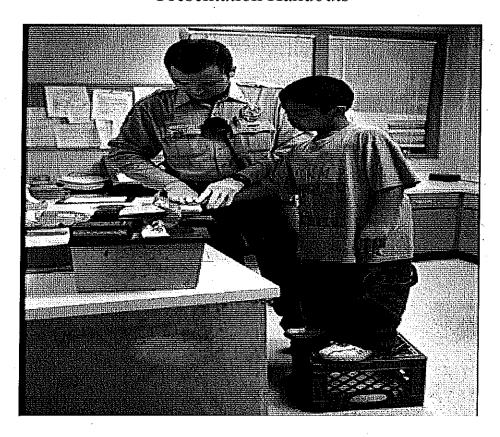# You Can Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline by Implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching

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Dr. Shonta Smith International LLC
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Presentation Handouts

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Class Motto and Poems

This day has been given to me fresh and clear. I can either use it or throw it away. I promise that I shall use this day to the fullest, realizing that it can never come back again. I realize that this is my life to use or throw away.

Dr. Smith: Are we motivated?

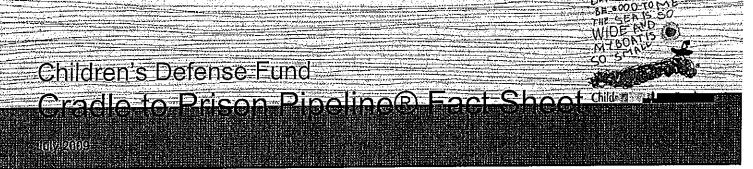Students: Motivated, motivated, downright motivated. Drive on Dr. Smith, drive on. Huh!!!

Excuses

Excuses are monuments of nothing. That build bridges that lead to nowhere. And those who use these tools of incompetence are masters of nothing. Therefore, we do not use excuses.

Task

Once a task has begun, never leave until it's done. Whether the task be great a small, do it right or not at all.

The Children's Defense Fund's *Cradle to Prison Pipeline* Campaign is a national and community crusade to engage families, youth, communities and policy makers in the development of healthy, safe and educated children. Poverty, racial disparities and a culture of punishment rather than prevention and early intervention are key forces driving the Pipeline.

KEY NATIONAL FACTS

A Black boy born in 2001 has a 1 in 3 chance of going to prison in his lifetime; a Latino boy a 1 in 6 chance; and a White boy a 1 in 17 chance. A Black girl born in 2001 has a 1 in 17 chance of going to prison in her lifetime; a Latino girl a 1 in 45 chance; and a White girl a 1 in 111 chance.

Pervasive Poverty – Poverty is the largest driving force behind the Pipeline crisis, exacerbated by race. Black children are more than three times as likely as White children to be born into poverty and to be poor, and are four times as likely to live in extreme poverty. One in 3 Latino babies and 3 in 7 Black babies are born into poverty. More than 1 in 4 Latino children and 1 in 3 Black children are poor. Between 2000 and 2007, the number of poor Latino children increased by 960,000 (to 4.5 million) and the number of poor Black children increased by 323,000 (to 3.9 million).

Inadequate Access to Health Coverage – One out of five Latino children and one out of eight Black children are uninsured, compared to one out of 13 White children. A child is born uninsured every 39 seconds. More than 2,200 children are born uninsured every day. And about 800,000 pregnant women are uninsured, while each year, approximately 28,000 infants die in America before they reach their first birthday.

Gaps in Early Childhood Development – Studies have shown that children who do not get the early intervention, permanence and stability they need are more likely to act out and fail in school because they lack the skills necessary to succeed. Researchers of early childhood emphasize the importance of early childhood nurturing and stimulation to help the brain grow, especially between birth and age seven, and even beyond and thus help children to thrive and to be on a positive path toward successful adulthood. The importance of stimulation in the first years of life is dramatically underlined in the U.S. Department of Education's study of 22,000 kindergartners in the kindergarten class of 1998-99, which found that Black and Hispanic children were substantially behind when they entered kindergarten.

Disparate Educational Opportunities – Children in the most economically depressed communities are at high risk of low achievement and attainment and are often stuck in under-funded, overcrowded schools. Poor urban schools have the highest numbers of teachers who are inexperienced or do not have degrees in the subjects they teach. Eighty-six percent of Black, 83 percent of Latino and 58 percent of White fourth graders cannot read at grade level; and 89 percent of Black, 85 percent of Latino and 59 percent of White 8th graders cannot do math at grade level. Black students are more likely than any other students to be in special education programs for children with mental retardation or emotional disturbance. Black and American Indian children are almost twice as likely as White children to be retained in a grade. The public school suspension rate among Black and American Indian students is almost three times that for Whites. Black, Latino, and American Indian children are more than twice as likely as White children to drop out of school. According to the US Department of Education, only 59 percent of Black and 61 percent of Latino students graduated from high school on time with a regular diploma in 2006. When Black children do graduate from high school, they have a greater chance of being unemployed and a lower chance of going to college full-time than White high school graduates. Only 48,000 Black males earn a bachelor's degree each year, but an estimated 1 in 3 Black men ages 20-29 is under correctional supervision or control. Approximately 815,000 Black males were incarcerated in state or federal prisons or local jails at mid-year 2007.

Intolerable Abuse and Neglect – A child is abused or neglected every 35 seconds. Four in ten of the children who are abused or neglected get no help at all after their initial investigation. More than 800,000 children are in foster care each year, about 513,000 on a single day. Black children represent 32 percent of children in foster care but only 15 percent of all children.

Unmet Mental and Emotional Problems – A Congressional study found 15,000 children in juvenile detention facilities, some as young as 7 years old, solely because community mental health services were unavailable. Studies have reported that as many as three-fourths of incarcerated youth have mental health disorders and about 1 in 5 has a severe disorder. Youths who age out of foster care are less likely to graduate from high school or college and experience more serious mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder, than youths generally. They are less likely to receive adequate health and mental health care, and are more likely to experience homelessness, and to be involved in the criminal justice system.

Rampant Substance Abuse – Drugs, tobacco and alcohol lead our children down the wrong path. Disconnected youth, lacking a decent education or high school degree, job training skills, and social support systems or mentors, often resort to self-destructive acts. Unfortunately, alcohol and other substance abuse treatment for youth and for parents and other adults is in too short supply. Only about 10 percent of youth with a substance use disorder receive treatment.

Overburdened, Ineffective Juvenile Justice System – One-size-fits-all zero tolerance school discipline policies are transforming schools into a major point of entry into the juvenile justice system as children are increasingly arrested on school grounds for subjectively and loosely defined behaviors. Black youth are about four times as likely as their White peers to be incarcerated. Black youth are almost five times as likely to be incarcerated as White youth for drug offenses. Of the 1.5 million children with an incarcerated parent in 1999, Black children were nearly nine times as likely and Latino children were three times as likely to have an incarcerated parent as White children. Most juvenile correctional facility programs focus on punishment rather than treatment and rehabilitation, often creating environments that further harden youth. This makes it more difficult for them to productively reintegrate into their families and communities.

We must speak out against policies that contribute to criminalizing children at younger and younger ages, and fight for policies that help children thrive and put them on track to a productive adulthood.

We need to:
- End poverty by creating jobs that offer livable wages, increasing the minimum wage, expanding job training programs, making college affordable for every student, and expanding income supports such as the Child Tax Credit.

- Ensure all children and pregnant woman have access to affordable comprehensive health and mental health coverage and services.

- Make early childhood development programs accessible to every child by ensuring such programs are affordable, available and of high quality.

- Help each child reach his/her full potential and succeed in work and life, by ensuring our schools have adequate resources to provide high quality education to every child.

- Expand prevention and specialized treatment services for children and their parents, connect children to caring permanent families, improve the quality of the child welfare workforce and increase accountability for results for children.

- Reduce detention and incarceration by increasing investment in prevention and early intervention strategies, such as access to quality early childhood development and education services and to the health and mental health care children need for healthy development.

For those children who do get caught in the deeper end of the Pipeline, we must accelerate reforms of juvenile justice policy at the federal, state and local level to ensure that troubled youth get the integrated services needed to put them on a sustained path to successful adulthood.

For more information on the *Cradle to Prison Pipeline,*
please visit www.childrensdefense.org or contact us at 800-CDF-1200 (800-233-1200).

Some Strategies for Teaching Culturally Diverse Students

Appreciate and accommodate the similarities and differences among the students' cultures. Effective teachers of culturally diverse students acknowledge both individual and cultural differences enthusiastically and identify these differences in a positive manner. This positive identification creates a basis for the development of effective communication and instructional strategies. Social skills such as respect and cross-cultural understanding can be modeled, taught, prompted, and reinforced by the teacher.

Focus on the ways students learn and observe students to identify their task orientations. Once students' orientations are known, the teacher can structure tasks to take them into account. For example, before some students can begin a task, they need time to prepare or attend to details. In this case, the teacher can allow time for students to prepare, provide them with advance organizers, and announce how much time will be given for preparation and when the task will begin. This is a positive way to honor their need for preparation, rituals, or customs.

Use a variety of instructional strategies and learning activities . Offering variety provides the students with opportunities to learn in ways that are responsive to their own communication styles, cognitive styles, and aptitudes. In addition, the variety helps them develop and strengthen other approaches to learning.

Consider students' cultures and language skills when developing learning objectives and instructional activities. Facilitate comparable learning opportunities for students with differing characteristics. For example, consider opportunities for students who differ in appearance, race, sex, disability, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, or ability.

Communicate expectations. Let the students know the "classroom rules" about talking, verbal participation in lessons, and moving about the room. Tell them how long a task will take to complete or how long it will take to learn a skill or strategy, and when appropriate, give them information on their ability to master a certain skill or complete a task. For example, it may be necessary to encourage students who expect to achieve mastery but are struggling to do so. They may need to know that they have the ability to achieve mastery, but must work through the difficulty.

Provide frequent reviews of the content learned. For example, check with the students to see if they remember the difference between simple and compound sentences. Provide a brief review of the previous lesson before continuing on to a new and related lesson.

Provide frequent feedback. Feedback at multiple levels is preferred. For example, acknowledging a correct response is a form of brief feedback, while prompting a student who has given an incorrect answer by providing clues or repeating or rephrasing the question is another level. The teacher may also give positive feedback by stating the appropriate aspects of a student's performance. Finally, the teacher may give positive corrective feedback by making students aware of specific aspects of their performance that need work, reviewing concepts and asking questions, making suggestions for improvement, and having the students correct their work.

Require mastery. Require students to master one task before going on to the next. When tasks are assigned, tell the students the criteria that define mastery and the different ways mastery can be obtained. When mastery is achieved on one aspect or portion of the task, give students corrective feedback to let them know what aspects they have mastered and what aspects still need more work. When the task is complete, let the students know that mastery was reached.

Comparison of Working-Class and Middle Class Values

Working Class	Middle Class
Believe one must make as much money as one can to pay for as good a life one can afford.	Possess "cultural capital" and engage in networking. Use cultural information and contacts to advance. Identity with brand-name clothing, cars, and so on.
Believe in a "whatever it takes" work ethic. Speak in a forthright manner—open and honest. Are proud of cultural customs. Employ the use of nonverbal communication skills.	Have a sense of belonging among members of dominant culture. Speak the language of dominant—culture authorities with fluency.
Have respect for parents and close contact with extended family members. Exhibit a sense of loyalty and solidarity with family and community members. Experience limited choices in school.	Receive privileged education. Expect extra and special treatment from authorities. Emphasize individuality. Children have a say in what they do. Seek intellectual challenges and choices in school.
Confront limited images in the media that portray cultural group members in a positive light. Mistrust "eggheads." Prefer logic that encompasses common sense and intuition.	Relate to predominant images in popular culture. Prefer analytical and logical approaches to problem solving.
Are emotionally expressive. Tend to be tough and loud.	Exercise emotional restraint. Emphasize surface appearances and getting along with dominant-culture authorities.
Seek work that pays well.	Seek work that is fulfilling and pays well.
Respect parent's accomplishments and efforts.	Feel pressured to achieve more than their parents
Acquiesce to authority when needed, yet refuse to be dominated on one's own turf.	Protest, question, and challenge authority.
Believe "I am what I am"	Believe "I must be someone important"
Experience overt prejudice and oppression.	Largely unaware of social—class oppression.
Expect to be a worker.	Expect to be a manager.

Source: Adapted from Lubrano, A. (2004). *Limbo, blue collar roots, white collar dreams*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Who Am I

Basics of Strategic Planning

Mission:

Vision:

Core Values:

Action Plan

Strategic Goal:

Strategy:

Objective:

Responsibility:

Timeline:

Exploring Cultural Linkages Between Family Systems and Minority Children Behaviors in the Academic Classroom: A System of Crisis from the Family, to School, then Prison

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Abstract

Each and every day, a number of American students are suspended from school. Depending on the violation committed, the student may be suspended from a single day to the entire school year. In particular, school systems across the United States are experiencing high suspension rates with minority children. The students are in fact funneled through a system known as the "school to prison pipeline." We intend to show that the students are funneled through this system because of a disconnect that exists between the home, the school, and the community. Students receive mixed messages from these three systems, yet they coexist within each larger system. Educators, parents, and community members are challenged by this epidemic, and are searching for answers to resolve it.

Introduction

Many professionals throughout the public educational system purport to be witnessing record occurrences of aggression and conduct management behaviors among students over the past two decades (Huff, Wilburn, & Belay; Boxer, Guerra, Huesmann, & Morales, 2005). While these behaviors are not exclusively occurring in the educational setting, teachers are finding it particularly difficult to meet the growing needs of students amidst these growing behaviors (Huff, Wilburn, & Belay, 2009). Increasingly, students across the United States are exhibiting a broad array of physical behaviors and mental challenges that

render them difficult to teach by way of conventional pedagogical practices (Boxer, Guerra, Huesmann, & Morales, 2005; Snyder, Cramer, Afrank, & Peterson, 2005). These students' behaviors occur during a time when many communities and educational settings are also experiencing the unique challenge of providing nurturing and education to a body of students who increasingly represent backgrounds that are culturally and socially diverse. Indeed the majority of the teachers who serve students within the public and private educational systems are from backgrounds that differ from their students'. While these trends reflect general occurrences amongst children throughout the United States, the impact on minority children has proven to be especially problematic (Hanks, 2008: Sirota & Bailey 2009).

Researchers generally agree that there are significant correlations between low academic achievement, increased dropout rates, and high levels of disciplinary procedures (Sameroff & Fiese, 2000). In addition, minority children also tend to come from families who withstand occurrences of divorce, single-parent households, households with low academic achievement expectations, and low income communities (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Hanks, 2008). While these categories are in no manner exhaustive or mutually exclusive, they represent a portfolio of social experiences that can make it difficult for many minority children to successfully integrate into society.

Given that increasing numbers of minority children are performing poorly in school and eventually succumbing to such fates as public school dropout and youth delinquency, it is clear that these trends are not sustainable. As has been stated, based on the noted challenges, many minority children experience a portfolio of life challenges that will likely render it difficult for them to successfully integrate into society (Hanks, 2008). Studies show that consequently, many children will make poor decisions and will likely intersect with the criminal justice system (McIntrye & Phaneuf, 2008).

Identifying the causes as to why certain students are not prepared for the realities of the real world leave lawmakers, schools, and even parents petrified, alarmed, and shocked. Historically, professionals and scholars have tended to agree that the answer to this issue resides in education; both in improving the quality of educators and in improving the environmental settings in which children can learn (Black, 2004; Sirota & Bailey, 2009). Accordingly, colleges and universities are churning out teachers at insurmountable levels to respond to this challenge (Black, 2004). However, it is the position of this paper that education alone is not enough to address the learning needs of today's minority students.

Given that children are influenced by more than just the educational system, it is clear that any meaningful attempt to improve upon children's ultimate life path must employ a solution that incorporates a child's home, school, and community. Children do not develop independently in these systems; rather, they develop interdependently. Therefore, a systems approach to addressing this issue is paramount. This paper is posited on the following premises: minority children are influenced by the consistent messages they get from their families, teachers, and peers; minority children experience greater indecision when the messages from families, teachers, community, and peers are not congruent; and minority children depend heavily on sound relationships as a prerequisite to academic achievement.

Education and Child Outcomes

Although today's children come from extremely diverse families and communities, 94% percent of all teachers in the United States of America are female and Caucasian (NCES, 2009). Consequently, many teachers are finding it difficult to understand and meet the learning needs of their minority students. Also, many children are having difficulties building teacher trust, gaining confidence in their teacher's ability to keep them safe, and validating their own fragile identities (Frey, Ruchkin, Martin, & Schwab-Stone, 2009). Because this disconnect is occurring so early and often in the life experiences of children, many of them are on a downward spiral consisting of negative life experiences spurring future decisions that will inevitably lead to unhealthy social outcomes and incarceration (Agnew, 2005; Frey, Ruchkin, Martin, & Schwab-Stone, 2009; Franco & Levitt, 1998).

Children who enter the classroom today are recipients of a society that is heavily influenced by technology and the internet. Professionals have been slow to adapt teaching practices in order to adequately meet the needs of these new student learners as change requires both consensus and financial responsiveness (Gordon & Browne, 2011). Over the last decade, professionals and advocates have changed their rhetoric to emphasize the dire need for action, for the issues in question are about to come to an unsustainable conclusion. Now that there is a collective agreement on the issue of children in crisis, advocates from various systems in society have sought to blame other institutions for the problem. For example, educators tend to see the issue being related to how children are raised at home. Parents, meanwhile, tend to feel that teachers bear the responsibility of educating, given the overt nature of their profession. These sentiments tend to also get played out in political systems, leading to policies that are often a challenge to implement en route to positive change.

Equally important is the fact that parents are the first teachers of children. The home has the most vital influence on a child's cultural and developmental life (Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Faust, 2009). As more and more children are becoming products of non-traditional families (i.e., single parent and female headed homes), children are taking on a number of responsibilities to assist and maintain the family's functionality (Agnew, 2005). In fact, children are growing up with an enormous volume of experiences yet with fewer opportunities for adult guidance and supervision (Frey, Ruchkin, Martin, & Schwab-Stone, 2008). For example, in many households, children are taking on the adult responsibilities of shared parenting and providing nourishment for younger siblings as a consistent part of their family's roles and expectations. These expectations often come at the expense of diminished opportunities for children to experience social and emotional development (Cavanagh & Huston, 2006). Without direction from their parents, children tend to make decisions based on what is popular among their peers or based on their own breadth of knowledge.

When children lack proper amounts of parental guidance and communication, they develop a high risk of experiencing neglect, abuse, and drug use in their lives (Kunjufu, 2005). Starting in life's early developmental stages, children cling to what they observe in the home and in their parents (Woolfolk, 2010). Consequently, a significant percentage of children will lead negative lifestyles when they experience parents who neglect, abuse, and/or subject them to drug-intense environments (Friend, 2011). Once the child begins to learn and develop destructive be-

havior at home, these behavioral patterns are continued outside of the home and within the child's community (Colder, Mott, Levy, & Fray, 2000; Frey, Ruchkin, Martin, & Schwab-Stone, 2009). In fact, the scientific literature is replete with researchers who purport that children who come from these at-risk experiences generally tend to be less prepared to successfully integrate into society as adults (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Aber, 1997; Hanks, 2008; Lauritsen, 2003; Sampson, Morenoff, & Raudenbush, 2005).

A number of minority families are likely to exist in low income communities which collectively present children with certain developmental and social deficits (Hanks, 2008). When minority children develop under such circumstances, and for prolonged periods of time, they are increasingly at risk of experiencing certain developmental and social delays which can affect their preparedness for a proper integration into society (Cavanagh & Huston, 2006; Degan, Calkins, Keane, & Hill-Soderlund, 2008). Children developing in low income families often experience the challenge of developing in a family with limited resources to foster learning and effective communication (Cavanagh & Huston, 2008). Consequently, few opportunities are provided for children to expand their cognition in ways that will be measured on standardized aptitude tests. Given the extreme conditions from which many children derive respective to their families and the communities that they reside in, the natural capacity of educational institutions to evolve in a way that meets the needs of children is often compromised (Keilty & Galvin, 2006).

However, financial resources are essential to the overall functioning and communicating within a family. Economic factors often influence how minority families are structured. For example, instability in income and em-

ployment outcomes has contributed to divorce rates and the number of families headed by a single income adult earner. As the family structure has changed over multiple generations, an impact has been observed on the primary role and responsibility of the family, which is the socialization of the child. Children now often experience less parent-child communication and supervision, fewer opportunities to experience language in ways that are measured on standardized testing, and fewer expectations for academic achievement (Dee, 2004).

Many of the above-noted factors are derivatives of the family system, and impact the life outcomes of many minority children who come from challenging backgrounds. Because these family systems denote synchrony and functioning, many minority families struggle to adequately meet the needs of their children (Cavanagh & Huston, 2008). This issue is compounded by the other critical issue of timing and duration in a child's life. Researchers generally agree that the quality of family interaction is critical to young children's early developmental years (Woolfolk, 2010). While the developmental consequences for children who experience compromised family dynamics are not permanent to the child's outcome, the prolonged experience of family instability tends to forge traits on children's behavior and developmental identities.

Family and Cultural Transfusion

The cultural experiences that children incur throughout their lives represent a fundamental ingredient of children's personal and social development. According to Woolfolk (2010), culture is the socially transmitted ways of thinking, believing, feeling, and acting within a group. Culture also consists of shared elements that provide the standards for perceiving, believing, communicating, and

acting among those who share language, a historic period, and a geographic location (Bradley & Kibera, 2006). While the role of culture is broadly understood and agreed upon by many professionals, the polemics of culture can be vividly understood when we consider the magnitude of a child's cultural messages. For example, children who represent certain ethnic groups may receive distinct cultural messages and experiences that shape their identities. This issue becomes complex when we consider the fact that the messages experienced in one cultural setting may be inconsistent with the cultural expectations in another (Bradley & Kibera, 2008). Due in part to the varied expectations and interactions experienced by minority children between the home and in their educational learning settings, children often receive mixed messages related to discipline, accountability, and academic competence (Bradley & Kibera, 2008). In the development of many children, this can be very difficult to understand and can even cause cultural identity crises (Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009).

The United States is currently experiencing a systemic challenge, as the nation is experiencing increasing cohorts of culturally and ethnically diverse families. Consequently, a number of minority children are experiencing extremely diverse cultural messages as they are moving between the family system and the school system (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009). Because of the systematic breakdowns associated with the incongruent messages experienced between the home and the school, many children fail to develop the communication and interaction skills essential to becoming successful in our technocratic society. When assessing the life experiences of many of these at-risk children, we see that minority children tend to commit violent crimes and become products of the criminal justice system at disproportionately high and alarming rates (Agnew, 2005). Compared to societal norms, minority children are at a disadvantage due to the lack of exposure to the standards of acceptable societal behaviors (Miltenberger, 2012). While the explanations provided by many professionals seem to vary, consistent agreement exists that when minority children experience certain life circumstances (i.e., poverty stricken communities, violent homes, poor family communication and support, poor family involvement in a child's educational outcomes) they tend to be at a high risk of failing to develop the social and personal skill-sets to make good decisions and integrate successfully into the broader society.

The mixed messages that minority children sometimes experience between the home, the school, and indeed the community often lead some children to feel that criminal activity is more advantageous than dealing with the rhetoric of school and family concepts. For example, some students begin to believe that they don't need to read, as they plan on engaging in criminal activities (Pinizotto, Davis & Miller, 1997). Children, who, at an early age, become members of groups that engage in criminal activity, are able to attain higher levels of self-worth and esteem because they now belong to a group and are able to achieve that group's success through reaching goals (Friend, 2011). In a drastic contrast, these same students are dehumanized and destroyed verbally at school, and cannot equate the same self-efficacy as expressed in their peer groups (Pinizotto, Davis & Miller, 1997). As noted by Pinizotto: "What conventional [systems] regards as inappropriate or unacceptable behavior that often results in punishment, [these groups] ignore, encourage, or recognize as adaptive for

their survival on the street" (Pinizotto, Davis & Miller, 1997). These untapped behaviors streamline the child directly to prison.

Family and Community Influences

Minority children coexist in a number of communities. On a daily basis, the children move between the peer community and the school community. The peer community has a great influence on the children, specifically adolescent children. As the children move between the two communities, in order to function successfully in both communities, the children must be able to code switch. Code switching is choosing one's language variety appropriate to the specific time, place, audience, and communicative purpose (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). For the present purpose, the children will be able to communicate to different racial and ethnic groups and not lose their cultural identity. A number of minority children are limited in their capabilities of code switching respective to the communication parameters in the home and in the school (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). This inability to code switch makes it difficult for the children to co-exist between the community sub-systems of the home, the school, and their respective peer groups. As a result, the children are forced into making a decision to choose which community is more important to his or her existence. Since the peer community has the greatest immediate influence, children often choose the peer community. With this choice, however, the children run into the problem of culture conflict. The conflict arises when the children attempt to engage in the cultural practices and rituals that are accepted in the peer community but are not accepted in the school community. The children deny the school community rituals and practices because the children perceive that those rituals and practices stand to

deny the peer community. By the same token, the school community perceives these rituals and practices as a conflict of interest (Woolfolk, 2010).

Schools

Children often replicate behaviors exhibited in the home within the school environment. Given that minority children often encounter and exhibit many challenging behaviors in the home that may not be acceptable in the school environment, educators face a great challenge when it comes to maintaining consistent practices in the school community (Lynch, 2002). When educators are unsuccessful maintaining control and structure in the academic classroom, the educational experience of many students gets disrupted.

One plausible explanation for this occurrence among some minority students is related to their adaptability. For example, at home the child may be in a less structured environment than is found in the school environment, and when the expectations between the home and the school are vastly different, children may have great difficulties adjusting to the expectations of each environment. Arguably, children who have prolonged experiences where they are not supported or guided through this transition may experience social deficits in their developmental character, which will inevitably lead to challenges within the school system (Jenkins, 2010).

When children are not productive in school, and experience a lack of parental guidance at home, these negative influences directly impact the child's overall life. Because the home and school environment are both settings that are instrumental to a child's learning and adjustment, these children sometimes experience severe developmental delays respective to their social and cognitive growth (McAdams, 2010). Consequently,

children experiencing severe developmental delays are at a high risk of affiliating themselves with organizations or engaging in behaviors that render them a danger to themselves and to their community (Agnew, 2005).

Children who experience developmental delays brought on by challenging life experiences increasingly demonstrate an inability to manage and cope in the school environment. Not only are they falling behind academically, but they are also increasingly experiencing the negative sanctions of school disciplinary actions, declining support from teachers, and suspension (Brown & Rodriguez, 2009). This cycle continues to the point where children fail to adequately develop the skill-sets that are essential to becoming good citizens. Prolonged negative and unsupportive life experiences increase the likelihood that children' will not have the life skills essential to adequately cope, and thus will succumb to behaviors that will lead to the prison pipe line dilemma (Jenkins, 2010). This dynamic gets at the heart of the issue, as a significant lack of congruence exists within the experiential messages that some minority children encounter between the home, the school, and their community of peers. Children need consistency of messages and support from all such settings to foster the healthiest outcome respective to education and development (Sirota & Bailey, 2009)

When children do not receive consistency of expectations in school and support among their teachers, they often perform poorly on academic tests and stop investing in education. According to Sirota and Bailey (2009), minority children often are perceived as less academically capable by teachers and are therefore not provided with an adequate level of support for academic success to be fostered among them. According to Brown and

Rodriguez (2009), there exists a cycle of institutionalized educational neglect, in which the demographical location, size of the school, and resources play a major part in the disengagement of minority children (Brown & Rodriguez). Within the constructs of the school, many factors can cause students to disengage as early as kindergarten, particularly if they are deemed to be at a behavioral disadvantage. Many students come from poor families and/or experience such challenges as homelessness, being an English Language Learner, hunger, and abuse. When children do not receive appropriate support from both the home and their teachers, the students begin to disengage and drop out of school, feeling in general that school may not be beneficial to their survival (Brown & Rodriguez, 2009; Rumberger & Rodriguez, 2002; Fine, 2001).

The process of delineating the student starts with what Fine (1991, p.50) calls "silencing and exporting dissent." Students in school districts containing higher poverty among families are at a higher risk of suffering academic setbacks and long-term failure, as they increasingly feel that their lives are not relevant and that they are not capable of performing academically (Brown & Rodriguez, 2009; Fine, 1991; Sirota & Bailey, 2009). A cycle is created wherein some minority children go back and forth between poor family dynamics and a school system where they are not receiving enough supportive experiences from teachers who believe they are as capable as other students. Prolonged experiences of this kind lead to poor academic performance, self-esteem issues, behavioral problems, and an overriding belief that they are not academically capable. This outcome will make them less prepared to get appropriate jobs as adults, much less internalize the cultural messages that will foster an

appropriate integration into the broader socie-
ty. Consequently, they are likely to be poor
when on their own, and produce families
where they may continue this cycle into the
next generation (Woolfolk, 2010).

Cultural Bias and the School

Language is an important issue to consid-
er when it comes to the outcomes of minority
children, as they are more likely to come
from cultural settings where they do not
speak formal English on a consistent basis.
Several researchers (Brown, 2006; Cho &
DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Dee, 2004; Siro-
ta & Bailey, 2009) have noted that educators
generally view minority students in a less
positive light than their Caucasian counter-
parts, and that teachers provide even less at-
tention and support when students do not pos-
sess a mastery of the English language or are
perceived to misuse it by leaning on cultural
slang. Consequently, these students are some-
times placed in special education classrooms
due to English acquisition problems or not
knowing the content presented to them.
These students are also often placed in groups
in which mastery of Standard English is
negligible and strong peer support is the only
way in which they can survive (Loza, 2003).
For example, a number of African American
children engage in Black dialect or slang.
This form of speaking is accepted amongst
the children's own cultural group. However,
when children attempt to use this form of
language at school, or in the community at
large, it oftentimes is not accepted. It is not
accepted because persons that are not
members of the children's cultural group do
not fully understand it. This example shows
how a language barrier can cause conflict
between cultural groups. Oftentimes, using
Black dialect has an outright adverse effect.
The adverse effect might cause a student to

be placed in in-school suspension because a
teacher overheard a conversation the child
was having with a friend and misinterpreted
what was said as being negative.

As with their English Language Learner
counterparts, African American students are
often disserviced by way of educational
neglect. Indeed, African American students
are overrepresented in special education
classes across the country (Friend, 2009).
Teachers often refer students there due to a
lack of experience with or understanding of
the culture of African Americans. Teaching
pedagogy is often not expressed in the
referral of these students. So students bear the
brunt of teachers who refuse to change
teaching styles that will accommodate the
learner (Brown, 2006; Friend, 2009). This
results in a child matriculating through a
system that facilitates the behavior but does
not educate the child.

Therefore the population of minority
students is often overlooked and alienated.
This neglectful behavior on the part of
education agencies across the United States
facilitates the process of students going from
school to prison. When students are not sup-
ported in the home and valued in the school,
they will likely become a product of the crim-
inal justice system (Pinizotto, Davis & Miller,
1997).

According to Kunjufu (2005), the prison
beds of the future are prepared based on the
number of third graders who do not pass state
reading tests, who have chronic absenteeism,
and who are transient. Given this pattern, it is
imperative that we look at the educational
system with regard to its policies and proce-
dures and help define current practices and
delineate what is and is not working in the
classroom so that teachers and students alike
can willfully succeed (Kauchak& Eggen,
2008).

Lack of Minority Teachers

Several researchers note that by 2020, minority students will constitute approximately half of the public school population in the United States (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005; Sirota & Bailey, 2009); however, minority teachers constitute only six percent (Dee, 2004; Shure, 2001). Minority teachers have been underrepresented in education among teachers for many years (NCES, 2009), but given the rapidly changing student population, it is imperative that the educational system's teachers become as diverse as the student body they are teaching.

Several factors contribute to the number of minority teachers. Many minority teachers are retiring while others are leaving due to health issues, lack of administrative support, and inadequate recruitment of new minority teachers (Gonzalez, Brown & Slate, 2008).

The shortage of minority teachers does not help the students who need racial identification as well as role models within the community (Tatum, 2003). Moreover, minority teachers, regardless of their quality, stand to represent cultural pride. The lack of minority teachers in the classroom can often chip away at a sense of cultural dignity – of belonging to something positive (which is a healthy substitute to the media, which disenfranchises such cultural value). Students whom identify with minority teachers have higher achievement scores as well as higher self-efficacy (Dee, 2004).

Summary

Young children entering school systems in the United States are increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse. In contrast, the overwhelming majority of teachers responsible for their learning environment will be White female teachers (NCES, 2009). While the challenges implied by this dynamic are enormous and not easily summarized, some noteworthy issues are as follows: (1) Young minority and primarily poor students tend to score poorly on aptitude testing, possess lower academic esteem, and have more behavioral problems; (2) Teachers in our school systems tend to perceive minority students as less capable and tend to direct more attention to White male students; and (3) Minority and primarily poor students who do not receive adequate support in the home and at school will likely fail to develop the skill-sets required to make good decisions as adults and become productive members of society.

The root causes of this dilemma stem from the fact that the home, school, and community function as separate societal entities which often present very different cultural messages to children. Each system represents a body of people that act as cultural agents to transmit cultural experiences and expectations. As the children attempt to co-exist in each one of these cultural systems, they begin to experience forms of cultural conflict because of the increasing occurrences of mixed messages from these systematic entities. In time, it becomes more difficult for the student to function properly within each entity, as each entity has and follows its own rules, procedures, and rituals. As the children move between these entities, they learn that although there may be similarities among the settings, there are far greater differences because these cultures neither speak the same language nor share the same expectations for adaptation and behavior. Consequently, a child's behavior in one setting may not be sanctioned in another setting. It appears that the root cause of the home, school, and community functioning as separate entities has contributed to the pressing social dilemmas of minority children. Consequently, communi-

ties and families continue to be caught in a cycle of poverty, unemployment, inadequate education, and diminished life opportunities (Taifa & Beane, 2008). The viability of a community is predicated on its ability to maintain the most important charge, which is the preparation and socialization of children for roles of importance to the greater community/nation. The challenge before the families, school systems, and communities of the United States is collectively understanding that it takes a village to raise a child, and until these systems can be unified in a common understanding and plan of action, the next generation of children may not fully be prepared for the roles and customs essential to maintaining the integrity and potential of our nation. If the home, school, and community continue to display elements of dysfunction, minority children will not be able to put a crack in the school to prison pipeline.

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