

Agenda

Beyond Missionary Parent Involvement: Learning About and From AA Families	African American Families
Discovering Wisdom, Beauty, and Funds of Knowledge Among AA Families	Culturally Relevant Assessment Suggested Activities

Home Intervention: Missionary Style

- Biweekly “parent-focused” home visits with parents of 3-7 year olds
- Each visit lasted approximately one hour.
- Clinch-Powell curriculum– comprehensive development (social, emotional, cognitive, physical); activities for one week

Components of Home Visits

- GREETING
 - Focus on parent. Create a warm, enthusiastic atmosphere.
- FINGERPLAY
 - Involve both parent and child. Demonstrate when necessary.
- FOLLOW UP
 - Review past week’s activities. Reinforce family’s accomplishments.

- ACTIVITIES
 - Introduce new concepts. Demonstrate activities. Use this time for co-planning and let the parent take the lead so she/he can demonstrate her/his understanding of the activities.
- STORY
 - Encourage parent to read the story. If parent cannot read, let her/him read the pictures. Books may be left in the home so that parents can be prepared for the following visit.

- EVALUATION
 - Involve parent in assessing what was learned and what could be improved.
- DISCUSSION
 - This time is reserved for discussion of any problems or concerns that the parent may have. Home visitor may accept a drink of coffee at this time.
- CLOSING
 - Remind parent of date and time for the next visit. Make sure it is recorded on the calendar.

- ## Reflections on the Research Process
- What was my intent? Were the children more prepared to do well in school and would parents be more involved?
 - What did I learn that I did not already know?
 - What did the parents want for their children? Had I silenced them?

Rural Home Settings of Families in the Study (Missionary Perspective)

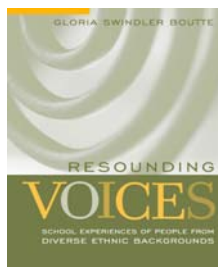


- Did not look for existing literacies in the home.
- *Canned* curriculum
- Did not help parents learn how to negotiate the school system—advocacy.

- Was there a way of making the interventions more relevant? How could I build on the existing wisdom in the homes and communities?
- My research agenda changed to become more responsive to participants.
- Took a course on qualitative methodology and began familiarizing myself with the knowledge base on critical pedagogy.

Using Personal Narratives

- Conceptual Framework
- Stories/Personal Narratives (as legitimate forms of reasoned knowing) (Bruner; Apple; Hatch & Wisniewski; hooks; Rosaldo; Freire)
- Voice and Critical Theory (Bruner, 1986; Delpit, 1995; Friere, 1999; Greene, 1995; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993).



Learning About and From Students of Color

- Plan to spend *extensive* time in settings where students congregate (e.g., church, barbershops, certain restaurants).
- How did you feel? What did you learn that can be used as a bridge?
- Study aspects of their culture ...
 - Humor
 - Magazines
 - TV shows
 - Social Organizations
 - Music

- What funds of knowledge exist? (e.g., cooking, religion, sewing, fishing)
- How can these be used to inform your assessments and how can these be related to the funds of knowledge at school?
- There is much wisdom and beauty among black families and in black communities.
- Find the sages in the homes and communities.

- *When beginning teachers come into minority communities, many are unable to understand the students' home language, social interaction patterns, histories, and cultures. Thus they cannot truly educate the students. Their perceptions of deficiency and competence are socially and culturally constructed. Without greater exposure to the students' culture teachers lack the tools with which to make sense of much that transpires in the classroom.*

• (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 134)

Activity

- Draw a large pair of glasses.
- Inside the first lens, list people, places, and experiences that have influenced you and contributed to who you are today.
- Inside the second lens, list the many identity groups that you are a part of.
- These lenses color the way we view the world.
- How would your world be different without these experiences?
- How can you effectively teach people who come from opposite backgrounds and perspectives?

Key Themes

- Learning About and *From* African American Families
- Avoid *missionary* efforts which attempt to "save" African American children from themselves and their culture

African American Children

“African-American children are not tabula rasas and they certainly are not simply inadequate dark skinned white children.”

A. Wade Boykin

“The education of any people should begin with the people themselves, but Negroes thus trained have been dreaming about the ancients of Europe and about those who have tried to imitate them.” (p. 33)

The Miseducation of the Negro

Look For These African American Cultural Legacies and Strengths

- Oral Tradition
- Extended Families/ “Fictive Kinship”/Communalism
- Spirituality
- Black Church
- Rhythmic Movements Expression
- Positive Racial Attitudes
- Perseverance
- Respect for Mothers (*Dear Mama*)
- Volunteerism & Service to Others

Dimensions of African American Culture

(Boykin, 1983, 1994; Shade et al., 1997; Hale, 2001; Hale-Benson, 1986; Hilliard, 1992)

1. Spirituality
2. Harmony
3. Movement
4. Verve
5. Affect
6. Communalism
7. Expressive Individualism
8. Oral Tradition
9. Social Time Perspective

**These aspects should be central in the curriculum and instruction for African American students.

Possible Misinterpretations of Cultural Orientations
(Donna Ford, 2002—in Dembo, 2002, p. 32)

Characteristics	Description	Possible Misinterpretations
Oral Tradition	Strong preference for oral modes of communication; students speak frankly, directly, and honestly; students enjoy playing with language (puns, jokes, innuendoes, storytelling, etc.)	Frankness and bluntness may be perceived as rudeness and lacking in social skills. Creative language may not be appreciated; if students speak Black English vernacular, they may be considered less intelligent.

Characteristics	Description	Possible Misinterpretations
Movement and verve	A strong need to be actively involved, mobile, psychomotor preferences.	Student may be viewed as hyperactive, inattentive, and immature.
Communalism	Interdependence; preference to social or group learning; dislike for individual competitiveness	The desire to work with others may be perceived as immaturity and lacking independence.
Affective	Expresses self-easily with emotions; feeling oriented	Student may be perceived as too emotional and immature; may be considered weak in cognitive skills.

Comparative Framework: African American and European American Values and Traditions (Ford, 1999, p. 7)

African Americans	European Americans
Extended family—strong family and fictive kinship bonds	Nuclear Family
Spiritual	Religious
Cooperation; social-oriented; mutual independence; collectiveness	Competition; task-oriented; independence; individuality
Multilingual (Ebonics)	Monolingual
Situation oriented	Time oriented
High context communication; verbal and non-verbal	Low context communication; verbal
Obedience to elders and adult authority	Obedience to authority

- Connection between West African Culture and African American Culture
- Video clip from [Rize—ch 8](#)
- **MARIMBA ANI: TO BE AFRIKAN**
"We are an Afrikan people," simply reveals that there are values, traditions and a heritage that we share because we have a common origin.

Contemporary African American Families

- Diversity Among Families (SES, structure, etc.)
- Geographic Distribution (South, North, West)

- Given that culture is influenced by and shifts across contexts such as socioeconomic class, geography, and age, it is not assumed that any culture is monolithic and static.
- However, it is equally problematic to negate the existence of culture at all (Seidl, 2007).

Two Stories of Black America

- One of success
 - Senator Barack Obama
- One of challenges
 - *State of Black America, 2007*

Successes

- One story celebrates the extraordinary fact that:
- Some of this country's top financial institutions have Black chief executives
- A Black woman is president of an Ivy League university
- The current and previous secretaries of state are Black Americans
- A Black coach led his team to victory in the Super Bowl
- The college graduation rate of Black women has never been higher
- Homeownership by Blacks is as high as it has ever been
- Blacks have penetrated nearly every barrier in law, business, medicine, sports, education, politics and public service.

A Story Too Often Told

- A quarter of all Black Americans live below the federal poverty level, a poverty rate about twice the national rate.
- More than a third of all Black children live in poverty and almost two-thirds grow up in a home without both parents.
- In some cities, more than half of all Black boys do not finish high school, and by the time they are in their 30s, almost six in 10 Black high school dropouts will have spent time in prison.
- Half of all Black men in their 20s are jobless
- More Black men in prison than enrolled in college (Cradle to Prison Pipeline—Children's Defense Fund).
- The typical Black household earns only about 60 percent of the earnings of White households and has a net worth only about 10 percent that of Whites.
- The HIV/AIDS rate is highest for Black Americans and Blacks are more often the victims of inadequate healthcare and preventable health maladies.
- Educational Inequities

Characteristics of The Upwardly Mobile Middle Class

- A sufficient family income
- Conformity to American norms of morality
- The close supervision of children
- The dual employment of husband and wife
- At least one spouse with a college education
- A belief in the upward mobility

- A close attachment to and involvement with their children's goals and lives
- The expectation that children will look to their parents as role models
- An expectation that their children will attend college
- Tend to live in suburban areas
- Participate in church activities and social clubs

The Established Upper Class

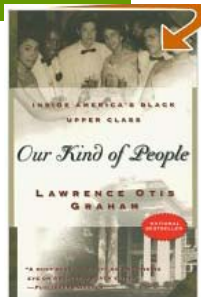
- Small, but growing
- Live in integrated suburban neighborhoods
- Mothers may or may not be employed
- Children are virtually always planned for (genealogical continuity is important)
- Dual career families are frequent

- Children often attend private schools with few African Americans enrolled
- Children tend to be well-behaved
- Family members seek to sustain long-standing traditions
- Women contribute to service organizations. churches, communities, sororities, etc.

- Children often attend private schools with few African Americans enrolled
- Children tend to be well-behaved
- Family members seek to sustain long-standing traditions
- Women contribute to service organizations. churches, communities, sororities, etc.

America's Black Upper Class (*Our Kind of People* by L. O. Graham, 1999)

- "Bryant Gumbel is, but Bill Cosby isn't.
- Lena Horne is, but Whitney Houston isn't.
- And neither is Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Clarence Thomas, or Quincy Jones.
- And even though both of them try extremely hard, neither Diana Ross nor Robin Givens will ever be." (p. 1).



Conclusions

- African American students and families are not monolithic
- In order to be effective, begin by seeing the world through their lens.
- Look for counternarratives to the familiar mantra that *Black parents do not care*.

Culturally Appropriate Practice

- Culturally Appropriate Practice is:
- Practice that addresses differences related to a child's cultural background.
- Be aware of perspectives relating to notions of authority.
- Understand how a culture views inner control vs. external control.

Cultural Considerations

- Degree of autonomy
- Nature of conversation
- Viewing routines culturally
 - Washing, bathing, and grooming
 - Feeding routines
 - Potty training
 - Dressing
 - Napping

Strengths Versus Deficit Views (Dr. Susi Long)

Move away from...
She can't.
They don't
He won't.
They never will.
I feel sorry for...
It is so sad...

How easy it would be to say . . .

“Well you know that home . . .
There's all that abuse, there's the
trailer in the back yard, and the
grandma takes care of her and she
can't read . . .”

What might we miss?

- He's strong and beautiful, but fragile. I have to build a safe and secure place for him and let him know that we, the class and I, will be there for him. The school has been placing him in the kitchen junk drawer. I want him to be up there in the china cabinet where everyone can see him.

Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers*

What is normal?

- Educators must know and understand the families that they work with.
- Children of color should not be treated as if they are White (mainstream) children.
- Specific attention to cultural issues is required.
- Knowledge of different cultures is critical.
- The detrimental impact of racism, classism, etc. is a consideration.

- No culture is superior to any other.
- Cultural learning styles and preferences should be considered.
- Knowledge is socially constructed.
- Understanding one's own culture is important.

- Whose culture is represented in "best practices"?
- Inappropriateness and Appropriateness is relative
- Problems with focusing on individualism
 - Co-construction of knowledge is neglected
 - Native Americans, African Americans, Asians

Understanding And Respecting Different Communication Styles

- Direct vs. indirect directives
- (Delpit, 1995, p. 34, quoting Brice Heath's study)
- *Indirect* (de-emphasizing power; veiled commands)
 - "Is this where the scissors belong?"
 - "You want to do your best work today."
 - "Would you like to take a bath now?"
- *Direct*
 - "Put those scissors on that shelf."
 - "Put your name on the papers and make sure to get the right answer for each question."
 - "Boy, get our rusty behind in that bathtub."

Respecting Different Parenting Styles

	Accepting, responsive	Rejecting, unresponsive
Demanding, controlling	Authoritative	Authoritarian
Undemanding, uncontrolling	Indulgent	Neglectful

Elements of the authoritarian style may take on different meanings and have different effects depending on context

- African American parents tend to use an "authoritarian" parenting styles yet children (particularly females) are independent.
- Asian-American parents may exert considerable control; however, the control is seen as a type of training.
- Latino children may be reared with an emphasis on respect and obedience develop a self and identity that is embedded in the family.
- Native Americans tend to use "permissive" parenting style in order not to interfere with the natural spirit of the child.

Punishment may also have varying effects in different contexts.

- Physical punishment is linked with increased externalized problems in non-Latino white families but not in some African American families, where requiring obedience to parental authority may keep children from engaging in antisocial behavior that can have serious consequences (Shore, 2004).
- Engage in discussions about caregiving practices with parents, dialoguing about cultural differences, and working towards resolving conflicts.

Environmental Factors—Test Your Reaction To Different Types of Background Music

- [music.variety.ppt](#)

Musical Selections

1. Let's Go Crazy—Prince
2. We Shall Be Free—Garth Brooks
3. I believe—Fantasia
4. We've come this far--Donnie McClerkin
5. Soldier—Destiny's Child
6. Arvin Smith—Drumming
7. Kenny G—jazz
8. Lion King
9. Ghanain music
10. Beethoven's 5th symphony

Consider the Cultural Relevance of Literacy Choices

- Fingerplays
- Nursery rhymes
- Books

Environmental Smells

- Think about walking into your house?
- What does it smell like?
- How does it make you feel?
- What smells are prevalent in families' homes.
- Recognize how comforting these smells may be to them.

Touch

- Individuals vary in their sensitivity to touch.
- Where and how we touch is bound up in culture.
- Different needs regarding frequently and intensity of touch

- Proximity—tell about weekend—start from a distance and gradually move up. Note comfort levels. Factors affecting proximity levels.

Mirrors and Windows in School

- Post photographs of familiar objects or people.
- Multicultural books and images—show variation within Black culture.
- Dolls/Figures—authentic Black images

Culturally Relevant Assessment

- Culturally relevant assessment-Assessment that is valid in terms of its adequacy and appropriateness.
- Culturally relevant assessment has to consider the validity of the inferences and actions that follow the assessment (e.g., placement in speech pathology, special education, labeling parents dysfunctional).
- Norming process
- Other validity issues—predictive validity; construct validity (may actually be measuring something other than intended).
- Impact of stereotype threat

- Seek information from several sources (e.g., poetry, music, dance, art, oratory, drama (role-playing), storytelling, and other performances).
- The goal is to get an authentic assessment of the family/child.
- Often the language and scenarios on assessments are Eurocentric.

Exhibit A

- The DIAL asks the child, *What do you do when you break something?*
- They say, 'get a spankin'.
- One teacher notes, *I mark it correct because that is what happens and how they see the problem solved.*
- The **correct** choices are 'say you're sorry' or 'offer to fix it or buy them another one,' but that is not what a lot of the children say.
- Now if the question had not asked what would **you (the child)** do....

EXHIBIT B

Consider the following typical scenario
(from Delpit, 1998, p. 23).

- The teacher "corrects" the students' AAL-influenced pronunciations and grammar while ignoring the fact that the student had to have comprehended the sentence in order to translate it to AAL.
- Moral: Don't confuse a new language system with reading comprehension.

Linguistics Society of America Resolution on Ebonics (1997)

- Patricia Cunningham found that teachers in the U.S. were more likely to correct reading miscues that were "dialect"-related than those that were "nondialect"-related.
- Dialect
 - "Here go a table" for "Here is a table"
- Non-Dialect
 - "Here is a dog" for "There is a dog"
- 78% of dialect miscues vs. 27% of the nondialect miscues are *corrected*.

- The variety known as "Ebonics," "African American Vernacular English" (AAVE), and "Vernacular Black English" and by other names is **systematic and rule-governed** like all natural speech varieties."
- "The systematic and expressive nature of the grammar and pronunciation patterns of African American vernacular has been established by numerous **scientific studies over the past thirty years.**"

- "Characterizations of Ebonics as "slang," "mutant," "lazy," "defective," "ungrammatical," or "broken English" are incorrect and demeaning."

- Ways of telling a story (topic-centered vs. episodic) (Delpit; Brice Heath)
- The child is scored for oral fluency of concepts and sequential storytelling or retelling of a set of pictures. The child whose storytelling style as defined by AAL characteristics is not sequential but episodic misses points (Delpit, 2002). *The skin that we speak*

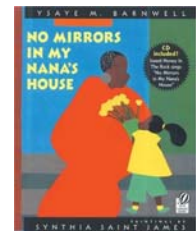
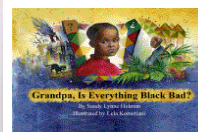
Liberation Literature

Books which portray various aspects of African American culture allowing African American students to have a mirror of and window into social, cultural, and historical awareness with their culture at the center, not as an additive or referent, worthy of serving as curriculum in its own right qualify as liberation literature.

Criteria For Liberation Literature

1. Celebrates the strengths of the Black family as a cultural institution and vehicle for survival.
2. Bears witness to Black people's determined struggle for freedom, equality, and dignity.
3. Nurtures the souls of Black children by reflecting back to them, both visually and verbally, the beauty and competencies that we as adults see in them.
4. Situates itself through its language and its content, within African American literary and cultural contexts
5. Honors the tradition of story as a way of teaching and as a way of knowing (Bishop, 2007, p. 273).

The Need For Liberation Literature and Counternarratives



C:\Documents and Settings\Gloria.HOME-364BE949E7\My Documents\There Are No Mirrors In My Nanna's House.ppt

Literature Which Affirms
Black Culture

Interactive Activity For Parent Meeting Partner Poem

My hair . . .
My skin . . .
I am proud when . . .
You can count on me for . . .
I value most . . .
I am most empowered when . . .
I feel the most comfortable when I am . . .

Questions/Answers