have been identified by LAB staff as educators who are doing outstanding work in their respective fields. If you would like more information about how stories are developed for "Voices from the Field," contact [Melissa\\_DaPonte@lab.brown.edu](mailto:Melissa_DaPonte@lab.brown.edu) or visit the web site at: <http://www.lab.brown.edu/public/index.shtml>.

#### **This story exemplifies the following practices:**

**Cultural Sensitivity** – To maximize learning opportunities, teachers gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms and translate this knowledge into instructional practice.

**Reshaping the Curriculum** – A reshaped curriculum is culturally responsive to the background of students.

**Student–Controlled Classroom Discourse** – Students are given the opportunity to control some portion of the lesson, providing teachers with insight into the ways that speech and negotiation are used in the home and community.

# Ms. Patalano's 1st Grade Class

## Ms. Patalano's 1st Grade Class, Veazie Street Elementary School

Providence, RI

**School Type:** Public

**School Setting:** Urban

**Level:** Elementary

**School**

**Design:** Traditional

**Content Presented By:**

The Education Alliance at Brown  
University



Ms. Patalano's classroom speaks eloquently of her attempt to cultivate creative and artistic expression in her first grade students at all times. The walls of the classroom in the Veazie Street Elementary School are covered with artwork, essays, and assignments. Colorful student mailboxes, a computer corner, a large globe and a colorful rug make the room more inviting. The classroom is filled with reading materials about families and children from different walks of life. All the materials are within arms reach of the typical six-year-old who comes to this classroom daily.

Ms. Patalano's method of leading story time illustrates her endeavor to have the students gain a voice and express their imagination in the classroom. Selecting topics, such as "families" that would be familiar to every student, she incorporates a call and response style in the reading. Stopping at different words (such as "barricade"), she asks the students to come up with the meanings. This story time is made particularly valuable by her attempt to relate all the stories to the personal lives of the students. Thus, the children bring into focus their own interactions and what they hold dear.

This concept is extended even into math class, as each child draws a picture of his or her own family. Basic math is thus taught using the number of people in each picture. The children then frame their pictures by creating patterns. They draw symbols on a sheet of paper and determine the number of diamonds, squares or circles in a row. The exercise includes graphing the pictures framed by shapes and symbols. This is an innovative way to make math more interesting and personalized, as well as link learning math to learning about families, backgrounds and cultures.

These resourceful practices are combined with deep cultural sensitivity to the students' varied backgrounds. The ethnically diverse class consists of Latinos, African-Americans, Caucasians, Portuguese, and Pacific Islanders. Through constant communication with the parents, Ms. Patalano learns about the specific background of each child, and brings this information into the classroom to create an atmosphere rich in sharing diverse experiences — such as differing accents, a vacation in Hawaii, or a grandparent who speaks another language.

Accommodating difference in the classroom is visible in another seemingly simple strategy — maintaining a "good deeds" journal, in which students note their good deed for the day. This becomes the means to initiate conversations about different lifestyles — for instance, the good deed of a student living in a house with a yard and a dog is different from that of a student living in a housing project. This exercise enables students to acknowledge their different backgrounds within a framework that stresses equality and student agency.

Working within a standardized and highly structured curriculum, the teacher nevertheless manages to sustain her agenda of linking school to home. A vivid example of this is the construction of a kindness tree. The kindness tree has a small plaque in the corner of the wall's three-dimensional artwork. Phrases such as "We can make a difference" and "Don't forget to do your good deeds" are written on leaves that are stapled on the branches that billow out. Each child has a kind deed or a goodness quote represented.

Under the topic "We can do so many things," there are pictures of the students' artwork. There are children riding bikes, jumping rope, walking a dog, playing with sisters and brothers. Each picture has a sentence on it that clearly encourages high expectations and reminds students of the values of the classroom. In this way, an aspect of the children and their artwork is presented at the same time as the classroom is connected to their families and their home environment.

### **Demographics**

Coming soon.

### **Background**

Coming soon.

### **Design & Implementation**

Coming soon.

### **Results**

Coming soon.

### **Replication Details**

Coming soon.

### **Costs and Funding**

Coming soon.

### **Contact Information**

For more information about this school or the issue of cultural relevance in teaching, contact: The Education Alliance 222 Richmond Street Suite 300 Providence, RI 02903-4226 401/274-9548 x289 or x275

### **Rating Criteria**

Coming soon.

### **This story exemplifies the following practices:**

**Cultural Sensitivity** – To maximize learning opportunities, teachers gain knowledge of the cultures represented in their classrooms and translate this knowledge into instructional practice.

**Active Teaching Methods** – Instruction is designed to promote student engagement by requiring that

students play an active role in crafting curriculum and developing learning activities.

# Related Web Resources

This is an annotated list of resources found on other Web sites that relate to this spotlight topic on The Knowledge Loom. We encourage you to access them from the links provided on The Knowledge Loom. To do this, go to the Web address noted in the header. Then click on the Related Resources link.

For an overview of additional content presented on The Knowledge Loom Web site that may not have been selected for this print document, see the Spotlight Overview located earlier in the document.

1) Profile of an Equitable Mathematics and Science Classroom and Teacher

<http://www.col-ed.org/smcnws/equity/profile.html>

This article by Joy Wallace, includes guidelines and descriptions for equitable mathematics and science teaching. Topics include Physical Environment of the Classroom, Curriculum, Language, Teaching Methodology/Interaction, Behavior Management, Academic Evaluation/Assessment and Classroom Integration.

2) Critical Behaviors and Strategies for Teaching

<http://www.ericdigests.org/2000-3/critical.htm>

The article by Jane Burnette describes certain behaviors and instructional strategies that enable teachers to build a stronger teaching/learning relationship with their culturally diverse students. Many of these behaviors and strategies exemplify standard practices of good teaching, and others are specific to working with students from diverse cultures.

3) "Rethinking the Principalship" Research Roundup

[http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/roundup/Spring\\_2002.html](http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/roundup/Spring_2002.html)

This article from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management features information about how today's principals are expected to be both instructional leaders and able managers. Given the demands on the principal's time, much current discussion focuses on new ways to allocate the workload.

4) The ELL KnowledgeBase

<http://www.helpforschools.com>

Developed by the Region VII Comprehensive Center & Logicon PRC, this web site assists in meeting compliance requirements from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) for programs serving Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and promotes effective education programs for English Language Learners (ELL) by providing samples of successful programs and practices.

5) Directions in Language and Education

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/directions/>

From the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education comes this description of a peer coaching professional development model for mainstream teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

6) Oral Language Development across the Curriculum, K-12.

<http://www.ericdigests.org/1996-3/oral.htm>

The digest presents the teacher's role as facilitator of students' development of oral communication. It argues against teacher-dominated lessons.

7) Selecting Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Materials

<http://www.ericdigests.org/2000-1/selecting.html>

This Digest by Rosa Santos and Debbie Reese focuses on how to identify, select, and adapt culturally and linguistically appropriate materials (e.g., books, brochures, pamphlets, fact sheets, and multimedia) for parents and family members.



8) Parent Power: A Positive Link to School Success  
<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/jeilms/vol16/jeilms1611.htm>

This article is a summary of the ways parents have been involved in the Clark County (Nevada) School District. It evaluates a specific program with respect to the methods, importance, and problems in communication with immigrant parents.

9) Enhancing Student Thinking through Collaborative Learning  
<http://www.ericdigests.org/1999-2/learning.htm>

This digest discusses the goals that group learning must fulfill and the different phases of small group discussions that include teacher and students' responsibilities.

10) Instructional Conversations  
<http://www.ericdigests.org/1992-2/instructional.htm>

The article presents a model of instructional conversation that is based on student-teacher discussion. Research argues that class-wide discussions, as opposed to a teacher's "recitation script," promote critical thinking and engage students in productive discourse.

11) Asian-American Children: What Teachers Should Know.  
<http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/eearchive/digests/1994/feng94.html>

This digest provides information to help teachers gain a better understanding of Asian-American children, particularly those from East and Southeast Asian cultures, and identify culturally appropriate educational practices to use with those children.

12) Incorporating Student Voice into Teaching Practice  
<http://www.soundout.org/features/incorporating.html>

In some classrooms, student voices are barely heard; the teacher monopolizes classroom talk, and knowledge is treated as residing entirely with the teacher. This digest explores different ways in which student voices can be heard in a classroom.

13) Expectations for Students  
<http://www.ericdigests.org/1998-1/expectations.htm>

Nearly all schools claim to hold high expectations for all students. However some schools have minimal expectations for particular segments of the student population. The article from the ERIC Digests presents students' perspectives on expectations and the underlying causes for formation of certain expectations, as well as suggestions for being fair to all.

14) Typical CFL Classroom  
[http://www.temple.edu/LSS/cfl\\_clas.htm](http://www.temple.edu/LSS/cfl_clas.htm)

A Community for Learning classroom is described in this information provided by LSS, The Laboratory for Student Success of The Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory at Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education. Regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, aides, and volunteers work together to help children with their learning. See the resource for details of one hour in a Community for Learning Day.

15) Teaching Language Minority Students in Elementary

<http://www.cal.org/crede/pubs/ResBrief1.pdf>

CREDE, the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence of the University of California, Santa Cruz published this research brief that may be downloaded or read in PDF. It focuses upon CREDE standards and follows Nora, a Grade 1 student and her teacher through a few learning activities. The brief demonstrates how teacher attention to language needs enables students to be involved in grade level content.

16) Effects of Sheltered Instruction on the Achievement of Limited English Proficient Students

<http://www.cal.org/crede/si.htm>

Sheltered instruction is instruction that targets helping limited English proficient students. It includes specific methods to help these students learn course content while learning to understand English. Authorities do not agree what techniques are best or should be considered sheltered instruction. This research project takes on the questions related to sheltered learning.

17) Integrating Language and Culture in a Middle School American History Class

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/ncrcdssl/epr8.htm>

This research details information on linguistically and culturally diverse students in the United States and their learning of American History. It emphasizes the need to offer students coursework as they are learning English. Ideas for teaching ELLs American History are included.

18) Play and Cultural Diversity

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/jeilms/vol15/playandc.htm>

The study, "Play and Cultural Diversity" by Michael Rettig of Washburn University in Kansas, features play as a method of bringing about cultural awareness. With classroom populations becoming more culturally diverse, it is necessary for young children to learn about and appreciate the cultures of others. Through play they will be able to develop early understandings.

19) The Equity Network

<http://ra.terc.edu/resources/equity/equity.html>

This Web site provides tools and strategies for achieving equity in K–12 classrooms. Its resource links provide general information about equity and specific information about equity issues related to women and girls; people of color; people with disabilities; and math, science, and technology classrooms.

20) Cheche Konnen Center – Science Teaching and Learning

[http://projects.terc.edu/cheche\\_konnen/](http://projects.terc.edu/cheche_konnen/)

The Cheche Konnen Center at TERC is spearheading a 5–year national reform initiative funded by the National Science Foundation to improve elementary and middle school science for language minority students.

21) Ethnic and Racial Equity

<http://www.enc.org/topics/equity/>

The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse provides a resource for educators concerned about creating

equitable conditions in which every child can succeed. These equity materials (in the form of stories, case studies, journal articles, checklists, etc.) can help teachers and administrators acknowledge children's diverse strengths, identify inequities, and improve the ways they serve students with varied needs.

22) Promoting Reading among Mexican American  
<http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/pages/1883.shtml>

Good books can help children develop pride in their ethnic identity, provide positive role models, develop knowledge about cultural history, and build self-esteem. However, Mexican American students in the United States often do not experience literature in this way. This Digest by Yvonne I. Murray and Jose Velazquez identifies key challenges, recommends classroom strategies, provides literature selection guidelines, and suggests reading lists for various grade levels.

23) School Practices To Promote the Achievement of Hispanic Students  
<http://www.helpforschools.com/ELLKBase/tips/SchoolPracticestoPromotetheAchievementofHispanicStudents.shtml>

This digest, based on Transforming Education for Hispanic Youth, summarizes Hispanic Dropout Project's recommendations for school practices and illustrates them with examples from the case studies. Nearly all these recommendations, while specifically oriented to the needs of Hispanic students, can improve the education of all students.

24) Parent Involvement and the Education of Limited English Proficient Students  
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED279205>

This ERIC Digest article lists parent-school activities, aspects specific to limited English proficient (LEP) parents and students, and strategies to increase LEP parent participation.

25) Bridging Cultures in Our Schools: New Approaches That Work  
[http://www.wested.org/online\\_pubs/bridging/welcome.shtml](http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/bridging/welcome.shtml)

This knowledge brief discusses a framework for understanding how teachers' culturally driven values can influence classroom practices and expectations. Problems arise when these values conflict with the values of immigrant and other parents from vastly different backgrounds, thus interfering with parent-teacher communication. The brief includes specific sources of cross-culture conflict and resolution methods.



# Content Providers

This is an annotated list of organizations that provided content for this topic on The Knowledge Loom.

## 1) RMC Research Corporation

For more than 25 years, RMC Research Corporation has worked with agencies, institutions, schools, foundations, and corporations whose missions involve learning. A private professional service business with offices in New Hampshire, Colorado, Virginia, and Oregon, RMC Research delivers technical assistance, conducts research, and develops, evaluates, and disseminates quality programs. The people of RMC Research are committed to the growth and success of their clients and the power of constructive action through learning.

## 2) The Education Alliance at Brown University

The Education Alliance, a department at Brown University, has been working to effect real change in education for more than 25 years. The organization helps schools and school districts provide equitable opportunities for all students to succeed. It applies research findings and develops solutions to problems in such areas as school change, secondary school restructuring, professional development, first and second language acquisition, educational leadership, and cultural and linguistic diversity.

