

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL
INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY,
MULTICULTURALISM, AND
BILINGUALISM WITHIN THE
CLASSROOM

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Our approach.


- The dynamics of a white teacher/black student classroom.
- The dynamics of an ELL classroom.

Points of discussion.

- How does the development of the student – teacher relationship affect student success?
- Does the difference in ethnicity between a student and teacher affect the student – teacher relationship?
- What is multiculturalism?
- How do ESL/NES students socialize in a classroom setting?
- Do social interactions influence academic achievement?
- What are some researched applications of combating cultural prejudice within the classroom?


Relationships matter.

- Caregiver and child rel'ship affects attachment prospects (Rey, Smith, Yoon, Sommers, & Barnett 2007)
- Adolescent Identity Statuses (James Marcia)
- Intimacy vs. Isolation state of development (Erik Erikson)



The student – teacher relationship.

- A child's emotional experience in the classroom was not most highly mediated by the rel'ships with parents or peers, but by teachers (Furrer & Skinner 2003).
- "Positive rel'ships between teachers and children are associated with...academic competence, behavioral adjustment, and attitudes about school," (Rey et al., 2007).



How ethnicity affects the student – teacher rel'ship.

1. The internalization level of conformity:
 - The teacher and student must have common aspirations in order for the student to be motivated.
 - Think of the typically contrasting SES backgrounds that a white teacher and black student bring into the classroom, especially in urban environment (Jonathan Kozol 1991).

How ethnicity affects the student – teacher rel'ship.

2. The source of the communication:

- The race of the communicator can have an effect on the communication (Aronson 2008).
- This also relates to building common aspirations.

How ethnicity affects the student – teacher rel'ship.

3. Demonstrations of Caring:

- Student perceptions of teacher's caring behaviors can vary by ethnicity (Tosolt 2008).
- African – American girls valued academic caring.
- African – American boys valued interpersonal caring.
- Caucasian females valued fairness caring.

How ethnicity affects the student – teacher rel'ship.

4. White teacher bias:

- "Teacher perceptions foster perpetuation of the black – white achievement gap," (Oates 2003).
- Aronson's definition of the stereotype and "ultimate attribution error".

It's not all bad, though.

- One way to combat prejudice is to encourage the embrace of your own culture along with **CREATING A NEW CULTURE** that is unique to the classroom.
- Gary Howard warns that when an individual (namely a white teacher) thinks of his culture as the normal one, then there is a tendency to think of other cultures as the abnormal, somehow derogated (1999).



It's not all bad, though.

□ Interdependence:

Students learn that if they have to depend on a fellow student to achieve a common goal, then ridiculing that student is counterproductive (Weyant 1992).



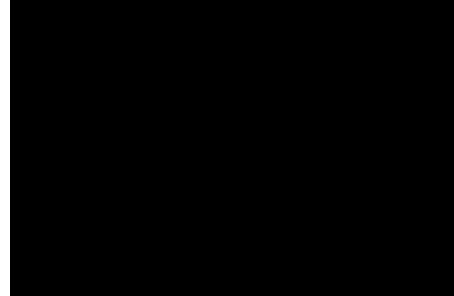
Informal survey results of author's students.

- 110 freshmen and sophomore African – American students, 2 Caucasian students in a small (~450 students) high school:
- On a scale of 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree):
 - 30% chose 4 or 5 on "I believe that a black teacher expects more effort out of me than a white teacher."
 - 29% chose 4 or 5 on "I feel it is easier to build a relationship with a black teacher than a white teacher."
 - 70% chose 4 or 5 on "I believe that developing a strong relationship with my teacher will enhance my performance."

Conclusions from informal survey.

- Ethnicity is on a typical student's mind perhaps more than an average teacher would predict.
- Students are more aware (than the average teacher would predict) that ethnicity can have an effect on an individual's behavior, even though people of high moral status in their life, such as teachers or church leaders, preach the concept of being "color – blind".

Some thoughts straight from the source.



Activity Time!

DIRECTIONS

- Get into groups of 3
- Take turns passing around the bag as each person selects 1 small piece of paper.
- Read the role that you have selected carefully.

ACTIVITY

- You are studying magnets in science class. Your teacher has just given you a tray with a couple of different magnets and some objects that the magnet can repel or attract. You and your group must work together to find out which items the magnet will repel or attract.

Activity continued...

- What did it feel like to be the ESL student?
- What did it feel like to be the NES student?
- What do think was the white Caucasian student's role in this activity?

This happens in everyday classrooms.



What is multiculturalism?



- Multiculturalism: educational programs that are designed to recognize the cultural diversity that exists in the U.S. as well as to promote respect for all of the cultural traditions (Macionis, 2008).



We are prejudice by culture.



- Cultural theory supports the notion that prejudice is built directly within our culture by favoring certain categories of people and avoiding others.
- Prejudice isn't actually a trait of deviant individuals as much as it is a standard part of our skewed cultural system (Macionis, 2008).



School is a means of socialization...

- "A school classroom provides a good setting for illustrating the responses of different individuals to a group." (Medway & Cafferty, 1992)
- Schooling allows children from various cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds to become involved in the U.S. culture.



What does ESL mean?...

- English as a Second Language
- ESL students have been in the country for a reasonable amount of time.
- They are learning the U.S. culture.
- They are working to improve the quality of their English-speaking abilities.



What does NES mean?...

- New English Speaker
- Students who are brand new to a country and have very limited or no ability to speak English.



A closer look at BILINGUAL

- DEFINITION:
One must master the knowledge that is necessary to communicate in two different cultures as well as coping with potential discrimination. (Woolfolk, 1998)



A closer look at BILINGUAL

- It takes students about 2 years in a good-quality program to be able to communicate face-to-face in a second language.
- It takes 5-7 years to learn the "academic language". (Woolfolk, 1998)



Socializing in the classroom...

- It is vital that we consider how NES, ESL, and native English speakers blend together and socialize in a classroom setting.
- Children that are brand new to this country will be extremely timid when they are first asked to exercise their speaking abilities. (Macionis, 2008)



Socializing in the classroom.



- The majority of NES students fear that their phonetic and syntactic abilities are completely inaccurate and at times, offensive
- As a result, NES students tend to speak primarily in their native language until they have mastered enough English words to practice their vocabulary.
- Studies have shown that it is actually more beneficial to the NES student if they are not forced to abandon their first language because the more proficient they are in their first language, the quicker they will master the second.

(2008)



Socializing in the classroom cont...



- On the other hand, ESL students are more comfortable with interacting with all types of students at school because they have developed the survival language that is essential when socializing with members of other social groups.
- As a result, ESL students are more likely to immerse themselves in social situations with native English speakers to acquire more knowledge and boost their socialization skills.



What about non-bilingual students?



- "Individuals who are physically disfigured, lower class, or ethnic racial minority hold lower social status and are less frequently looked to as friends."
- Other students might view NES and ESL students less desirable and therefore reduce their social interaction with these students.
- However, cultural desirability can be extended to other students simply by equipping NES and ESL students with appropriate social cues and using these skills to behave in an acceptable, attractive way. (Maruyama and LeCount, 1992)



Social interaction vs. academic achievement...

- Social interaction is a powerful tool for predicting academic achievement.
- Blend ESL, NES, and native English speaking students are working collaboratively together to achieve a common goal.
- In doing so, ESL/NES students can use various social cues to work with native English speakers in completing the experiment. (Macionis, 2008)



Social interaction vs. academic achievement cont...

- Providing students with the opportunity to socialize with various social groups allows students to improve their ability to interact with a mixture of students.
- When students feel comfortable enough to socialize with classmates, they will have a better chance to focus less on social acceptance and more on academic achievement
- When a teacher demonstrates the positive outcomes from collaborative efforts, students from all cultural and racial backgrounds can have more of an opportunity to succeed socially and academically. (Woolfolk, 1998)



Summary Points...



- Student-teacher relationship is important in predicting student success
- This relationship can be mediated by differences in race and ethnicity.
- Social interaction between ESL, NES, and native English speakers plays a significant role in influencing academic achievement.



The grand finale...

- Ask your questions
- Make your comments
- Or, forever hold your peace.

