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# Teaching about Children and Families in a Multicultural Society

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## **Teaching about Children and Families in a Multicultural Society**

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### **Teaching about Children and Families in a Multicultural Society**

"It is not enough to prepare our children for the world; we also must prepare the world for our children." Luis Rodriguez (1997, p. i)

I am a woman of African American descent who has engaged in teaching with predominantly European American audiences for more than eleven years. I have taught a variety of Human Development courses that center upon social and personality development, multicultural and diversity issues, and human development research. Incorporating issues of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression (and corresponding privilege), into the curriculum can be difficult enough, but even more so when the person presenting is obviously from a background that traditionally has been oppressed. When presenters are from backgrounds that traditionally have been oppressed, audience members may wonder whether the presenter has ulterior motives or a "personal agenda" for including multicultural materials into the curriculum and may become defensive (Colbert, 1998, p. 33; Stephan, 1985; Williams, Dunlap, & McCandies, 1999).

Defensiveness can make even more difficult the challenge of linking the classroom to knowledge about, and experience with, traditionally disenfranchised communities. Resistance can make it very difficult to provide students with opportunities for greater awareness, understanding, and improved behavior. It can make it even harder to get people to talk honestly about intergroup differences, similarities, and related issues in the classroom. People of traditionally privileged backgrounds tend to become uncomfortable and fearful when talking cross-culturally about racial and

other matters involving oppression and privilege because people desire to portray themselves as unbiased and prejudice-free (Stephan, 1985; Tatum, 1992; Williams et al., 1999).

Finding new methods for bringing discussion about cultural socialization, ethnicity, construction of "race," racism and other issues that intersect with issues of oppression and privilege is an area to which I am committed as part of a life-long journey (Dunlap, 1999). I have tried to explore these issues most notably in my courses centered on issues of diversity and multiculturalism. One such course is Children and Families in a Multicultural Society. In this course I try to develop a bridge among scholarly information about a diversity of cultures, racism's impact on children and families, and the provision of images of children and families as they successfully cope and function in everyday life (Williams et al., 1999). The philosophies guiding this particular course are detailed in Williams et al. (1999). The following syllabus of the course (as a follow-up to the Williams et al. (1999) Transformations article) provides a listing of the course requirements and the pedagogical resources that are available to students. It is intended as an adaptable resource for other professors and courses.

## **SYLLABUS**

Children and Families in a Multicultural Society

Michelle R. Dunlap, Connecticut College

### **Course Description and Objectives:**

Through research literature and multi-media, this course examines the influences of culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, societal inequity, and racism upon the growth and development of children, adults and families. The course includes an emphasis on contemporary issues related to families and children in a diverse society including child-rearing, education, and media influences. Perceptions and mis-perceptions regarding children and families of diverse backgrounds are considered. Students are expected to grasp general and specific concepts and issues regarding families of diverse backgrounds. They are also expected to make practical connections between course curriculum, service learning observations and experiences at the Connecticut College Children's Program, and personal life experiences. The concluding objective of the course is the enhancement of our ability to think knowledgeably and critically about the theoretical frameworks, concepts, and social issues that affect the development of children and families in

today's diverse and ever-changing world, and to improve our cultural competency skills.

### **Textbooks and Articles:**

(L & H) Lynch, E. & Hanson, M. (1998), *Developing cross-cultural competence: A guide for working with children and their families* (2nd Ed.). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Okun, B. (1996). *Understanding diverse families: What practitioners need to know*. NY: Guilford Press.

Tatum, B. (1997). "Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?": And other conversations about race. NY: Basic Books.

### **Reserved Readings:**

(A & B) Allen, B. & Butler, L. (1996). The effects of music and movement opportunity on the analogical reasoning performance of African American and White school children: A preliminary study. *The Journal of Black Psychology*, 22 (3), 316-28.

(APA) American Psychological Association (1994). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, DC: APA (currently 3 copies at the library on general reserve).

Blake, J. (1997). Lilacs. In B. Blauner, (Ed.), *Our mothers' spirits: On the death of mothers and the grief of men*. (pp. 284-293). NY: HarperCollins.

(B & K) Brehm, S. & Kassin, S. (1996). Perceiving groups (Chapter 4). In S. Brehm, S. Kassin, & S. Fein (eds.). *Social psychology* (3rd Edition). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Carnes, J. (1995), *Us and them: A history of intolerance in America*. [Video documentary]. NY: Oxford University. Montgomery, AL: Teaching Tolerance, A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Chao, R. (1994). Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: Understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. *Child Development*, 65, 1111-1119.

Chideya, F. (1995). *Don't believe the hype: Fighting cultural misinformation about African Americans*. NY: Plume/Penguin.

Cooper, J. C. (1992). How, why to get rich. In *The matter is life*. (pp. 15-

31). NY: Anchor Books/Doubleday.

(D, B, D, & P) Deater-Deckard, K., Bates, J., Dodge, K., & Pettit, G. (1996). Physical discipline among African American and European American mothers: Links to children's externalizing behaviors. *Developmental Psychology*, 32 (6), 1065-1072.

Dunlap, M. (1997). The role of the personal fable in adolescent service learning and critical reflection. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 4, 56-63.

Dunlap, M. (manuscript in press). Voices of community service and learning: Student perspectives on working with children and families. (Tentative Title). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Dunlap, M. (1998). Voices of students in multicultural service learning settings. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 5, 58-67.

(E & P) Edwards, A. & Polite, C. (1992). *Children of the Dream: The Psychology of Black Success*. NY: Doubleday.

(F & S) Feagin, J. & Sikes, M. (1994). Seeking a good education. In *Living with Racism: The Black Middle Class Experience*. (pp. 78-134). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Foster, M. (1994). Educating for competence in community and culture: Exploring the views of exemplary teachers. In M. Shujaa (Ed.). *Too much schooling too little education: A paradox of life in white societies*. (pp. 221-224). Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, Inc.

(G, H, & A) Gibbs, J., Huang, L., & Associates (1998). *Children of color: Psychological interventions with culturally diverse youth*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Hale-Benson, J. (1986). *Black children: Their roots, culture, and learning styles*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Jensen, R. (1998). Patriarchal sex. In S. Schacht & D. Ewing (Eds.). *Feminism and men: Reconstructing gender relations*. NY: New York University Press.

Jimenez, F. (1993). The circuit. In T. Lopez (Ed.). *Growing up Chicana/o: An anthology*. (pp. 136-146). NY: William Morrow & Co.

(K & S) Kanter, R. & Stein, B. (1980). *A tale of O*. New York, NY: Harper

& Row. (Available in HMD 111B reserved materials).

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lee, G. (1997). Mah-mee. In Blauner, B. (Ed.). *Our mothers' spirits: On the death of mothers and the grief of men*. (pp. 34-48). NY: HarperCollins.

McIntosh, P. (1989). *White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack*. Peace and Freedom, July/August.

Patterson, C. (1994). Children of the lesbian baby boom: Behavioral adjustment, self-concepts, and sex role identity. In Greene, B. and Hered, G. (Eds.). *Lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research and clinical applications*. (pp. 156-175). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pearlman, S. (1993). Late mid-life astonishment: Disruptions to identity and self esteem.. In Davis, N., Cole, E., & Rothblum, E. (Eds.). *Faces of Women and Aging*. (pp. 1-12). NY: Haworth.

Rose, M. (1989). *Lives on the boundary: The struggles and achievements of America's underprepared*. NY: Free Press.

Salinas, M. (1993). The scholarship jacket. In T. Lopez (Ed.), *Growing up Chicana/o: An anthology*. (pp. 127-132). NY: William Morrow & Co.

Schofield, J. W. (1986). Causes and consequences of the colorblind perspective. In J. Dovidio & S. Gaertner (Eds.). *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism*. (pp. 231-253). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Shade, B. (1989). *Culture, style and the educative process*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publishers.

Shujaa, M. (1994). Education and schooling: You can have one without the other. In Shujaa (Ed.). *Too much schooling too little education* (pp. 13-36). Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

(S & S) Suina, J. & Smolkin, L. (1994). From natal culture to school culture to dominant society culture: Supporting transitions for Pueblo Indian students. In P. Greenfield & R. Cocking (Eds.). *Cross-cultural roots of minority child development*. (pp. 115-132). NJ: Erlbaum.

Swann, J. (1992). *Girls, boys & language: Language in education*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

(T & G) Tasker, F. & Golombok, S. (1995). Adults raised as children in lesbian families. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 65 (2), 203-215.

Tan, A. (1993). *From the Joy Luck Club*, In M. Hong (Ed.). *Growing up Asian American*. (pp. 223-230). New York: Avon Books.

Tatum, B. (1992). Talking about race: The application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review* 62 (1), 1-24.

Terkel, S. (1992). *Friends*. In *Race: How blacks & whites think & feel about the American obsession*. (pp. 51-56). NY: The New Press.

Tijerina-Jim, A. (1993). Three Native American women speak about the significance of ceremony. In Davis, N., Cole, E., & Rothblum, E. (Eds.). *Faces of women and aging*. (pp. 34-40). NY: Haworth.

#### Documentary and Film Resources:

Chadha, G. [Dir.]. Syal, M. [Writer]. Marsh-Edwards, N. [Prod.]. *Bhaji on the Beach* [1995, videocassette]. Clover City, CA: Columbia TriStar Home Video..

Chasnoff, D. & Cohen, H. [Prods.]. Chasnoff, D. [Dir.], *It's elementary: Talking about gay and lesbian issues in school* [1996, Videocassette]. Hohokus, NJ: New Day Films.

Clark, L. [Prod./Dir.]. *Mike Rose: Educating Disadvantaged*. [1994, Videocassette]. Bill Moyers: World of Ideas Series, Princeton, NJ: Films for the Humanities.

*The Connecticut College Children's Program* [1997, Videocassette]. New London, CT: Dept. of Human Development, Connecticut College.

Fox, J. [Prod./Dir.]. *An American love story series* [1999, videocassettes]. NY: Zohe Film Productions, [www.pbs.org/lovestories](http://www.pbs.org/lovestories).

Guggenheim, C. [Prod.]. *The shadow of hate: A history of intolerance in America* [1995, Videocassette kit]. Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center.

Hanna, S. & Wilford, S. [Prods.]. *Floor-time* [1990, Videocassette]. NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Lazarus, M. [Prod./Dir.]. *Still killing us softly*. [1987, Videocassette].

Cambridge, MA: J. Kilbourne & Cambridge Documentary Films.

Lee, S. [Prod./Dir.]. Lee, J. [Writer]. Crooklyn [1994, Videocassette]. Universal City, CA: MCA Universal Home Video.

Lee, S. [Prod./Dir./Writer]. Do the right thing. [1989, Videocassette]. Universal City, CA: Universal Home Video.

Magnaye, M. [Dir.]. Camp Lavender Hill. [1997, videocassette]. San Francisco, CA: Hybrid Productions.

MCC. Free indeed: A video drama about racism [1995, Videocassette], Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S..

Peters, W. [Prod./Dir.]. A class divided-Jane Elliott's blue eyes and brown eyes [1985, videocassette]. New Haven, CT: Yale University Films.

Rajski, P. & Stone, R. [Prod.]. Rajski, P. [Dir.]. Trevor. [1998, Videocassette]. Water Bearer Films, [www.waterbearer.com](http://www.waterbearer.com).

Reid, T. [Prod./Dir.]. Once upon a time when we were colored. [1996, Videocassette]. Los Angeles, CA: Republic Entertainment/BET Pictures, see <http://www.republicpictures.com>.

Riggs, M. & Kleiman, V. [Prods.]. Riggs, M. [Dir.]. Color adjustment [1991, Videocassette]. San Francisco, CA: California Newsreel.

Rosenblatt, J. [Prod./Dir./Writer]. The smell of burning ants [1994, Videocassette]. Hohokus, NJ: Jay Rosenblatt Films.

St. Pierrie, S. [Prod.] Too good to be true? (The story of Marva Collins) [1995, Videocassette]. 60 Minutes Program, NY: Columbia Broadcasting System.

Saraf, I. [Prod.], Light, A. [Dir.]. Dialogues with "mad women." [1993, Videocassette]. NY: Light-Saraf Films.

Thomas, A. [Prod.]. Nava, G. [Dir.]. Mi familia (My family). [1995, Videocassette], New Line Cinema/Turner Home Video.

Wang, W. & Tan, A. et. al [Prods./Dir.]. The Joy Luck Club. [1994, Videocassette]. Burbank, CA: Buena Vista Pictures Distribution.

### **Course Requirements:**

### **Attendance and Informed Participation:**



Regular attendance and participation in class discussions are required. Attendance will be taken daily. Failure to participate in class discussions and course work in a manner that suggests that you have been informed, in part, by your readings and other course resources can negatively affect your grade.

### **Service Learning:**

Required on a regular basis. It is my philosophy that service learning experiences help to enhance academic learning, and vice versa, that academic learning can enhance service learning. Therefore, I require students to engage in supervised service learning involving children, adults, and/or families who are within any portion of the life span. This semester, all students will be placed at the Connecticut College Children's Program. A representative from the program will visit to offer an orientation and to coordinate placement assignments during the first week of classes. A letter is attached for you to give to your service learning placement supervisor when you begin your service learning.

### **Reflection Journal:**

The purpose of the reflection journal is for the regular documenting of all of your activities related to the course. Items that are to be included in the reflection journal are: your answers to the Journal Reflection Questions; feelings and insights regarding each of your service learning experiences; reactions to text readings, reserved readings, films, guest speakers and other course related materials and experiences; insights gained related to the course; and a concluding summary to bring your journal to a close at the end of the semester. Entry submissions should be ongoing from the beginning of the course, are to be typed, double spaced, completed and submitted for grading as scheduled below. Your journals must reflect that you are completing, and seriously reflecting upon, your reading assignments, service learning, and other course-related experiences.

### **Film Analysis Sheet**

For each film selected complete an analysis sheet annotating the following areas:

1. Historical Context Issues
2. Inaccurate Stereotypical Media Images In the Film
3. Cognitive/Cultural Style Links (i.e., "Sociotypes" vs. Stereotypes)

4. Character(s)/Family Issues and Uniqueness
5. Connections to your own culture, family and/or experiences
6. Your emotional experiences with, and reactions to, the film. Which portions and why?
7. Other notes?

### **Take-Home Midterm and Final Exams:**

The take-home midterm and final exams will be in essay format. They will involve analyzing in a culturally relevant manner the characters and circumstances in a multicultural scenario, film or other multi-media. Answers must be neatly typed, doubled spaced, in APA 4th Edition Publication Manual style, and well supported with citations and references (8-10 pages for the mid-term, and 12-15 pages for the final). The final should be considered cumulative. In addition, the instructor may issue a "pop quiz" at any time without advance notice.

### **Evaluation Form:**

Must be completed by each student's service learning supervisor before the end of the semester. It is your responsibility to verify with your supervisor that the evaluation has been mailed by the appropriate due date. Students are not to hand-deliver the evaluations to instructor or to her box.

### **Schedule**

The reading assignments given below are required and are to be completed by the date they appear in the outline unless otherwise specified. Additional recommended or required readings may be assigned and/or reserved as we progress through the semester. If any additional assignments are announced in class, you are responsible for them. Most classes will take the form of lectures, discussions, and/or multi-media presentations.

### **Course Schedule:**

Week 1: Introduction to the Course and to Each Other

Service Learning Documentaries: The Connecticut College Children's Program and Floor-Time. Readings: L & H: chs. 1-3; Okun: ch. 1; Shade: ch. 1.

Week 2: Cultural Explorations. Development and discussion of rules for safe communication. Readings: Tatum (1997); chs. 1-5; Dunlap (in press), preface & introduction. Homework Assignment Due: After reading Tatum (1992) and Tatum (1997): chs. 1-2, prepare a one-page statement of your racial identity stage(s) for today's class work.

Week 3: What are Cognitive Styles? (Sociotypes vs. Stereotypes). Documentaries: A Class Divided and Mike Rose. Readings: Tatum (1992); B & K: ch. 4; K & S: all; Schofield; Hale-Benson: ch. 2; Carnes (skim); Dunlap (in press): ch. 8; Shade: chs. 7, 14 & 26. Watch accompanying video documentary: The Shadow of Hate.

Week 4: Film: Mi Familia, and discussion. Readings: L & H, ch. 5; Tatum (1997): ch. 8; S & S; Jimenez; Salinas; Tijerina-Jim; Dunlap (in press): chs. 3 & 9; Shade: ch. 10; and G & H: chs. 4 & 7.

Week 5: Families with European, Native American, and Hispanic/Latino Roots. Film: Free Indeed. Readings: L & H: chs. 4 & 7; Tatum (1997): chs. 6-7; Terkel ("Friends: Peggy Terry"); McIntosh; Dunlap (in press): ch. 4; G & H: ch. 8.

Week 6: Families with African Roots. Readings: L & H: ch. 6; Cooper; Blake; and Dunlap (1997); APA, pp. 1-22, 258-272; Dunlap (in press): ch. 5; G & H: chs. 5-6. JOURNALS DUE in appropriate flat 3-pronged folders. TAKE-HOME MID-TERM EXAM DISTRIBUTED.

Week 7: Film: Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored, and discussion. Readings: E & P: S. Taylor, pp. 175-179 and K. Mfume, p. 183-188; Chideya: chs. 6-7; F & S; Dunlap (in press): ch. 6; Shade: ch. 2. TAKE-HOME MID-TERM DUE

Week 8: Media and Stereotyping; Biracial/Multiracial Families. Documentaries: Too Good to Be True; and sampling of An American Love Story series. Readings: Tatum (1997): ch. 9; Okun: chs. 8-10; and L & H: postlude; Chideya: chs. 1, 4, 11, & 18; Shujaa; Dunlap (in press): ch. 10; Gibbs & Huang: ch. 10; documentary: Color Adjustment. Homework for later this week: Browse the Juvenile section of the Connecticut College library, and the Multicultural Resource Center to familiarize yourself with some of the new multicultural books that are available for children and families. Be sure to discuss the collections in your journal.

Week 9: Adoptive and Kinship Care Families. Meeting with Connecticut College Children's Program teachers to discuss service learning questions and experiences (location TBA). Readings: Okun: chs. 2-4, 11; Dunlap

(1998).

Week 10: Families with Asian Roots. Film: The Joy Luck Club, and discussion. Readings: L & H., ch. 8.; Chao; and Lee; Tan; G, H & A: ch. 9.

Week 11: Gender, Sexism, Sexual Orientation and Multicultural Issues in Every Day Life (College Alumni Speak). Films: The Smell of Burning Ants; Trevor, and It's Elementary. Readings: Okun: chs. 5-7; Swann: chs. 3 & 5; Jensen, 1998; Pearlman; Patterson; T & G; Dunlap (in press): ch. 7; documentaries: Still Killing Us Softly; Dialogues with "Mad Women"; and Camp Lavender Hill.

Week 12: Families with Middle and Far Eastern Roots. Film: Bhaji on the Beach, and discussion. Readings: L & H: ch. 11; Tatum (1997): ch. 10; Dunlap (in press): ch. 11 & Afterword.

Week 13: Field Trip to Local Elementary Public School. Readings: L & H: ch. 12; Ladson-Billings: ch. 6.

Week 14: Film: Crooklyn, discussion, and course wrap-up. Readings: Tatum (1997): Appendix (skim); Foster; Shade: ch. 25. JOURNALS DUE. TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED (exam utilizes Do The Right Thing).

GRADING: Final course grades will be based on evaluation of the following (%'s are approximations):

Class Attendance and Informed Participation (15%)

Service Learning and Evaluation (15%)

Course Journals (20%)

Mid-Term (20%)

Final Exam (30%)

LATE WORK: Work that is late will be reduced by 10% of the highest possible grade for that assignment for each day that it is late.

## REFERENCES

Colbert, I. 1998. Career consultants: Including race in the curriculum. Black Issues in Higher Education 15 (21), 33.

Dunlap, M. (1999). My study of prejudice: A lifelong journey. In P. Batur-Vanderlippe & J. Feagin (Eds.), *The global color line: Racial and ethnic inequality and struggle from a global perspective*. (pp. 337-356). Stamford, CT: Jai Press.

Rodriguez, L. (1997). *America is her name*. Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press.

Stephan, W. G. 1985. Intergroup relations. In G. Lindzey & Eron Aronson, (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology*, Third Edition, Vol. 2, (pp. 599-658). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Tatum, B. (1992). Talking about race: The application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62 (1), 1-24.

Williams, M., Dunlap, M., & McCandies, T. (Fall, 1999). Keepin' it real: Three black women educators discuss how we deal with student resistance to multicultural inclusion in the curriculum, *Transformations*, 10 (2), 11-22.

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**Michelle Dunlap** is an assistant professor of Human Development at Connecticut College in New London, CT. She has written many articles on intergroup relations, community service-learning, and prejudice and racism. She is author of the soon to be released book *Voices of Volunteers in Community Service for a New Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers), and is co-editor with Lynn Collins and Joan Chrisler of the forthcoming book *Charting a New Course for Feminist Psychology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing). She is also the current chair of the Association of Women Psychology's (AWP) Women of Color Psychologist Award.