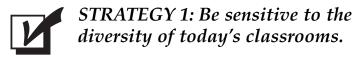# 1

Making the Multicultural Connection

One day our descendants will think it incredible that we paid so much attention to things like the amount of melanin in our skin or the shape of our eyes or our gender instead of the unique identities of each of us as complex human beings.

Franklin Thomas

STRATEGY 1: Be sensitive to the diversity of today's classrooms.

What the Research Says

That today's schools are more diverse than ever is undeniable. According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (1998), one in every three students currently attending primary or secondary schools is of a racial or ethnic minority. It is predicted that students of color will make up almost

50 percent of the U.S. school-age population by 2020 (Banks & Banks, 2001). The children born of the large influx of immigrants to the United States in the last several decades currently comprise approximately 20 percent of the children in America, providing a kaleidoscope of cultural and language differences to many classrooms (Dugger, 1998).

Cultural and language differences are only a part of the diversity in our schools. One in five children under the age of 18 years currently lives below the poverty line. The traditional two-parent family is becoming the minority. Less than half of America's children currently live with both biological parents, with almost 60 percent of all students living in a single-parent household by the time they reach the age of 18 years (Salend, 2001). All of this is occurring at a time when schools are working toward mainstreaming and inclusion of nearly 11 percent of school-age children who are classified as *disabled* (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). Certainly the challenges in today's classrooms have never been greater. Many teacher preparation programs now include classes to help prepare future teachers for cross-cultural, inclusive instruction. Zeichner (1993) proposed that the key characteristics of these programs provide for the dynamics of prejudice and racism.

Classroom Applications

Even in today's society, some classrooms seem to be focusing on the "differences" and difficulties involved in multicultural education, rather than embracing these differences as enriching, desirable, inevitable, natural, and positive forces. Teachers must not only acknowledge the more obvious diversity issues such as color and physical disability, but also be aware of the *cultural* diversity of students and families. In selecting curriculum it is important to see if examples of diversity are represented. Are the visual examples only of whites? Are the holidays represented in literature only those celebrated by Christians? Are the needs and emotions of people with disabilities presented? When having a discussion of families, it is important to stress that not all family units are alike. When sending a note home to parents, it is better to have it addressed to the "parent or guardian of" instead of "mother" or "father."

A teacher once asked her students to describe their bedrooms and draw pictures of them. What this teacher didn't realize was that several students did not have their own bedrooms but shared the room with four or five other siblings. Disclosing this information to the class by reading the story and showing the drawing might be embarrassing for the students. By the same token, all teachers must be especially aware of district and state education codes with regard to celebrating religious holidays in the classroom. What about the student who doesn't celebrate Christian or Jewish holidays? Rather than ask a student to write a story

about his or her favorite Christmas memory, the teacher might assign students to write about a favorite family tradition.

One question teachers should ask themselves is, "Could this question, example, or assignment make a student feel uncomfortable with regard to his or her race, religion, ethnicity, or cultural background?" Designing a richly diverse curriculum does not have to be difficult, it simply takes thought and consideration. The use of cooperative learning groups lends itself particularly well to teaching students with differing abilities in the same classroom. Students should be grouped with consideration to differences in gender, race, ethnicity, and ability. Using assignments and activities that incorporate the recognition of multiple intelligences is necessary and particularly effective in responding to student diversity.

Precautions and Possible Pitfalls

It is of the utmost importance that teachers are prepared for cross-cultural, inclusive instruction. Classes in teacher education programs must include information about the characteristics of prejudice and racism, successful examples of teaching ethnic and language minority students, and instruction that provides both social support for students and intellectual challenge.

Teachers must also be sensitive to issues involving money. Perhaps every child in class can't afford the cost of a field trip. For one high school that was considering putting ATM machines on campus, the realization of the ways this could further divide students into "the haves" and "the have nots" caused administrators to rethink their decision.

Teachers should consult with experienced, exemplary teachers or school administrators before meeting with parents of immigrant students to determine if a translator might be needed, or if there is any specific information about that student's family culture that might assist the teacher in having a successful meeting. The same is true for a student with disabilities. The special education teacher and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) can provide beneficial information to the teacher. The more a teacher is sensitive to the richness of the diversity in his or her classroom, the more successful and equitable today's classrooms will become.

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STRATEGY 2: Move beyond "color blind" teaching and take the time to know students in specific localized cultural contexts.

What the Research Says

More than 90 percent of classroom teachers in the United States are white, according to the National Education Association in 1997. It is no secret that they are teaching students who are of very different backgrounds from the teachers and from their fellow students. This statistic highlights a huge racial and cultural divide between teachers and the students in their classrooms. The gap is projected to keep growing. The Johnson study (2002) examined how white teachers conceptualized their own race and their students' races, and how these views might affect teachers' professional choices and practices.

This study gathered data through interviews of six white teachers from racially diverse classrooms who had been "nominated" as being aware of race and racism by a panel of experts. The teachers' responses to semi-structured interviews focused on their racial identity along with a classroom visit and observations of teacher-student interactions. Johnson's analysis (Johnson, 2002) revealed that teachers' cognition of racial and ethnic awareness was affected by the following:

- A perceived identity as "outsiders" due to social class background or sexual orientation that allowed them to "dis-identify" with the white mainstream
- Living and working with individuals of other races in relationships that approximated "equal status," which exposed them to "insider" views on race and racism
- Personal religious or philosophical beliefs that emphasized equality and social justice concerns (p. 153)

The information presented suggested implications for restructuring teacher education programs that included the following (Johnson, 2002, p. 153):

- Revising candidate selection criteria
- Increasing the racial diversity of students and faculty
- Experiencing some type of immersion program in communities of color
- Using autobiographical narratives, which serve as starting points for reflection and as pedagogical devices for identifying related issues

Classroom Applications

From the perspective of the white teacher, the term *color blind* is often used to describe a teacher's idealized view on race and ethnic background. Many believe it is wrong to notice or speak about the race of their students. A teacher observed in the Johnson study stated she used to think it was wrong to notice the race of her students but she had changed her view. She said, "Before I had that liberal mentality, that mentality where everyone is the same. Well, that's not true. This person's experience may be very different than mine and I need to understand that before teaching them or before engaging them in conversation" (Johnson, 2002, p. 161).

It is not race so much as it is the cultural context that a teacher needs to understand to better serve his or her students. For an educator, it is class background, sexual orientation, and racial and ethnic affiliations that must be understood. This moves the teacher beyond the "Black-White paradigm." This Black-White paradigm *racializes* African Americans but not whites. Teachers fail to see culture in their African American students and the huge range of ethnic diversity within their population.

Beyond the Black-White paradigm, the background of Hispanics and Hispanic social grouping is very different and exists well beyond the more known and understood Black-White paradigm. There is no legacy of slavery, and skin color is not as often seen as a clear racial distinction. Hispanics are discriminated against less for skin color but more for their Hispanic cultural stereotypes, surnames, language, and other characteristics that are more likely targets for bias.

In a hypothetical community, economically disadvantaged whites may culturally identify more closely with other economically disadvantaged racial minorities than with white middle-class values. The "white privilege" of the educated white teacher is far from their lives. Cultural differences can fall more along economic and educational background lines than skin color or other more familiar ethnic factors. Because of this, in some cases, it is the economic and educational divide that separates a teacher's cultural context from his or her student's context, not ethnic or racial. When a teacher looks out into the classroom into that sea of faces, skin color only scratches the surface of the differences between individual students and between the students and the teacher.
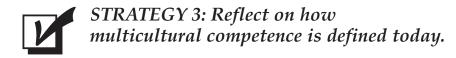
Precautions and Potential Pitfalls

In the study of logic lies the fallacy of oversimplification. Some will try to, in an effort to understand, oversimplify a very complex social issue. There are so many variables in any community that overlaying a cliché understanding over any community would be a mistake. An accurate cultural context is built over time as a teacher becomes familiar with a community and the school's demographics. Moving beyond the color-blind approach means that a teacher becomes truly engaged in seeking a clear understanding of a community and a student's place in it.

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STRATEGY 3: Reflect on how multicultural competence is defined today.

What the Research Says

Stuart (2004) reviews the history of the multicultural genre within the discipline of clinical psychology and the evolution of how multicultural competencies and perspectives have changed over the years. Current research (American Psychological Association, 2002) finds a central premise that states, "psychologists should be aware of and respect cultural, individual and role differences . . . must practice only within the boundaries of their competence . . . and must make a reasonable effort to obtain research, training, consultation, or study." Stuart outlines the history of multiculturalism and its development as a major factor in clinical psychology. Finally, Stuart provides and describes practical suggestions for those interested in refining their approach to understanding how ethnicity and culture influence a person's life perspective.

Stuart (2004) states that people tend to believe that others see the world the same way. Further, he states that when people do acknowledge different perspectives, they normally form convenient notions about the differences that create little more than the illusion of understanding. For the psychological community, Stuart goes on to say that to achieve true

multicultural understanding, psychologists need to learn how to find and use resources that allow them, "to approach clients with sensitivity to their diversity while avoiding the trap of pan-ethnic labels . . . which dilute and obscure the moderating effects of national origin, immigration history, religion and tradition," not to mention individual differences within larger groups.

Stuart notes that more than 1 in 10 Americans are foreign born and 1 in 3 belong to groups identified as minorities. The majority of these live in three states: California, Hawaii, and New Mexico. Whereas the term *culture* was first used in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the term *multicultural* did not appear in the *Oxford English Dictionary* until 1989.

Classroom Applications

In education, multicultural competence can be defined as the ability of the teacher to understand and constructively relate to the uniqueness of each student in light of the diverse cultures that influence each student's identity and perspective. Taken further, parents of students and the communities that feed into a teacher's classroom must also be considered. To achieve this level of competence, it is necessary to avoid stereotypes and simple cliché characterizations and to identify the multicultural influences that can help define appropriate discourse, curriculum, and instructional strategies. Specifically, teachers need to make the effort to discover who their specific students are in an effort to better meet their diverse needs.

Teachers should develop their skills at discovering each student's cultural outlook. Students do not always see multiculturalism in the same way as the teacher. Teachers can develop the skills it takes to see how their students explain and justify their lives and how their perspectives define what they think to be their true selves. Good teaching involves both acceptance and change. Change is more meaningful and easier to accomplish when it is grounded in acceptance and understanding of the student's own reality.

Teachers need to model the same reflective techniques they want their students to exhibit. Multicultural sensitivity begins very personally in the minds of teachers. When a teacher's biases go unchecked, some of a teacher's beliefs can turn into predictions and self-fulfilling prophecies about the behavior of a student or a student group. Simple sharing activities, journaling, or oral presentations can help students communicate their ideas. These activities can also help establish a positive classroom community.

Teachers should tread lightly and wait for "teachable moments." There are times where there are prominent differences, but it is very important to remember there are many other group behaviors and beliefs that are

common across cultures. The observation of a few differences doesn't necessarily indicate that everything else in the culture is different too. Resist overgeneralizing from one or two differences, which can lead to stereotyping.

Teachers need to model for their students an ability to resist coming to conclusions with limited data. Because of the complexity of culture or cultures, knowledge and information from literature often suffers from flawed collection techniques. Small sample sizes or too many variables can lead researchers to inaccurate conclusions. Ideas should be looked at with a critical eye.

Teachers also need to encourage critical thinking in their students during discussions about multiculturalism as it is a complex issue. People have far more diversity than is reflected in language categories. Spanish speakers of the U.S. Southwest, for example, comprise a large range of cultures, backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and ethnic origins. There is a high degree of bias and stereotyping that occurs within this group that shares the same language. Many ethnic groups vary depending on which generation they happen to be from and how removed they are from their country of origin. Native Americans vary greatly in where they are culturally and in their worldviews. It is better to describe rather than categorize a student's or group's identity or behavior.

Teachers can help students understand individuality by learning about each student's acceptance of peer-group and cultural beliefs. Although it may seem that certain students express identification with a particular ethnic or cultural group, they do not always reveal which specific beliefs or practices they really accept, how strongly they express those beliefs, and whether they reject certain ideas outright. Getting to know the individual student well and developing an accepting and trusting relationship can help create understanding.

Teachers need to be aware of their students' ethnic and worldviews when selecting discussion topics. For example, all African American students have not universally embraced multicultural programs that emphasize African and African American history and culture. Some students state they feel little or no affinity for the contents of these programs. Their connections are to the United States and, more important, to their own local communities and personal histories. They state they are more concerned with the reality of their current situations rather than searching for connections to the past. There are individual or family philosophical conflicts between historical context, relevancy, importance, and validity. In these situations, curricular content can be seen as a "force fit." Keep in mind that a teacher's enthusiasm for a particular classroom instructional style may not always be shared by students.

Teachers need to be aware of and sensitive to alternative beliefs and perspectives. Sensitivity to a student's personal culture is to understand the unique and personal way in which values, beliefs, and practices help

create identity and meaning. A lack of sensitivity, empathy, and respect limits the rapport a teacher needs to be effective. For example, various cultures have different views on the value of education. In some cultures, there is a double standard and expectation for boys and girls within the same family or community. Many times teachers see the potential of female students but also see the conflict these students have with their families' expectations. Teachers have an obligation to offer the alternative views necessary to facilitate a student's growth. In instances such as these, knowledge of the belief systems shared by the family and student helps.

Ultimately, multicultural competence requires self-reflection, critical skills in evaluating curriculum and other materials, thoughtful accumulation of personal teaching wisdom, and great sensitivity to the uniqueness of each class and each student.

Precautions and Potential Pitfalls

Teachers need to realize that these approaches take time to adopt within a personal style. Teaching styles develop over time and through experience. Teachers can develop their style by "trying on" new behaviors and seeing which ones "fit" or work in certain settings.

Don't forget to solicit students for their suggestions on how to best address the issues of multiculturalism in the classroom. Often they are a positive source of instructional ideas, and using their suggestions increases their ownership in the classroom community.

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STRATEGY 4: Help immigrant students by understanding their personal beliefs.

What the Research Says

Researchers Exposito and Favela (2003) examined the issues surrounding immigrant students and their teachers. They identified five themes that are found in highly effective teachers:

1. *Ideological clarity*: Teachers need to take the time to evaluate their own personal beliefs about a given culture. Often these ideas are developed in the teacher's own childhood experiences and may extend to ideas about how people should live and what they should be trying to achieve.

2. *Ideology based on middle-class values*: Teachers also need to evaluate their beliefs and attitudes about how families should function if that view is based on a standard middle-class white family structure. Efforts should be made to understand the immigrant family structure and its process.

3. *Ideological baggage*: Teachers need to examine their own educational experiences. Journaling can be an effective way to uncover these issues. Some teachers have had negative experiences, which can motivate them to become the positive teachers they wish they'd had.

4. *Asset-based education*: Teachers need to develop a positive outlook regarding the available skills that immigrant families and students can offer. Teachers need to incorporate these "cultural resources" into their classroom instruction.

5. *It only takes one person*: Teachers need to remember that one person can make the difference in helping immigrant students feel comfortable and safe exploring the new while maintaining their own individual cultural traditions.

Classroom Applications

The first step for any teacher who plans to be effective working with immigrant students is to closely examine his or her own personal beliefs. Journaling is often an excellent way to uncover an individual's personal educational experiences. By reviewing one's own educational experiences, a person can examine beliefs held about other cultures; a teacher can understand his or her own feelings about the culture of a particular student who comes from a different background. Taking the time to learn about that culture and finding the positive educational assets that culture can bring to the classroom is the next step. From this point, ongoing critical reflection will facilitate the reciprocal development of both the teacher and the immigrant students. Teachers must ask themselves if their underlying beliefs are helping or hindering their students. They must then make whatever changes are required.

Teachers need to create positive classroom environments that welcome and encourage children of different cultures and experiences to feel valued and respected. By listening to their students and making the extra effort to

learn about them as individuals, teachers can help bridge the gap between feeling isolated and lost and feeling secure. Honoring and valuing differences in language and culture sets a positive tone for all students in a classroom.

Precautions and Possible Pitfalls

Some teachers feel that they have nothing to offer students from different cultures if they have never experienced other cultures or learned a second language personally. This is not necessarily the case. By modeling openness and acceptance and taking the time to listen and learn from their students and their families, all teachers can succeed in creating a positive classroom environment for their immigrant students.

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STRATEGY 5: Make sure white ethnic students get multicultural education too.

What the Research Says

Immigration has been a part of the American experience since the beginning of the country. U.S. history tells us the Great Migration (1885–1925) brought waves of immigrants from both southern and eastern Europe to the United States. For years, the term *melting pot* captured the basic philosophical nature of assimilation into mainstream America as immigrants sacrificed many of their cultural ways to become part of their new country. However, these white immigrants and their second-, third-, and fourth-generation children, while participating fully in being American, often returned to ethnic neighborhoods where the traditions, languages, and customs of their countries of origin persist.

In 1977, Stein and Hill marked the beginning of the white ethnic movement, arguing that the melting pot idea did not work and the descendants of the Great Migration were "unmeltable." Concurrent with this redefinition, the multicultural education movement emerged with the goals of creating educational environments in which students from all cultural

groups (gender, sexual orientation, special needs, linguistic, religious, ethnic/racial) would experience educational equality. In contrast to the melting pot idea, the "salad bowl" philosophy replaced the idea of full assimilation. The term *salad bowl* described a concept in which separate and distinct items exist together but are not part of each other. So a person's identity included an ethnic background in addition to being an American. This identity might also include religious background, sexual orientation, and other outward signs of one's heritage or current beliefs.

In 1978, Banks and Gay described the goals of multiethnic education as modifying the total school environment so that it is reflective of the ethnic diversity within American society. The main goals were to help reduce discrimination against ethnic groups, to provide all students with equal educational opportunities, and to help reduce ethnic isolation and encapsulation.

The goal of Wenze's 2004 study was to replicate his previous 1984 study in a public school in Scranton, Pennsylvania. This new study was prompted by a 2000 census indicating a growing cultural diversity in populations entering the Scranton area yet still showing strong evidence of white ethnic grouping. Both studies tried to determine white ethnic children's need for multiethnic education as it was envisioned by their parents. Indicators of ethnic heritage in the Wenze study included frequent ethnic meals, interest in ethnic literature, observance of ethnic customs, feeling closer to family and ethnic members, ethnic customs at weddings, ethnic names in families, membership in ethnic clubs, ethnic language in the home, preferring family members as close friends, subscription to an ethnic newspaper, and embracing ethnic identity along with being an "American."

The objectives of the new study were to determine if ethnic consciousness exists among the parents and whether the locus of ethnicity is in the school or elsewhere. The investigation showed that the center of ethnicity for all survey populations was predominately in the home. However, parents showed an interest in their children learning about ethnic heritage in schools. They also wanted their children to learn about other cultures. In questionnaires, parents saw the school as a place with the potential to teach ethnic heritages. Asked whether parents thought it was a good idea to have ethnically relevant materials in schools, one parent was quoted as saying, "We believe strongly in introducing our children to as many ethnic groups and their traditions as possible. Having the school do the same would lessen the differences."

The Wenze study went on to describe how white ethnicity is defined. Although the original study described multicultural education as programs for ethnic groups who were phenotypically different from the dominant white group, Wenze suggests that white ethnics are another group whose children would benefit from multicultural or multiethnic education. Dense populations of Italian, Polish, Slovak, and Irish groups in neighborhoods next to schools, in addition to churches founded by white ethnic groups, create ethnic consciousness.

Classroom Applications

Twenty-first century classrooms are filled with students of diversity. It's a time when teachers are challenged to provide a form of education that meets the needs of a wide range of ethnicities. To add to the mix, teachers are expected to be sensitive to other inclusive target categories such as gender, sexual orientation, gifted and talented, and special learners. This research adds another inclusive category to the agenda.

The term *white* covers a wide demographic. white ethnicities are often generations removed from their original immigrant ancestors, and the need for multicultural and multiethnic education may not be as clearly defined as it was at the turn of the century. white privilege and entitlement can be a common misconception if all whites are considered to be in the same ethnic genre. The voices of other inclusive or minority groups are loud. Yet, teachers are encouraged to remember that there are many diverse individuals found among white ethnic students as well as among other minority student groups of color and linguistic differences. Many of these groups also share an early history of discrimination and bias.

The results of Wenze's research suggest that there is a desire for culturally relevant curriculum and instruction to enhance the educational opportunities for white ethnic children. All children benefit from learning about their own and other cultures. Some teachers find projects like "I" searches, family trees, and family traditions can provide a good starting point for positive discussions.

Precautions and Potential Pitfalls

Inclusive or minority education, particularly the multicultural variety, is politically loaded with pitfalls. There are many voices competing for a role in defining priorities for reform and restructuring. Many minority or under-represented groups want a voice in how inclusive education is to be identified, created, organized, and implemented. It is very difficult to be politically, ethnically, and morally correct in every situation.

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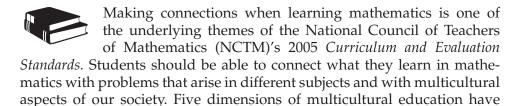
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STRATEGY 6: Cultivate multicultural connections.

What the Research Says

Making connections when learning mathematics is one of the underlying themes of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)'s 2005 *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards.* Students should be able to connect what they learn in mathematics with problems that arise in different subjects and with multicultural aspects of our society. Five dimensions of multicultural education have been identified as comprising a framework for mathematics:

1. *Integrate content* to reflect diversity when teaching key concepts.

2. *Construct knowledge* so students understand how people's points of view within a discipline influence the conclusions they reach in a discipline.

3. *Reduce prejudice* so students develop positive attitudes toward different groups of people.

4. *Use instructional techniques* that will promote achievement from diverse groups of students.

5. *Modify the school culture* to ensure that people from diverse groups are empowered and have educational equality.

Classroom Applications

Teachers should take into consideration that disciplines and content areas are not free of cultural influences, that some textbooks have racial biases, and that the history of any discipline should not just be viewed from a Eurocentric perspective (Pugh, 1990). The five principles are not limited to a math curriculum; they can be applied to any discipline. For example:

1. *Integrate content* so that the history of the discipline's content knowledge comes from many cultures and ethnicities. For example, teach students about George Washington Carver, an African American who made major contributions that influenced botany, agribusiness, and biotechnology.

2. *Construct knowledge* so students see the universal nature of the components, concepts, and processes of the discipline and how other cultures and ethnic backgrounds might view them.

3. *Reduce prejudice* by using teaching and learning to eliminate stereotypes. For example, balance the contributions of whites with other ethnic backgrounds and cultures.

4. *Use instructional techniques* that motivate students and demonstrate mutual respect for culture. For example, group together students from diverse cultures for cooperative learning activities; encourage all students to participate in extracurricular activities; and have high expectations for success from all students, regardless of cultural backgrounds.

5. *Modify the school culture.* Make special efforts to work with minority parents, especially parents who are not native English speakers.

Precautions and Possible Pitfalls

The teacher needs to make sure that multicultural aspects of lessons are not performed in a patronizing manner. Also, a teacher should try to be broad in his or her multicultural focus so that no particular cultural group (e.g., African American, Hispanic, Asian) is excluded. Teachers need to remain cognizant that individual cultural experiences create a filter through which the world is viewed. Recognizing that filter is an important part of self-reflection.

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STRATEGY 7: Develop and promote
a positive ethnic identity.

What the Research Says

Multicultural contemporary classrooms now trigger issues such as the construction of racial and ethnic identities, gender roles, and socioeconomic status. Within this mix falls a teacher's sense of ethnic identity. Teachers must be aware of the ways in which language, culture, and ethnicity mediate the social constructs of identity. How teachers perceive and interact with these constructs can affect the expectations they have for the students. In this study, Hispanic teachers and Hispanic students were the focus. In comparing white, black, and Chicano self-conceptions, Hurtsfield (1978) concluded that ethnic membership and status often determine an individual's self-description. Minority subjects were more likely than majority subjects to be conscious of racial or ethnic identity. The research cited past studies that found connections between minority teachers who interpreted their own cultural identity and how it played a critical role in their identity as educators. They also noted correlations between self-concept, teacher efficacy, and empowerment.

Ethnic identity can often reflect how individuals recognize the social-political context in which they live. Analysis revealed that for minorities, ethnic self-identification is an individual conceptualization. It is reflected in the heterogeneity found within groups, and ethnic labels are not always interchangeable. Second, it was important that individuals identify themselves individually as too often they are stereotypically lumped together. Third, patterns within groups can be revealing. These three categories of data can be used to increase understanding of distinctiveness within minority groups. For example, some native-born individuals identified themselves as Mexican even though they were not foreign born.

The study produced a variety of recommendations geared toward teacher education programs recognizing the need for minority teachers to work with the questions regarding their teacher and ethnic identities. Above all, education programs need to address and value the cultural knowledge that minority teachers bring with them. They also need to recognize that their identity as educators will affect many areas of their interaction with students.

Classroom Applications

Because today's classrooms, more than ever, are cross-cultural situations, successful teaching depends on positive teacher self-esteem. Ultimately, the way the school and its teachers respond to

and support difference affects the degree of school success for many ethnic minority and language minority students.

If a teacher is from a minority culture, how he or she identifies with his or her culture or is seen culturally by the students affects the teaching and learning environment. The research did identify a very heterogeneous mix of cultural self-concepts even within small ethnic groups. Not everyone wants his or her ethnic or cultural background to be subject for reflection or public attention. Individuals have to decide for themselves how their ethnic identity or cultural background becomes or doesn't become an element in their professional lives. Teachers should consider talking to trusted colleagues about the issues or seeking out additional academic research on the topic. There are no easy answers; the individualistic nature of self-ethnic identification doesn't foster *one-size-fits-all* solutions and strategies.

Ultimately, some will see their calling as role models or advocates for their ethnic or cultural background. Others will take the path of assimilation and not want their ethnic and cultural background to be an element in their teaching. Just becoming aware of the choices is a start.

Precautions and Possible Pitfalls

These issues can be frustrating as there are no real right answers that fill every single individual need. Some native Spanish speakers claim that English immersion is the best way to treat English language learners. Others are passionate advocates for various forms of bilingual education.
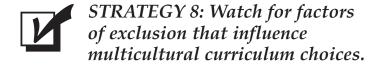
Many teachers who were language minority students themselves may be tempted to feel that the path personally taken toward success in school is the best one. Teachers' expectations for their students can be biased by their own experiences. Teachers have options to consider in how they perceive themselves, the identities they want to project, and how all of that fits into their own teaching and professional relationships.

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STRATEGY 8: Watch for factors of exclusion that influence multicultural curriculum choices.

What the Research Says

Agee's case study (2004) follows the experiences of a young African American English teacher over a 3-year period that encompassed her late preservice coursework, student teaching, and her first years teaching under contract. The subject was a 21-year-old English major. She was one of only two African American students in her English education program. Her teaching experience took place in two high schools. The first was a primarily white school both within the student body and faculty. The second setting was a more diverse experience. This teacher especially wanted to work with disadvantaged students to bring their individual voices and interests into the class mix. The questions Agee was trying to answer included:

- What perspectives does a preservice teacher have on the reading and the teaching of literature?
- How is the young subject of the research, an African American female teacher, able to develop her identity teaching in a suburban high school?
- How do national and state policies, which shape standards and assessment, influence teacher identity formation, especially for teachers who want to use more diverse texts and approaches?
- Are teacher education programs unintentionally maintaining a white, Euro-American hegemony with discourse that makes teachers of color and their perspectives on curriculum invisible?

In her university experience, the subject was highly motivated and encouraged in her classes. She expressed a personal desire to teach multicultural literature using a constructivist style. The goal was to build and use the curriculum, the literature, and a diverse student body's personal experiences to broaden the students' understanding of racial, ethnic, and cultural differences.

Yet, in both her preservice teaching and her first 2 years of contract teaching she found it difficult to implement her goals. Her goals, efforts, and identity as a teacher who would help students explore, begin to understand, and celebrate diversity began to degenerate as she struggled with school policies, mandated assessment preparation, and racial bias. Her disenchantment grew as her imagined identity collided with state

mandates, the mainstream construction of a teacher's role, and heavily institutionalized versions and ideologies of curriculum and assessment. According to Agee, "Her story speaks to the gap between progressive teacher education programs and the demands of mandated, high stakes tests on schools and teachers." One result Agee found within the study was the tendency to silence diverse points of view, "a factor that may further contribute to the lack of teachers of color in American schools."

This teacher's story documents how many teachers are not prepared for the constraints on teaching and learning that accompany testing agendas and the personal ethical decisions they will need to make.

Agee described the subject of the study as wanting to be a "change maker" but found there were costs. In the end, the subject found no comfortable zone to realize her dream or remove the intense institutional pressure to comply with mainstream or dominant ideologies.

Agee's research is an example of how many new teachers evolve through their first few years. Agee's research observes and describes many of the experiences that many, if not all, new teachers experience. However, in Agee's view there are a number of more hidden topics of race and power mixed in. Many education majors come into teaching with their personal agendas and are not prepared for the politics and power struggles of teaching and the classroom.

The subject teacher's choice of literature spawned classroom discourse leading to the embarrassment of some students and resistance by others. Discussion brought up racial tensions, and she had little guidance on how to handle racial and ethnic bias within classroom curricular discussions. Other teachers, parents, and students frequently critique literature choices by teachers for validity. Beginning teachers may not have the political capital to fight criticism.

It is also clear that all educational stakeholders (parents, students, community members, etc.) have their own ideas of what teaching and learning is or should be. If students or parents feel threatened by what goes on in the classroom (i.e., grades, not being prepared for testing or college), they will react; teachers who haven't helped the stakeholders prepare for curricular changes risk a backlash.

In the Agee study, while the teacher seemed supported at times in her efforts to work in multicultural curricular goals, there were counterpressures. Discussions within the English department suggested an effort to standardize the curriculum and begin grade-level testing to better prepare students for the state's graduation tests. They wanted curricular unity so instruction didn't overlap. The proposed curriculum, the grade-level tests, and the state graduation tests would all force her to alter her personal plans and limit her personal goals. Being different usually draws attention to the teacher, and, again, new teachers rarely have the power to deviate too far from the mainstream.

In a second setting, the subject's efforts were stymied by the grade-level testing designed to better prepare students for the state tests. She talked about how mandated tests pushed her to teach literature differently than she had planned. She decided to go along with the consensus of the English department, but was very troubled by the power of the testing agenda and the politics of curricular development.

In the beginning of this 3-year study, Agee described a motivated teacher with an interest in developing multicultural educational environments using constructivist approaches with at-risk students. Once she started teaching, she was routinely experiencing dilemmas. How could she balance her early goals and what she hoped to achieve with "the realities of school," which meant trading her early idealism for test scores? She found she had no help in facilitating test preparation or preparing her students to understand other races and cultures through education. By the end of her second contract year she had found no time to add multicultural literature to the traditional required readings. She moved from a constructivist and student-centered approach to a largely teacher-centered approach. The 3-year transition seemed to bring an end to her initial vision of herself as a teacher and her new perspectives regarding curriculum and instruction.

Classroom Applications

It is no secret that there are huge challenges for new teachers between the idealism and expectations of preservice experiences and the realities of teaching actual students in actual school environments. In the case of Agee's research, it was suggested the word *reality* was used as a code word for "white mainstream ideologies" in schools.

New teachers routinely *hit the wall* of classroom reality when transitioning from life as an education student to life as a teacher and educational practitioner. These early rough transition periods are widely believed to be the cause of the high attrition rate for new teachers, particularly new teachers in urban settings.

New teachers need to be made aware of the politics of schools as a workplace. Workplace savvy can help new teachers through discouraging times. One way to begin is to look at curricular development from a new perspective. Rather than dropping all hope of making a difference, new teachers need to think about making "surgical strikes" into existing mandated curriculum. Many times it's the perspective that is taken or the way students view a concept that can make a difference. For example, the battle of the Alamo could be taught from both perspectives, the U.S. side and the Mexican side. By discussing alternative perspectives, teaching is student-centered and builds critical thinking. Students are not told what to think but are only asked to think. In this way, teachers begin to expose biases, stereotypes, inaccuracies, and marginalization in curricular content, pedagogy, and academic policies.

To further examine the issues presented in Agee's work, a different perspective in multicultural or inclusive instructional practices can help. Gorski (2004) said that multicultural or inclusive practices can be defined in two ways. They are summarized here.

Inclusion refers to the extent to which different voices and perspectives are heard in the classroom. There are two levels of inclusion. When most teachers talk about inclusion, they are referring to representational inclusion, or the inclusion of sources or information that closely match or represent the diversity within a particular classroom. For example, if there is a Mexican student in a class, a teacher must be sure to include sources by Mexican authors in the classroom. The second level of inclusion is student-centered inclusion, or the inclusion of the voices and perspectives of the students themselves in the educational experience. Students are the most underused educational resource in most classrooms. A multicultural curriculum encourages them to provide personal multicultural context and perspectives on all subjects covered in school.

Multicultural curriculum transformation does not need to result in an overabundance of new material to teach students. It doesn't mean necessarily dropping required material or the "stuff they need for the test." Teachers can still work from their state's standards by reexamining the way they teach. The transformation does not call for teachers to replace Columbus or the Alamo. It calls for teachers to teach Columbus or the Alamo in a more complete and accurate way and from a broader or non-Eurocentric perspective.

The following are a number of Internet sites (accessed March 15, 2005) that focus on the transformation of curriculum to a more inclusive or multicultural perspective. Most of them contain links to other useful sites.

Multicultural Education and the Internet by Paul Gorski: http://www .mhhe.com/socscience/education/multi_new/

The University of Georgia's Multicultural Perspectives on Mathematical Education: http://jwilson.coe.uga.edu/DEPT/Multicultural/MathEd .html

The Multicultural Pavilion: http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/

Multicultural Review Homepage: http://www.isomedia.com/homes/ jmele/homepage.html
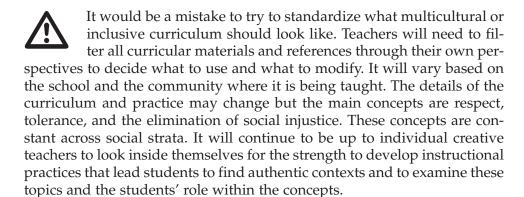
Stanford University-SPICE or Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education: http://spice.stanford.edu/about/index.html

It is true that mandated testing influences curricular development and teaching style—the "testing tail wags the curriculum dog." It is also true that the concepts of multicultural and inclusive educational practices are

relatively new. There are many "turf wars" as the variety and range of traditionally marginalized groups struggle for influence, power, and recognition. There are going to be many versions of what multicultural and inclusive education looks like. The key is to always look at it as work in progress because change in the institution of education is slow. Multicultural or inclusive education is a progressive approach for transforming education that holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices that are historically entrenched in the institution.

Teachers need to present curriculum in the most appropriate way possible and guide students in constructing new, more useful, and fair views of race, ethnicity, culture, society, gender, and sexual orientation.

Precautions and Potential Pitfalls

It would be a mistake to try to standardize what multicultural or inclusive curriculum should look like. Teachers will need to filter all curricular materials and references through their own perspectives to decide what to use and what to modify. It will vary based on the school and the community where it is being taught. The details of the curriculum and practice may change but the main concepts are respect, tolerance, and the elimination of social injustice. These concepts are constant across social strata. It will continue to be up to individual creative teachers to look inside themselves for the strength to develop instructional practices that lead students to find authentic contexts and to examine these topics and the students' role within the concepts.

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STRATEGY 9: Focus on the classroom management factors that best reflect culturally responsive teaching.

What the Research Says

In Brown's 2004 study, 13 urban teachers, ranging from grades 1–12, reflected on their classroom management strategies. These teachers were selected from seven major cities across the United States. The demographics of each teacher's classroom drew from African American, Hispanic, Native American and Asian American students, as well as a wide variety of recent immigrant and refugee students. Among the teachers interviewed there were two Hispanic Americans, one African American, a native Sri Lankan, and nine teachers described as "white."
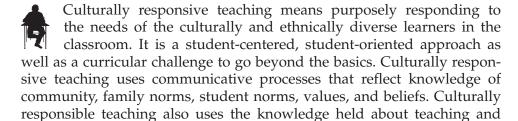
Their professional experience ranged from 2 to 33 years of teaching. They were selected for the study based on either personal knowledge or information gathered from colleagues regarding their teaching effectiveness. All were recognized as highly effective urban educators. The primary questions used to gather data included

- How do you interact with students?
- How would you describe your management style?
- What works well for you in communicating with students?

Their responses were then compared and contrasted with research on culturally responsive teaching. Participants revealed using a number of techniques supporting the notion that their responses do reflect culturally responsible teaching. The following are the main elements of their management strategies:

- Development of personal relationships with students
- Creation of caring learning communities
- Establishment of business-like, structured learning environments
- Use of culturally and ethnically congruent communicative processes
- Demonstrations of assertiveness
- Use of clearly stated and enforced expectations

Classroom Applications

Culturally responsive teaching means purposely responding to the needs of the culturally and ethnically diverse learners in the classroom. It is a student-centered, student-oriented approach as well as a curricular challenge to go beyond the basics. Culturally responsive teaching uses communicative processes that reflect knowledge of community, family norms, student norms, values, and beliefs. Culturally responsible teaching also uses the knowledge held about teaching and

learning to define the responsibility of teachers and the roles of students in the classroom.

Culturally responsible management focuses on the elements and components that involve the ability of the teacher to develop a safe classroom social and academic environment. Students are free to take risks and know that teachers and other students will treat them with respect. This environment features students who agree to cooperate with the teacher and fellow students in the pursuit of academic growth and success. Managing student behavior and maintaining an appropriate learning environment is an art. The teachers in Brown's study offered a number of suggestions reflecting specific areas of management focus.

1. Personalized Relationships, Caring Attitudes, and Mutual Respect Through Individualized Instruction

The most important characteristic described by the teachers was the conscious effort to develop strategies emphasizing personal attention and a relationship with each student. Teachers made it a point to communicate individually with students on academic and nonacademic matters and to genuinely connect to each student's emotional and social persona.

Many urban students lack supervision, attention, understanding, and caring in their homes and communities. Therefore they struggle with inadequate communication processes with adults. This research emphasized that the best urban teachers use warmth and affection to develop relationships with students as pathways to student growth. It was stated that students, "preferred teachers who displayed such attitudes and established community and family-type classroom environments" (Howard, 2001).

Teachers need to take time out of their day to communicate with as many students as they can about nonacademic matters in addition to academic concerns. They need to try to see students in settings outside of the classroom. Mutual respect means taking a personal interest in each student and creating an emotionally safe and secure environment.

2. Building Caring Learning Communities

One of the teachers in the study stated, "It doesn't matter what content you have, or what good curriculum you have, or what exciting lessons you have; if you don't care about students and they know that, you don't have a chance to get to them." Another explained, "You have to get to their heart before you get to their head. The fact that you care makes them see you differently." Another teacher said that, "You have to form a viable social community before they can become a viable learning community." The research emphasized that students and teachers are here to help one another and any behavior that threatens or breaks down this environment and the class values needs to be addressed and discouraged.

Many urban students lead stressful and challenging lives outside the classroom. Often their responsibilities outside of class call on them to make adult decisions about taking care of their brothers and sisters, raising their own families, or working to support their families. Urban students may resent an unequal or unbalanced authoritarian power relationship in the classroom.

A more democratic style of classroom emphasizes cooperation, mutual goal setting, decision making, and shared responsibility. A democratic classroom respects the rights of others and helps students take control over their learning. Spending the time to create this type of environment may be perceived as off-task or noninstructional behavior, yet the establishment of such an environment actually leads to a more productive learning and teaching environment, as well as student engagement and buy-in.

3. Establishing a Businesslike and Highly Structured Learning Environment

The more experienced teachers in this study were forceful in describing their need to establish a business-like learning environment while also managing to maintain mutually respectful relationships with students. Creating clearly stated expectations and enforcing them during the year was described as very important. Expectations for students were highly structured and communicated in detail. No excuses were permitted. Students knew what to expect down to every detail. Students were expected to learn and not to interfere with the rights of others to learn.

4. Establishing Harmonious Communicative Processes

Establishing the rules of discourse or communication requires effort. Differences or misunderstandings in discourse can affect the quality of relationships between teachers and their students. The social interaction styles of some urban ethnic groups or cultures can be misidentified as disrespectful. For example, some Asian cultures use ritualized laughter to maintain harmony and avoid conflicts with authority. Gay (2000) identified certain African American groups who have a social interaction style referred to as "call response." The students may frequently speak while the teacher is speaking as a response to their feelings about a teacher's comments. This is not meant to be rude. In this setting, this can be seen as an entry strategy into conversation through personal assertiveness rather than waiting for an "authority" to give permission (Gay, 2000).

Teachers in this study mentioned that their students needed many opportunities for socialization as a part of instructional interaction. They have a need for verbal interaction during class time. Teachers can create meaningful bonds with students based on genuine social discourse, but teachers need to realize appropriate discourse often needs to be taught.

Good listening skills can also be taught. The power of classroom discourse cannot be overlooked in establishing caring, respectful relationships.

In many situations there may be a mismatch between cultural norms of discourse, and it is up to the classroom teacher to make sense of these mismatches. Culturally diverse classrooms pose unique problems as the student demographics can be different for every class and every school. This issue also can spill into parent-teacher communications. Because every community and school presents a different set of norms and communication styles, teachers must explore the topic within the local setting to help better normalize the elements of discourse in professional interactions.

5. Teaching With Assertiveness and Clear Expectations

One of the greatest weaknesses among new teachers, described in Brown's research, is their lack of confidence regarding assertiveness with students. The least experienced teachers who were interviewed admitted their initial reluctance to establish high expectations for behavior and academic achievement.

A challenging aspect of management plans involves establishing an appropriate balance of power in the classroom. Teachers must maintain authority status and provide students with some decision-making power while avoiding power struggles with students.

Delpit (1995) describes a view held by some ethnic or cultural groups that power and authority are expected to be earned by personal effort and exhibited by personal characteristics. This contrasts with a view held by mainstream middle-class cultures where one achieves authority by acquisition of an authoritative role. A teacher is an authority because he or she is a teacher.

All the beginning teachers in this study described a weak or soft start or a meek and mild approach as the "kiss of death" for classroom management. Students need to know that teachers have standards and expect things of them. Sometimes students don't have anything expected of them anyplace else in their lives. Assertive teachers also need to realize that these types of relationships develop over time.

The researchers also described fear toward students as perhaps the most dangerous reaction by teachers in urban classrooms for failing to establish and maintain an effective management plan. If teachers ignore misconduct, the power balance shifts out of an adult-child relationship into something else that often cannot be recovered once it slips away. Teachers must be assertive in responding to inappropriate behavior expectations to protect the classroom's academic and social environments. Responses must be applied consistently and fairly.

Some may see assertive behavior in conflict with a teacher's efforts to develop democratic opportunities. Democratic decision making should

not create a conflict with the standards and rules designed to protect the classroom. However, too much freedom or choice can exceed the students' level of maturity in decision making. All teachers need to develop a level of professional savvy and awareness to strike a balance between control and a cooperative classroom spirit. Experience is the best teacher.

Finally, all the teachers in this study with more than five years of experience established clearly stated expectations and consequences for behavior and used assertive strategies when necessary to reinforce their authority as teachers. They all stressed business-like learning environments with clear expectations for behavior and academic progress. In contrast, the novice teachers reflected on the difficulty they faced because of their failure to establish clearly defined expectations and an assertive stance.

Brown concluded by saying that much of the success by teachers in urban environments depends on their ability to develop positive classroom learning environments through the implementation of culturally responsive classroom management practices. The suggestions presented here offer a good start.

Precautions and Potential Pitfalls

All the strategies here should be seen as guidelines. Human nature demonstrates that every classroom and student mix is going to present different challenges. There are no perfect formulas. Also, urban settings can be very tough on new teachers; teacher retention statistics reflect this. Most teachers need to hit the ground running, with the necessary management survival skills. It is generally better to start firmly and loosen up than to try to get a class back after a weak start.

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STRATEGY 10: Include multicultural works when developing a quality English curriculum.

What the Research Says

Even with the wide calls for more multicultural texts and literature in secondary English curriculum, teachers have encountered roadblocks to integrating new literature into their courses. Selections do not always hold up well against competition from the great works from more traditional canons. In this context selected multicultural additions often are marginalized. Nontraditional authors do not fit comfortably into the curriculum.

Another concern is that students often distill a curricular march through the more classic selections as a search for "right" answers with little connection to why the works were chosen or how they might connect to a larger purpose. The content finds little or no context or connection to students or other parts of the curriculum. This collected research seeks to discover a more *knowledge-in-action* discourse and current conversation about living traditions. The main concern is that lists of classics, or the selected tradition, predispose curriculum to a more teacher-centered and less student-centered pedagogy. A student-centered approach would strive to include multicultural texts as "curriculum in conversation" and use it as a framework for discussing multicultural literature.

In Burroughs's (1999) research, three teachers' experiences were used as part of a larger study of teacher decision making regarding curriculum involving eight English teachers in 19 classrooms in two high schools. The three teachers featured in the paper came from the same high school, which had a diverse student body with more than 50 percent African American students. Observations were taken over a two-year period as teachers worked, with varying degrees of success and motivation, to integrate multicultural literature into the curriculum.

Of the three experiences, one included very little multicultural curriculum because the structure of her course and her teaching style crowded it out. A second included many multicultural works and changing conversations that put multicultural curriculum as the center of instruction. Another actually created a multicultural curriculum course and changed what were defined as literary works while creating new conversations to analyze them. She expanded what has been traditionally considered literature.

Classroom Applications

The responses of the teachers in the study to the task of creating a more multiculturally inclusive literary curriculum yielded three very different responses. The responses also helped redefine and

develop new ways of thinking about what is curriculum and how it should be selected. It showed that changing to a more inclusive curriculum requires more than just selecting multicultural texts and a range of minority authors. While an essential and positive starting point, simply selecting is not enough. For example, teachers in this study expanded the term *literature* to include speeches, myths, plays, and journals, as well as novels and poems.

Beyond making selections, teaching and learning also require thinking about how teachers and students should experience and appreciate the content and its context. Scope and sequence were also seen as important, and the notion of curriculum needed to incorporate some intellectual continuity of discourse as a theme in the construction of curriculum. Teachers in these studies found that the types of student conversations desired began to drive decision making. They found students responded well to some selections and not to others. Adjustments were made.

In the Burroughs study, the least successful teacher only added one multicultural text to her existing curriculum, and students found little evidence of context and relevance to the scope and sequence of the course.

The major problem the teachers in the study encountered was the challenge of providing a scope and sequence without the class time and space to provide it. Teachers found that unlike a college course where literature can be more effectively grouped as a coherent curriculum, high school students lack the background and teachers have a difficult time making connections between time periods and source cultures. The literature range required for high school is too broad, and time is too short.

One of the ways two of these teachers solved the problem was to make textual selection criteria a more explicit part of the classroom conversation. One created a theme called "What is American Literature," which allowed him to move away from a more traditional approach. In the new multicultural literature course, "World Cultures," the teacher created conversations to reflect cultural and individual differences within the classroom as well as within the literature.

As teachers work to broaden the traditional literature canon, it is more realistic and useful to think about restructuring the entire curriculum rather than just adding a new text. Multicultural restructuring requires a look ahead as to how students will experience and use the new information they are given. Context and relevancy need to be considered, and strategies of discourse are very important. Although it was not mentioned in the research, the nature and makeup of each class can interact with curriculum in different ways. Diverse classes mean a variety and range of educational consumers, each with different expectations and mindsets.

Given an opportunity, the three teachers in this study responded to the challenge of inclusion with various degrees of motivation and success. What is clear is that inclusive curricular design is not easy. Giving a voice to traditionally marginalized groups is an art, not a science.

Precautions and Potential Pitfalls

Restructuring is always a process loaded with workplace politics over funding, department policy, priorities, and so forth. If teachers are not already doing something, somewhere in the future schools and teachers are going to be accountable for their efforts to create an inclusive curricular experience for students. It would be a mistake not to begin to make the effort now. The only question individual teachers have to ask themselves is how are they going to respond to the inquiry about inclusion in their classrooms. They need to begin to develop a multicultural vocabulary when it comes to curricular discussions.

It is always a challenge for a teacher to replace curriculum. There are always worries that the students are going to miss something they need for a standardized test. Keep in mind that politics do play a part, and well-intentioned teachers can encounter resistance from all sides.

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