

# Learning About Cultural Differences and Similarities

# Questions

- What do you remember about the classrooms of the schools you attended?
- If you are currently teaching, what does your classroom say to those who enter?

# Classroom Environment

- The sum of all the parts that comprises a teaching/learning setting.
- It includes:
  - The space
  - The social and emotional atmosphere
  - The cognitive opportunities
  - The creative opportunities

# Guidelines for Selecting Materials

Karen Matsumoto-Grah (1992)

1. Present the contributions of groups other than European Americans; reflect a cross-cultural perspective of what groups have contributed.
2. Portray people across SES and religions who are free of stereotypes
3. Depict religious issues appropriately  
“when religion is integral to the context of the subject.”

# Guidelines for Selecting Materials

Karen Matsumoto-Grah (1992)

4. Give socially balanced views of “famous people,” that is, including the outstanding people from both the privileged and the working class.
5. Reflect the cultures and ethnicities of the classroom children and of their community.

# Guidelines for Selecting Materials

Karen Matsumoto-Grah (1992)

6. Exhibit and include the native languages present in the class.
7. Material presented is at the developmental level of the children and offer challenges with opportunities to experience success.

# BIAS FREE ENVIRONMENT

*This means paying attention to what and how material is presented.*

# “Token Diversity”

What is it?



# “Tokenism”

- Token representation reduces the importance of significance of the contributions and roles of a group

(King, Chipman & Cruz-Janzen 1994)

# Reasons for Tokenism

- Lack of awareness
- The lack of time

# How to avoid “Tokenism”

- Do not display the single item
- Use pictures along with the dolls or real objects

# When to Keep and When to Remove

- Based only on the character of the stereotypic or misleading information that it contains.
- Stereotype materials as a teaching resource – used only by the teacher.

# When to Keep and When to Remove

- 2 things that can be done before removing
  - Incorporate
  - Alter or transform the materials.

# Ideas

- Art
- Literacy area
- Persona Dolls
- Music and Movement
- Game and Play

# Preparing to Design Activities

## HANDOUT

- A primary goal of education for diversity is teaching children to be productive members of a culturally eclectic society.
- An appropriate classroom environment constitutes an ideal place for children to develop the appropriate social cognition.
- Social cognition will allow the child to perceive life from the perspectives of others.
- Perspective taking, or the ability to see and understand one's position and the positions of others, is developed by growing up in a supportive environment.
- Early childhood classrooms must become supportive environments in order to promote learning about diversity.
- It is important that the classroom activities lead children in discovering diversity as a normal part of life and, at the same time, adhere to the principles of cognitive development.

# A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING

- Awareness
- Exploration
- Inquiry
- Utilization



# A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING:

## Awareness

- The child becomes familiarized, apprised of the existence of an idea or an issue.
- Questions:
  - How can the child become cognizant about this issue/idea?
  - In what ways can the environment be set up to engage the child's interest?

# A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING:

## Exploration

- The child begins to search for the elements that define the issue or idea that captured his/her attention.
- In the process, the child will process information according to his/her own experiences.
- The child is actively using his/her cultural baggage to filter what is meaningful.

# A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING: Exploration

- Questions:
  - How can I facilitate, support the child's investigation?
  - What activities, materials can help the children in the process?
  - What questions should I ask the child to verify their progress, understanding?

# A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING:

## Next 2 levels

- Next 2 levels are more advanced in nature and not frequently experienced by young children.

# A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING: Inquiry

- Child begins to reexamine and compare the acquired knowledge
- Questions:
  - What are the additional experiences that will help the child see the idea from the point of others
  - What questions can I pose to the child that will help him/her focus on other aspects of the topic?
  - What other area, information, resources would he/she need to examine.

# A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING: Utilization

- The child begins to bring things into a functional reality.
- Activities and opportunities are offered to help the child apply what has been learned.
- This validation of knowledge occurs as the child finds its usefulness in daily life.

# A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING: Utilization

- Questions:
  - What opportunities can I create in the classroom for the child to apply/demonstrate what was learned?
  - What real-life situations can I use to illustrate the applicability of the knowledge learned?

# Issue

- A parent provided her child's classroom with a Dream Catcher.
- A teacher kindly hung the Dream Catcher up for display.
- Another parent disliked it and feel that it is a source of evil.
- What do you know?
- What do you need to know



**Start with You!**

**R.E.A.C.H**

# Piaget's stage of cognitive

- Preoperational (2 – 7 years)
- Learning happens through the senses and via language, which gives the child access to communicate interests and ideas and to inquire.
- Play is used as a means to “play out” or represent, actions from reality.

# Dream Catchers

- Group:
- Problem/issue
  1. Awareness/ What they seem to know?
  2. Exploration/ Investigating
  3. Inquiry/ Self-investigation
  4. Utilization/ Applying what we know