

Chapter Five

American Indian Students: The Invisible Minority

Education is your most powerful weapon. With education you are the White man's equal, without education you are his victim.

—Chief Plenty Coups (Crow Tribe)

The first people in America were the Indians. They built their wigwams where the homes, schools, factories, and stores of modern cities now rise. They hunted deer or buffalo over land where today massive farms exist. Their hunters, warriors, and traders used paths now followed by roads and railroads. Indian words dot America's map. Place names such as Massachusetts, Mississippi, Ohio, Chicago, and Pontiac, Michigan, originated from American Indian languages. Twenty-seven states and large numbers of towns, cities, rivers, and lakes bear names from the languages of the first Americans.

Indian farmers were the first to grow corn, potatoes, tomatoes, peanuts, pineapple, cranberries, chocolate, popcorn, and beans and the first to make maple sugar and grits. They found uses for such plants and trees as rubber, tobacco, and the cinchona tree (for quinine).

Words borrowed in English show how much the first settlers owed the American Indian (*chetmunk* became chipmunk, *moos* became moose, *aposoun* became opossum, *paccan* became pecan, etc.). Other gifts from the American Indian include knowledge of the best trails and ways of traveling across the country by canoe and snowshoe. Indians also invented hammocks, fry bread, sports and games (hide-and-seek, follow-the-leader, crack-the-whip, blindman's bluff, baggataway, and ice hockey). American Indians also contributed their distinctive styles of weaving, beadwork, masks, folklore, poetry, pottery, and painting.

The Indians had lived in America for many centuries before the white man first came from Europe. When Christopher Columbus arrived on American shores, in San Salvador in 1492, he called the native people *Indios* (Spanish for Indians) because he thought he had reached India. From that first encounter began the demise of the American Indian.

EARLY LIFE IN THE AMERICAS

When European explorers arrived in the Western Hemisphere in 1492, it was populated by many different cultures and groups that became collectively known as "Indians" to Europeans. This misnaming of the aboriginal people of the Americas by the Europeans foreshadowed the misunderstanding, distrust, and hostility that later developed between the two groups.

The early history of American Indians is still somewhat a mystery to scientists and archeologists who are still trying to unravel their early history. Although the word *Indian* often conjures a stereotypic image in the popular mind, Indian people are quite diverse, both physically and culturally. Their skin color, height, hair texture, and facial features vary greatly. How Indians survived also varied widely. Some groups obtained food by fishing and hunting, others through agriculture. Political institutions also were quite diverse. Highly sophisticated confederations were common among the northeastern tribes, such as the League of the Iroquois, and in the southeast, the Creek Confederacy. California tribes had no formal political institutions but were organized into small family units headed by men who had group responsibilities but little authority over others. Warring and raiding were important aspects of the Apache culture, but the Hopi were "the peaceful ones." Social class had little meaning among the southwest tribes, but it was extremely important in the northwest Pacific Coast cultures. Food, hunting, home-style clothing, tools, and religious ceremonies also varied greatly among and within various American Indian cultural groups.

SIMILARITIES IN INDIAN CULTURE

Although American Indian cultures are highly diverse, they are similar in many ways. Indian cultures were and still are based on a deep spirituality,

which greatly influences all aspects of life. They see themselves living in harmony with all beings on earth. Traditional Indian culture sees an interdependent relationship between all living things. Just as one seeks harmony with one's human family, so should a person try to be in harmony with nature, rather than dominant over it. "The earth was created by the assistance of the sun, and it should be left as it was. . . . The earth and myself are of one mind," said Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce. They view the universe as a harmonious whole, with every object and being having a sacred life. American Indians have a deep respect and reverence for the earth and for all other living things. People must not harm the earth because it is sacred. White man's agriculture defiled Mother Earth. White men plowed up the ground, cut down trees, and killed everything.

The Indian conception of the earth and their relationship to the land differed greatly from that of the Europeans and was a source of conflict among the cultures. The Europeans regarded the earth as a commodity that could be broken into parts and owned by individuals. To the American Indian, the earth was sacred and consequently could never be owned by human beings.

Indian people had a deep respect for the rights and dignity of the individual. Decisions were based on group consensus. There were few hierarchical positions. Respect was earned by becoming outstanding warriors, being able to communicate with the spirits, or learning to perform some other service the community needed and valued. Another shared cultural value between Indian groups included extended family and kinship obligations. Group needs are more important than individual needs. Communal sharing with the less fortunate was expected.

Because of their feudalistic background, the Europeans looked for kings among the Indians and assumed the Indian chiefs had absolute authority over their tribes. The Europeans made treaties with the chiefs and assumed they were binding. They did not understand that the chief's authority was usually limited by the tribal council. This cultural conflict between the Europeans and Indian groups haunted their relationships for centuries.

EARLY CONTACT WITH EUROPEANS

The Indians' earliest contacts with the Europeans were usually friendly and generally involved trade. In exchange for furs, the Indians acquired

rum, guns, gunpowder, horses, tools, and other goods. Tribes that wanted European goods but had depleted the supply of fur-producing animals began to invade the territories of other tribes to obtain furs for trade.

From 1540 to 1790 no one power was dominant in the Indian territory that had been invaded by the Europeans. Once the British colonies were formed, struggles for power began between the British and the Indians, and this deeply influenced Indian policy. Deep factionalism within the tribes occurred. The League of the Iroquois was eventually destroyed by the European wars.

Next came removal. Once an Indian tribe had signed a treaty, the whites schemed to remove them from their land. The Indian people either had to relocate or be exterminated. The federal government legitimized Indian removal with the Removal Act of 1830. Many of the Eastern tribes were forced to settle in territories occupied by the Plains Indians. More fighting among the tribes resulted. The California gold rush of 1849 hastened the defeat of the Western tribes by the government.

Indians had been conquered by the late 1880s, and vigorous efforts to eradicate the cultures, values, and ways of life were already under way. Reservation life was forced upon the tribes, which were governed by agents who ruled the Indians with an iron hand and stifled all their efforts at self-initiative.

After the Indians had been thoroughly subjugated and placed on reservations, white authorities began efforts to "civilize" them, which meant to make Indians as much like whites as possible from dress to language. The goal became to assimilate the Indians quickly into the mainstream society. No attempt was made to give Indians a choice or to encourage them to retain their culture. The children were given white people's education. Children were sent to boarding schools far away from home reservations so that the authority of their parents would be undermined.

The schools were a dismal failure. When children returned home, they were unable to function well in their ethnic cultures or within the mainstream society. What the schools tried to teach had no relevance to life on the reservations. The schools also failed to teach Indian children the white culture owing to the poor quality of teachers and curricula. Though the U.S. government's practice of removing children from their home environment was reversed in the 1930s, by then several generations of Indian children had lost their traditional cultural values and ways.

The boarding school concept has caused alienation between American Indians and traditional American education. Traditionally, American Indian children were hands-on learners who received their education from every member of the tribe. The children were often considered "slow" by their white teachers because they did not catch on quickly with this new "book in hand" style of learning. Laura Wittstock-Waterman, an Indian educator, stated that parent apathy and lack of involvement in their children's education is a direct result of these negative boarding school experiences, creating a cycle that continues even today.

During World War II many Indians left the reservation to seek employment in the war industries of the larger cities. This start of Indian urban migration coincided with the federal government's efforts to remove the Indians from the reservations and to end its responsibility for the Indian tribes. Many Indians were taken from their homes and relocated in urban areas in a manner that brought back memories of the earlier forced removal to reservations. Unprepared for urban life, many were devastated by this upheaval. Alcoholism, suicide, and homicide increased to epidemic proportions and continue to be the leading causes of death among Indians (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).

When white explorers and settlers encountered the native population in North America, they tended to see Indians as simple primitives, a view that was used to justify paternalistic treatment and genocide. This stereotype was succeeded by that of the Noble Savage, a romanticized image of a lost tradition. Such stereotypes fix American Indians in the past, making it difficult for young American Indians to develop a cultural identity suitable for the 21st century.

American Indians have been reduced to cardboard figures, all wearing headdresses and saying "how." Many of our young Indian students cope by hiding behind Latino or black ancestry rather than risking humiliation and embarrassment. Life outside the reservation brings economic opportunities but cultural starvation.

Stereotyping continues despite what we try to say and do to alleviate it. Popular images about American Indians and Eskimos are widespread. Older Western movies shown on television contribute greatly to this stereotypic image. Textbooks still call the Americas the "New World" and imply, if not state, that Columbus "discovered" America. The implication is that American civilization did not exist until the Europeans first arrived

in the late 15th century. They consequently in effect deny the existence of the American Indian cultures and civilization that had existed in the Americas for centuries before the Europeans arrived.

A major goal of our curriculum content should be to help students view the development of the Americas and of U.S. society in particular from the point of view of American Indians. For example, the movement of European Americans from the eastern to the western part of the United States was not, from the Indian point of view, a westward movement. The Lakota Sioux did not consider their homeland the West but rather that their land was the center of the universe. Students need to understand that the “western movement” had very different meanings for the migrating European Americans and for the Indians whose homelands were being invaded. Such a belief does little to promote racial and cultural pride among American Indian students, and it has the potential for promoting misguided notions of superiority or supremacy among other students. Students are misinformed (at best) and miseducated (at worst) by whose story (white or Indian) is told. By helping students view concepts, events, and issues from diverse cultural and ethnic perspectives, we can help them become critical thinkers and more compassionate citizens.

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY “INDIAN”?

It is conservatively estimated that prior to 1492 there were 3 to 5 million indigenous people in America. Following the disastrous contact with Europeans, the populations were greatly reduced, and by 1850 there were only about 250,000 Indians left in North America. Now there are almost 2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the continental United States. They represent more than 500 different cultural communities federally defined as sovereign entities with which the United States has a government-to-government relationship. Only the Cherokee, the Navajo, the Chippewa, and the Sioux have more than 100,000 members. In addition there are an estimated 250 native groups that are not recognized by the U.S. government.

The first Americans (American Indians and Native Hawaiians) are the nation’s smallest racial groups, representing approximately 1% of the

U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999). Although once referred to as the “vanishing Americans” these groups have increased steadily since the 1940 census.

Most American Indians live in Oklahoma, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Census data from 1999 indicate that 65% live in urban areas and 25% live on reservations. Approximately 10% are scattered in rural areas (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999). Poverty runs rampant among many American Indian populations.

Each of the American Indian cultural communities has its own language, customs, religion, economy, historical circumstances, and environment. They range from the very traditional, whose members speak their indigenous language at home, to the mostly acculturated, whose members speak English as their first language. Most Indians identify with their particular ancestral community first and as American Indians second.

K. Tsianena Lowawaima, a professor of American Indian studies, says that a member of the Cherokee Nation living in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, is different from an English-speaking, powwow-dancing Lakota Sioux born and raised on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, who is different from a Hopi fluent in Hopi, English, Navajo, and Spanish who lives on her reservation and supports her family by selling “traditional” pottery in Santa Fe and Scottsdale galleries. The idea of being generically “Indian” really was a figment of the European imagination.

From the beginning of their encounters with Europeans in the 1500s, Indian values were at odds with the individualistic and capitalistic orientation of white settlers. Throughout the centuries U.S. government leaders were convinced that changing Indian cultural values was the key to “civilizing” Indians and acquiring Indian-controlled lands.

An elder in the Minneapolis Indian community summed it up as she told me in an interview at her home in 2004:

For 500 years my people have been told in so many ways that we are no good, we are savages, we are not civilized, not Christian and must change our ways. My grandfather gave up his tribal religion and customs. He adopted Christianity. He and my grandmother and the other people on the reservation did their best to give up the old ways, become farmers, quit hunting, go to church, and be “good Indians, civilized Indians.” They cried when the government took away their children and sent them off to board-

ing school. Some of the children never came home. Some came home to be buried. My grandparents cried again because their children grew up learning alien ways, forgetting their language and customs in schools far too far away to visit.

My parents married soon after they came home from the boarding school. They came from different tribes. They left the reservation encouraged by the U.S. government and the boarding school system to find jobs in the "real world." The promised jobs never materialized and, stuck between two worlds, the white world and the Indian, my father drank and beat my mother. My mother worked at menial jobs to support us. I was never parented because my parents, raised in government boarding schools, had nothing to give me. They had lost their culture and language. They had never been parented themselves. Boarding school nurturing was having their mouths washed out with soap for talking Indian and receiving beatings for failing to follow directions.

So this is my legacy and the legacy of many Indians, both reservation and urban. We are survivors of multigenerational loss and only through acknowledging our losses will we ever be able to heal. (Charlotte Little Eagle, White Earth Reservation)

The legacy of loss is accompanied by a legacy of resistance. As they had in the past, Indians resisted the termination policy, a policy toward American Indians during the 1950s and 1960s in which conservative congressmen led by Utah senator Arthur Watkins sought to emancipate the Indians by terminating federal ties to Indian communities and withdrawing federal support for tribal governments. The policy ended in the 1960s following the election of John F. Kennedy. The civil rights era included American Indian demands for greater self-determination and the development of the American Indian Movement. In response to Indian activism the federal government promoted Indian-controlled schools, protected Indian religious freedom, and preserved the traditional Indian languages.

Michael Vasquez reflected on the future of Indians in the United States during a conversation we had in July 2004:

The major issue we face today boils down to survival, how to live in the modern world. We must remain Indians and this is the challenge. Our languages are being lost at a tremendous rate; poverty is rampant, as is alcoholism. But still we remain. The traditional world is intact.

It is a matter of identity. It is thinking about who I am. I grew up on Indian reservations, then I left the Indian world and entered the white world. But I am still Indian. People enter the white world but they keep an idea of themselves as Indians. That is the trick.

That is the trick, remaining anchored in a positive sense of one's cultural identity in the face of racism. The use of schools as instruments of forced assimilation was education at its worst. What would it look like at its best? How can we affirm the identities of American Indian students in our schools? That is the question to be considered next.

Before we look at cultural values and plan strategies and programs to break down cultural barriers we need to consider two additional indigenous groups, Native Hawaiians and the Inuit/Eskimos.

NATIVE HAWAIIANS

The experiences of Native Hawaiians parallel those of other indigenous peoples whose cultures and traditional lifestyles were drastically altered by European contact. In 1778, Captain James Cook's expedition landed on the islands that he named the Sandwich Islands, now called the State of Hawaii. There, Cook found nearly 300,000 people living in relative isolation. Since that time, Hawaiian history has been fraught with benevolent paternalism by Europeans and Americans to the detriment of Native Hawaiians. Their story is one of broken promises and exploitation by foreigners that, in some ways, is similar to the plight of American Indians.

Until foreigners started coming to Hawaii, Native Hawaiians did not have a word for *race*. There were two groups, Hawaiians and strangers—*kanakas* and *haoles*. As whites became more prevalent on the islands, the Hawaiian people were forced to deal with an alien white economic, social, and legal system that they did not understand.

In the early subsistence economy of Hawaii, the survival of Hawaiians depended on a communal effort to reap the maximum benefits from the islands' scarce resources. The Hawaiians were an agricultural and fishing people governed by powerful chiefs.

There were two Hawaiian customs that would lead to inevitable conflict with haoles in the future. One was a system of sharing and bartering, in

which products were exchanged from one island to another. The Hawaiians did not use currency, and therefore the accumulation of wealth in a market economy as we know it was unknown. The other custom was the notion that the land belonged to the gods, and thus belonged to everyone and could not be owned by individuals.

The propensity of Hawaiians to share helped to seal their demise. Besides providing provisions for ships, Hawaiians were quite willing to share their women. The venereal diseases introduced by the European and American sailors found little natural resistance among the Hawaiians and, along with measles, cholera, and alcoholism, took a deadly toll. By 1840, only 100,000 Hawaiians remained.

Several groups entered the Hawaiian scene. Missionaries arrived from New England. Their goal was to Christianize the natives. As whaling in the Pacific began to decline, the Hawaiian economy shifted to plantation agriculture. Planters began importing field labor from China, Japan, Portugal, Korea, and Puerto Rico. The strategy was to keep any one nationality of laborers from becoming too numerous, and thus to thwart any type of labor organization. The nature of the sugar and pineapple plantations required a large concentration of land and capital, as well as a disciplined work force.

Annexation began in the 1890s as the United States saw value in the islands as a source of economic gain. Once Hawaii became a territory of the United States, its political and economic affairs were managed by forces on the mainland or by the island elites responding to powerful people on the mainland.

The opening of the Panama Canal made it much easier for Hawaiian products to reach markets on the East Coast of the United States. The plantation economy continued to flourish. After World War II, political leaders in Hawaii began to seriously discuss seeking statehood. It was argued that becoming a state would guarantee the large U.S. market for Hawaiian products.

Present-day Hawaii is a mixture of peoples with varied backgrounds. There are sizable communities of Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans. There is also a sizable number of Koreans who work in the restaurant and hotel businesses. They had come originally to work on the pineapple and sugar cane estates. Filipinos and Portuguese also came as agricultural workers. There are also a few thousand African Americans

as well as the still powerful haoles (whites). Upward mobility by Asian Americans in Hawaii contrasts sharply with their status as primarily agricultural workers one or two generations ago. Hawaiians are very heterogeneous, which makes it difficult to classify them. Many have varied backgrounds, including Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and African ancestry.

As with all diverse groups, Hawaiians have many cultural values and norms that can be used to create an educational framework. The spirit of *Aloha Aina* (love for the land) persists. Hawaiian values were never lost and the traditional value of *ohana* is a cooperative system of social relationships found within an extended family. This value of *ohana* is sometimes counterproductive to Hawaiian children attending school where cooperation on academic work may be perceived as "cheating." Also, Hawaiian children do not particularly relish the peer competition engendered in many school situations, and consequently they often do not respond well to competitive tasks. School personnel need to become familiar with such Hawaiian values as strong family relations, respect for and love of nature, creativity, and expressiveness.

The average Native Hawaiians fall far below their white counterparts in economic prosperity. They generally live in facilities that are substandard. They comprise a disproportionately high percentage of school dropouts and police arrests.

Native Hawaiians have not adapted to the competitive nature of the dominant society. They are oriented toward affiliation rather than competition. Friendship and family harmony are prized and are not to be traded for economic status. The reluctance to compete is one way to retain ethnic identity in a society that rewards competition. Hawaiian schoolchildren seem to achieve much better when they are evaluated collectively rather than individually.

INUIT/ESKIMO

Inuit/Eskimo are a people who live in and near the Arctic. Their homeland stretches from the northeastern tip of Russia across Alaska and northern Canada to Greenland. *Inuit* refers to the people formerly called Eskimos, a term from American Indian languages that may have meant *eater of raw*

fish or netter of snowshoes. Many natives consider the term Eskimo insulting and prefer the name Inuit, which means *the people* or *real people*.

Inuit culture developed more than 1,000 years ago in what is now Alaska and Siberia. The Inuit have always lived by the sea, which has provided much of their food. As the Inuit moved eastward, they modified their way of life to suit the Arctic environment they encountered. They caught fish, hunted seals and walruses, and went after whales. They also hunted caribou, musk oxen, and polar bears. They used the skins of these animals to make clothes and tents. They crafted tools and weapons from the animal bones, teeth, and horns. In the summer they traveled by boat, in the winter on sleds pulled by dogs. Most Inuit lived in tents in the summer and sod houses in the winter. They built snow houses as temporary shelters when hunting in the winter.

The Inuit way of life began to change in the 1800s. At that time, European whalers and traders began arriving in the Arctic in large numbers. The Inuit eventually adopted many aspects of European culture and permanently altered their traditional way of life.

Today there are more than 100,000 Inuit in Russia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. Most live in small settlements scattered along the Arctic coast. They have retained a considerable knowledge of their ancient culture. The traditional way of life has ended. The kayak has given way to the motorboat, and the snowmobile has replaced the dog team.

Many Inuit suffer from unemployment and other issues like alcoholism and drug abuse. In addition, industrial and nuclear pollution are poisoning their traditional homelands and food sources.

Inuit education tries to honor the past and create a future for their children. While Inuit parents were being moved from igloos to houses in the 1950s, their children were being assimilated into a European white educational system. In the worst cases, the children were taken from their families, harshly disciplined, and stripped of their culture. Only over the past 20 years have the Inuit been permitted to speak out about how their children are educated. After so many years of feeling marginalized by formal European education, the Inuit today are a people trying to correct the damage.

Many schools were built entirely for the Inuit, where even preschool children live in residence. These preschool children get an introduction to the classroom. When they do start school, a white teacher who knows

nothing about their heritage and culture will teach in a language they have never heard. This is one of the problems being addressed by the Inuit today.

In schools in the large cities where there is a mix of white and Inuit students there are difficulties. Inuit students are not flourishing in school. Parents feel more education in their native Inuktitut language and a culturally relevant curriculum would help. White parents, however, do not want their children “losing out” because of lagging Inuit students. An argument focuses on the difference between education and schooling.

In addition, a horrifying trend is developing: suicide among young teenagers. In 2003, in one small village in northern Alaska, eight young men killed themselves in the one year. Parents are shuddering at the thought that their teenage sons and daughters feel so isolated and hopeless that they would take their own lives. They wonder just how much the school system plays a part in this scenario.

If the Inuit could establish more control over educational policy and curriculum, Inuit culture and language could be thriving in schools. But it is not. On many playgrounds the children only speak English. Their native language is becoming a relic of the past Inuit culture just as it is in American Indian tribes.

CULTURAL VALUES

In general, American Indians from different tribes, Native Hawaiians, and the Inuit people share some common values. Particularly important is the collective identity, that is, one’s belonging to the tribe. I have noticed that their values also include idealism, nonaggressiveness, and nonmaterialism. Remember, what is valued and respected in one culture is not necessarily valued in another.

Traditional American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Inuit cultural values include:

- Traditional identity: approximately 550 tribes in the United States (versus white individual identity)
- Social and familial cooperation (versus white competition)

- Nonaggressiveness, avoidance of conflict, noninterference (versus white aggressiveness)
- Horizontal decision making, group consensus
- Nonmaterialism/respect for nature and humans' place within (versus white materialism where things and possessions are highly valued)
- Group life is primary; collective orientation
- Respect for elders, experts, and those with spiritual powers
- Spirituality, religion is a way of life (versus white religion, which is just one more institution)
- Maternalism (versus white paternalism)
- Introversion; avoidance of ridicule or criticism of others if possible
- Idealism (versus white realism)
- Accepts "what is"; holistic approach to life
- Emphasis on responsibility for family and tribal community
- Search for harmony, privacy, maintenance of traditions (versus white preference for progress, change)
- Observation of others' behavior; emphasis on how others behave and not on what they say
- Incorporation of supportive nonfamily or other helpers into family network
- Bilingualism; native languages still used and taught in many communities (versus white monolingualism)
- Use of nonverbal communication, gestures, expressions, body language (versus white verbal expressions)
- Belief in interconnectedness of all things, living and nonliving
- Emphasis on preserving a natural balance, in both nature and life
- Self-sufficient at an earlier age than other ethnic groups
- Living in the here and now, time is flexible, actions are controlled and influenced by cultural traditions rather than linear time systems (versus white future orientation, time is rigid)
- Oral history, songs and dances, ceremonial activities, and reservation communities are all important aspects of American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Inuit life.

LEARNING STYLES

We think, learn, and create in different ways. The development of our potential is affected by the match between what we learn and how we

learn with our particular intelligences. Education for Indian children should empower them to believe in their unique view of the world, including its cultural underpinnings.

American Indian students need real experiences both inside and outside the classroom, through which they can identify personal and cooperative interests, abilities, and talents. Learning styles are important.

Native learning styles include:

- Oral traditions give value to creating stories, poems, and recalling legends; good at storytelling
- Value cooperation, not competition; work well and communicate effectively in groups
- Learn holistically, beginning with an overview or "big picture" and moving to particulars
- Trial-and-error learning by private (not public) experiences
- Have well-developed visual/spatial abilities, highly visual learners
- Value life experiences in traditional learning
- Value design and create symbols to communicate; often exhibit visual artistic talent
- Intuitive ability valued and well developed
- Seek harmony in nature and life; are good mediators
- Excellent memory, long attention span, deductive thinkers
- High use of nonverbal communication
- Accept responsibility and discipline of leadership

In meeting the needs of American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Inuit children, teachers should decrease competition via cooperative/collaborative teaching methods and groupings as well as modifying instructional styles. These students benefit from increased use of visual aids, increased opportunity for storytelling, increased use of multisensory approaches to instruction, more open-ended or divergent assignments, and increased use of culturally relevant and affirming materials.

Teachers need to be aware that among American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Inuit students, there is a tendency toward the following:

- *A global or holistic style of organizing information.* They first develop an understanding of the whole concept. Classrooms are dominated by analytic or linear thinkers who process the pieces first

and then bring them together. This is contrary to the Indian learning style.

- *A visual style of mentally representing information in thinking (as opposed to verbal).*
- *A preference for a more reflective style in processing information.* Many Indian students learn by observing the tasks they are to perform. This is referred to as the watch-then-do approach.
- *A preference for a collaborative approach to task completion.* Parents encourage their children to collaborate with others to accomplish tasks and solve problems. In most classrooms students are expected to complete much of their work individually.

When I make an assignment, my American Indian students are reluctant to finish quickly or to correct other peers' papers (still a common practice in many schools). White students jump to the task. Indian students appear to need time to think about things before they take action on their assignment. It is almost like they have to make sure they can do it before they try. Often they seem to just not care about doing their assignments.

An elder once told me that Indians tend to ridicule the person who performs clumsily. An individual should not attempt an action unless he or she knows how to do it. If he or she does not know, then the individual must watch until the task is understood. In European and American cultures the opposite attitude is generally the case: "Give a man credit for trying." "The way to learn is to attempt to do so." Most Indian children observe an activity repeatedly before attempting any kind of public performance. Learning through public mistakes is not a method that Indians value.

Many Indian groups use the visual approach as a method by which to come to know and understand the world. My students also need to see the whole picture. Most classrooms tend to introduce new concepts and give all instructions verbally, which is in direct conflict with the encouragement of visual strengths.

I have also noticed that when I ask a question, my Indian students will not respond. There is dead silence. When I make a comment without questioning, they are more likely to join in the discussion.

Indian students want to blend into the total class and participate in group or team situations. They avoid individual competition.

When Indian children err, their elders explain privately the correct procedure or proper behavior. However, in school, teachers tend to scold and even verbally assault the child before his or her peers.

We must become more sensitive to the needs of Native students. We can:

- Discuss students' learning style with them.
- Be aware of students' background knowledge and experience.
- Be aware of how questions are asked.
- Remember that many students do not like to be "spotlighted" in front of a group.
- Provide time for practice before performance is expected.
- Be aware of proximity preferences (how close is comfortable?).
- Provide classroom activities that encourage both independence and cooperation.
- Provide immediate and consistent feedback.
- Give specific, meaningful praise.

Teachers, let your students (and their parents) know that you are also willing to learn.

In her article "Is There an 'Indian' in Your Classroom?" Lee Little Soldier makes the point that teachers might find it hard to determine whether there even are Indian students in their classrooms. Indians often have European names, and because of the high proportion of mixed-heritage individuals, there are wide variations in physical appearance. Some are easily recognized as people of color: others have light skin, light eyes, and brown or blond hair and may be identified as white. Those who are products of black-Indian unions may simply be assumed to be African American. In parts of the United States with small Indian populations, many people may be surprised to discover that American Indians still exist at all. American Indian communities are typically portrayed as a thing of the past, not of the present or the future. This depiction prevails even in places where there is a large and visible Indian population.

The schools remain at fault. In Nome, Alaska, a community where Alaska Natives outnumber whites, but where the school board, faculty,

and administration are all white, we look at Nome-Beltz High School as an example of this fault. At Nome-Beltz High School teachers and students maintained a veil of silence about Alaska Native history and culture except for the disparaging remarks about Alaska Natives as barbaric and ignorant that were part of the hidden curriculum. Teacher expectations of Alaska Natives were low, and in fact almost half of the Native students dropped out of high school before graduation. Several committed suicide. Those who did graduate were discouraged from attending college and encouraged instead to pursue vocational training.

We must reconstruct the curriculum in our schools to reflect not only teaching about traditional life but also about transitional life and the modern period. The inclusion of contemporary life is essential if our Indian students are to see that they have a future, not only a past. Such curricular interventions stand in stark contrast to the deculturalization that has been the legacy of American Indian education, reminding us that education does not have to mean alienation. We must realize that the Indian community is not a relic of the past but a growing community with a future.

Effective and appropriate programming and instruction must incorporate the beliefs, values, and traditions of American Indians, Native Hawaiians, and Inuit people. Our goal should not be to make these students "Anglo-American" but to make them bicultural by giving them the skills, pride, and self-confidence to enable them to move between cultures. Thus, the teacher's responsibility is to help build bridges rather than destroy cultures. Building bridges results, in part, from providing students with cultural understanding and respect.

Indian education has meant different things to different people. Once it meant the ways American Indians, Native Hawaiians, and the Inuit passed on their cumulative knowledge to coming generations. For years it meant forced assimilation to European ways. Today it is teaching that recognizes the educational needs of Indian youth as unique.

The purpose of education is the actualization of unique personal and cultural characteristics and potential. Educational experiences should be consistent with Indian values. It is essential that the nation's schools help Indian students acquire the knowledge, values, and skills needed to participate in the forging of a democratic and just society that fosters the common good.

Chapter Seven

Hispanic/Latino American Students: An Ethnolinguistic Group

Success is achievable. It is right there for you to grab. But you have to want it and want it bad.

—Juan Ramando

Although conversations about race, racism, and racial identity tend to focus on black-white relations, to do so ignores the experiences of other targeted ethnic groups. When we look at the experiences of Latinos, American Indians, Arabs, and Asian/Asian Pacific Americans in the United States, we can easily see that racial and cultural oppression has been a part of their past and present and that it plays a role in the identity process for individuals in these groups as well.

Hispanic/Latino Americans are Americans of Spanish-speaking descent. Many are the descendants of Mexican people who lived in the Southwest when it became part of the United States. Almost all other Hispanic/Latino Americans or their ancestors migrated to the United States from Latin America.

The three largest groups in the United States are Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans. Hispanics are the nation's fastest-growing ethnic group. A substantial number of immigrants from Central and South America have entered the United States since 1970. They come from El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Ecuador. Their medium age on arrival is 25.8 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001).

Most live in California, Texas, Florida, and New York. The urban areas involved are Los Angeles, New York City, Miami, San Francisco, and Chicago, as well as many cities in the Southwest. About one third of all

Puerto Ricans live in New York City. Miami has the largest Cuban American population of any U.S. city. Large numbers of Nicaraguan immigrants have also settled in Miami and other Florida cities.

It is misleading to consider Hispanics/Latinos as one ethnic group. Even though they share a past influenced significantly by Spain and the Spanish language, there are tremendous historical, racial, and cultural differences among and within them. Hispanic/Latino Americans represent a mixture of several ethnic backgrounds, including European, American Indian, and African. Most Mexican Americans are mestizos (Indian), whereas some Cuban and Puerto Ricans are black. Some are native to the United States, others are recent arrivals.

Today, more than 35 million people of Hispanic/Latino descent live in the United States. They make up the largest cultural group in the country, with African Americans ranking second. Mexican Americans make up 59% of all Hispanic/Latino Americans. Puerto Ricans make up 10%, and Cuban Americans account for 3.5%. People from Central America, South America, and Spain together make up approximately 9%. Many Hispanic/Latino individuals did not specify a place of origin on their forms, which makes these percentages unreliable. Hispanic/Latinos are the fastest growing group as a result of a high birthrate and continuing immigration. Between 1990 and 2000, this country witnessed a 53% increase in their number. Projections indicate that this trend will continue (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001).

Most Hispanic/Latino Americans speak English but continue to use Spanish as well. Spanish has become the next most commonly spoken language after English in the country today. In addition to their language, Hispanic/Latino Americans have preserved many other traditions of their homelands. The foods, music, clothing styles, and architecture of these countries have greatly influenced U.S. culture.

Like other culturally diverse groups, Hispanic/Latino Americans are confronted by high poverty and unemployment rates, as well as poor educational outcomes. Dropout rates are alarming. Unofficial reports indicate that one in two Hispanic/Latino students leave the public school system without a degree. They are hampered by not having skills that are important for competing in the job market. For example, many new Hispanic/Latino immigrants cannot speak or understand English. Discrimination and the lack of such skills have contributed to a high rate of unemploy-

ment and, consequently, a high rate of poverty among Hispanic/Latino communities.

Let us take a closer look at our three major Hispanic/Latino groups. Each group is a distinct population with a particular historical relationship to the United States.

MEXICAN AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

It would be a disservice to portray the future in idealistic terms. Hope is important, but the falsification of reality can immobilize a community.

—Rodolfo Acuna

Mexican Americans are part of the largest ethnic group of color in the United States. They are also the largest part of the Hispanic/Latino culture. Mexican Americans attribute their rapid growth to a higher birthrate than other racial groups and a significant and continuing immigration from Mexico.

Historical Perspective

More than 25 million Indians were living in the Western Hemisphere when the Spanish conquistadors arrived in 1517. The Mayas and the Aztecs developed some of the most complex societies in the region. Gradually the Spanish soldiers conquered the Indian groups and settled in the area known as Mexico and the Southwestern United States. Because few women came to the colonies from Spain, most of the Spanish men had Indian concubines or wives. The offspring of these ethnically mixed unions were known as mestizos. The unique characteristics of the Spanish settlers significantly influenced the physical and cultural development of the new "race" that was formed in the Americas. The biological and cultural heritage of Mexican Americans includes African strains. Moors came with the Spanish, as well as African slaves.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Mexico was in a perpetual state of political turmoil. Greatly concerned with the declining population in

Texas (at that time a part of Mexico), the Spanish encouraged Anglo Americans to settle there by making *impresario* land grants. Because Texas was geographically close to the United States, it attracted a large number of Anglo immigrants. They were interested in rich resources and open territory. Anglo Americans totally ignored the terms of the land grant agreements (becoming loyal Mexican citizens, adopting the Catholic religion, learning Spanish, and giving up their slaves). The new settlers were not interested in Mexican culture and really wanted to establish and control Anglo institutions in the Mexican province.

When the Mexican government took serious steps to halt Anglo immigration to the Southwest, the United States began an aggressive campaign to annex all of Mexico's northern territories. War broke out and Mexico was defeated. Anglo Americans gained control of all the Southwest territories and reduced the native Mexicans to the status of second-class citizens. Rioting, lynchings, burnings, vigilante action, and other forms of violence were directed at the country's "newest aliens" during this period of turmoil. At the same time state legislation in Texas and California outlawing the use of Spanish in the schools was enacted. Though the Mexican population declined during the conquest (due to forced relocation), it increased again during the early 20th century when U.S. farmers actively encouraged Mexican immigration as an inexpensive source of agricultural labor. Mexican immigrants found jobs in truck farming, cotton and sugar beet fields, mines, industry, and the railroads. Subsequently, political and economic conditions in Mexico have fueled a steady stream of immigrants to the United States.

When the Great Depression hit in 1929, jobs became scarce. White immigrants fled to the Southwest and took the few available jobs. Mexican citizens were "encouraged" or forced to return to Mexico. The civil rights of the U.S. citizens of Mexican descent were seriously violated. Violence and race riots broke out again. This led to the Chicano movement. Prior to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, *Chicano* was a term used to refer to lower-class Mexican immigrants from rural areas and small towns. The term was viewed negatively by middle-class and elite Mexicans, as well as whites.

However, at some point, Chicanos stopped thinking of themselves as Chicanos in a negative sense and became culturally aware of their language, heritage, and values. They became politically aware of and

reviewed their history in the United States. Many Hispanic Americans tell me that they go through stages of racial identity. Stage 1 is forced identification, where individuals are identified as Hispanic or Mexican Americans by others, stimulating a search for their cultural roots. Stage 2 is acceptance of their group. Stage 3 is affiliation; in this stage Hispanic students and families develop a deeper sense of belonging and a desire to contribute to a sense of personal and familial well-being.

The term Chicano was also used to link Mexican American political activists and intellectuals to their Mexican Indian heritage. The Chicano movement had economic, educational, religious, and cultural goals. The push for bilingual education in the schools was one of its major goals.

The Chicano movement was also political. Many believed political clout was the best way to attain their goals. They would be able to overcome oppression in the United States only when they had political power and control over the schools and courts that influenced their lives.

Students need to be made aware of four young men who epitomized the movement in the public vision. Cesar Chavez unionized the farm workers and led various strikes. Reies Lopez Tijerina demanded that Anglos in New Mexico return the lands they had taken from the Mexican Americans in the 1800s or compensate them. Rodolfo "Corkey" Gonzales organized the Crusade for Justice in 1965. The crusade initiated successful projects related to improved education, better housing, and the elimination of police brutality in Mexican American communities. Jose Angel Gutierrez organized the political party La Raza Unida in the 1970s.

Mexican Americans Today

Most Mexican Americans continue to live in the Southwest in urban areas. Mexican-origin Latinos are the youngest of all Latino subgroups with a median age of 24.1 as compared to 33.5 for non-Hispanic/Latinos. Education and family income remain below the U.S. average (only 45% of Mexican Americans aged 25 and older have completed high school, and 26% of all Mexican-origin families live in poverty) (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 50).

Mexican Americans, like African Americans and American Indians, made important educational and economic gains during the 1960s. However, many of these gains faded in the 1970s and 1980s owing to conser-

vative national politics and changes in the economy. As the nation became more technologically advanced, groups with few skills could no longer find jobs.

By 1990, a new movement began. The various Hispanic/Latino groups (Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans) joined together to form political, cultural, and business organizations to push for their collective rights and to improve the economic and educational status of the Hispanic/Latino Americans. Mexican Americans were reaping the benefits in local and state elections.

The Mexican American population is becoming urbanized. Large populations are concentrated in Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, Denver, and Chicago. Among this urban population has developed a new middle-class group of Mexican Americans who are professionals and businesspeople.

Mexican Americans face several important challenges in the years ahead including the need to improve the educational status of its youth, close the income gap between Mexican Americans and the total U.S. population, and work with other Hispanic/Latino groups to influence political elections and national policy. Let us hope that the Mexican American community will face these challenges creatively.

PUERTO RICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

Colonialism has played an important role in the Puerto Rican experience. We are connected to you through colonial ties, making us unique.

—Sonia Nieto

Puerto Ricans are the second largest Hispanic/Latino group in the United States. The Puerto Rican population on the U.S. mainland is growing faster than the population in Puerto Rico.

Content about Puerto Ricans should be included in our curriculum because Puerto Ricans are an integral part of our society. Knowledge of their experiences on the mainland can help students master social science concepts such as *migration*, *cultural diversity*, *racism*, and *colonialism*. Students can also compare and contrast Puerto Rican experiences with those of other cultural groups.

Puerto Ricans are culturally uprooted and their migration is unique. They are U.S. citizens. Other groups coming to America must be naturalized. Puerto Ricans can enter the United States without restriction since they became citizens in 1917. Between 1940 and 1960 more than 500,000 arrived on the mainland looking for jobs and a better life. By 1970 over 70% of all Puerto Ricans in the United States settled in East Harlem in New York City.

Historical Perspective

Puerto Rico, called San Juan Baptista by Christopher Columbus, is a beautiful, small tropical island in the Caribbean Sea. It is smaller than the state of Connecticut. Spain ruled the island country from the 16th century until the Spanish American War in 1898 when the United States took control. Puerto Rico is neither a state nor an independent nation but a U.S. territory.

Like the conquered Mexicans, Puerto Ricans did not choose to become U.S. citizens. Puerto Rico became an unincorporated territory of the United States in 1898, ceded by Spain at the conclusion of the Spanish American War. Puerto Rico, which had struggled to become independent of Spain, did not welcome subjugation by the United States. An active policy of Americanization of the island population was implemented, including attempts to replace Spanish with English as the language of instruction on the island. The attempts to displace Spanish were vigorously resisted by Puerto Rican teachers and students alike.

In 1917, the U.S. Congress passed the Jones Act, which imposed citizenship and the obligation to serve in the U.S. military but denied the right to vote in national elections. In 1951, Puerto Ricans voted to accept commonwealth status, which allowed them greater control of their school system. The Spanish language was subsequently restored in all schools on the island.

Puerto Ricans began migrating to the mainland in large numbers after World War II. Economic conditions on the island have driven many Puerto Ricans to New York City and other northeastern U.S. cities. Puerto Rico has a high level of unemployment. City slums, housing congestion, and below-poverty-level incomes were also a factor. Fluctuating employment conditions have contributed to their migration, which has been called “the

revolving door migration.” This is a pattern of circular motion in which Puerto Ricans go back and forth between the island and the mainland depending on economic conditions in the two places.

The lack of legal barriers is a major factor in Puerto Rican migration to and from the U.S. mainland. As U.S. citizens Puerto Ricans can move freely. They are not limited by quotas as are Mexicans and other Hispanics/Latinos. Easy and inexpensive transportation to the mainland also facilitates Puerto Rican migration.

The Americanization of Puerto Ricans has also played a major role in their migration. Since Puerto Rico became a territory, U.S. culture and institutions have profoundly influenced Puerto Rican culture and lifestyles. English was initially forced on the students, and textbooks venerated George Washington and Abraham Lincoln rather than Puerto Rican leaders.

Puerto Ricans Today

The family, which is very important in traditional Puerto Rican culture, is changing. Values such as respect for authority and youth work ethic are changing. Puerto Ricans are clinging to respect for the elderly and the extended family. The Puerto Rican community is very poor and its members' educational status is comparatively low. The poverty rate is close to 60%, and approximately 50% of Puerto Rican adults over age 25 have not completed high school (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999). Puerto Ricans are a multicultural population descended from European colonies, enslaved Africans, and the indigenous Taino Indians, and a significant number of them are dark skinned and so may experience more racism and discrimination than light-skinned Latino populations.

The future of the Puerto Rican community must be shaped by educational, political, and social action. More young people are working to strengthen the community. Organizations are promoting educational achievement and leadership development among the youth. The Puerto Rican Youth for Social Action is one example of this shaping process.

The future of Puerto Ricans in the United States will be heavily influenced by the political, economic, and social developments on the island. These two communities are integrally bound. Status on the island influences the ideologies, debates, and visions of mainland Puerto Ricans.

CUBAN AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

If in things concerning my country I should be given a choice, I would choose to want the cornerstone of our Republic to be the devotion of Cubans to the dignity of human kind.

—Jose Marti

As a group, Cuban Americans are older and more affluent than other Latinos, reflecting a different immigration history. Although Cuban communities have existed in Florida and New York since the 1870s, the majority of Cubans emigrated to Tampa, Key West, Miami, and New York City in the years after Fidel Castro assumed power in the 1959 revolution. As a group, Cuban Americans have low visibility because their relocation has occurred almost exclusively in a few large urban areas.

The first wave of immigration was upper-class, light-skinned Cubans who left in the first days of the Castro revolution in 1956. They were able to bring their personal fortunes with them and established businesses in the United States. The second major group, largely middle-class professionals and skilled workers, left after Castro had been in power for a few months. Though many were unable to bring possessions with them, they received support from the U.S. government and charitable organizations. The last major group of Cuban immigrants was known as the Marielitos. They arrived in 1980, having lived most of their lives under a socialist government. Marielitos are typically much poorer, less educated, and darker skinned than earlier refugees. Many also had criminal records.

Those who left the island in search of a political haven are not a representative sample of the Cuban population at large. A disproportionate number of refugees come from middle-class and upper-strata prerevolutionary society. They were threatened by government-mandated changes that eroded their economic position. Many are elderly because barriers to their exit from the island were considerably fewer than those faced by younger Cubans.

On average, Cubans have higher educational levels than Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans. Approximately 17% of Cubans over age 25 are college graduates, as compared to less than 10% for Chicanos and Puerto Ricans (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999). Because the early Cuban immigrants viewed themselves as people in exile who might return to

Cuba when Castro is no longer in power, they have worked to keep Spanish an integral part of their lives in the United States.

Life in Cuba

On January 1, 1959, the city of Havana, Cuba, rocked with the effects of a drastic change. The regime of dictator Fulgenico Batista had been deposed by a revolution led by a bearded young rebel named Fidel Castro. His triumphal entry into the capital city was seen by nearly everyone as the coming of a new messiah. His popularity was more than that of a political figure; he had all the makings of a charismatic leader.

As the course of the revolution drifted politically left, a marked polarization of Cuban society began to occur. A person either supported the revolution or was thought of as a *gusano* (worm). The latter was a parasite to progress and the revolution was better off without him or her. The revolution affected all Cubans, regardless of their place in society. Fundamental changes reached to economic, political, social, and religious sectors of Cuban life.

The educational system was affected greatly. The number of schools in rural areas was increased in a campaign to end illiteracy. School was required for at least six years (ages 6 through 14). The government also provided a strong adult education program. Cuba has developed one of the most extensive networks of schools in Latin America, from preschool to graduate and professional programs. Nearly all adults can read and write. New high schools were built in rural areas. Instruction in the humanities and the natural and physical sciences was fraught with political socialization, which placed a premium on loyalty to the revolution.

The Cuban economy today deemphasizes consumer goods in favor of products for export. As a result of this emphasis, as well as of production lags, rationing is fairly common.

Since the collapse of the Soviet empire, most of the trading agreements Cuba had with former communist nations have collapsed. New goods must be purchased with hard currency, and the Cuban peso is not a hard currency.

Leaving Cuba entails many sacrifices. Relatives are left behind, a significant point when one realizes the close-knit nature of the Cuban extended family, which makes it difficult for members to break from the

family unit. Forfeiture of all possessions is another factor to consider. Everything a person has worked for goes to the government. Also, there is the prospect of starting over in a strange environment without command of the English language. Despite all these difficulties more than a million Cubans have felt compelled to leave their homeland.

In the early 1960s, the United States accepted as a political refugee any Cuban who could reach its shores. Between 1959 and 1962 about 200,000 anti-Castro Cubans immigrated to the United States. After commercial air flights were suspended in 1962, many Cubans risked their lives as they came by small boats or rafts. In 1980 the flood of refugees was housed in temporary quarters ranging from holding shelters to the Orange Bowl in Miami. Despite tighter laws limiting the arrival of Cuban refugees, many continue to enter the United States any way they can.

Most immigrants to the United States have come with the unwavering intention of making this country their permanent home. Many Cubans arrived here with the thought of returning to their homeland as soon as the political climate changed. Most of them never expected Castro to remain in power for very long. Although the refugees were grateful to the United States for asylum, their ultimate plans were not in this country. Thus, they did not feel the immediate need to assimilate into the mainstream culture.

The adaptation of Cubans to American life has often been difficult. One problem encountered by Cuban parents was trying to raise their children to adhere to Cuban values, norms, and customs. These customs and values permitted less freedom than their American peers enjoyed. The children had to make major adjustments, as did the school systems that were to receive them. Along with a new language and curriculum, some students had to learn a new value system. Cuban youth lacked self-discipline and also the concept of private property (Suarez-Orozoco & Suarez-Orozoco, 2001). Authority was equated with people one does not trust and taking someone else's property was synonymous with "need" not "bad." With time and the patience of teachers, these students have adjusted to the new value system and have progressed well in their studies.

Cuban Americans Today

Cuban Americans, while making economic, social, and cultural contributions to the United States, also seek to maintain their cultural identity. In

doing so they want their children bilingual. Cuban parents feel that bilingual education is a necessary bridge for those with limited or no English-language ability to succeed in American classrooms.

Today, Cuban Americans are the third-largest Spanish-speaking group in the United States (Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans rank first and second). The Cuban experience indicates that Cuban Americans have been a viable and beneficial addition to U.S. society. The pattern can be expected to continue.

**OTHER HISPANICS/LATINOS
IN THE UNITED STATES**

One thing is certain, racism is everywhere in America. Whenever a person of one race factors in skin or ethnicity or religion to make a decision about another human being, the racist card is being played.

—Maria de la Cruz

“Other Hispanic/Latinos,” as the U.S. government classifies those Latinos who do not trace their family background to Mexico, Puerto Rico, or Cuba, are an extremely heterogeneous group. They include South Americans as well as Central Americans, well-educated professionals as well as rural farmers, those who immigrated for increased economic opportunities as well as those escaping civil war. Among this category of other Hispanics/Latinos, the largest groups are from the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, and Nicaragua.

They arrive with a wide range of educational backgrounds. In El Salvador there is widespread poverty, and not enough schools. Children are supposed to be required to attend school from ages 7 to 12 but many do not attend at all. Only one half of those who attend school graduate. In Nicaragua a literacy campaign was started and then dropped due to lack of funding. In the Dominican Republic 60 percent of the people live in rural areas where there are few schools (*The Great World Atlas*, 2004). In the United States, these students suffer from the same racism and discrimination attacks as do all other Hispanic/Latino students.

Hispanic/Latino Cultural Values

Overall, the cultural value of *familism*—the importance of the extended family as a reference group and as providers of social support—has been identified as a characteristic shared by most Hispanic/Latinos independent of their national background, birthplace, language, or any other socioeconomic/demographic characteristic. For example, achieving in school and at work were considered important by Latino teens because success would allow them to take care of family members. Conversely, white American teens considered education and work as a means of gaining independence from their families (Takaki, 1993). The most critical task facing the children of all immigrants is reconciling the culture of home with the dominant American culture.

Spanish is often spoken in the home and is a very critical piece of the Hispanic/Latino culture. Who are you if you don’t speak Spanish? Language is inextricably bound to identity. Jose, a young Puerto Rican man, said, “I think the only thing Puerto Ricans preserve in this country is the language. If we lose that we are lost. I believe that being Puerto Rican and speaking Spanish go hand-in-hand.”

Large inner-city schools have failed to address the educational needs of Hispanic/Latino students. The dropout rate continues to be unbearably high. The matriculation rate in higher education is decidedly low, and the high school completion level is abominable.

The Latino students you have in your classrooms may have lived here for a generation, immigrated recently leaving many relatives behind, or arrived as war refugees with no option to return to their home country. These origins affect the extent to which they have learned English and the family’s desire to maintain Spanish at home.

Cultural values play a huge part in the lives of Hispanic/Latino students and their families. Traditional Hispanic/Latino American cultural values include:

- A strong extended family system that is more pronounced than among other ethnic groups (versus white individualism)
- Relaxed/permissive child-rearing practices; independence and early development of skills are not pushed in young children (versus white authoritative child-rearing practices)

- Interdependence, cooperation, personal and interpersonal relationships are highly valued and come first; emphasis on social relations (versus white independence, competition, emphasis on task)
- Concrete thinking and learning experiences (versus white passive learning)
- Social learning in pairs and small groups (versus white independent, individual learning)
- Relaxed, present-time orientation (versus white future-time orientation)
- Commitment to the Spanish language, bilingualism (versus white monolingualism)
- Direct physical contact accepted, affectionate hugging and kissing on the cheek are acceptable for both the same sex and opposite sex
- Very strong religious beliefs
- Saving face, use of indirect communication
- More traditionally defined family structure (father as head of the house) and more defined sexual roles
- More overt respect for the elderly
- Past orientation, listens to experience
- Uses nonverbal communication, gestures, and expressions

Hand-in-hand with culture are learning styles. Hispanic/Latino learning styles involve:

- An inclusive approach
- Cooperative learning/peer tutoring
- Sensitivity to communication needs; are students “tuned in” to the class?
- Performance-based learning, ability tasking
- Hands-on learning
- Involvement of extended family
- Use of the Spanish language
- Less independent and more modest about accomplishments and abilities
- Youth-initiated and maintain meaningful interaction and communication with adults
- Use of intuitive reasoning (making inferences)
- Value of history, oral tradition, and visual/kinesthetic learning

In general, Hispanic/Latino American students value nonmaterial possessions, family bonds, active real-world learning experiences, social and cooperative learning, and student-centered classrooms.

I have found several strategies that work for Hispanic/Latino American students regardless of age. The following really do work:

- Use the overhead projector and videos to help students visualize. Include pictures, diagrams, and interest-related materials.
- Let the students sit where they feel comfortable as long as their behavior is constructive.
- Engage the students using the “whole class” method; do not single students out.
- Give constant praise.
- Explain directions in many ways, give a demonstration, and have the patience to repeat directions.
- Never assume that, because the students do not ask questions, they understand. Go to the student, ask, and make sure.
- Use hands-on materials, building things together.
- Offer extended time for assignments and tests.
- Make statements and ask questions in more than one way.

Educating and empowering Hispanic/Latino American students for school success necessitates developing their appreciation for their own culture, adapting teaching styles to learning styles, increasing students' sense of belonging in school settings, and focusing on strengths while reappraising weaknesses. Efforts must also continue to target language acquisition. Bilingual programs, Spanish-immersion programs, English as a Second Language (ESL), or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are most helpful. Language is a major barrier for culturally diverse students, not just Hispanic/Latino students in U.S. schools. Teachers' beliefs about foreign languages can play a role in their ability to see the verbal strengths of these students.

For many years, the educational achievement of most Hispanic/Latino American students has lagged behind that of non-Hispanic students, despite early programs designed to help boost achievement. Under bilingual programs started in 1968 students were taught in Spanish such basic

subjects as math and science, and studied English as a second language. When the students were ready, the classes were then taught in English. By 1990, many schools had replaced that traditional approach with two-way bilingual education, which combined native Spanish speakers with English-speaking students in all classes. The students progressed through the grade levels with some subjects taught in Spanish and others in English. The participants helped each other learn. This program remains controversial because some educators feel all academics should be completed in English.

Discrimination continues to plague many Hispanic/Latino American students. Educators like Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) and Takaki (1993) have shown that these students have often been assigned to classes for low achievers, forced to repeat grades, or classified as special needs because they do not speak English well enough or because of cultural differences.

Hispanic leaders support the hiring of more Hispanic/Latino teachers for Spanish-speaking students. Such teachers tend to be more sensitive to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of Hispanic/Latino students. Leaders also call for improvements in English-language courses and counseling services for these students. Many schools have developed dropout prevention programs, career guidance programs, and multicultural educational programs aimed at providing better educational opportunities for Hispanic/Latino American students.

To help Hispanic/Latino students achieve academic excellence, we must utilize bilingual education. Leading educational researchers have found that bilingual education has a positive impact on student achievement levels. It is a tool for encouraging critical thinking, abstract problem solving, and cognitive development. We must also use progressive teaching methods by combining high academic standards with a focus on the individual child's needs and learning styles.

Hispanic/Latino American students also benefit from multicultural learning. We should provide intensive exposure to culture and community. Multicultural learning is also an important part of the child's cognitive and social development.

Finally, we must encourage and support family involvement. Research shows a direct correlation between student achievement and parental involvement in school. Hispanic/Latino parents want to commit them-

selves to intensive involvement in both curricular and extracurricular programs. We must seek excellence and equity for our Hispanic/Latino American students, acknowledging in the process that these students are an integral part of our future and are worth educating.

Chapter Eight

Asian American Students: The Model Minority

What has been spoiled through man's fault can be made good again
through man's work.

—I Ching

Ronald Takaki in his book *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (1993) wrote, "In America, Asian immigrants and their offspring have been actors in history. Their dreams and hopes unfurled here, before the wind, all of them. . . . [F]rom the first Chinese miners sailing through the Golden Gate to the last Vietnamese boat people flying into Los Angeles International Airport . . . [Asian immigrants] have been making history in America" (p. 5).

Asian Americans, one of the most diverse and interesting ethnic groups in the United States, are rarely studied in the public schools. When discussed in the textbooks and other media, they are often used to illustrate how an ethnic group of color can succeed in the United States. Yet curiously absent is a discussion of why Asian Americans outperform white students in schools. Because of their tremendous educational, occupational, and economic success, Asian Americans are often called the "model minority." It is true that some Asian American groups are better educated, have a higher occupational status, and earn more money than other Americans, including white Americans. However, the model minority concept is problematic for several reasons.

A focus on the economic success of Asian Americans obscures the tremendous economic diversity within Asian American communities. The model minority concept also obscures the stories of successful members

of other groups, such as upwardly mobile African Americans and Hispanics. Finally, when overemphasized, the model minority argument can divert attention from the racism that Asian Americans still experience in the United States. As with all groups, Asian Americans have not escaped the ravages of poverty. Many hold menial, low-skilled, service and blue-collar jobs. Others attain managerial and technical positions.

Asians have immigrated to the United States from various countries: the Philippines, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and so forth. During the 1980s, Asian Americans grew faster than any other racial group in the United States. This group included Korean Americans, Asian Indians, Pakistanis, and Southeast Asians (Hmong, Vietnamese) who fled to the United States in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. There was a 99% increase in the number of Asian American students compared to an increase of 53% for Hispanic students (U.S. Census Bureau, 1993).

The Koreans are one of the largest and fastest-growing ethnic groups in the United States. Many are college-educated professionals. Many Asian Indian and Pakistani immigrants are English speaking and highly educated. The Southeast Asians came for different reasons than the early Chinese and Japanese. Singular political, economic, or personal concerns motivated many of the refugees to leave their homelands. Most had been directly touched by the trauma of the Vietnam War (1954–1975) or its aftermath.

Historical Perspective

White racial ideologies during the late 1800s define Pacific immigrants as aliens ineligible for citizenship, unfair economic competitors, and socially unassimilated groups. For the first 100 years of Asian American immigration (1840s–1940s) the images of each community were racialized and predominantly negative. The Chinese were called “Mongolians” and depicted in the media as heathens, gamblers, and opium addicts. The Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans were viewed as the “yellow peril.” Filipinos were derogatorily referred to as “little brown monkeys.” Asian Indians were called “rag heads.”

In the late 1960s, as a part of the transformation of the civil rights era, the racial identity and ethnic consciousness of Asian immigrants were brought to the front burner. The polarization of civil rights protests required Asians in America to consider their identity, their self-definition,

and their place in racialized America. They discovered that racial quotas and legal inequalities applied to them just as they did to other culturally diverse groups. “Colored” was clearly defined as anyone nonwhite.

Consequently, the terms *Asian American* and *Asian Pacific American* emerged as a unifying political construct, encouraging individuals to work across ethnic lines for increased economic, political, and social rights. Asian American groups have lobbied for bilingual education, curriculum reform, Asian American studies, improved working conditions for garment and restaurant workers, and support for community-based development. They have also opposed media misrepresentations and sought more opportunities for Asian Americans in theater, film, and television. Racial politics have continued to foster this unifying panethnic identity, though the large influx of new immigrants has changed the character of the Asian American community from the stable third- and fourth-generation community of the 1960s to one now composed largely of newcomers.

As we have said, Asian Americans have been called the model minority. Young Asians are routinely depicted as star students (especially in math and science), supported by industrious, entrepreneurial, upwardly mobile parents. For individual students, the stereotype of success may have negative consequences for the quality of instruction they receive. For example, I watched a five-year-old Asian American girl in a charter school kindergarten class dutifully engaged in the task the teacher had assigned, placing a number of objects next to the various numerals printed on a card. The child worked quietly without any help from the teacher and when the time was up she put her work away. The only problem was that at the end of the session, no numeral had the correct number of objects next to it. The teacher said that Mia, like other Asian American students she had taught, was one of the best students in her classroom. In this case, the stereotype of good Asian students meant Mia had not received the help she needed.

Asian Americans: A Diverse Group

What do we mean when we say “Asian”? Asian Americans are one of the most highly diversified ethnic groups in the United States. They vary greatly in both cultural and physical characteristics. The attitudes, values, and ethnic institutions often differ within their communities.

The U.S. government includes in its definition of Asian people from East Asia (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino), from Southeast Asia (Vietnamese, Laotian, Burmese, Cambodian), from the Pacific Islands (Samoan, Guamanian, Fijian), and from South Asia (Indian, Pakistani, Nepali). The Asian Pacific population in the United States has increased from less than 1 million in 1960 to more than 8 million in 2000. It includes 43 ethnic groups with religious beliefs that vary greatly and include Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Shintoism, ancestor worship, and animism. Those from communist countries where religion was outlawed may be without any religious tradition.

The largest Asian Pacific American groups are the Chinese (23% of the Asian population), followed by the Japanese (12%), Asian Indian (11%), Korean (11%), and Vietnamese and Hmong combined (9%), the fastest-growing Asian community in the United States (Uba, 2000).

Because of tremendous diversity among Asian Americans and their unique experiences in the United States, studying them can help students increase their ethnic literacy and develop a respect for cultural differences.

The Asian American groups also have important similarities. All came to the United States seeking the American dream, satisfied labor needs, and became victims of an anti-Asian movement to prevent their further immigration to the United States. Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Filipino Americans have also experienced tremendous economic, educational, and social mobility and success in U.S. society.

The stories told by these groups can help students understand how the American dream can be pursued and attained. However, when these groups are studied, the problems that Asian Americans still face in the American society, such as cultural conflict, identity, and attaining a balance between their ethnic culture and the mainstream culture should not be glossed over. The poverty that exists in the urban communities and the new wave of racism that has been directed against Asian Americans, as well as against other groups of color, must be analyzed.

CHINESE AMERICANS

Talk does not cook rice. Learning is like rowing upstream. Not to advance is to drop back.

—Chinese proverb

When the news reached Guangdong Province in southeast China that there was a “Golden Mountain” across the Pacific, a number of young men violated both Chinese law and tradition and headed for the promised land. The decision to leave China for a foreign land was a serious one because it was illegal to emigrate and violators could be severely punished. Also, Confucian doctrine, which was an integral part of Chinese life during this period, taught that a young man should value his family above all else and should not leave it. However, both the promises of the land and the mountain of gold, and the living conditions in Toishan district in Guangdong, from which most of the first Chinese immigrants hailed, helped push the young immigrants across the Pacific.

Political upheaval, famine, local warfare, excessive taxes, a severely depressed economy, and the rugged terrain in Toishan that made farming difficult motivated young Chinese men to seek better opportunities in an unknown land where one could easily strike gold and return to China a rich man.

The Chinese were the first Asians to emigrate to the United States in large numbers, arriving in California in 1850 as part of the rush for gold. The journey across the Pacific was rugged and hazardous. These first arrivals were single men who paid their own way to the California gold fields, hoping to get rich and then return home to China.

On their arrival in California they experienced a rude awakening. White Americans considered them strange and exotic because of their traditional Chinese clothing, language, queue hairstyle (which whites called pig-tails), and skin color. Almost from the beginning, the Chinese were objects of curiosity and victims of racism.

As the gold rush waned, many Chinese did not have enough money to go home. Hired at wages one third below what whites would have been paid, Chinese immigrants were able to find work in a wide range of occupations that most whites found unpalatable, such as work on railroads (they built the Pacific portion of the transcontinental railroad), domestic work, and intensive farming.

It did not take long for whites to become alarmed at the numbers of Chinese entering the United States, and a vicious movement developed to keep them out. Anti-Chinese activities took the form of racist newspaper stories, violent attacks against defenseless men, women, and children, and highly discriminatory laws, such as the Foreign Miners Tax, which forced

the Chinese to pay a highly disproportionate share of the taxes collected under the law.

Immigration was severely restricted in 1882 and completely forbidden by the 1924 Immigration Act. Like African Americans and Indians, the Chinese were viewed as a threat to white racial purity. Laws prohibiting marriage between a white person and a "Negro, Mulatto, or Mongolian" were passed. These laws and discrimination in housing and employment limited the growth of the Chinese population.

A second wave of Chinese immigration occurred after World War II. In an effort to promote an alliance with China against Japan, the U.S. government allowed a few thousand Chinese to enter the country. Chinese scientists and professionals and their families escaping from Communism were part of the second wave.

A third wave occurred after the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act. Quotas were eliminated and entire families immigrated at once. Tens of thousands of Chinese have come to America every year, and the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States has provided new immigration opportunities for Chinese students.

JAPANESE AMERICANS

A teacher for one day is like a parent for a lifetime.

—Japanese proverb

By contrast, more than three quarters of the people of Japanese ancestry in the United States are American born, descendants of those who came to the U.S. mainland or Hawaii before 1924. Because of overpopulation, depressed farming conditions, and political turmoil in Japan in the early 1860s, its citizens began emigrating to Hawaii and the U.S. mainland in search of better economic opportunities. The arrival of 148 Japanese contract laborers in Hawaii in 1868 to work on the plantations violated Japanese law. By 1886, Japan, because of internal problems, legalized emigration and the exodus to Hawaii and the U.S. mainland began in earnest.

These early immigrants were attracted by higher U.S. wages. Because

the Japanese government encouraged women to emigrate as well, often as "picture brides" in arranged marriages, Japanese families quickly established themselves. While Japanese workers were welcomed on the plantations of Hawaii, there was considerable anti-Japanese feeling on the West Coast. In 1906, the San Francisco Board of Education established a separate school for Chinese, Japanese, and Korean children, and the California Alien Land Law prohibited Japanese immigrants and other foreign-born residents from purchasing agricultural land because they were ineligible for citizenship.

The Japanese arrivals on the West Coast worked in a variety of fields, including agriculture, the railroads, domestic work, gardening, small businesses, and industry. Because of job discrimination, they were mainly self-employed. Their greatest impact was in agriculture, gardening, and small industry. Of all these areas, their accomplishments in agriculture, and especially truck farming, were the most impressive. Most of the land they were able to farm was considered unarable and largely useless by most white farmers. With a great deal of ingenuity and the use of intensive farming techniques, the Japanese dominated certain areas of California truck farming. They produced a large amount of the state's peppers, strawberries, celery, peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, and onions.

Japanese immigrants were often praised for their industry and eagerness when they first arrived in California. However, their tremendous success alarmed the white farmers, who viewed them as tough competitors and chose to drive the "yellow peril" out of California. "The Japs Must Go" became the rallying cry of the anti-Japanese movement led by the white farmer's unions and supported by the new media of the times.

Pressure built up. Then, on December 7, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Hysteria emerged on the West Coast as anti-Japanese groups spread rumors about espionage activities among the Japanese. The uproar on the West Coast and the fear that spread throughout other parts of the nation resulted in government action in March, 1942. Executive Order 9102 established the War Relocation Authority, which authorized the secretary of war to forcibly remove Japanese Americans to federal concentration camps. Without a trial or hearing, 120,000 Japanese Americans were removed from their West Coast homes and confined in camps as far away as Idaho, Colorado, and Utah. The internment showed how a dehumaniz-

ing experience could demoralize a group that had traditionally had high group solidarity and trust and cause mistrust and suspicion within it. There was a question of loyalty as Japanese leaders accused each other of participating in the oppression.

One response to this internment was for Japanese families to encourage their children to become as "American" as possible in an effort to prevent further discrimination. For this reason, as well as their longevity in the United States, Japanese Americans as a group are the most acculturated of the Asian Pacific American communities.

Japanese Americans today are one of the smallest of the Asian American groups. However, they have been called a leading force in the so-called model minority because of their success in education, social class mobility, and low levels of crime, mental illness, and other social deviances.

FILIPINO AMERICANS

The most important tool for success is the belief that you can succeed.

—Filipino American student

Filipino Americans also experienced a pattern of male immigration to Hawaii and then the mainland United States in the early 1900s. Like other groups they came seeking work and better opportunities. An early community of Filipinos in Louisiana was documented by Marina Espina in his 1988 book, *Filipinos in Louisiana*. Espina's research cites October 18, 1587, as the date when Filipino sailors aboard a Spanish galleon jumped ship on the Louisiana coast. They formed a settlement in the bayous of Louisiana and developed a shrimping industry.

Significant numbers of Filipinos did not settle in the United States until the first decades of the 1900s, after the Philippines became an American possession as a result of the Spanish-American War. Many were government-sponsored students who returned to the Philippines to apply the knowledge they acquired in America. Others were laborers who were recruited to work in the Hawaiian sugar cane fields. Because the men were not allowed to establish families, there are few descendants from this

wave of immigration. This pattern ended in 1930 when Congress set a Filipino quota of 50 per year. Tens of thousands have immigrated since 1965 when the 1965 Emigration Act abolished national origin quotas, and more Asian immigrants were allowed into the country. Some Filipino immigrants were quite affluent in the Philippines, while others were extremely poor. In general, because of the U.S. military presence in the Philippines during most of the 20th century, Filipino immigrants are much more familiar with U.S. culture than most Asian immigrants.

Because of chronic unemployment and widespread poverty at home, like the Chinese and Japanese, thousands of Filipinos were lured to the United States in search of the American dream. But they largely worked as cheap and exploited field hands. Even though Chinese and Japanese immigration had come to an abrupt halt with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, Filipinos were allowed into the United States because of the U.S. annexation of the Philippines in 1898. Once the Philippines gained independence in 1946, immigration was severely limited.

Filipino immigrants in the United States had some unique group characteristics that made their lives on the West Coast and Hawaii harsh. As the third wave of Asian immigrants, they were victims of accumulated anti-Asian racism. They were also on average much younger (16 to 30) than other Asian immigrants. Also, most Filipinos were sojourners who hoped to return to the Philippines after gathering the riches of America. The Filipinos emigrated from a country that was a U.S. colony where the American myth of "all men are created equal" was taught in the schools. Thus, unlike other Asian groups, they came to the United States expecting to be treated as equals. Their acceptance of this myth made their adjustment in the United States more difficult (Takaki, 1993).

Like other Asian immigrants they did the work the whites disdained and refused to do. They were contracted to do stoop labor, like picking asparagus and lettuce, and to work as domestic servants. Some worked in the fishing industry and in canneries.

Unlike the Japanese and Chinese, the Filipinos were unable to develop tightly knit ethnic communities because their jobs kept them moving. They turned to recreation and entertainment that reflected the sociological makeup of young, unmarried men searching for meaning in life in a hostile and racist atmosphere. Cockfighting and gambling were favorite pastimes of the lonely, alienated men, who also often frequented prostitutes.

Filipino-owned dancehalls, in which white girls danced and sold or gave sexual favors to the immigrants, were popular and a source of widespread tension between Filipinos and white men.

Today, the majority of the immigrants from the Philippines are professionals, technical workers, and specialists. Current success was attained and is maintained by hard work, tenacity, and the will to overcome.

KOREAN AMERICANS

Those who have it all never stop seeking. Those who stop seeking never have it all.

—Korean elder

Korean immigration to the United States occurred in three distinct waves, beginning with fewer than 10,000 laborers who arrived between 1903 and 1905. While there were some Korean "picture brides," most male immigrants were unable to start families because of the same antimiscegenation laws that affected the Chinese and Japanese. Another small group of Korean immigrants came to the United States after World War II and the Korean War. This group included Korean adoptees and war brides. Korean immigration dramatically increased between 1970 and 1990 with more than 30,000 Korean families arriving on U.S. soil.

These Koreans came from a wide range of socioeconomic and educational levels. Most Korean families currently living in the United States are part of families consisting of immigrant parents and children born or raised in the United States, families in which differing rates of acculturation may contribute to generational conflicts.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICANS

Southeast Asian refugees are quite different from other Asian immigrant groups in their reasons for coming to the United States and their experiences in their homelands. After the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, a large number of mostly educated Vietnamese arrived. After 1978, a second group of immigrants, many of them uneducated rural farmers trauma-

tized by the war and its aftermath, came to the United States largely to escape persecution by the Communists, the ravaged countryside of their homeland, and refugee camps. Many continue to arrive today from the refugee camps in Cambodia and Thailand. This group includes Hmong, Vietnamese, Chinese Vietnamese, Cambodian, Lao, and Mien. Chapter 9 is devoted to these new arrivals from Southeast Asia.

ASIAN INDIANS

Asian Indians have also experienced a dramatic population growth in the United States. Over 1 million are currently residing in various areas of the country. The first immigrants were farmers from India who settled on the West Coast in the 1850s. Like other Asians, they encountered a lot of discrimination and did not gain a foothold at that time. The contemporary wave (1986 to present) of Asian Indian immigration includes many highly educated English-speaking adults and their children. In addition this wave of immigrants also includes rural families who are less fluent in English and are having more difficulty adjusting to the American culture.

Asian Pacific Americans, Latinos, and American Indians are disparate groups, but they all share with the people of African descent the need for meaningful education. This education must lead to finding one's ethnic identity. This will help deal with negative stereotypes, resist negative self-perceptions, and affirm oneself.

Many of our Asian refugees and immigrants are scared. Fear is a powerful emotion, one that immobilizes, traps words in our throats, and stills our tongues. In order for meaningful dialogue to occur, fear of what they experienced in their war-torn countries must eventually give way to risk and trust. A leap of faith must be made. It is not easy. Breaking the silence requires courage.

As educators, we must encourage all groups to identify their strengths and to use them. We can also learn from the history we were not taught, view the documentaries we never saw in school, and speak with culturally diverse community members.

All of us can "do the right thing" once we discover what our own right thing is. We must share the vision. Sharing leads to a support network. There is strength in numbers. Strength leads to courage. Courage allows

us to speak. Meaningful dialogue leads to effective action. Change becomes possible.

ASIAN AMERICAN RACIAL IDENTITY

Ethnic awareness becomes the first stage of identity for Asian Americans. This occurs during elementary school as students interact with family and community members. Positive racial identities develop with family support and exposure to the family's culture and heritage.

White identification is the second stage. Asian students begin to develop a heightened awareness that they are different from their white classmates. Racial prejudice contributes to negative feelings. Feelings of inferiority cause students to attempt to adopt or internalize white values. Further, they begin to alienate themselves from other Asian Americans.

The third stage is awakening to social political consciousness. In this stage students develop a new perspective of themselves, seeing themselves as a minority in society.

In the next stage, redirection to Asian American consciousness, students immerse themselves in their Asian culture and racial heritage. They often become angry, resentful, and outraged about white racism.

The final stage, and the stage we hope all culturally diverse groups will reach, is incorporation. Students' identity is strong, balanced, and secure.

ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURAL VALUES

Traditional Asian American cultural values include:

- Confucian ethic: Strong work ethic centered on effort and persistence (versus white Protestant work ethic centered on ability and personal characteristics)
- Academic orientation: Status by effort (versus white status by ability)
- Family honor and tradition (versus white individualism)
- Past and tradition: (versus white future, change)
- Nonaggressive, cooperativeness (versus white aggressiveness)

- Multilingualism (versus white monolingualism)
- Mutual interdependence, collectiveness, group welfare, public conscience (versus white independence, self-reliance, individuality, privacy)
- Harmony with nature (versus white mastery over nature)
- Conformity, correctness, obedience to adult authority and elders (versus white obedience to authority rather than elders)

Additional American culture includes:

- "We" over "I," support the group
- Use of self-control, self-denial, and self-discipline
- Cooperation, nonconfrontation, and reconciliation are valued
- Formality and rules of conduct
- Direct physical contact (particularly between men and women) should be avoided, public displays of affection are not acceptable
- Honor/status is given to position, gender, age, education, and financial status
- Spiritual, humanistic, often believe in fate
- Contemplative, circular thinking (to start at a given point and work your way back to that point after you have considered all options), never making decisions in haste
- Traditional hierarchical family roles; children are extensions of parents
- Parents provide authority, expect unquestioning obedience
- Emotionally controlled, modest, stoic
- Indirect and nonverbal communication used, often implied meanings
- May avoid eye contact as a mark of respect to authority figures
- High value placed on education, reverence/status given to teachers

ASIAN AMERICAN LEARNING STYLES

- High achievement motivation
- Use of intuition in learning and problem solving
- High degree of self-discipline, self-motivation, self-control
- High level of concentration and persistence in academics

- Disagreeing with, arguing with, or challenging the teacher is not an option; this has to do with respect
- Attitude toward discipline as guidance
- Modest, minimal body contact preferred
- Ability to listen and follow directions
- Excellent problem-solving ability (female Asians have higher math scores than any other female ethnic group)
- Indirect and nonverbal communication used, attitudes unfavorable to participation in discussion groups
- Keen awareness of environment
- Strong valuing of conformity may inhibit creative thinking

Asian students prefer a global learning style with a holistic view. They prefer experiential learning and learning through communication. Children often are already in kindergarten at age three if they live in Japan or China. They are not there to play but to develop language skills. There is a strong component of what we may refer to as "rote learning." We often view this as mechanical memorization. Chinese educators view it as memorizing with understanding.

Asian students perceive themselves as being competent in learning. They take responsibility on themselves for success in their subjects. They work hard and go over and over problems until they understand them. Asian American students lack anxiety, which has been proven to be a major hindrance to learning.

In general, Asian American values include mature self-control, a Confucian ethic (the belief that people can be improved by effort and instruction), a strong work or achievement ethic, strong family bonds, a respect for obedience and authority, and a strong commitment to education and achievement.

Although many Asian groups are excelling in U.S. schools, some educators argue for a reevaluation of education for Asian Americans to address the development of talents in leadership, the arts, and creativity. Other educators recommend an emphasis on cooperative learning, self-paced instruction, and values awareness. It is also essential that Asian Americans address issues of assimilation and acculturation, dual identities as American and Asian, in positive and proactive ways.

Motivation alone does not guarantee that Asian American students will

achieve to their potential. As educators we must include such factors as learning styles, study skills, work ethic, attitudes toward school, and the quality of the learning environment. Rely on the students to help mold their learning. Remind the students that knowledge is the key to their future and determination, the key to their goals.