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### The Global Child: A Roadmap for Becoming Culturally Responsive Educators

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# THE GLOBAL CHILD

*A Roadmap for Becoming  
Culturally Responsive Educators*

**THOMAS EDISON  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

THE JOHN S. WATSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

**Center for the Positive  
Development of Urban Children**

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**2020**

# ABOUT THOMAS EDISON STATE UNIVERSITY

Established in 1972, Thomas Edison State University provides distinctive undergraduate and graduate education for self-directed adults through flexible, high-quality, collegiate learning and assessment opportunities. One of New Jersey's senior public institutions of higher education, the University offers associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs and certificates in more than 100 areas of study. For more than 45 years, the University has pioneered the use of the latest technologies to develop and deliver academic programs that work around the unique needs of adult learners and has served as a national leader in the assessment of adult learning. *The New York Times* called the institution "the college that paved the way for flexibility." The University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (267-284-5000).

**The John S. Watson School of Public Service** at Thomas Edison State University prepares professionals for leadership roles in a wide variety of public service-related settings. The Watson School is preparing the next generation of public policy and community service leaders in the following areas: Urban, Rural and Regional Policy Studies; Nonprofit Management; Environmental Policy/Environmental Justice; Information and Technology Management; Health Policy and Public Health Management; Early Childhood Education Leadership and Management; Public Administration; and Public Finance/Budget and Fiscal Management. The concentration areas of the School have been a direct result of The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy work across the state with leaders in various sectors.

**The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy** is a center of innovation and applied policy within the Watson School offering a new paradigm, applying the resources of higher education to public policy decisions in a practical and hands-on manner and in response to the expressed needs of decision makers, providing practical research, technical assistance and

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**The Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children** (CPDUC) strives to bridge the voices of teachers, practitioners and families with policy initiatives that impact the positive development of New Jersey's children. The work of the CPDUC encompasses a holistic approach that utilizes best practices, policy analysis and research to improve the health, well-being and educational outcomes for children and adults working with families. CPDUC goals are:

- To review and advise on early childhood policy and initiatives that impact the positive development of urban children.
- To utilize evidence-based practices and evaluations to influence best practices in the field of early childhood development, early learning and child health. Such practices focus on children's socio-emotional development, teacher preparation and support systems for diverse children and families.
- To identify and promote economic messages to engage nontraditional champions for children within municipal government and the business sector.
- To provide professional development opportunities that focus on parent engagement, socioemotional development, supervision and mentoring of teachers, and working with diverse children and families.
- To provide advisement to early childhood practitioners that guides them to career and academic options for becoming highly qualified and certified.

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# EVIDENCE OF STRATEGY ADOPTIONS

The program strategies and the assessment tools encourage early childhood teachers to adopt 26 strategies across three competency areas: 1) classroom design; 2) teachers' rhythm and temperament; and 3) instructional strategies during the 10-month program year. Mentors are assigned to each teaching team and through supportive site visits and assessment visits help the teams change their thinking and practices to be more culturally and linguistically responsive. A description of each type of visit is below:

**Supportive site visits** helped build a rapport between the teachers and their assigned mentor in order to develop an action plan to transform their classrooms into culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments. Each visit is a minimum of two and a half hours but has no maximum length. Most mentors spend three to three and a half hours per visit. During the visit the mentor observes both the classroom environment and the teachers' adoption of best practices for improving the learning environment and instruction. After the visit, the mentor created a report entitled the Supportive Visit Narrative that measured what specific strategies teachers have adopted, changes in their thinking and what supports are needed to help them achieve their action plan. In the narrative, the mentor tells the change story and provides the team with commendations and recommendations. The report is given to the teachers before the next site visit. The supportive visit narrative is also used in the coaching sessions.

**Post-Institute assessment visits** - Mentors use the Culture and Language 5-Point Assessment Scale (at the four-month marker, six-month marker and nine-month marker) to help the teachers reflect on the learning that has occurred and what types of supports or interventions are needed for the teachers to continue making progress. The visit is a minimum of two and a half hours but has no maximum length. During the visit the mentor assesses the classroom design, teaching rhythms and temperament and instructional strategies of the teaching team. The four-month, six-month and nine-month final assessments are compared and the data is shared with the teachers.

There are **five levels** in which teachers naturally progress through to become more culturally conscious and responsive across three domains.

# LEVELS OF CHANGE IN THINKING AND PRACTICE

## LEVEL 1



The learning environment changes infusing more cultural and linguistic artifacts and materials. Sometimes they are used for curricula and sometimes they are just visual reminders of the diverse children and families being served.

## LEVEL 2



The artifacts and materials are often used in a meaningful way to support language and culture.

## LEVEL 3



Teachers are making intentional efforts to speak the home language(s) of the children during daily interactions including instructional time and are beginning to infuse some cultural nuances into the learning activities.

## LEVEL 4



Teachers are using the children's cultures as a springboard for curriculum and activities most of the time and are intentional about using the children's home language(s) for interactions and instructional times.

## LEVEL 5



Teachers are practicing all the strategies described in each of the level and the three domains and are becoming more creative with learning activities and how parents and family members are engaged.



# DOMAIN I: A CULTURAL CLASSROOM DESIGN

Classroom Design refers to how the teaching teams placed cultural artifacts (family photos, maps, flags, art works, fabric, etc.) from various countries that present the children's cultural background and their local community throughout the learning centers. They also use multicultural materials and books that represent the families enrolled in their centers to create a global village so you know who is in the classroom by what is in the classroom.

**Pictures/Photos** of the families enrolled.

**Pictures/Photos** of families around the world.

**Pictures/Photos** of houses and buildings around the world.

**Posters** of world maps, national flags and cultural artifacts.

**SOURCE:** The program strategies and three domains used in the program are a combination of strategies we have documented in the nine-year evidence based program of the New Jersey Cultural Competency and English Language Learners Summer Institute and Mentoring Program. In addition, strategies were adopted from Patton O. Tabors (2008). *One child, two languages: A guide for early childhood educators of children learning English as a second language.* Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. and Teaching Strategies. (2003). Starting Points Video Training Series: Teaching English language learners.

The Global Child:  
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**Artifacts:** Items from around the world, but particularly those that represent the cultures of the children enrolled in the program, are evident in the classroom.



**Use of Print:** Labels in English and the children's home language(s) are placed on the materials, supplies and surfaces. Different languages are represented in different color ink for example Spanish in red and English in blue.



**Use of Print:** Signage is used throughout the classroom that provides direction and clarifies expectations in English and the children's home language(s).



**Use of Print:** A collection of books that reflect the children in the classroom from a variety of genres are placed throughout the room and in the library area.

**Walls/Displays:** If walls could talk what would they say about the diversity of the classroom and what would the learning areas communicate about the cultures and countries represented in the room?



**Materials/Supplies:** Items are arranged in a meaningful way to invite self-discovery and curiosity about diversity and how diverse people live.

**Learning Centers:** Every area has cultural and linguistic items that celebrate culture and language. Items are selected because they teach acceptance of diversity, e.g., cultural puzzles and cultural board games, books, beads, fabric, etc.

**Music and Movement:** This area could include multicultural CDs and instruments from around the world or homemade instruments.

**Table Toys:** This area could include multicultural puzzles, games and beads from around the world.

**Art Area:** This area could include skin-tone crayons, papers and magazines from different countries, and fabric and artifacts from different cultures.







**Block Area:** This area could include posters of different buildings and block sets from around the world. In addition, cardboard boxes can be added to build homes from around the world.



**Science:** This area could include different climate charts that show cold and hot regions, various types of sand from around the world and cultural recipes that allow children to practice measuring and cooking.



**Listening Center/Computer:** This area could include various music and books on tape from around the world. Software that reinforces vocabulary and models pronunciation in home language(s).

**Dramatic Play:** This area could include play food from a variety of cultures, traditional clothing, hats and shoes from around the world. Menus for different types of cuisines could also be added to this area.

**Library Area:** This area could include a collection of books that reflect who is in the classroom and in the world as well as a variety of books in various languages.



# DOMAIN II: TEACHING RHYTHM AND TEMPERAMENT

Teaching Rhythm and Temperament refers to how the lead and assistant teachers work cooperatively to support culture and language through co-teaching, co-decision making and small group instruction. It is also the teachers' degree of empathy toward diverse learners as well as the teachers' disposition toward students and parents who do not speak English. A successful teaching team applies the skill sets and strengths of each educator to provide all students with maximum attention and support using their home language(s) and English as well as cultural nuances that connect with the children's family life.

**Discipline Strategies:** Guiding behaviors that mirror the cultural nuances of the families enrolled can bridge understanding and enhance communication.

**Routines/Transitions:** The use of predictable routines and transitions that include the children's cultural nuances and languages helps children gain confidence and security in the school environment.

**Routines/Transitions:** Using the same activities throughout the day to cue children creates a sense of a global community and will help them understand what comes next.

**Models/Facilitates Exploration:** Teachers work to model acceptance of cultural nuances and home language(s) throughout the day. In addition, they incorporate culture and language(s) into daily activities.

**Models/Facilitates Exploration:** Teachers model the children's family values such as interdependence versus independence, roles of family members and roles of elders.



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**Provides Choices to the Children:** Children are encouraged to express their cultural values, family values and religious affiliations while selecting activities and interacting with peers.

**Provides Choices:** Children are encouraged to use the language they prefer during daily interactions and activities.

**Helps all Children Participate Regardless of Proficiency Level:** Children are encouraged to take risks in using English while being supported in their home language(s).



**Helps all Children Participate Regardless of Proficiency Level:** Children are supported in building their English dictionary and home language(s) dictionary (mental templates) to increase their vocabulary and comprehension.

**Interaction with Children:** Teachers interact with the children in their home language(s) using survival phrases, interpreters and other technologies.

**Co-Teaching/Co-Decision Making:** Teachers share the responsibility of instructional time in the home language(s) of the children providing bilingual/multilingual learning while incorporating culture into the daily routine.



**Co-Teaching/Co-Decision Making:** Teachers share the responsibility of working with children based on their language ability. There are many ways to accomplish this through using two languages simultaneously or one language in the morning and another in the afternoon, or on alternate days. Agreement of philosophy is important as well as fidelity to the approach.

# DOMAIN III: INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Instructional Strategies refers to how the lead and assistant teachers work cooperatively to double the message through adopting strategies such as literacy moments (using props, gestures and visuals), utilization of home languages as well as English for both vocabulary building and for content and directions. In addition, it refers to how the teams incorporated the content across the curriculum areas as they incorporate the children's culture and language(s) into the daily learning experiences and interactions.

## **Starting Slowly and Starting with What Children Know:**

The children's experiences, home life and cultures are used as a springboard for activities and interactions.

**Talking While Doing:** Narrating the children's activities in both English and their home language(s) builds their language dictionaries, and comprehension.

**Using Props and Gestures:** Adding items that help double the message and increase comprehension helps all students, especially ELL and other students, to make sense of the activities and stories used in the program.

**Talking About Here/Now:** Talking about what is right here or happening now, assist ELLs to narrow the field of what the conversation is about and focus on appropriate responses.

## **Utilizes One-to-One and Small Group Instruction:**

This strategy helps with social proximity, language usage and transition to greater group involvement and practice in the new language.



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**Repetition:** Saying things more than once gives a child more opportunity to comprehend what is being said and learn new words. Placing the new word at the end of the sentence improves comprehension.

**Extending/Expanding:** This is when teachers take a concept and add to it, so it builds comprehension and vocabulary. For example: “The Play-Doh is round, like a cookie. What type of cookies do you like? Chocolate-chip (then pretend to eat it).”

**Extending/Expanding:** This is when we “up the ante” and insist on verbal communication by asking questions and creating a back-and-forth dialogue. This helps to fine tune what the children know about using both languages. If the children do not engage in the process, teachers may have to rephrase and make the questions simpler to get them to take a risk in the new language.



**Utilizes Literacy Activities such as Read Alouds, Poems, Word Walls, etc.:** A rich-print environment is valuable when both English and the children’s home language(s) are being validated. The use of cultural stories, poems, songs and rich vocabulary that connected to the daily activities enhances comprehension and self-worth.

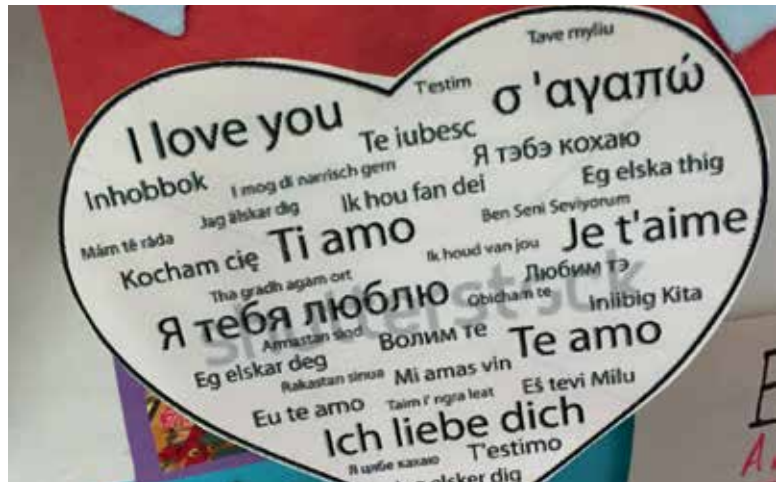
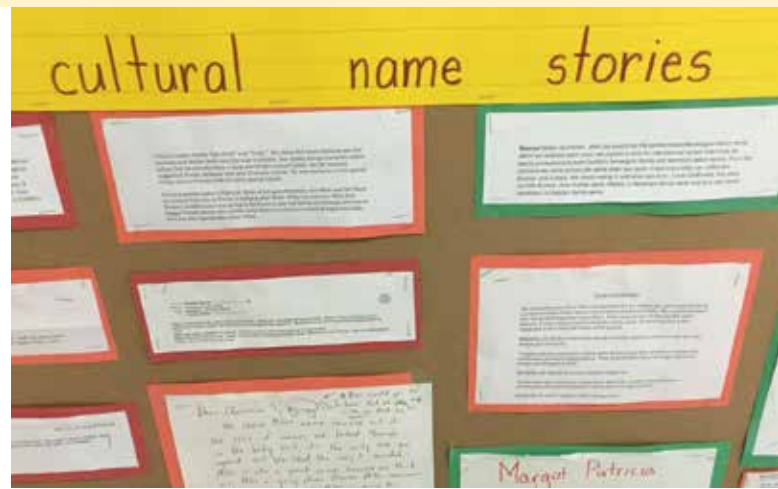


**Utilizes Literacy Activities such as Read Alouds, Poems, Word Walls, etc.:** Cultural stories support cultural identity/self-worth. When the stories connect to the other learning areas this helps English language learners feel a sense of belonging and that their cultures and language(s) are valued.

**Using Songs with the Children's Names:** The most wonderful word to a child is their name. They may not understand much of the English language, but they do know their name and coupled with gestures this can help a child feel a part of the school's culture and activities.

**Building Vocabulary and Conversation in English and Home Language(s):** Bilingual and multilingual children need to know that both or all their home languages are important. Creating rich blocks of time for conversations in English and their home language(s) can provide respite from processing the new language. It also reinforces vocabulary. When teachers are not fluent in the children's home languages, inviting volunteers that are native speakers or using books on tape can also provide respite from processing the new language.

**Use Second Language for Both Content and Directions:** Teachers are encouraged to use both English and home language(s) for both content (subject being taught) and direction (language that helps children understand expectations and requests).







## Incorporate the Children's Culture and Language into the Daily Curriculum and Learning Experiences:

Everyday offers us an opportunity to teach about the cultures represented in the classroom. We can visit the world through books and use the experiences in a book to help children accept others and celebrate diversity.

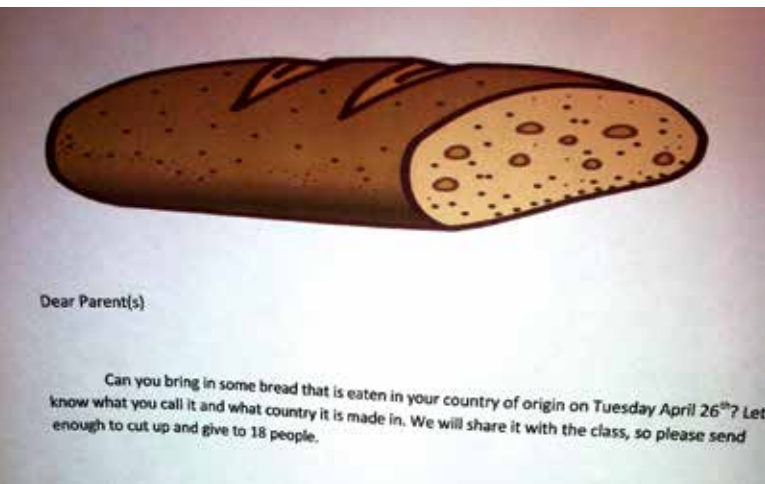


## Involve Parents in Meaningful Ways (Parent Questionnaire, Volunteer in Classroom and Information Exchange):

Parents/guardians can be wonderful teaching resources for the classroom through sharing their cultural games, stories, experiences and language(s), etc.

## Provide School Information in the Parents' Preferred Language:

Letters, newsletters and important information should be shared with parents in their dominant language.



Parents from Michael's Energy Factory enjoying a family event with the students.



# PARENT ENGAGEMENT

According to National Staff Development Council - [www.nsd.org](http://www.nsd.org) - writers Sarah Nelson and Patricia L. Guerra, there are three kinds of parent support:

## 1. Parent Involvement

actions parents and families take to support their own children;

## 2. Parent Engagement

parents and families working with educators on the broader goals of the school by providing input and serving on decision-making committees; and

## 3. Parent Empowerment

parents and families having actual ownership of the school.

**Our program focuses on each of these supports** as we engaged culturally and linguistically diverse parents and families by examining parent engagement through a cultural context that values what parents bring to the home-school relationships. It also builds the trust that allows for the impartation of parenting skills, effective communication, academic support and empowerment of parents to be co-architects in their children's educational success. This program helps teachers adopt strategies for greater parent involvement. The leadership institute assists school leaders in developing relationships and opportunities for parents to feel they can provide input and serve in decision-making capacities. Moreover the parent engagement activities allow for teachers, school leaders and parents to practice what they have learned to benefit the diverse children and families enrolled at their centers.

**There are many reasons** that parents might not be engaged with the children's schools such as: language barriers, lack of understanding of how the educational system works or understanding the role they could play in their children's education. When schools make it a goal to understand the parents' challenges and develop solutions together, parent engagement increases and becomes meaningful. Parents need to feel successful in navigating educational systems, contributing to these systems and supporting their children.



*Parents from Montclair Community Pre-K*

## Our program focuses on building positive relationships

with parents and developing their confidence as their child's first teacher and first advocate. Parents bring a host of skills to school and need supports to feel they can be partners with teachers and school leaders in the academic success of their children. Each center designs their own cultural and linguistic parent engagement activities that included cultural festivals, parents sharing a cultural stories, asking parents to share their cultural artifacts in various ways as permanent features in the classroom or in a lesson for the children. One parent, dressed in her Egyptian tradition attire, came and read an Egyptian tale and demonstrated to the children Egyptian's written symbols. Each child received the opportunity to write their name using these symbols.

## Parent Testimonies:

**Loyd's Mom:** "I am happy to know that the Spanish language is being taught in the class especially since my child learned to speak some words."

**Cailling's Dad:** "I love how the classroom looks. It feels comfortable and cozy, and I love the presentation of the many cultures. I would have loved to be a kid again to enjoy this type of learning environment."

**Jair's Mom:** "Wow, the classroom is beautiful with the display of many cultures. I'm going to take pictures."

**Lismer's Mom:** "I'm very happy that my daughter is part of this classroom because they are learning about culture. My daughter loves it so much that she would tell me about different cultural outfits that they would try on in the classroom in the dramatic play area."



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