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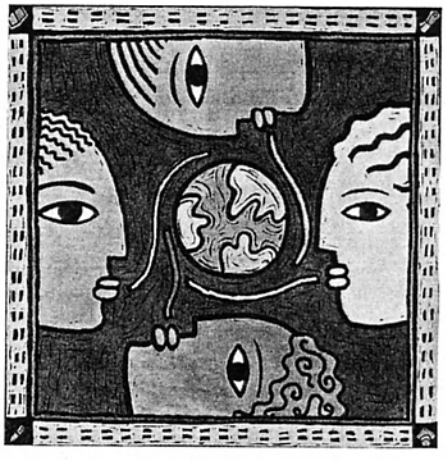
BILINGUAL AND ESL CLASSROOMS



Culture

CHAPTER OUTLINE

> *Culture . . . is not so much a matter of an inert system in which people operate, but rather a historical construction by people that is always changing. This change is not necessarily for better, not necessarily for worse, but always changing because the essence is not order, the essence is volition. The essence is how people work to create culture, not what culture is.*
>
> HENRY GLASSIE, folklorist, 1992

In the lives of language minority students in our schools and communities we can see many different cultural processes at work. Such processes, however, can often defy easy understanding on the part of educators, because they can be interpreted (or misinterpreted) in conflicting ways. On the one hand, cultural processes are the complex, fluid, mysterious, and subtle ways in which we both transmit and create culture. But on the other hand, in interpreting them, we can end up with fixed labels that reduce cultural patterns to simplistic and dangerous stereotypes. Thus, at times, we may agree with Glassie's sense of the disorderliness of culture, while at other times we may be eagerly looking for pegs on which to hang cultural labels—labels which will confirm our desire for cultural stability and predictability.

Numerous factors contribute to cultural identity and have the potential either to bring us together or to separate us from each other. Some of the factors that contribute in varying degrees to cultural identity are ethnicity, geographical region, national origin, social class, level of education, types of contact with other cultural groups, religion, gender, and age. Yet, for all of the good pedagogical intentions associated with the process of identifying such factors and attaching cultural labels, there is always the danger of doing a disservice to the complex nature of cultural processes and thus to the individual student. As Maxine Greene states (1993),

> No one can be considered identical with any other, no matter what the degree of gender, class, ethnic or cultural identity ostensibly shared. Neither fixed in place nor voiceless, no one can be conceived as an endlessly reproducible repetition of the same model, to be counted for in accord with general laws of behavior. Nor can any human be predefined. The self is not something ready-made, John Dewey wrote; "but something in continuous formation through choice of action." Within that flux, the person is forever embarking on new beginnings, reaching beyond what is to what might be.

Embracing the dynamic and volitional nature of cultural processes suggested by Greene, we interpret culture in this chapter as a deep, multilayered, somewhat cohesive interplay of language, values, beliefs, and behaviors that pervades every aspect of every person's life, and that is continually undergoing modifications. When we study culture, it becomes an abstraction—albeit a useful one—for giving meaning to human activity. What it is *not* is an isolated aspect of life that can be used mechanistically to explain phenomena in a multicultural classroom or that can be learned as a series of facts. When we discard the dynamic and multidimensional view of culture for a series-of-facts view of culture, our efforts to implement multiculturalism become unrealistic when compared to the complex day-to-day events in the cultural life of the classroom. With respect to culture there *should* be an uneasy and creative tension between theory and practice, because this reflects the elusive and impermanent nature of cultural knowledge and processes (Ovando & Gourd, 1996).

To establish a broader basis for what we mean and do not mean by the word *culture,* in the first section of this chapter we consider various perspectives on the concept of culture—first the anthropological view and then popular views. In the second section we look at processes involved in the development of children's cultural identities: cultural transmission, biculturalism, acculturation, and assimilation. For the remainder of the chapter we delve into multicultural education as it relates to language minority students. To do this, in the third section of the chapter we introduce the principles of cultural pluralism and multicultural education. In the fourth section we examine cultural concepts relevant to prejudice and discrimination, and in the fifth section we explore the role of culture in the school

success of language minority students. In the final section, we continue to examine the role of culture in achievement more closely through a survey of relevant ethnographic studies.

Throughout the entire chapter, we ask the reader to remember the importance of personal reflection on the topics that we address. Making educational decisions regarding cultural differences can be much more slippery or abstract than making decisions about how to set up a bilingual cooperative learning group, how to introduce reading in a second language, or how to make use of L_1 during content area instruction, for example. Whether you are a preservice or an in-service teacher, we ask that you pause throughout this chapter to reflect on how the topics relate to your own experiences—experiences that you have had with your family, in your own schooling, with your peers and friends, with your co-workers, in your travels, in community activities, or with your students. Unless we personally confront cultural issues such as acculturation, assimilation, ethnocentrism, stereotyping, discrimination, and deficit theories—just to name a few—we cannot assume that we have adequately "covered" culture (M. Calderón, personal communication, December 16, 1996).

PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

The Anthropological View of Culture

The concept of culture has been something of an enigma for social scientists. There is, to begin with, disagreement as to how culture should be defined (Wax, 1993). A common point of departure for discussion, however, is the definition formulated in 1871 by one of the earliest anthropologists, E.B. Tylor: "Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society" (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963, p. 81). Such broad, listlike definitions of culture have served as natural seedbeds for cultural analysis and intellectual enrichment for many years. However, if one views culture as an innumerable and complex set of nongenetic characteristics, as suggested by Tylor's definition, anthropological analysis runs the risk of limiting itself to what Geertz (1973) refers to as

> turning culture into folklore and collecting it, turning it into traits and counting it, turning it into institutions and classifying it, turning it into structures and toying with it. (p. 29)

For this reason, contemporary anthropologists have suggested a less segmented and more conceptually intricate perspective (Geertz, 1973; Jacob & Jordan, 1993). As a proponent of a deeper view of culture, Geertz (1973) offers the following interpretation:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.
>
> Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is. It is a strange science whose most telling assertions are its most tremulously based, in which to get somewhere with the matter at hand is to intensify suspicion, both your own and that of others, that you are not quite getting it right. . . . Anthropology, or at least interpretive anthropology,

> is a science whose progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate. What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other. (pp 5–29)

Despite conceptual disagreement over a specific definition of culture (Wax, 1993), anthropologists do tend to agree on three of its most basic characteristics (Hall, 1976, p. 13): (1) culture is not innate, but learned; (2) culture is shared and it has an important role in defining the social boundaries of different groups; and (3) the various facets of culture are interrelated.

Culture Is Learned

In other words, culture is not carried in the genes. Consider a child who accidentally touches a hot object. The immediate withdrawal of the hand is a physical reflex that does not have to be taught. However, whether the unpleasant surprise elicits from the child a scream of "Ay!" or "Ow!" becomes a cultural artifact, something transmitted through social interaction. Because a newborn child comes equipped with virtually no cultural baggage, an essential characteristic of being human is the manner, consciously and unconsciously, in which we transmit cultural patterns to succeeding generations. The premise that culture is learned, not inherited, is so basic to all considerations of the concept that it has often been used as a definition of culture by itself. Long before children enter the formal classroom, a rich mixture of culturally coded behavioral patterns have been learned through enculturation, a term described by Margaret Mead (1963) "as the actual process of learning as it takes place in a specific culture" (p. 185).

Because cultural patterns are learned, they are highly variable. Administration of justice among children, for example, does not follow one pattern that is innate to all humans. A pattern observed among some native Hawaiian families is that when children are involved in argumentative behavior with siblings or friends, parents tend to discipline all involved rather than attempting to identify the guilty parties. Consequently, these children may learn that it pays to take care of their concerns within their peer groups rather than sharing them with the adults (Gallimore, Boggs, & Jordan, 1974; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). But the same children may also learn that in their classrooms, which generally operate out of a different cultural system, the teacher may often want to know who is responsible for the unacceptable behavior. Such an approach may teach children different ways of interacting with each other and with adults.

Culture Is Shared

Culture exists only in relation to a specific social grouping. Humans acquire and create culture only as members of society. Therefore, as groups constantly maintain some aspects of their identity while periodically modifying other aspects, individuals serve the dual function of being culture bearers as well as culture makers. This continual flux reflects what Berger (1967) refers to as "the cultural imperative of stability and the natural state of culture as unstable" (p. 6). To put it another way, human beings are constantly in the process of becoming "*a part of*" and "*apart from*" a given cultural context (Adler, 1972). For example, a child becomes a part of her home cultural environment as she learns ways to give or get information and to give or get attention appropriate to her ethnic group (Goodwin, 1990; Hymes, 1979). In school, however, she may grow apart from these patterns to some extent as she learns alternative forms of communication that characterize the classroom setting (Heath & Mangiola, 1991). Through such social contact with members of her own and other cultural groups her cultural identity develops.

While culture plays a role in defining ethnic boundaries, these boundaries are usually quite porous. To use a saying that folk singer Pete Seeger attributes to his father, "plagiarism is basic to all culture." Throughout history, societies have borrowed a great deal from each other (Wax, 1993). This borrowing has been a principal source of the instability of culture and of the constant development of cultural patterns "apart from" the original ones. This perpetual state of becoming—of new beginnings crafted on old ones—gives culture its dynamic and fascinating character.

Cultural Components Are Interrelated

The cultural traits of a particular group of people are largely integrated with each other into an interrelated whole. In other words, cultural traits are not a random hodge-podge of discrete customs with no relation to each other. To some extent this integrated consistency derives from adaptation to the environment. For example, in preindustrial societies, the traits of low population density, a nomadic lifestyle and limited material possessions relate to a hunting and gathering society. Higher population density, permanent communities, and more acquisition of material possessions emerge with the development of agriculture-based societies. Cultural patterns tend toward a psychological integration of values and beliefs as well. For example, child-rearing practices and family living arrangements within a particular cultural group tend to reflect the same values and beliefs that the groups' folktales portray (Ember & Ember, 1988, p. 26). Of course, no two individuals within any cultural group are completely alike, and change is constantly occurring. Therefore, cultural components are not always in complete harmony with each other, but there is certainly an adaptive tendency toward reasonable consistency.

Because cultural patterns are integrated, a change in one aspect of the culture can, and probably will, affect many other facets of the culture. Looking just at examples involving education, consider the introduction of compulsory formal schooling into remote Alaskan native villages. Athapaskan Indians of the Yukon traditionally followed a seminomadic way of life, moving from fishing camps to hunting camps as the seasons changed. In the 1930s, however, "compulsory education forced parents to keep their children in school and thus abandon their traditional seasonal rounds" (Simeone, 1982, p. 100). Thus with changes in the form of education also came changes in residential patterns, along with concomitant changes in subsistence patterns, the local economy, and patterns of social interaction, and the loss or weakening of indigenous languages (Ovando, 1994). The Micronesian island of Pohnpei underwent a comparable process when the introduction of Western schooling patterns brought about many other changes in cultural patterns (Falgout, 1992).

The above generalizations—that culture is learned, shared, and integrated—provide some important grips on the concept of culture, but they do not give one a comprehensive hold. Culture is learned, but most of the teaching of culture is unreflected on, and the content is somewhat modified as it is transmitted. Culture is shared and defines boundaries, but the exact same culture is not shared by all members of a social group, and the boundaries are highly permeable. Components of a culture seem to be interrelated as in a system, but this system does not always seem to behave according to clear, systematic rules.

Finally, to make the understanding of culture even more evasive, there is the problem of inevitable bias. Because we are all culture bearers, when we study or simply observe the behavior of members of a cultural group, we cannot dissociate our own cultural background completely from the topic of inquiry. Because we all view the world through our cultural lenses, objectivity is a goal we can only hope to approach but will probably never reach. If we implement a critical pedagogy

that activates students' prior experiences, incorporates community knowledge, and addresses sociocultural issues of concern to students, we will certainly have a wealth of important cultural information to use in the teaching and learning process. But as we make instructional decisions based on our observations of students' cultural background, it is extremely important to remember that our interpretations will always be colored by our own cultural and individual values. This issue of subjectivity will be discussed further in the third section of this chapter, when we take a look at cultural concepts relevant to prejudice and discrimination.

Popular Views of Culture

The High Civilization View

Educators have often tended to use the word *culture* as meaning the accumulation of the so-called "best" knowledge, ideas, works of art, and technological accomplishments of a particular group of people. This "high civilization" or "highbrow" view of culture (Levine, 1988), in the case of Western civilization, conjures up the image of the sophisticated cognoscente familiar with the likes of Shakespeare, Dante, Cervantes, Socrates, Mozart, Michelangelo, and so on. Such a sophisticated person may scoff at the unfortunate slob who "doesn't have any culture." Curricula in the United States have implicitly and explicitly stressed the importance of Western ideals as the hallmark of culture. This view of culture (minus the snobbery) can be justifiably taught as an appreciation of a historical heritage, and it can be an important component of the liberal arts curriculum (Banks, 1993; García, 1993). However, a monocultural view of the accomplishments of the Western or English-speaking world, at the expense of the social, cultural, and linguistic realities that surround minority learners, may have significant negative effects. Lack of acknowledgment of multiple cultural traditions can be related to high dropout rates, alienation, and low academic achievement (Banks, 1993; Ogbu, 1978, 1992; Stanford Working Group, 1993; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Trueba, 1987).

The Set-of-Traits View

Another common approach to culture—one that we refer to as the "set-of-traits" point of view—is the tendency to view culture as a series of significant historical events and heroes, typical traditions, and culturally coded concepts or terms. Erickson has referred to such superficial treatment as "cultural tourism"—a focus on the more colorful and salient aspects of a group of people (Erickson, 1997, p. 46). Tongue in cheek, the set-of-traits point of view has also been called the "laundry list" approach and the "facts, fun, and fiestas" approach. Using the laundry list approach to Mexican-American culture, for example, an educator could conclude that students should know about such items as Benito Juárez, César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, *la Virgen de Guadalupe*, *Cinco de Mayo, La Raza*, *cholos, Aztlán*, and *la quinceañera*. The argument for this approach is that the better informed students are about a culture, the less prejudiced they will be. And there is some empirical evidence to support the argument (Banks, 1991b; Glock, Wutnow, Piliavin, & Spencer, 1975; Lambert & Klineberg, 1967).

The set-of-traits view, however, is extremely limited and easily promotes the view that culture is highly static rather than being a complex, interrelated, and varying construct. The approach obscures the reality of individuals as culture bearers and culture makers, who not only carry their culture but also may help to

reconstruct their world if they so desire. It does not lend itself to the consideration of people's acculturation or assimilation, nor does it portray culture as an integrated configuration adapted to a particular context. There is also the danger that this type of approach may lead to stereotyping, especially of already stigmatized minorities. One is inclined to assume falsely that everything on the cultural "list" is meaningful in the same way to every member of the cultural group. This view of culture may also encourage one to feel a sense of distance from the everyday immediacy of cultural phenomena. The 'bits" of culture become discrete abstractions, items that can be reduced to "right" or "wrong" on a multiple-choice test. Instead, it is important to observe the actual behaviors of students and parents in and outside of the classroom and to ask many questions. For example, instead of assuming that a given holiday or celebration is meaningful for *all* members of a particular ethnic group, the teacher may wish to ask the students and parents themselves, "What holidays or celebrations are most important to you? Why?" (Saville-Troike, 1978, p. 37). The responses to such inquiries may confirm what was already known, but they may also reveal new dimensions to a student's ethnic identity.

Both the high-civilization view of culture and the set-of-traits view have some pedagogical validity, but they are not in and of themselves sufficient to achieve an understanding of culture in the multiethnic classroom. Both views deprive us of an awareness of culture as an integral aspect of our own lives—as the web we all weave, together and separately, day after day. Both views bypass a premise particularly essential to multicultural education: that no child or teacher is without culture. This premise is the critical source for the role of culture in the classroom. An awareness of culture is not only the discovery of "others," but also the discovery of ourselves, of our own webs. To illustrate this point, consider the reaction of a group of adult students, learning to read for the first time, to a picture of their village—the first they had ever seen. (This incident occurred in São Tomé, an island off the west coast of Africa.)

> The class first looked at the picture in silence, then four of them got up as if by arrangement and walked over to the wall where the picture code of the village was hung. They looked attentively at the picture, then they went over to the window and looked at the world outside. They exchanged glances, their eyes wide as if in surprise, and, again looking at the picture, they said, "It's Monte Mario. That's what Monte Mario is like, and we didn't know it." (Freire, 1981, p. 30)

PROCESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL IDENTITIES

As teachers, we are working with young people who are not only developing physically, emotionally, socially, academically, and cognitively; we are also working with children who are developing culturally. As stated in the first section of this chapter, children are not born with a culture; they learn it. In the case of language minority children, the process is a particularly interesting one as they build their cultural identity within the multiple contexts of their home environment, the school environment, and the larger dominant sociocultural environment. To better understand this process of cultural development, we will consider Mead's model of cultural transmission, and then we will look at the interrelated issues of biculturalism, acculturation, and assimilation.

Cultural Transmission

We have already introduced Mead's concept of enculturation when we described the child's process of learning cultural patterns. However, the process is not a simple, straightforward one in which children always learn "all there is to know" from older family members. A lifelong student of cultural transmission in Western and non-Western societies, Margaret Mead (1978) concluded that the process by which new members learn the scope and detail of their own culture is not, and never has been, a smooth and painless one. She identified three kinds of cultural transmission processes: postfigurative, cofigurative, and prefigurative.

Postfigurative Transmission

In postfigurative transmission, adult community members pass on values, beliefs, and behaviors to the upcoming generation with little alteration. Usually in such contexts the children do not question much the cultural patterns they receive from their elders. In the United States, for example, the Amish and Hutterite subcultures closely represent postfigurative processes. Immigrants from traditional or rural societies may also have a background of strong postfigurative cultural transmission.

Cofigurative Transmission

In cofigurative transmission communities there are multiple cultural role models—old ones and contemporary ones. Emergent cultural traits may be attributed to the sharing between parents and children at a time when the traditional cultural patterns have lost some power over the young. Cofigurative communities may be represented, for example, by immigrant groups that are partially disengaging from the past and are beginning to relate in different ways with their children growing up in the United States. "But Mom, that's not the way you do it here," may be a beginning signal that cofigurative culture change is occurring within the ethnic community.

Prefigurative Transmission

In this type of cultural transmission the children to a large extent create culture change. For example, immigrant parents in prefigurative situations vicariously experience much of American society and culture through their children. The reality that such children present to their parents has been secured from the formal school system and from many informal channels—peers, street culture, television, radio, magazines, newspapers, clubs, and organizations. These children are frequently the source of many answers for their parents' concerns. They serve as translators at the doctor's office, for example, or they write the school absence excuse for their younger siblings. Virtually everything new is filtered through the children, who may put aside some of their old values as being obsolete. Frustration and stress may sometimes begin to characterize many of the interactions between parents and children. There may also be a sense of power or superiority on the part of the prefigurative youth. As Handlin (1951) put it years ago, referring to the acculturation process across immigrant generations, "the young wore their [U.S.] nativity like a badge that marked their superiority over their immigrant elders" (pp. 253–254).

While Mead analyzed the development of cultural identity across generations, another important way to look at the process is from the standpoint of interaction between various cultural groups. From this point of view we will look at biculturalism, acculturation, and assimilation.

Biculturalism

A person is bicultural when he or she has the capacity to negotiate effectively within two different cultural systems. Being bicultural, however, does not necessarily mean giving equal time to both cultures in terms of behavior. There may be many traits from one culture or both that the person understands but doesn't necessarily act out, such as religious rituals or family traditions (Kim, 1988; Paulston, 1992; Saville-Troike, 1978). The following statement by a Greek-American scholar provides a window into the dynamics of biculturalism in the United States:

> Living in two worlds, the one American, the other of the immigrant Greek, was not an emotional strain. It was a natural thing to do and made it possible to achieve early in my life a sense of identity, something which we are trying now to achieve with the cultural minority groups in our schools . . . .
>
> Phenomenologically, my work world and my social world are a seamless fabric of a continuing experience. This bicultural experience provides me with an active comparative and contrastive set of insights into American and immigrant cultures as continuing lived experiences . . . . I feel that the opportunity to experience cultural conflict and the cultural integrity earned through the resolution of that conflict are vital affective education. (Cited in Havighurst, 1978, pp. 15–16)

Although one would think that an understanding of biculturalism would be an important aspect of public policy on bilingual education, surprisingly little theorizing has been given to the concept (Harris, 1994). Anthropology, for example, which has so much to say about culture, has very little to say about biculturalism. The term receives only a small paragraph, as a subheading under the term *acculturation,* in the *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (Sills, 1968, p. 24). The *Dictionary of Anthropology* does not even include a listing for the term *bicultural* (Seymour-Smith, 1986). And while perhaps a majority of bilingual programs are described as "bilingual/bicultural" programs, the extent to which learning a second language actually implies becoming bicultural is something that has not been significantly analyzed. Paulston (1992) substantiates the lack of work on this topic. In her search of the literature she found only five entries under *biculturalism.*

The tendency in the United States has been to perceive biculturalism as an abnormality (Social Science Research Council, 1954, p. 982). This tendency to view biculturalism negatively is related to much linguistic and psychological work done during the first half of this century that suggested that bilingualism was an undesirable trait. Such research alleged, for example, that bilinguals "had lower IQ scores than monolinguals, were socially maladjusted, and trailed monolinguals in academic performance" (Reynolds, 1991, p. 145). Similarly, Diebold (1968) pointed out that in the past a common perception in the United States was that bilingualism was detrimental to personality development because the knowledge of two languages was thought to imply two separate, culture-bound personality structures operating within the same individual.[1]

A more positive view of biculturalism emphasizes the maintenance of identity by means of changes in cultural patterns. For example, studies by Clark, Kaufman, and Pierce (1976); Delgado-Gaitán (1994); Merino, Trueba, and Samaniego (1993); Suárez-Orozco (1989); Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (1995); and Spindler and Spindler (1990) suggest that culture contact in the United States generates "situational ethnicity"—individuals have a range of types of bicultural

behavior that vary in their emphasis on minority cultural patterns and majority cultural patterns. For example, in an investigation of the ethnic identity of Mesquakie Indians, Polgar (1960) found that the teenagers he studied regularly went through a process of biculturation. Through their reservation life and contact with the outside community (especially through the schools) they had been simultaneously enculturated into traditional Mesquakie life and media-influenced dominant culture lifestyles.

Based on research among Eskimo students in rural Alaska, Kleinfeld (1979) has also concluded that institutions such as schools play a highly significant role in the establishment of young people's cultural identities. She has noted two characteristics that can foster the "bicultural fusion" of the minority child:

1. Significant reference groups in the majority culture (such as teachers, majority-group classmates, media) hold the minority culture in esteem and significant reference groups in the local minority culture (such as parents, peers, older youth who are trendsetters) hold the majority culture in esteem.
2. Central socialization settings (home, school, religious groups, ethnic organizations) fuse elements from both cultures rather than separate them. (Kleinfeld, 1979, p. 137)

Kleinfeld's findings suggest that school personnel and community members who have mutual respect for each other's values and who also are open and adaptable in their interaction with one another enhance children's ability to function biculturally as both members of an ethnic group and participants in American society at large.

Acculturation

Although the term *biculturalism* has not been researched extensively in the field of anthropology or education, the related terms *acculturation* and *assimilation* have been used exhaustively to analyze culture contact. Acculturation is a process by which one cultural group takes on and incorporates one or more cultural traits of another group, resulting in new or blended cultural patterns. The *Dictionary of Anthropology* describes acculturation as "processes of accommodation and change in culture contact" (Seymour-Smith, 1986, p. 1). For example, as rural Mexican immigrant youngsters start wearing baseball caps and listening to heavy metal music, they are acculturating to outward aspects of contemporary U.S. culture. However, although these children may quickly adopt some U.S. clothing styles and musical tastes, such things as their language usage patterns, gestures, facial expressions, value systems, and social interaction styles will most likely remain more Mexican for a much longer period of time. As Nieto (1996) puts it, students often maintain such "deep culture" while they acculturate to their new cultural environment in more superficial ways.

Cultural change through acculturation does not necessarily mean loss of the original cultural identity. For example, a Koyukon Athapaskan who uses a snowmobile instead of sled dogs is still an Athapaskan Indian. It is not a set of particular traits that counts in ethnic identity as much as it is the fact that the Athapaskan *considers* him or herself as a member of a distinct group (Erickson, 1997). Acculturation can frequently be seen as an additive process, one that can result in bicultural or even multicultural identities. Acculturated individuals are able to employ situational ethnicity because they have the knowledge and skills to function in two or more different cultural contexts. As Erickson points out, in

today's world most humans actually are multicultural, especially those who live in large, complex societies (Erickson, 1997).

Assimilation

Acculturation, instead of resulting in biculturalism and situational ethnicity, can alternatively result in assimilation. Assimilation is a process in which an individual or group completely takes on the traits of another culture, leaving behind the original cultural identity. The absorption of many European immigrant groups into majority U.S. cultural patterns and social structures has generally been described as a process of assimilation. For many years in the past one of the goals of many school programs in the United States has been to assimilate indigenous and immigrant minority children into the majority culture. For example, the policy of assimilating American Indian youth through education is clearly reflected in the 1887 statement by J.D.C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs: "If we expect to infuse into the rising generation the leaven of American citizenship, we must remove the stumbling blocks of hereditary customs and manners, and of these language is one of the most important elements" (Adams, 1988, p. 8).

Because the concept of the assimilative melting pot has been such a strong theme in the history of the United States, there is a tendency to still assume today that many young people will want to entirely assume dominant cultural patterns. However, Nieto (1996, 1994) found in her own case studies of 12 high school students, as well as in other researchers' work, evidence that many contemporary minority students—despite some conflicts and mixed feelings—have pride in their background and express a desire to maintain their language and culture. As one of the students in her case study said, "You gotta know who you are" (1996, p. 284). She also notes research evidence that suggests that students who resist assimilation may also be more successful academically. For example, one study of Southeast Asian students found a positive correlation between higher grades and maintenance of pride in ethnicity.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Cultural Pluralism as a Basis for Multicultural Education

As language minority students enter adulthood, they will have to confront the degree to which United States society is prepared to accept their multiple cultural identities through an ethos of cultural pluralism. Cultural pluralism characterizes a society in which members of diverse cultural, social, racial, or religious groups are free to maintain their own identity and yet simultaneously share equitably in a larger common political organization, economic system, and social structure. Cultural pluralism is an extremely sensitive political issue in many nations throughout the world. Biculturalism can conceivably be seen as a matter of individual choice, but a positive or negative stance on cultural pluralism as a national policy touches on the most basic definitions of nationhood. In the United States, for example, with its growing diversity, there is a renewed public debate regarding the best way to induct historically marginalized groups into the sociocultural fabric of society. Some argue that unless diversity is harnessed, through an assimilative process, into a common culture and language, the country will become divided into many ethnic enclaves with very particular agendas that

could threaten the unity and future of the nation. For example, the works of Bennett (1984), Bloom (1987), D'Souza (1991), Epstein (1977), Finn, Ravitch, & Fancher (1984), Glazer (1985), Gray (1991), Hirsch (1991), Ravitch (1990), and Sowell (1993) reflect this general point of view. The American historian, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in his controversial book, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections of a Multicultural Society* (1992, p. 18), echoes the above concerns, asking, "Will the center hold? Or will the melting pot give way to the Tower of Babel?" Looking specifically at education, Lutz (1994) reports that some writers hold that cultural pluralism will lower academic standards through an emphasis on "feel good" learning, and further that it will teach wrong values and infringe on the right to freedom of speech through enforcement of political correctness.

Supporters of cultural pluralism, however, argue that it is not only possible but necessary to affirm ancestral cultural and linguistic roots while concurrently sharing a set of pluralistic democratic principles, especially through the school curriculum. Supporters of cultural pluralism hold that the inclusion of diversity in both the content and the process of schooling practices gives society its sociocultural coherence. Cultural pluralism in fact puts into practice *e pluribus unum* and thus enables us to live up to the founding democratic principles of our society (Banks, 1993; Graff, 1992).

The above interpretation of cultural pluralism is of course an ideal, which has, so far, come quite short of its mark in the United States. With respect to public school policy, the controversy cannot be resolved to suit everyone's ideological or pedagogical persuasion. Cultural pluralism elicits strong passions because it challenges us to rethink not only our conception of a just society but also of who we are as Americans and what makes us unique. Critics of cultural pluralism who fear a loss of national character would do well to consider whether or not that supposed character has ever been a constant. National character, if it can even be identified, is not a straitjacket—an all-encompassing yet vague force that causes particular types of behavior in particular groups. It has always been a developing and adjustable framework, very responsive to social and economic conditions. For example, it would be very difficult to find many cultural similarities between the "typical American citizen" of 1797 and the "typical American citizen" of 1997, even if we could find such a thing as a "typical" citizen. Maintenance of any ethnic identity within the United States is not a result of adherence to rigid cultural laws but occurs within the context of adjustments to social and economic conditions and cross-cultural contact. Language minority children in a school that values their ethnic heritage would be highly unlikely, as a consequence of such schooling, to lock themselves into all the behaviors and values traditionally held by members of their ethnic group. While remaining secure in their ethnic identity, they would more likely alter some of the characteristics of that identity as they experiment with new behaviors that are effective in new social contexts.

Dimensions of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is built on the premise of the need to prepare all children, minority and majority, to participate equitably in a culturally pluralistic society. And like its conceptual partner, cultural pluralism, it too has been subject to severe criticism, as suggested above by Lutz. Cummins (1996a) argues that the debate is so heated because multicultural education

> entails a direct challenge to the societal power structure that has historically subordinated certain groups and rationalized the educational failure of children

> from these groups as being the result of their inherent deficiencies. Multicultural education . . . challenges all educators to make the schools a force for social justice in our society. (p. xvi)

Multicultural education is challenging and controversial not only because it has the potential to mobilize communities of learners as social change agents, but also because it makes us rethink our ideas of what constitutes effective teaching: Are teachers to be merely transmitters of consensus values and dominant culture knowledge, or are they to be co-participants with students in knowledge construction and social action?

As suggested by these broad issues of social justice and knowledge construction, multicultural education today is defined by leaders in the field as a comprehensive approach to schooling that can touch on virtually every aspect of the educational process, from power and decision-making structures to curricular content to instructional practices to community relations (Banks & Banks, 1997; Bennett, 1995a; Grant & Sleeter, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1996). Nieto (1996, pp. 306–323), for example, anchors her broad approach to multicultural education within the sociopolitical context of contemporary society, and she identifies seven key characteristics of multicultural education, which we summarize and paraphrase here:

1. Multicultural education is anti-racist. It does not gloss over the presence of racism in society but addresses it.
2. Multicultural education is basic. It is an integral component of education along with other core subjects.
3. Multicultural education is vital for both majority and minority students.
4. Multicultural education is pervasive in the entire schooling process. It is not a separate subject.
5. Multicultural education is education for social justice. It connects knowledge and understanding with social action.
6. Multicultural education is a process. It is ongoing and dynamic and involves relationships between people as much as it does content.
7. Multicultural education is critical pedagogy. Teachers and students in a multicultural learning environment do not view knowledge as being neutral or apolitical.

This multifaceted definition shows that multicultural education is a highly challenging concept that can be viewed as an organizing principle for systemic school reform. Nieto (1996) argues that without such a transformative sociopolitical approach, multicultural education is just a trip to "fairyland" (p. 9), another set-of-traits or cultural tourism approach to the issue. Erickson (1997, p. 53) provides us with a good illustration of the limits of a multicultural approach that does not address the larger sociocultural and political factors that affect school achievement. Distinguishing between what he calls the visible and the invisible aspects of culture, he describes a potential scenario in which a classroom has visible signs of a multicultural curriculum—for example, a poster of Frederick Douglass is displayed, the children learn vocabulary in Swahili or Yoruba, and they also study about West Africa from a positive point of view. However, in this same early childhood classroom, cultural variation in language use patterns—a less visible aspect of culture—is not recognized, resulting in lower expectations for some students. Erickson gives the example of the teacher's assessment of "reading readiness." The teacher holds up a sheet of red paper and asks a

low-income African-American child, "What color is this?" Because the child comes from a cultural background in which adults tend not to use such known-answer questions in conversations with children, he or she is confused by the nature of the question and answers in Black English, "Aonh-oh". (I don't know.) The teacher makes a negative evaluation of the child's nonstandard English pronunciation coupled with an assumption of limited vocabulary development, and the child may well be on his or her way to a tracked program of low achievement, despite the presence of an outwardly multicultural curriculum.

Given the extensive boundaries of multicultural education, how can bilingual and ESL educators play an active role in its implementation? To address this question, we will use the five dimensions of multicultural education that Banks and Banks (1995) have identified as useful guides to educators who are trying to implement multicultural school reform. The dimensions are:

1. Content integration.
2. The knowledge construction process.
3. Prejudice reduction.
4. An equity pedagogy.
5. An empowering school culture and social structure. (Banks & Banks, 1995, pp. 4–5)

In this book, reflecting the premise that multicultural education should be comprehensive, we address many different aspects of the multicultural approach throughout the entire text. We discuss Banks and Banks's first dimension, content integration, in a variety of contexts. In particular Chapter Three (including art, music, and technology) and the chapters on language, social studies, math, and science address incorporating multicultural materials and perspectives. (Another useful resource for content integration is Grant and Gómez's book *Making Schooling Multicultural: Campus and Classroom* (1996), which includes separate chapters on multicultural content integration in math, science, social studies, art, music, physical education, health, theater, and television and film.) Banks and Banks's second dimension, knowledge construction, is related to the concepts of active learning and critical pedagogy, which are described in Chapter Three. We also consider knowledge construction later in this chapter and in Chapter Seven. The final three dimensions—prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering schooling—also appear indirectly throughout the book as we consider the many different ways in which to provide an equitable education for language minority students. However, we will focus most directly on these three dimensions in the remainder of this chapter. We will first look at prejudice reduction in light of the issues of marked and unmarked cultures, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. We will then look at equity pedagogy and empowering schooling environments as we examine the role of culture in the school success of language minority students.

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

Through the civil rights movement, educators developed a greater awareness of prejudice and discrimination in schools. For example, one study done in the early 1970s for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, based on observations of 494 classrooms in the Southwest, revealed that teachers directed 21 percent more

questions to European Americans than to Mexican Americans, praised or encouraged European Americans 35 percent more often, and accepted or used European Americans' ideas 40 percent more often (Jackson & Cosca, 1974). Despite the growth of such awareness in the 1960s and 1970s, the fact remains today that prejudice and discrimination are still frequent presences within schools across the nation. ESL and bilingual educators have both firsthand and secondhand knowledge of this discrimination as they work with children from a broad range of backgrounds. Nieto (1994) gives the example of the thoughts of one immigrant high school student from Cape Verde (an island nation west of Senegal) who came to the United States at the age of 11:

> When American students see you, it's kinda hard [to] get along with them when you have a different culture, a different way of dressing and stuff like that. So kids really look at you and laugh, you know, at the beginning. (p. 47)

We will focus our examination of prejudice and discrimination on the implications of the following cultural concepts: marked and unmarked cultures, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. Teachers who bring an understanding of such concepts to the school environment will be better prepared to analyze and address the discrimination that occurs in bilingual and ESL settings.

Marked and Unmarked Languages and Cultures

The terms *marked and unmarked language,* and by extension, *marked and unmarked culture,* distinguish between the different degrees of status assigned to particular cultural groups. Fishman (1976), a linguist who analyzed the education of language minority students from a broad, international perspective, introduced the terms. In the context of bilingual education, Fishman (1976) defined a marked language as one "which would most likely *not* be used *instructionally* were it not for bilingual education, that is to say, it is precisely bilingual education that has brought it into the classroom. Conversely, a language is *unmarked* in a bilingual education setting [if it] would most likely continue to be used instructionally, even in the absence of bilingual education" (pp. 99–100). In other words, marked languages are the ones associated with less social status and political power. In the United States the unmarked language is standard English.

Expanding the concepts of marked and unmarked languages to the groups they most closely represent, unmarked culture in the United States tends to be associated with white, middle class, nonethnic, English-speaking groups. It is unmarked in the sense that it reflects a somewhat mythical generalization of the way the typical "American" is "supposed" to be. Marked culture, on the other hand, is associated with the stigmatized and sometimes subordinate status of socioeconomically or culturally defined minority groups. Most curricula in public schools in the United States tend to emphasize unmarked cultural values, because the unmarked culture is the one that wields by far the most power in educational institutions.

Spolsky (1978, p. 28) suggested that one goal of bilingual education should be to enable language minority students to experience unmarked civic life outside the boundaries of their marked culture without being stigmatized. For schools to allow this would imply their unprejudiced acceptance of the blending of characteristics of the unmarked and marked culture. We are all too often unable to approach this ideal, of course, and the stigmatization of marked languages and cultures in the

United States continues to be a problem as evidenced by the chronic difficulty in gaining full acceptance of bilingual programs that have a strong, long-term use of L_1 and a strong cultural component.

Nieto (1996) effectively describes the potential burden of carrying a marked cultural background in school:

> "*Who does the accommodating?*" This question gets to the very heart of how students from nondominant [marked] groups experience school every day. Dominant-group students, on the contrary, rarely have to consider learning a new language to communicate with their teachers. They already speak the acceptable school language. The same is true of culture.These students do not generally have to think about their parents' life-styles and values because their families are the norm . . . Students from other groups, however, have to consider such issues *every single day.* Their school experiences are filled with the tension of accommodation that students from the dominant group could not even imagine. (p. 334)

The intuitive awareness of marked and unmarked languages and cultures appears to develop in children at a fairly young age. Consider the following dialogue that a colleague of one of the authors overheard, which reflects an awareness of marked and unmarked status among three elementary-age students:

> Three middle class teachers who work at a largely Hispanic-American, lower-income elementary school have come to school on a Saturday to catch up on work. These three teachers have all brought their daughters along, all of whom attend middle class elementary schools. The children are all native English speakers—two European-American girls and one Mexican-American girl who is very acculturated to the unmarked culture. They are working at a table cutting out decorations when a local, Mexican-American mother comes into the classroom and carries on an extended conversation in Spanish with one of the teachers. After the mother leaves, this conversation arises among the children:
>
> Linda (Mexican American): I know how to speak Spanish—my grandmother taught me. But I don't like to!
>
> Laurie (European American): I know. There's a girl in my class who all she does is speak Spanish and she's so dumb! All she does is copy my work.
>
> Jennifer (European American): People who speak Spanish aren't dumb. They just can't help it.

Cummins (1989b) found the same phenomenon in a study of four first-generation Mexican-American fifth graders. Although these students were not fully proficient in English, they rarely used their native language, Spanish, explaining that this language was just for "dumb kids." The adverse pedagogical implications of this bias against the marked language are significant. As Cummins points out, the students' avoidance of use of the marked language, coupled with the school's failure to capitalize on the student's experiences and language-rich home environment, resulted in serious limits on their opportunities to employ more abstract discourse and higher levels of cognitive functioning.

The case of immersion bilingual education programs provides another revealing example of the role of marked and unmarked cultures in educational outcomes. Edelsky (1996), reflecting on the studies she and Hudelson conducted in two Spanish-English two-way immersion programs in the late 1970s, noted that for children in such programs, "clues mount up quickly over which language must be learned" (p. 26). For example, in one of the programs, which was an alternate day program, the unmarked language, English, very frequently crept into use during

Spanish days—much more so than Spanish crept into use during English days. On Spanish days, English speakers were often given comprehension checks in English, whereas on English days, Spanish speakers were less likely to be given such assistance through their L_1. Because English was the unmarked language, it was taken for granted by children and teachers alike that this was the language that all students would have to learn. Spanish speakers made great strides in English over the course of the year, while English speakers knew little more than colors, numbers, and social routines in Spanish after months of exposure to the marked language.

Edelsky suggested that, although the outside effects of the larger social structure cannot be totally neutralized, intensive efforts can be made within the school to lessen the degree of markedness of the marked language by making greater efforts to use the languages equitably. This stance is borne out by the findings in California, alluded to in Chapters Three and Four that suggest that a 90 percent marked/10 percent unmarked pattern of language use in the early grades is the most effective form of immersion education for both language majority and language minority students. The heavy emphasis on the marked language in the early grades helps the marked language speakers to develop their cognitive skills in a less prejudiced atmosphere, and it provides the unmarked language speakers with an environment in which—within the confines of the school—the marked language is actually the one that counts the most.

Stereotypes

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines a stereotype as "a conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image." Although we have all been victims as well as users of stereotypes, they become particularly significant when talking about marked cultural groups. The following comments from a high school student of Lebanese origin reflect his mixed feelings over stereotypes and his desire to be judged as an individual rather than according to the generally negative view of Middle Easterners portrayed in the media. Despite this student's statement that it doesn't matter, one gets the feeling from his overall comments that perhaps the stereotype does matter to him:

> Some people call me, you know, 'cause I'm Lebanese, so people say, "Look out for the terrorist! Don't mess with him or he'll blow up your house!" or some stuff like that... But they're just joking around, though . . . I don't think anybody's serious 'cause I wouldn't blow up anybody's house—and they know that . . . I don't care. It doesn't matter what people say. . . . I just want everybody to know that, you know, it's not true. (Nieto, 1994, p. 35)

Hispanic Americans in the United States are often stereotypically lumped into one cultural group by non-Hispanic Americans. Judging from the media, one might assume all Hispanic Americans are in pursuit of a soccer ball, are Roman Catholics, have large extended families, and like to eat jalapeño peppers. Hispanic Americans, however, are not at all a homogenous group: they form a cultural, social, and historical mosaic. Mexicans eat tortillas, but Cubans do not. Most Hispanic Americans are associated with Catholicism, but a growing number are Protestant, and many have African-influenced religious traditions. Some have become so acculturated that they speak little or no Spanish, whereas many have maintained a strong language loyalty. Many Hispanic Americans in the Southwest are second only to American Indians as our earliest residents, but many are newcomers who have immigrated recently. Some have strong rural ties, whereas

others are firmly rooted within the urban context (Arias, 1986b). Even within a single Mexican-American barrio, one encounters many Mexican Americans, not "the typical Mexican American." Here is a description of El Hoyo, a Chicano neighborhood in Tucson, Arizona, by the author Mario Suárez (1973):

> Perhaps El Hoyo, its inhabitants, and its essence can best be explained by telling a bit about a dish called *capirotada*. Its origin is uncertain. But, according to the time and the circumstance, it is made of old, new, or hard bread. It is softened with water and then cooked with peanuts, raisins, onions, cheese, and *panocha*. It is fired with sherry wine. Then it is served hot, cold, or just "on the weather" as they say in El Hoyo. The Sermeños like it one way, the Garcías like it another, and the Ortegas still another. While it might differ greatly from one home to another, nevertheless it is still *capirotada*. And so it is with El Hoyo's Chicanos. (p. 102)

Region of origin is one example of a factor that may account for some of the deviation a child shows from stereotyped patterns of behavior for a given cultural group. Just as a great variety of regional cultural patterns can be found in the United States, there are also very striking regional differences within the countries of origin of most immigrant families (Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991; Stevenson, 1994). Some Cambodians established in the United States, for example, may be offspring of Hmong tribesmen, who are from rural, nontechnological mountain villages, whereas others may be the children of white-collar apartment dwellers from Phnom Penh. Although all of them are Cambodians, the behavior and adjustment patterns exhibited by the two groups will be considerably different. The significance of place of origin also explains why one first-grader in a school composed predominantly of recent immigrants from rural Mexico doesn't "seem" like the other children and occasionally points out to her teacher and peers that her family is from the Mexican city of Ensenada, rather than from a small farm or *rancho*. She has taken upon herself the responsibility of making sure that the teacher doesn't stereotype her.

While overgeneralization is one problem with stereotypes, another is that actual behavior patterns can change much faster than stereotypes do. Gender roles provide just one example of the many ways in which this may happen. All cultural groups have developed expectations, attitudes, and values associated with a person's gender, and institutions such as the family serve to maintain these expectations. Consequently, outsiders to a culture may expect masculine or feminine behavior of a group member to conform to stereotyped notions. For example, many Mexican families used to place little importance on formal education for girls, resulting in females' lower educational aspirations. However, gender roles are changing both in Mexico and Mexican-American society. Research evidence suggests that today Mexican-American girls may actually place a higher value on education than their male counterparts (Bennett, 1995b, p. 665; Carter & Wilson, 1994; Ovando, 1978a).

Because of the damage that negative stereotypes have inflicted on individuals and groups over time, educators are "supposed" to think of stereotyping as a bad thing. And yet, like ants, stereotypes do not seem to go away no matter how hard we try to eradicate them. Some educators argue that precisely because stereotyping is here to stay we should make the concept useful by subjecting it to critical interrogation. For example, one can make an effort to distinguish between personal traits and ethnic traits (Bem, 1970; Longstreet, 1978). For the teacher this distinction becomes a process of balancing an awareness of general cultural or subcultural traits with an affirmation of the absolute uniqueness of every child. It also becomes a process of contrasting the cultural variations represented by actual

students with the existing stereotypes. As a step toward effective teaching in the bilingual or ESL classroom, it is therefore important to assess the within-culture diversity already existing in the school's cultural microcosm. In a multiethnic environment, the interplay between stereotyped behavior patterns and personal patterns is amazingly intricate for children as they adjust to their culturally varied settings—the home culture versus the world of television, school versus the street, first-generation adult values versus second-generation youth values, and so on. The sociocultural background of the child in the bilingual or ESL classroom, therefore, emerges not in clear-cut stereotyped patterns but in varied types of behavior. In understanding a student's behavior, it is helpful to strike a balance between a more culturally based stereotypic perspective and a totally individualized perspective. The misperceptions stemming from a stereotypical perspective are well known, but on the other hand a totally individualized perspective is skewed because it does not take into account the powerful molding forces of culture (Robert & Lichter, 1988).

Teachers, of course, are not the only people with stereotypic views. Students and parents bring their own stereotypic views to the bilingual or ESL classroom. Some Mexican-American children may arrive in the kindergarten classroom with unconsciously formed expectations about *gabacho* behavior based on parents' or older siblings' perceptions. (*Gabacho* is a term used by Mexican Americans to refer, often derogatorily, to European Americans.) A Korean immigrant parent may approach his first meeting with an American teacher with certain stereotypical assumptions about the teacher's high degree of permissiveness. In considering the presence of prejudice in school environments, therefore, teachers also need to be aware that students and parents may bring negative stereotypes to school interactions.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism, the belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group, can emerge in many different configurations within the multiethnic classroom. Ethnocentric reactions may occur on the part of the teacher toward the student, on the part of the student toward the teacher, between students, on the part of the parent toward the teacher, and so on. The sense of group identity attained by prejudice against another group is demonstrated with the following story. After India gained its independence from Britain, there was a strong push to soften the rigid caste system. A group of idealistic students supposedly approached some members of the Harijan caste (the untouchables) and started to talk with them about the past injustices of the caste system. The students suggested to the Harijans that they should become politically involved and elect officials who would improve their lot. No sooner had the speaker finished his speech, when one of the outcast members said, "The only way the system can improve is to develop another group below us so that we can look down upon them."

In multicultural societies, such as the United States, the balance between cultural pride and negative ethnocentrism—with its resultant prejudice and discrimination—is delicate. Just how much ethnocentrism is innocuous cultural pride and how much is damaging to the social fabric? Consider the emotional high many Hispanic-American soccer fans may feel when an Argentine or Mexican player scores a goal for his national team in a critical World Cup match. Most would say that this is not ethnocentrism, just healthy cultural pride. Bidney, an anthropologist who studied ethics from a cross-cultural perspective, suggested that cultural pride itself need not be equated with ethnocentrism. He stated that it is not

"the mere fact of preference for one's own cultural values that constitutes ethnocentrism but, rather the uncritical prejudice in favor of one's own culture and the distorted, biased criticism of alien cultures" (Bidney 1968, p. 546). It is this type of critical prejudice that can do so much damage to the development of the minority child. What happens, for example, to the self-concept of a language minority child who absorbs so many negative evaluations of his cultural background that by the time he is 10 he prefers to hide his ethnicity as much as possible and even avoids being seen with his parents?

Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism is an important concept for bilingual and ESL educators because it serves as an antidote to the damaging effects that conscious or unconscious ethnocentrism can have on the emotional and academic development of language minority children. Cultural relativism, as described by Bidney, involves "tolerance based on skepticism of universal, objective standards of value as well as the idea of progress" (1968, p. 547). As a *philosophical* doctrine cultural relativism can imply that there are no universal norms by which all cultural groups should be judged, and as such, the concept can raise many ethical problems. For example, is female circumcision or the use of corporal punishment that leaves bruises or other longer lasting effects to be considered objectively acceptable on the basis of adherence to cultural relativism? As a *method* for coming to understand a cultural system and for viewing cultural change, however, cultural relativism is basic to all cultural inquiry. It constitutes an attempt to interpret data from the viewpoint of the people being observed or studied, rather than applying the values of one's own cultural system to the subject (Bidney, 1968, p. 543). The novelist (and former anthropology student) Kurt Vonnegut (1974), in an introduction to a children's book, *Free to Be You and Me*, proposes cultural relativism as a way of looking at how people may interpret their multiple worlds:

> one thing I would really like to tell them [children] about is cultural relativity. I didn't learn until I was in college about all the other cultures, and I should have learned that in the first grade. A first grader should understand that his or her culture isn't a rational invention; that there are thousands of other cultures and they all work pretty well; that all cultures function on faith rather than on truth; that there are lots of alternatives to our own society. (p. 139)

Cultural relativity is, of course, easier to talk about than to practice in the classroom, especially when members of cultural groups subscribe to beliefs, values, or behaviors that run counter to those prescribed for traditional educational settings in the United States. For example, from a culturally relative point of view, standard and nonstandard versions of a language are of equal validity in terms of performing the function of communicating a message. Yet, within the classroom, teachers of language minority students may find it difficult to accept the nonstandard dialect as a valid one and still believe that they are providing adequate standard language preparation for the students. To consider an example involving teachers' own language varieties, teacher-training institutions generally consider the ability to use standard English as part of the requirements for becoming certified. An aspiring Alaskan teacher who wished to return to teach in her home village, however, expressed doubts to one of the authors as to whether teacher certification was worth the price of alienating herself from her home community by giving up her bush English—a variety of English spoken by many Native Alaskan villagers.

All of us grow up with a basic core of set values; to have to reexamine them vis-à-vis other modes of behavior can be a disturbing task. However, cultural relativism is an important tool for educators as it enables us to move toward less prejudiced perceptions. For an American with a relativistic point of view, the British do not drive on the *wrong* side of the road. They simply drive on the *left* side of the road. To achieve the perspective of cultural relativism, understanding the *underlying premises* for the behavior is as important as understanding the behavior itself. Because culture is accumulated learning, it involves a long history of people responding as needed to environmental conditions and problems. Consider another example from the Alaskan bush. An imported teacher from the "lower 48" was trying very hard to have her Athapaskan youngsters develop cuddly feelings for a pet rabbit that she had brought to the classroom. When the children responded in unexpected ways she became very puzzled. After all, she had assumed that all children liked rabbits as pets. In order to accept the children's behavior, she had to understand that in their subsistence-oriented environment, a rabbit was more likely to be considered a source of food than something to be petted. From the children's point of view, it was the teacher's behavior that was puzzling.

Having an awareness of marked and unmarked cultures, the role of stereotyping and ethnocentrism, and the framework of cultural relativism will help us to better understand the ways in which prejudice and discrimination appear in schooling contexts. However, simply being aware of such issues will not reduce the incidence of various forms of bias. Considering ways to reduce prejudice brings us back to the pervasive nature of effective multicultural programs. For example, Nieto (1996, pp. 330–331) refers to a variety of research findings that suggest, in essence, that actions speak louder than words. Explicit "anti-prejudice" lessons for students or "one-shot" treatments seem to be less effective than broad-based programs that are infused into the curriculum through such practices as cooperative learning and the inclusion of social justice issues within academic content. A "before" and "after" lesson plan from Grant and Sleeter (1989, p. 110–111) illustrates how prejudice reduction can be built in to academic learning without explicitly addressing it as a separate lesson topic. In Grant and Sleeter's monocultural example of a unit on American Indians, the listed objectives are to identify reservations in the students' state and name the tribes, to list geographical features in the state that have American Indian names, and to appreciate local American Indian art and literature. In a multicultural unit design on the same subject, the objectives change significantly: the students will identify areas of good and bad agriculture on a state map, analyze the distribution of land to Whites and American Indians and the consequences of that distribution, make bar graphs from numerical data, differentiate between institutional racism and individual prejudice, and appreciate the potential of their own actions against institutional racism. This lesson plan demonstrates the important role of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1992) in prejudice reduction, as students involved in the above lesson would be examining power issues within a historical context and also exploring avenues of social action.

Looking beyond individual lessons to overall school climate, we began this section by noting that it is the marked students who traditionally have had to do most if not all of the accommodating in school. Díaz, Moll, and Mehan (1986) suggest a schoolwide process of "mutual accommodation" in which both teachers and students make modifications which build toward more equitable school success at the same time that they allow for integrity of marked cultures. Such an atmosphere of mutual accommodation allows fewer opportunities for prejudice

and discrimination to impinge on the quality of the school environment for language minority students.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN LANGUAGE MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT

We now look at Banks's last two multicultural dimensions, equity pedagogy and empowering school structures, by more closely examining the role of culture in the school success of language minority students. Language minority students reflect a very broad range of achievement levels: Some of the nation's finest young scholars are language minority students, whereas other language minority students fail to complete high school or exit with a very inadequate education. These students find themselves without the necessary literacy and learning skills to find adequate employment opportunities and to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy.

Explanations for school failure or success, of course, are heavily colored by the assumptions on which they are based. When searching for factors to help explain the tendency toward lower educational achievement of many language minority students, educators and policy makers in the past all too often pointed fingers in the direction of the students' sociocultural background, suggesting that the students possessed deficiencies that impeded academic success. For example, educators often placed recently arrived language minority students in the lowest curriculum track, thus virtually guaranteeing low achievement levels (Arias, 1986a). Hispanic Americans for a number of years were very frequently misplaced in classes for the educable mentally retarded, based largely on IQ tests that did not take into account language proficiency or cultural bias (Figueroa, 1980). The apparent assumption underlying such practices was that lack of English language skills equaled lack of academic potential (California State Department of Education, 1986).

Some progress has been made since the days when many ELLs were erroneously placed in highly inappropriate programs, assuming that it was up to the individual to sink or swim. There is recognition today that a complex variety of social, economic, cultural, and personal factors can all play roles in influencing the education outcomes of such students. As we look at the role of culture in school success, therefore, we must also take into consideration the relationship of cultural factors to other variables. As Banks and Banks (1997) point out, "It is necessary to conceptualize the school as a social system in order to implement multicultural education successfully" (p. 1). Exploration of education for language minority students with a map drawn from social and cultural analysis is important because such a map can help us to discover the "hidden curriculum"—that is, the concealed norms, values, and beliefs of the school culture and social system that can hinder or promote children's cognitive, linguistic, and social development (Beyer & Apple, 1988).

To better understand the role of culture in the school success of language minority children, first we will look at the legacy of deficit theories and its impact on school success. Then we turn to the development of cultural difference theories, and next we put these perspectives within the context of larger socioeconomic and political factors. (The reader may want to consult Cortés, 1993, Jacob and Jordan, 1993, and Nieto, 1996, for their more in-depth discussions of the complex array of theories that have been used to explain the tendency toward the academic underachievement of many minority students.)

As we proceed through this discussion of cultural factors in school achievement, it is useful to recall Thomas and Collier's prism, which was introduced in Chapter Four. At the center of the triangular prism are "sociocultural processes," which are interrelated with all three interconnected anchoring points of the prism: language development, cognitive development, and academic development. Through our discussion of the role of culture in school success, we will be examining a range of such sociocultural processes as they affect language minority students' linguistic, cognitive, and academic development. By building a strong awareness of the role of these sociocultural processes within the prism, bilingual and ESL teachers are in a better position to take an effective role in the implementation of equity pedagogy and empowering sociocultural structures within the schools.

Deficit Theories

There are essentially two aspects to deficit theory, genetic deficit and cultural deficit. (Ginsburg, 1986, may be consulted for detailed review of deficit theories.) The genetic deficit framework, which has existed in a variety of forms for many years as a justification for personal and institutional racism, resurfaced in new ways in the 1960s. At this time, some researchers suggested through statistical analyses that a group's overall capacity to learn is enhanced or constrained by their inherited genes. Researchers such as Jensen (1969) suggested that the academic underachievement of minorities had little to do with the environment, class, ethnicity, or the nature of assessment procedures and much to do with the kinds of genes inherited by the individual. It is important to note that despite the general lack of respect that social scientists have had for such genetic determinism theories, Herrnstein and Murray (1994) in the 1990s again renewed a national debate over the role of genetics with the publication of *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. Their genetically deterministic argument rekindled the debate over Jensen's discredited genetic view. It seemed to have tapped racist and xenophobic sentiments in the country, as evidenced by the large amount of media coverage and the number of weeks that the book was on the best seller list of the *New York Times*. Despite all of the interest in the book, the genetic heritage explanation, with its racist base, is flawed and extremely harmful to the education of minority students. It compares such students, who have varied cognitive, linguistic, socioeconomic, political and cultural patterns, with majority students, who serve as the criterion for intellectual and sociocultural "normalcy" (Delpit, 1995).

Perhaps as pernicious as the genetic deficit explanation is the second view, the cultural deficit view, which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. This "culture of poverty" approach, which implied that academic underachievement among many groups of minority students was anchored in their socioculturally, economically, linguistically, and intellectually impoverished environments, tended to devalue the sociocultural and linguistic background of students as well as to blame the victim (Ovando & Gourd, 1996). Jacob and Jordan (1993) have summarized some of the key areas in which culture of poverty children were said to be deficient: "cognitive development," "attention span," "expectations of reward from knowledge and task completion," "ability to use adults as sources of information," "ability to delay gratification," and "linguistic and symbolic development" (p. 5). Looking more closely at linguistic development, language skills have been an important component of much cultural deficit research in the past (Jacob & Jordan, 1993; Guthrie & Hall, 1983), and there still is a lingering yet erroneous view

among some educators today that lower-income ethnic minorities enter school with faulty oral language and literacy patterns, which inhibit their intellectual development.

Like the genetic deficit viewpoint, the cultural deficit viewpoint is flawed in that it brings to the research a predetermined idea of what constitutes "normalcy." Researchers evaluate children's performance based on their discipline's culturally influenced ideas about "normal" affective, cognitive, and language development patterns. Then when they identify other patterns within particular groups, the implication is that these patterns are defective, rather than simply being different.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the effect of cultural deficit perspectives on bilingual and ESL instruction for ELLs has been evident in the preponderance of programs that have tended to view lack of English proficiency as a problem that had to be fixed through remedial programs, with the goal of exiting the children into mainstream classrooms as soon as they have become, so to speak, "normal." One bilingual teacher in the 1970s reflected on her feeling that public bilingual education would not be so threatening to its opponents if it were not associated with allegedly "culturally deprived" groups:

> If I were telling people that I taught in a French/English program at an elite private school, I think it would be easy to rave about the virtues of bilingual education and get agreement from virtually everyone. But that is not quite the context of my bilingual school, which is about 95 percent minority and in one of the lowest income neighborhoods of the city. My students are too often perceived as problems rather than as promises, as members of the "culture of poverty" whose cultural values need to be changed.

Cultural Difference Theories

The basic premise of cultural difference theories is that the failure of schools to effectively address discrepancies between sociocultural and linguistic patterns in the home and in the school produces underachievement (Forman, Minick, & Stone, 1993; Jacob & Jordan, 1993; Lomawaima, 1995; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Rather than blaming minority students for their underachievement, which genetic and cultural deficit theories would do, cultural difference theories proceed from the anthropological notion that "minority students and their families and communities are no less well endowed, in basic intelligence, talents, language, culture, or life experience, than members of the majority population. Therefore, clashes with majority culture schools, when they occur, are matters not of deficit, but of difference" (Jacob & Jordan, 1993, p. 10).

Within this field of culturally based research into minority student achievement, a number of interrelated terms have been used. One of the early terms was *home-school mismatch.* Other terms that researchers and practitioners use for instruction derived from cultural difference theories are *culturally compatible, culturally congruent, culturally appropriate, culturally responsive,* and *culturally relevant* (Nieto, 1996, p. 146). Despite differences in focus and in the degree to which educators believe that school practices must mimic home practices, the general concept of this type of research remains that schools that make accommodations according to cultural backgrounds will enhance minority achievement. For example, Ladson-Billings, who developed her concept of "cultural relevance" through a case study of highly effective teachers within a predominantly African-American community, found that the teachers in her study were able, through culturally relevant teaching, to provide an environment in which students could

"choose academic excellence yet still identify with African and African-American culture" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17).

Such home-school differences can manifest themselves in a very broad range of ways in the classroom. Three of the major ways that we will examine here are cognitive styles, language variation, and language use patterns.

Cognitive Styles

Teachers today are aware through their training and experience that children vary in their cognitive styles, and a body of research suggests that these styles may be influenced by cultural background (Bennett, 1995a). Banks (1988) in a review of studies on cognitive style, for example, found that ethnicity tended to have a greater influence on cognitive style than did social class, suggesting that there is a link between cultural background and approaches to learning. Childrearing practices, degree of stress on individual orientation versus group orientation, ecological adaptations to the environment, and the ways that language is used are just some of the factors that may result in patterns of cultural differences in cognitive styles (Bennett, 1995a).

While an awareness of potential differences in cognitive style can be valuable, it can also be misleading. Notions about culturally influenced cognitive styles can be based on faulty research and can also lead to stereotyping. The difficulty in finding clear answers about the relationship between culture and cognitive styles is evident in many studies. Cole and Scribner (1974) did an international review of research on culture and cognition, covering the areas of language, perception, conceptual processes, memory, and problem solving, and two of the main things that they learned from the careful review was how *not* to ask questions and how *not* to design and carry out research in culture and cognition (p. 173). For example, apparent difficulty in performing certain cognitive tasks, as a researcher looking for cultural differences presents them, may not necessarily be related to a difference in cognitive style but instead to different schemata, or networks of background knowledge. A Navajo from a remote rural area, for example, may be more likely to successfully complete sequencing tasks if initially they are based on the care of sheep rather than on small pictures of a trip to an urban supermarket (Bingham & Bingham, 1979; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975).

We can use the issue of so-called "field-dependent" or "field sensitive" learning to illustrate how cognitive style research can lead to negative stereotyping. In the 1970s research by Ramírez and Castañeda (1974) suggested that Mexican-American children had a field-dependent learning style. Other research studies emerged suggesting that African Americans and American Indians also shared this type of learning style. According to these researchers, field-dependent students did not prosper academically in U.S. schools because they tended to rely heavily on learning styles that were deductive, global, highly personalized, cooperative, and group normed rather than relying on field-independent styles that were inductive, linear, analytical, fomulaic, impersonal, independent, and individually oriented. (Ramírez & Castañeda, 1974, p. 142). Irvine and York (1995, p. 484) in a survey of the literature concluded, however, that findings on patterns of field dependence and field independence had been "premature and conjectural." Nevertheless, the concepts, for a period of time, influenced many educators and had a negative effect on perceptions of minority students, because the field-dependent style had a less positive connotation than the field independent style from the point of view of dominant cultural patterns.

Another problem with theories on cultural differences in cognitive styles is that implementation in the classroom of culturally compatible learning strategies

can be difficult. Nieto (1996, p. 139), for example, refers to at least 14 identified types of learning style differences and 13 learning styles theories. As has been suggested many times now, culture is truly complex, deep, and changing. As we survey lists of observable behaviors that have been developed to supposedly identify learning styles, we need to remember that there are usually uncharted waters surrounding those behaviors and we may not be in a position (by virtue of knowledge, training, or experience) to penetrate them. Just as the essence of culture is not order but change, students' cognitive styles are not necessarily static. In a constructivist sense, students are developing multiple learning styles in response to their learning environments.

Despite the difficulties with cognitive style theories, the concept of cultural variability in such styles does have a role to play in understanding cultural factors in the achievement of language minority students. Confirming the inconclusive but at the same time promising aspects of learning styles, Irvine and York (1995) state

> The research on the learning styles of culturally diverse learners is neither a panacea nor a Pandora's box. The complexity of the construct, the psychometric problems related to its measurement, and the enigmatic relationship between culture and the teaching and learning process suggest that this body of research must be interpreted and applied carefully in classrooms of culturally diverse students. . . . However, learning-styles research has significant possibilities for enhancing the achievement of culturally diverse students. This body of research reminds teachers to be attentive not only to individual students' learning styles but to their own actions, instructional goals, methods, and materials in reference to their students' cultural experiences and preferred learning environments. (p. 484)

Language Variation

In Chapter 1, we introduced the notion that a great deal of language variation can exist within the bilingual or ESL classroom, in both English and in the non-English languages. In a bilingual setting in Los Angeles, one teacher identified three varieties of English and three varieties of Spanish in her classroom. Each variety carried with it information about social status and the cultural background of the speaker: instruction officially went on in the standard forms of English and Spanish, but students used two other varieties of English—Black English and Chicano English—and two other versions of Spanish—Chicano Spanish and a rural northern Mexican variety.

Related to the issue of standard and nonstandard language is the process of word borrowing, which occurs naturally in language contact situations. Consider the word *grocería*. A Nicaraguan living in the Midwest may use this word to refer to a grocery store, when in fact *grosería* (spelled differently, but pronounced the same way) means "cuss word" in standard Spanish. However, in the Midwestern Spanish-speaking community where the speaker lives, *grocería* is a natural and legitimate word for grocery store, especially because the usual places in which one buys food in Nicaragua are very unlike the physical set-up of large supermarkets in the Midwestern United States—words used in Nicaraguan Spanish for places to buy food don't really fit well in the new context. However, this natural process of language adaptation can be negatively misinterpreted as a reflection of weak language skills. For example, nonlinguists sometimes refer derogatorily to the blend of Spanish and English as "Spanglish."

Code-switching is another important aspect of language variation that affects language minority students. Suppose that a bilingual Mexican American child says to another peer, "*Ándale, pues,* I don't know," or "Gimme the ball, *que le voy a*

decir a la maestra."[2] Such language behaviors, sometimes erroneously labeled as reflections of "semilingualism," are also natural adaptations to language contact situations. Research, for example, suggests that code-switching among bilingual people is both a predictable and a creative skill that follows patterns and performs special communicative functions (Ferguson & Heath, 1981; Jacobson & Faltis, 1990; Timm, 1993; Valdés, 1980).

To the purist, both word borrowing and code-switching may seem to be a threat to the integrity of the standard language, but such language mixture has always been a part of language change and as such is part of the larger and inevitable process of culture change (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). However, students who navigate two overlapping linguistic worlds in a school environment that is not accepting of cultural differences may find barriers to school success. A bilingual education researcher describes his personal questioning of his language identity:

> With what language was I raised? What language do I speak in the Chicano community? Is it Spanish? Is it English? Is it even a language? Early in my elementary school days I learned that I was not speaking English; and later, in high school, when I was enrolled in what I thought would be an easy course, Spanish, I was told that I didn't speak Spanish! (Carrasco, 1981b, p. 191)

Because of the use of nonstandard language patterns, many of the children who qualify for bilingual or ESL instruction represent linguistic backgrounds that all too often are still perceived as being "deficient" by speakers of standard English. Such judgments are unconsciously woven in with judgments of the quality of the child's cultural background, and can result in lower expectations of the child's ability, which will in turn lead to lower achievement. When we introduced these language differences in Chapter Four, in the context of language arts instruction, we noted the importance of accepting nonstandard language varieties in the classroom at the same time that standard forms are added to the students' repertoire of language proficiencies. Erickson (1997, p. 32) provides an example of lost learning opportunities due to culturally insensitive approaches to language differences. Referring to Piestrup (1973) he describes a first-grade reading lesson in which the teacher wanted the children to read aloud and "remember your endings" (the final consonant sounds at the ends of words). The teacher had one student re-read "What did Little Duck see?" four times until he or she finally pronounced the final "t" in "what." Such an approach certainly does not encourage a child to perceive reading as a pleasurable experience. The time spent insisting on pronunciation of final consonants is at the expense of time that could be spent bringing some personal meaning and higher level thinking skills to the story of Little Duck. Erickson calls this an example of a "cultural border war" that results in lower achievement, and we will return to this concept later in the chapter.

Language Use Patterns

We have learned from ethnographic studies of human communication that there are cultural differences in the ways in which people communicate with each other. Using videotapes, audiotapes, and participant observation, researchers interested in differences in how cultural groups use language to communicate collect data on a variety of classroom and community interaction patterns: for example, types of listening behaviors, ways of showing attention, turn-taking structures, questioning patterns, the ways in which topics of conversation are organized, body movements, and the rhythm and cadence of conversations.

Researchers who have studied these differences in classrooms and minority communities have in some cases found evidence to suggest that some modification of school patterns to more closely resemble home and community patterns may have a positive effect on school success for language minority students. In the last section of this chapter, "Ethnographic Approaches to Cultural Understanding" we will return to look more closely at some examples of home-school differences in participant structures and other language use patterns.

Social, Economic, and Political Factors in Achievement

Cultural difference theories—addressing such issues as cognitive styles, language variation, and language use patterns—have contributed greatly to our understanding of schooling outcomes for language minority students. However, the issue of cultural congruence cannot provide a complete explanation for the lower achievement levels of some groups of language minority students. Ogbu (1986), for example, argues that cultural differences alone cannot explain differences in school success, pointing out a pattern in which culturally different recent immigrant students are more likely to succeed academically than culturally different castelike minority students who have been subject to generations of discrimination. Whether immigrant or castelike minority, there are also cases where minority children achieve success even though the instructional practices at their school are not culturally congruent, suggesting that "other factors not related to cultural conflict must be involved as well" (Nieto, 1996, p. 149).

Some theorists use a distinction between microforces and macroforces to analyze cultural versus sociopolitical factors in school success for minority students. The behaviors and human interactions that teachers, students, family members, and community members engage in every day both inside and outside the classroom constitute the microforces that may affect student success. Such microforces are associated with cultural difference theories about school achievement, because cultural difference research focuses in very closely on the minutia of human interaction. Macroforces, on the other hand, are those large socioeconomic and political patterns that are generally not accessible to intervention strategies on the part of educators. They have to do with who holds wealth and power in the society and how the distribution of such status is maintained or altered. We will look at these macroforces first by considering in a general sense the role of socioeconomic status (SES) in the school success of language minority students and then by examining social reproduction theory as it applies to language minority students.

Socioeconomic Status

The ability to perceive the interplay between SES and cultural variables is important in the context of bilingual and ESL instruction because people often associate the terms *ethnic group, language minority,* and *English language learner* with lower SES. However, it is important to remember, as we mentioned in Chapter One, that they do not necessarily go hand in hand. For example, using a typology that distinguishes between ethnic groups that have tended to be relatively successful socioeconomically and those that have not, Havighurst illustrated a variety of patterns that emerge through the interplay of ethnic identity, cultural models, and socioeconomic structures. Through this interplay, it emerges that some minority groups have in the past managed to position themselves successfully within the given educational and socioeconomic structure, while other groups have not been served fairly by existing educational and economic opportunities

(Havighurst, 1978, pp. 14–18). However, despite the fact of socioeconomic diversity within the language minority community, it is true that a disproportionate number of language minority children do come from lower-income homes.

It is no great surprise that parents' SES can be a strong factor in school success for both majority and minority students. Using an approach called status attainment research, investigators such as Coleman et al. (1966) and Jencks et al. (1972) gathered extremely large sets of research data from across regions, ethnic groups, and social classes and performed a variety of statistical analyses to isolate the extent to which such variables as family background, innate ability, peer influences, and schooling practices explained students' variation in performance on standardized tests. Jacob and Jordan (1993) indicate that such status attainment researchers have generally concluded "that family background is highly related to student performance on standardized tests and that school variables, except for some characteristics of teachers, are not significantly related to student test performance" (p. 6). An important component of family background is SES—parents' education level, occupation, and income level.

From a cynical point of view, then, we could conclude that the best way for language minority students to ensure their academic success is to "choose their parents well." However, macro-level status attainment research, like micro-level cultural difference research, has been criticized for its inadequacy in explaining the variability in achievement among minority students. There are also methodological challenges to the types of measurements used. Critics also fault this type of approach for ignoring the microforces at school that must come into play for the macro input variables such as parents' SES to result in particular outcomes (Jacob & Jordan, 1993, pp. 6–7). We can use an interesting example from the 1970s to illustrate one way in which microforces may intervene between macro input variables and achievement outcomes. The U.S. Civil Rights Commission found in a 1972 study that the degree of acceptance of the use of Spanish by Hispanic children was related to the income level of the students' families. The no-Spanish rule, which was present in many schools in the Southwest at this time, "was more likely to be enforced when the proportion of Chicanos in the school was high and the socioeconomic status of the population was low" (Peñalosa, 1980, p. 11). The macro input variable of low SES resulted at the micro-level of daily school interactions in the discriminatory treatment of the students' L_1, which in turn could be argued to have contributed to the outcome of low achievement. Thus, one could argue that it was not the SES that caused the low achievement, but the ensuing prejudicial treatment that stemmed from the low status of the students.

Social Reproduction Theory

Social reproduction theory provides another type of sociopolitical macro explanation for schooling outcomes. Associated with such researchers as Bowles and Gintis (1976), proponents of social reproduction theory hold that, as instruments of the dominant classes, the schools' implicit and explicit curricular infrastructure serves as a vehicle through which the larger society's socioeconomic and cultural inequalities are reproduced. This view of society suggests that macro structural forces in society largely determine how well children will succeed in school. Thus, if language minority students attend poor neighborhood schools with a working class student population, the chances are great that such students' outcomes will be influenced not only by what they experience in the courses they take but also through many other aspects of the school environment. Such things as the physical layout of the school (prisonlike or campuslike, for example), the nature of the relationships between students and teachers, and the quality of the

courses (watered-down "basic" courses versus challenging course content) all may be said to reflect the dominant versus the subordinate status of different schools (Nieto, 1996, p. 235).

Social reproduction theory has been challenged, among other things, for being excessively deterministic and overstating the connection between highly varied local school practices and the larger capitalistic structure of society. Theorists also challenge social reproduction theory, such as status attainment theory, for also failing to address at the micro level the school practices that produce the unequal outcomes (Mehan, 1989). Some social reproduction theorists, however, have to some degree incorporated micro factors into their model by introducing the concept of "cultural capital." By defining cultural traits as a form of "capital" within the socioeconomic system, they argue that marginalization of minority students occurs because their cultural capital has little value in the social structure of the school. Consequently, they find themselves at a disadvantage compared to students who have large amounts of dominant society "cultural capital" to invest in school success (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; McLaren, 1989).

Another variation of social reproduction theory is Erickson's resistance theory. Erickson (1987) combines aspects of cultural mismatch theory with the socioeconomically deterministic premise of social reproduction theory to suggest a process in which early cultural differences in the schooling process initiate school failure. This failure then becomes entrenched within some groups as they actively begin to resist the school's culturally hegemonistic social reproduction patterns. For example, students may resist "selling out" to the dominant culture's expectations through attitudes and classroom behaviors that have negative effects on their learning. From this perspective, minority students are not just victims of the reproduction of social inequalities: They become actors who are involved in a struggle. As we mentioned previously in this chapter, Erickson (1997) has described such conflicts as cultural border wars. Our earlier reference to the teacher who battled with her students over the pronunciation of final consonant sounds was an example of such a cultural border war. We can also see evidence of resistance theory in the results of a year-long study comparing teachers who negatively sanctioned Black English with teachers who accepted the presence of Black English. At the end of the school year, the students in the sanctioned classroom actually used more Black English than they had at the beginning of the year. The students whose Black English had been accepted, however, used more standard language patterns by the end of the year (Erickson, 1997, referring to Piestrup, 1973). Erickson's resistance theory mitigates the deterministic implications of social reproduction theory by suggesting that schools that are willing to acknowledge and address sociocultural issues are less likely to set off cycles of resistance. As Erickson (1997) states, "in the short run, we cannot change the wider society. But we can make school learning environments less alienating. Multicultural education, especially critical or antiracist multicultural education, is a way to change the business as usual of schools" (p. 50).

While acknowledging the power of strong macroforces such as socioeconomic inequality, perpetuation of power structures, and the presence of racism, many researchers agree that there is evidence that schools that embody a multicultural approach to education can provide more equitable opportunities than schools that ignore multicultural issues. In other words, despite socioeconomic and political macroforces, treatment of cultural differences still has a role to play in school success. Nieto points out that while racism, inadequate health care, substandard housing and all the other negative effects of poverty are serious causes for concern, there are schools that manage to be more successful than others in such

contexts. Social and economic hardships "do not in and of themselves doom children to academic failure" (Nieto, 1994, p. 26). Faltis (1997), surveying the field of culturally appropriate learning environments, cites a variety of studies that indicate that teachers' changes in the context for learning that are based on an understanding of cultural differences between the home and the school can lead to improved school success. Also, looking specifically at bilingual programs, in Chapter Four, we referred to evidence suggesting that SES can be a less powerful variable in academic achievement for language minority students in schools that have a strong, academically rich bilingual program. The Significant Bilingual Instructional Features Study (Tikunoff, 1985; Tikunoff et al., 1991) provides broad-based evidence for the key role that cultural relevance can play in the quality of programs for language minority children. This large study involved observation and data collection in 58 classes with students from many different linguistic origins at six sites throughout the United States. Through analyses of all of the data, researchers identified several culturally relevant factors in effective bilingual instruction (Tikunoff, 1985, p. 3).

To summarize thus far our exploration of the role of culture in school success for language minority students, we return again to Nieto (1996, p. 245), with whom we began this section by listing her defining factors of multicultural education. In her extensive review of factors in school success for minority students, she concluded that

> school achievement can be understood and explained only as a multiplicity of sometimes competing and always changing factors: the school's tendency to replicate society and its inequalities, cultural and language incompatibilities, the limiting and bureaucratic structures of schools, and the political relationship of ethnic groups to society and the schools. Nevertheless, it is tricky business to seek causal explanations for school success and failure. . . . Structural inequality and cultural incompatibility may be major causes of school failure, but they work *differently* on different communities, families, and individuals. How these factors are mediated within the school and home settings and their complex interplay probably are ultimately responsible for either the success or failure of students in schools. (Nieto, 1996, p. 245)

As bilingual and ESL educators, we have an important role to play as to how these factors are mediated within the local schools. Díaz, Moll, and Mehan (1986) emphasize the role of "pedagogically optimistic teachers" in this process. Such teachers are able to change the classroom social organization patterns for full participation of students from a variety of backgrounds through a variety of culturally appropriate learning environments. Through such actions, teachers in bilingual and ESL classrooms can help to foster multicultural programs that nurture equity and an empowering school climate.

ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACHES TO CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

In the previous section on the role of culture in school achievement we have just concluded that, despite the acknowledged power of socioeconomic and political macroforces, teachers can have an effect on learning outcomes through the development of multicultural learning environments. By surveying some examples

of ethnographic studies that examine sociocultural processes in the classroom and the community, we can develop a more specific understanding of the evolving ways in which educators can effectively address cultural diversity. Such ethnographic studies have had and will continue to have an important role in helping educators to understand cultural processes in bilingual and ESL classrooms. Ethnography is a vital tool in the construction of culturally sensitive learning environments for language minority students. Ethnographic approaches enable us to see the school as a sociocultural system, they explore the insiders' perspective on the schooling process, and they place education within the context of the community to see how communication and learning takes place both inside and outside of the classroom walls. Microethnography, a type of ethnography that focuses in on selected aspects of human interaction and language use, can, for example, provide insights into "how learning is mediated by adults in the classroom and how concrete activities of communication shape the way children cope cognitively with different learning tasks" (Moll, 1981, p. 442).

As we consider the following ethnographic studies in a progression from earlier work up to more recent work, we will see a general move away from the idea that home and school cultures must be closely matched, and we will also see a movement toward greater interest in culturally relevant knowledge construction processes in classrooms. As we move into knowledge construction processes, we will also consider the important role of teachers in ethnographic research.

Cultural Compatibility Studies

We start by discussing one of the best-known and most comprehensive projects on cultural compatibility, the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP). During the 1970s and 1980s KEEP researchers conducted a series of studies on home-school mismatch, looking at social interaction in the home, in the community, and in the classroom. Psychologists, cultural anthropologists, sociolinguists, and curriculum specialists collaborated in a broad spectrum of applied research studies on the academic achievement of children of native Hawaiian ancestry, who have tended to have some of the lowest achievement levels of any group in the nation. In searching for cultural explanations for the tendency of minority groups toward lower academic achievement, Kamehameha researchers operated under the assumption that

> minorities are members of coherent cultural systems and that their difficulties are not the consequence of personal and/or social deficits and pathologies. Second, the classroom is held to be an interface of cultures in which the learning process is disrupted because teachers and pupils have incongruent expectations, motives, social behaviors, and language and cognitive patterns. (Gallimore, Boggs, & Jordan, 1974, p. 261)

KEEP project members used a three-stage process for improvement of instruction for Hawaiian children. First, KEEP researchers developed a knowledge base regarding Hawaiian children within the context of their home culture and their school experience. They gathered information on such topics as home socialization, social motivation, language production, phonemics, sociolinguistics, cognitive strategies, and standard English acquisition. (For example, one area of cultural mismatch that they identified was the value placed on personal autonomy. The researchers observed that in the home the children were socialized to value being contributors to the family's well-being rather than to value independent living (Tharp, 1994). In the classroom, however, personal accomplishment was

valued for its own sake rather than as a contribution to the needs of others.) In the second stage, researchers and teachers collaborated to apply this database to the development of an effective program in the project's laboratory school. Finally, through in-service training and collaboration between consultants and teachers, the instructional program was implemented in public schools that had a concentration of Hawaiian students (Tharp et al., 1981; Tharp, 1994; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1993). One of the project's videotapes, *Coming Home to School: Culturally Compatible Classroom Practices,* demonstrated how teachers, by getting a glimpse of native Hawaiian students' natural cultural environment at home, saw these children demonstrating talents seldom revealed in the classroom. Teachers were then able to use the filmed information as a guide in selecting culturally and instructionally appropriate learning environments.

While KEEP researchers considered a culturally responsive curriculum to be a keystone for effective schooling, identifying what is and is not essential in the match between the home and school was also important. Some important home cultural patterns were positively applicable to the classroom. Language use patterns in the home, for example, were transferred to classroom reading instruction through emphasis on comprehension rather than phonics, and through an open, relaxed, "talk story" discussion approach in place of the "teacher-asks-a-question/one student-answers/teacher-evaluates" format. (The "talk story" is a particular type of discourse pattern that the researchers observed to occur regularly in Hawaiian homes.) The researchers concluded that other home cultural patterns, however, seemed to have a neutral effect on classroom performance. For instance, they found that the English of the classroom did not have to match the students' variety of English, Hawaiian Pidgin, for achievement to improve.[3]

A variety of ethnographic studies published in the 1980s focused on communication patterns and participant structures of language. For example, Mohatt and Erickson (1981) conducted a study on language use patterns in Native American classrooms by comparing an Indian and a non-Indian teacher. Mohatt and Erickson observed such behaviors as how teachers gave directions and how they monitored student activities. They also studied the rhythm of the teachers' pause times between questions and answers. They found that the Indian and non-Indian teachers used different participation structures in the classroom. For example, the non-Indian teacher used more direct commands and singling out of students for individual responses or contributions. However, it is also interesting to note that as the school year progressed the non-Indian teacher began to use more of the participation structures that were characteristic initially of the Native American instructor only. Mohatt and Erickson's study thus suggested two things for the teacher in the bilingual or ESL classroom. First, the ethnicity of the instructor can have an effect on the participation structure that evolves in the classroom and on the degree to which that structure complements the students' own communication styles. Second, if teachers' ethnicity differs from that of students, it may be possible for teachers to adapt their style as they gain experience with classroom participants.

In another investigation of language patterns, Morine-Dershimer (1983) studied the effect of teachers on the "communicative status" of students in multiethnic classrooms. Students with high communicative status were defined as those with a high frequency of classroom verbal participation and were viewed by classmates as people one could learn from. In her research, Morine-Dershimer found that teachers could "create" varied distributions of communicative status within their classrooms, depending on the types of instructional strategies they employed. The types of students who attained high communicative status via a

textbook-based teaching approach, for example, differed from the types of students who attained high status via an experience-based approach. This research implied that a more equitable distribution of communicative status opportunities could be realized in multiethnic classrooms through the intentional use of varied types of instructional strategies.

Philips's study on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in eastern Oregon was a sociolinguistically based investigation that compared interaction styles within the classroom and the community. In her research she studied the cultural differences in attention structure and regulation of talk between home and school. Among her principal findings were that Warm Springs Indian students "speak too softly, hesitate too long before speaking, and engage in too much visually received signaling *from the point of view of teacher expectations* [italics added]" (Philips, 1983, p. 129). Philips, however, pointed out that one's position in the social structure influenced how researchers and educators perceived such miscommunication. That is, because of the teacher's higher social status and authority, observers tended to conclude that it was the students who misunderstood, whereas logically it could just as well be said that it is the teacher who misunderstands. In other words, it would be just as reasonable to say that the teachers talked too loudly, didn't pause long enough before speaking, and didn't make use of sufficient visual signaling. Based on her research, Philips suggested that even if teachers had good intentions, they and their students could miscommunicate nonverbally. She argued that because nonverbal behavior is extremely difficult to monitor consciously, ethnic discrimination by teachers may continue to occur even if deliberate efforts were made to eliminate it.

Another influential study of language use patterns was Heath's research with children in a community in the Piedmont Carolinas, where many African-American residents spoke a nonstandard variety of English. Heath found that these children in her study tended to be very unresponsive to the teachers' questions in school, and consequently educators perceived the children to be deficient in language skills. Through her ethnographic work, Heath observed that the questioning patterns used in the home were different than those used at school. Consequently, when teachers changed their questioning style at school to one more similar to the home style, there was a significant change in the students from a passive to an active role in classroom discussions. This success then served as a bridge to traditional classroom questioning patterns (Heath, 1983).

As ethnographic studies of language minority education continued into the 1990s, researchers began to question some of the conclusions regarding cultural patterns and learning styles previous researchers had made. To varying degrees some researchers set aside the notion that cultural patterns in the classroom necessarily had to emulate those found in the home. For example, McCarty et al., (1991), based on their research on the Rough Rock Indian reservation, concluded that the idea of the nonverbal Indian student was a myth. In reaching that conclusion, they raised questions about the very concept of culturally based learning styles. The researchers noted that in the past educators, in an effort to establish culturally compatible classrooms, had tended to favor nonverbal and short-answer types of instruction for American Indian students. The result, according to McCarty et al., has been detrimental to the students' development of higher-order thinking processes and the use of inquiry methods. The researchers worked with Navajo staff members from the Native American Materials Development Center to design and implement a bilingual inquiry-based social studies program. Teachers using this program were to emphasize inquiry and information-seeking questions. Project members designed the program to use the students'

prior knowledge of the local community as a bridge to their understanding of new problems and their solutions. Because they were working in an instructional environment that was based in their own experience and knowledge and that was designed to emphasize inquiry, the researchers observed that the students did indeed become more verbal. They concluded that it was classroom discourse patterns that had previously limited the nature of their verbal responses.

Sociocultural Theory and Knowledge Construction Studies

A growing number of studies based in sociocultural theory reflect the move away from a focus on culturally compatible classroom practices. From the point of view of sociocultural theory, "both student and teacher are engaged in the process of constructing their minds through social activity" (García, 1994, p. 146). The work of Vygotsky (1978) can be seen as a link between research in cognitive styles and the development of the sociocultural framework. Vygotsky postulated that children's cognitive structures are developed through the actions and speech of their caretakers and are transmitted through social interaction. It follows, therefore, that culturally coded styles of speech and social interaction result in culturally related patterns of cognitive structure. To come to an understanding of students' cognitive structures, it is therefore important to develop a data base on the sociocultural patterns surrounding the learner. Therefore, the use of ethnographic methods continues to be important in the context of sociocultural research.

Building on sociocultural theory, it follows that the extent to which the cultural and linguistic resources of the community are used in the knowledge construction process will positively or negatively affect the teaching and learning process. For over 10 years, Moll and his colleagues have been using a sociocultural approach in their field studies that links schools closely with their Hispanic-American communities in the Southwest. Guided by principles from anthropology, psychology, linguistics, and education, and building on the research of Vélez-Ibáñez (1993) and Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg (1992), Moll and his colleagues have examined resources Hispanic-American communities use to survive economically as well as to provide academic, linguistic, cultural, and emotional support for their children. This body of research suggests that the use of the Hispanic-American community as a resource can play a key role in the academic and sociocultural well-being of Hispanic-American students (Moll, 1992a; Moll, 1992b; Moll & Díaz, 1993). We have already alluded to this concept of the use of local funds of knowledge when we discussed literacy development in Chapter Four, pointing out that connections between home and school literacy development can enhance language minority students' learning. We will return to the theme again in the final chapter of the book, "School and Community."

Sociocultural theory implies that certain instructional approaches will be more favorable than others to the establishment of an environment in which knowledge construction thrives. Some instructional approaches used in socioculturally based classrooms are dialogue, teacher co-learning, peer collaboration, questioning, use of students' prior knowledge, and joint knowledge construction (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992). Moll and Díaz (1993), using the framework of knowledge construction, focus on the "immediate environment of learning" rather than on possible mismatch between the home culture and the school culture. In a series of studies they collaborated with teachers to compare the reading instruction of elementary-age native Spanish speakers in Spanish and English. They also studied the English

writing instruction of junior high school native Spanish speakers. In both cases they found evidence of a "watered down curriculum" that did not use the students' cultural and linguistic resources in the knowledge construction process. In the case of the elementary students, they observed that students who could read very well in Spanish and who demonstrated sophisticated comprehension skills during Spanish reading instruction were being given only very simple decoding lessons during English reading instruction, with an emphasis on correct pronunciation. Once the English reading teacher was given an opportunity to observe the students' skills in Spanish reading, the researcher and teacher were able to work together to change the social organization of instruction and to use bilingual support through L_1 to remove the unnecessarily simplified constraints of the previous English reading program.

A similar pattern of reductionist instructional strategies was observed in writing instruction at the junior high school. The native Spanish speakers were doing very little extended writing in English, ostensibly because of their lack of English skills. The researchers began by studying uses of writing in the students' community and by talking to parents about local issues that were important to them. This generated possible topics for writing assignments from which students could choose. Then in a two-phase process, students collected information on their topics through homework assignments, usually consisting of interviews of community members. Then they wrote and revised their essays or reports. Although the products contained many grammar errors, the important point was that the students were now doing work that was comparable to what the native English speakers were doing in terms of development of expository skills. In both this case and the previous one, the principal question of the investigators and the teachers was "how to maximize the use of available resources to overcome reductionist instructional strategies" (Moll & Díaz, 1993, p. 74). Reflecting the shift away from emphasis on home-school cultural mismatch, the authors argued that "to succeed in school one does not need a special culture; we know now, thanks to ethnographic work, that success and failure is in the social organization of schooling, in the organization of the experience itself" (Moll & Díaz, 1993, p. 78).

We conclude this brief review of several ethnographic studies by noting the valuable role that teachers can and do play in such research.[4] Because one of the goals of ethnography is to gain some understanding of a cultural system from the insider's perspective, collaboration between researchers and teachers is valuable. In fact, the distinction between teacher and researcher can become blurred as they both take on the role of learners. Collaboration between researchers and teachers was an important component of Moll and Díaz's (1993) studies, which we just described. The teachers involved in these studies kept journals of their observations and innovations, and the research team used these to help guide their investigations. Using a similar approach, Calderón (1996) developed a project in which teachers were trained to work as microethnographers within their classrooms. In this study of two-way bilingual programs in a Texas-Mexico border town, pairs of teachers team taught. This made it possible for team partners to observe classroom sociocultural interaction on a regular basis. The purpose of the observations was to help the teachers to be able to step back and develop an understanding of such things as the different types of discourse that were valued in Spanish and English instruction and the different types of social relationships of power that were sanctioned or encouraged. The 24 teachers involved in the study formed a Teachers Learning Community, which met regularly to discuss their observations. With the data collected, the teachers developed new ways of looking at their daily routines. According to Calderón (1996),

> By creating a culture of inquiry through ethnography, professional learning was focused and accelerated. With the tools of "teacher ethnography" the teams of monolingual and bilingual teachers grew closer together. They learned about their teaching by observing children and their partner. Their partner provided a mirror for their teaching. Change became meaningful, relevant and necessary. Although far from perfect still, the teachers' continuous learning is bringing about instructional program refinement and greater student gains as evidenced by preliminary academic and linguistic data for the experimental and control students in the study. (p. 8)

It is clear that ethnographic approaches can be used in many ways to enable educators to better understand the role of culture in bilingual and ESL classrooms. Ethnographic approaches help educators to analyze the dynamics of human interaction in the learning process, they provide us with broader perspectives on the assessment of student competencies, they develop our awareness of culturally influenced patterns of communication, they provide a window into the character of the local community, and they increase our sensitivity to the cultural influences on social, curricular, and organizational structures of school. Through all of the above, they provide insightful ways for teachers to observe and improve the multicultural learning process.

CONCLUSION

Given the all-encompassing nature of culture, our discussion in this chapter has ranged far and wide. We started by arguing for a complex view of culture as an elusive but powerful force in students', families', and teachers' lives. Then we explored children's development of cultural identities and found a multifaceted and dynamic process. Next, we turned to the broad dimensions of multicultural education as an organizing concept for how to capitalize on cultural diversity in bilingual and ESL settings. Within this context, we examined cultural concepts relevant to prejudice and discrimination, and we then turned to the role of culture in school success for language minority students. Armed with the argument that culturally relevant instruction did have a role to play in school achievement, we finally looked at ethnographic studies as important tools in the development of locally sensitive educational environments that take advantage of the cultural and linguistic wealth of their communities.

Trying to summarize all of this as succinctly as possible, we conclude that the 1978 resolution of the Council on Anthropology and Education on the role of culture in educational planning is still quite valid:

1. Culture is intimately related to language and the development of basic communication, computation, and social skills.
2. Culture is an important part of the dynamics of the teaching-learning process in all classrooms, both bilingual and monolingual.
3. Culture affects the organization of learning, pedagogical practices, evaluative procedures, and rules of schools, as well as instructional activities and curriculum.
4. Culture is more than the heritage of a people through dance, food, holidays, and history. Culture is more than a component of bilingual education programs. It is a dynamic, creative, and continuous process, which includes behaviors, values, and substances shared by people, that guides them in their

> struggle for survival and gives meaning to their lives. As a vital process it needs to be understood by more people in the United States, a multiple society which has many interacting cultural groups. (Saravia-Shore, 1979, p. 345)

In 1968 Jackson wrote in *Life in Classrooms* that schools have a hidden curriculum, and today we are still exploring all of the implications for language minority children. These children adapt to, learn from, contribute to, or rebel against the largely concealed and yet powerful beliefs, values, behaviors, and language use patterns that schools embody. At the same time these children are maintaining, modifying, or discarding the largely unstated and yet powerful beliefs, values, behaviors, and language use patterns that they bring to school from their homes and communities. To the degree that we can make these changes mutual learning processes instead of battles, we can enhance the life opportunities for language minority students.

We return to our initial theme in this chapter: the perplexing webs that we all weave as cultural beings. The thoughts of a Vietnamese-origin high school student powerfully illustrate the elusive nature of culture. Referring to his teachers, he said,

> They understand something, just not all Vietnamese culture. Like they just understand something *outside*. . . . But they cannot understand something inside our hearts. (Nieto, 1994, p. 53)

We cannot understand cultures completely, but we can *know* and *accept* that we do not understand everything; we can be prepared to learn *from* as well as *with* the students in our schools. For teachers in bilingual and ESL settings the significance of culture will always be so close and yet so difficult to capture. The patterns and perceptions are always changing, because "the essence is how people work to create culture, not what culture is" (Glassie, 1992). As culture-bearers and culture-makers we are all continuously transmitting and constructing new realities. As bilingual and ESL educators, we can play an enormously important role in working together with our students as culture-bearers and culture-makers to create culturally peaceful schooling realities that foster each child's full potential.

ENDNOTES

1. Current linguistic studies find no basis for the idea that bilingualism is detrimental to personality development or cognitive functioning. In fact, in many studies bilinguals have been found to have a more diversified pattern of abilities than their monolingual peers (Bialystok, 1991; Hakuta & Díaz, 1985, p. 322; Moran & Hakuta, 1995). For further discussion of the cognitive aspects of bilingualism, see Chapter Four.
2. Translations: "Gosh, well, I don't know." "Gimme the ball, or I'm gonna tell the teacher."
3. KEEP programs did result in improved test scores for many students, and the KEEP studies on cultural factors in school success have been very influential in guiding research and practice in language minority settings. However, recently some Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) have placed the findings and practices of KEEP educators under new scrutiny. For example, Hewett (in press), a native Hawaiian educator, criticizes KEEP researchers, who were not generally Kanaka Maoli, for having represented the voice and curricular perspectives of the colonizer. Hewett questions the research approaches and the generalizations they made about Hawaiian children and

how they learn. For example, she takes issue with KEEP's reification of "talking story," as it is referred to among the Kanaka Maoli, into "the talk story" and then using it in the classroom without fully understanding the meaning of this cultural practice. As Hewett sees it, "talking story" is an intricate part of the Hawaiian way of life—part of a web of social communication—not something to be turned into an instructional method. This and other points that Hewett raises demonstrate once again the complexity of cross-cultural studies: our cultural lenses and our place in the sociopolitical structure continually affect our perceptions and consequently our conclusions and actions.

4. There are other informative ethnographic studies that we do not refer to in this chapter. In the last chapter, "School and Community," we will discuss several of these ethnographies which are important in the field of bilingual and ESL education.