

▼ Introduction ▼

*Reconciling Cultural Diversity and
Quality Schooling: Paradigmatic Elements
of a Socioacademic Framework*

ROBERT A. DeVILLAR
and
CHRISTIAN J. FALTIS

Schooling: The Realization
of Access, the Need for Equity

Schools in the United States are generally characterized by policies and practices that are antithetical to meeting our nation's purported goal of delivering a comparable education to its culturally and racially diverse populace (see DeVillar this volume). The negative effects of these policies and practices on the elementary and secondary schooling outcomes of African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and other designated minority-group students are clear, widespread, and growing in scope and complexity (cf. Arias 1986; Calathes 1991; Catterall and Cota-Robles 1988; Cohen and Arias 1988; Fernández and Shu 1988; Fordham 1988; Goldenberg and Gallimore 1991; Levin 1985; Moore and Pachón 1985; Navarro 1986). Recent demographic data with respect to the disproportionately large birth and immigration rates of minority populations relative to their majority-population counterparts, their significantly younger age rates, and their rates of increasing poverty and low-income status compound the bleakness of their educational futures and add to the mounting pressure for institutional change (cf. Borjas and Tienda 1987; Bouvier and Gardner 1986; Calathes 1991; Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship 1988; Davis, Haub, and Willette 1983; Orfield and Ashkinaze 1991; William T. Grant Foundation 1988; O'Hare 1988).

School Access as an Indicator of Equality and Integration

School administrators, staff, and teachers are arguably in the best professional position to be the most effective change agents in our national challenge to achieve congruence between our educational rhetoric and educational practices, notwithstanding substantial historical and current evidence to the contrary (cf. Bennett and LeCompte 1990; Cuban 1984; Goodlad 1984, 1990; The Holmes Group 1990; Ramírez and Merino 1990). In moving toward this prospective balance between rhetoric and practice, however, we must ensure that the results of educators' anticipated concerted efforts are not too narrowly defined with respect to what constitutes student equality and social integration. Specifically, future achievements must extend beyond traditional notions of what is meant by having attained consonance between educational rhetoric and practice in these two areas of our societal development.

There is little doubt, for example, that the United States already practices its rhetoric with respect to providing universal access to schooling for virtually all children within its national borders without regard to, among other factors, citizenship, economic status, race, ethnicity, or primary language spoken. Implementing a universal policy of access to schooling within this context of national heterogeneity is in itself a formidable achievement, particularly when compared to or contrasted with policies and outcomes of universal access to schooling in other advanced industrialized nations (Kirst 1984), including those with relatively homogeneous (at least with respect to national self-perception) populations (cf. White 1991) and those experiencing recent major influxes of culturally and linguistically diverse immigrant groups (cf. Bruce 1991). However, as highlighted in a later chapter (DeVillar), our national dilemma is decidedly not one of universal schooling but one of universal quality schooling. Thus, universal school access is an insufficient mechanism by which to attain a unified, informed, productive, and creative populace, or through which to reap the related developmental, economic, political, and other advantages associated with such a national profile. The focus, then, of our national attention must be more encompassing, fixing itself upon students' quality of educational experiences once in

school and the derivative social and academic outcomes that result for them. Universal quality schooling, rather than universal access to schooling, is necessary for our desired national profile and its intended benefits to occur.

Educational Equity: Refining the Indicators of Integration and Equality

Access is a necessary, but not sufficient, element within the quality schooling equation. Hence, access by itself, whether as policy or practice, will not translate into the advantages which are expected to accrue at the individual, group, and national levels. For advantages to occur at these levels, access must become part of a more encompassing notion, one that includes student participation and the benefits derived from that participation (Brookover and Lezotte 1981, cited in Lipkin 1983). These three critical elements—access, participation, and benefit—are of fundamental importance in two interrelated ways. First, as a group they provide the foundation for our view of educational equity (DeVillar 1986; DeVillar and Faltis 1987, 1991), that is, the notion that all groups of students can have comparable access to quality schooling, that they can have comparable participation in the schooling enterprise once they are there, and that they will derive comparable educational benefits from their participation. Second, they serve as more appropriate criteria by which to gauge whether and to what degree quality schooling is actually made available to all groups of students and experienced positively by them. This judgment, in turn, enables us to determine the extent to which our rhetoric of schooling relates to our practices in terms of equality and social integration.

Integration, Communication, and Cooperation: The Roots of Unity

DeVillar and Faltis (1991) have developed a socioacademic achievement framework that incorporates the notion of equity as described above. Additionally, it identifies, defines, and interrelates three key elements required to attain equity within culturally and linguistically heterogeneous school settings and, by extension, universal quality schooling in the United

States. These three essential elements—*integration*, *communication*, and *cooperation*—also have served as key components within preexisting conceptual frameworks. The principal of integration reflects the work of Allport (1954) in the area of contact theory, particularly with respect to successful performance and equal-status relationships within heterogeneously comprised human groupings. The principle of communication relates to the work of Vygotsky (1978) in the area of social learning theory, with particular emphasis upon the fundamental role of communication with others as a means to individual learning and transformation. The principle of cooperation reflects the works of educational researchers such as Johnson and Johnson (1981, 1984, 1986, this volume) and others in the area of cooperative learning, especially with respect to the role of structured cooperation in realizing enhanced social relationships and academic gains at the individual and group levels within heterogeneous classroom contexts. The following synthesis of their socioacademic framework represents its essence and serves to theoretically anchor and guide the reader relative to the contents of this volume and its array of contributions, which address substantive issues of quality schooling across elementary, secondary, and university settings within our culturally diverse nation.

Current Teaching and Learning Practices in U.S. Classrooms: The Need for an Alternative Framework

There are three major social and physical contexts in which communicative exchanges that support student learning occur: (1) teacher-led whole class instruction, (2) teacher-led small group teaching, and (3) teacher-delegated small group-work in which students work together on their own.

Although increasing numbers of teachers are incorporating small group teaching and small group learning strategies into their instructional repertoire, teacher-led whole class instruction continues to be the most widespread strategy of organizing for instruction. Currently, then, teachers remain reluctant to incorporate small group teaching and learning as integral parts of their students' daily learning experiences. Kliebard (1989) offers an explanation of this reluctance when he speaks of teachers' need to control with whom students talk, as well as to control when and how much they talk:

The teacher as a question-asker and the student as responder is a way of ensuring teacher dominance in the classroom situation. If students asked the questions or if they addressed one another rather than the teacher or if they engaged independently in discovery practices, the risk of disorder would be introduced, and the structure of school organization will not tolerate that kind of risk. (10)

This prevailing need to control student talk, and hence student learning, can also be seen in the frequent companion to whole class teaching, individualized instruction. In this type of instruction, students work alone on problems ostensibly related to information presented to the whole class. Calling the practice "individualized" is largely a misnomer, however, since teachers rarely customize learning materials for individual seatwork, and all tasks assigned to students for individual completion are essentially identical (Goodlad 1984). In fact, individualized instruction amounts to little more than seatwork in which students complete prefabricated worksheets on their own.

Just how widespread is teacher-dominated whole class teaching? Sirotnik (1983) conducted a nationwide study involving 129 elementary school all-English classrooms and found that students spent about 70 percent of their time in class listening to the teacher, who taught mostly to the class as a whole group. Verbal interaction with students within this setting most frequently entailed asking and answering factual questions about known information. Nearly all of the classrooms had a combination of fixed and moveable chairs, but students were almost never observed talking or working together on learning tasks. Fewer than half of the classrooms had separate learning centers that had been arranged by the teacher. Summarizing the findings, Sirotnik offered the following dismal image of the typical elementary school classroom:

Consider again the model classroom picture presented here: a lot of teacher talk and a lot of student listening, unless students are responding to teachers' questions or working on written assignments; almost invariably closed and factual questions; little corrective feedback and no guidance; and predominately total class instructional configurations around traditional activities—all in a virtually affectless environment. (29)

More recently, Ramírez and Merino (1990) investigated the nature of classroom interaction in three types of bilingual education program models: (a) structured English immersion, (b) early-exit transitional bilingual, and (c) late-exit transitional bilingual. (Note that the first program type could perhaps more appropriately be termed an English-only program and the last program type a developmental-maintenance bilingual program.) Using a systematic observation instrument, they observed social interaction in 103 first- and second-grade classrooms at eight sites in California, Florida, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. They found that instruction was conducted mainly in large groups, typically to the whole class. Teachers generated two to three times more talk than students, and when students did talk, it was most often in the form of short responses to teacher questions. These findings are virtually indistinguishable from the patterns of teacher-controlled talk that Sirotnik (1983) reported for all-English mainstream classrooms. Earlier findings (Dawe 1934; Furst and Amidon 1962; Pankratz 1967; Sirotnik 1981; Cuban 1984) reported in DeVillar and Faltis (1991) provide comparable evidence that this current instructional profile reflects our historical practice since at least the 1880s and remains intact across all subject-matter areas and grade levels.

In summary, the majority of both mainstream and bilingual/ESL classrooms are fundamentally teacher-controlled whole classroom learning environments. In essence, students are silenced (Fine 1987). They are provided with minimal opportunities to use their own ideas for verbal exchanges with the teacher, and they are not allowed to engage in conversations with their peers. Ironically, as DeVillar and Faltis (1991) point out, "as students grow increasingly able to expand their vocabularies and to manipulate and articulate complex language and thoughts, the opportunities to engage in meaningful classroom conversations which would develop these skills decrease" (7).

Thus, teachers rely on the whole class as the chief social context for teaching, virtually excluding the contexts of teacher-led small group teaching and small group learning from their pedagogical repertoire.

There are serious problems associated with the fact that our nation's classrooms have been and continue to be structured in such a way that students are denied access to commu-

nication both with their teacher and their peers. First, students are not seen as capable of contributing to and developing knowledge. Second, knowledge itself is reduced to the rote acquisition of existing facts. Third, classroom learning under these conditions, in essence, does not reflect the way that students learn in their social contexts outside of school or, albeit rarely, in student-centered learning settings within the school, particularly in small group contexts where the teacher and peers talk and work together toward a common goal. Fourth, whole class instruction followed by individualized instruction socially isolates and segregates students. Taken together, these four problems point to a need for a fundamental change in the way that teachers organize for instruction, in order for social integration and interaction, equality of educational opportunity, and enhanced academic achievement to occur within culturally diverse, and otherwise heterogeneous, classroom contexts.

It should come as no surprise, then, that students cannot develop and exchange ideas through talk or learn to work together cooperatively in classrooms dominated by whole class instruction and driven by the operating assumptions that only teachers have knowledge, that only they can transmit it, and that students cannot learn from one another. Thus, in addition to generating the four problem areas listed above, the silencing of students also violates a fundamental maxim of our socioacademic framework:

Schooling will foster an educational context conducive to enhanced academic achievement by all students to the extent that it models the creation and implementation of an equitable and socially integrated society where individual and group voices, actions, and talents are explicitly valued, nurtured, and incorporated within the learning environment.

Hence, the social context of learning and academic outcomes are intimately linked. Thus, to achieve our universal quality-schooling goals, students must not only hear and learn indirectly about our democratic society and the potential benefits derived from it, they must experience democracy and its workings continually within the very socialization institutions that proclaim its merits and by so doing directly derive benefit from their participatory efforts.

Successful Schooling in a Culturally Diverse Society: Applying and Integrating the Socioacademic Principles

Classroom instruction that disallows communication, that segregates students, and that encourages competition hinders successful teaching and learning in the culturally diverse classroom. As mentioned previously, the socioacademic view of teaching and learning integrates important principles from the works of Lev Vygotsky concerning the social role of interaction, particularly communicative, for individual learning; the works of Gordon Allport in terms of contact theory, especially relative to the successful integration of members of distinct groups in reaching common goals in a shared and equitable manner; and the works of David and Roger Johnson, and others, concerned with promoting cooperative learning to enhance academic outcomes and prosocial behavior in culturally heterogeneous classroom settings. Descriptions of these principles and illustrations relating to their integration in culturally diverse classroom settings follow.

The Principle of Communication

The socioacademic framework is in theoretical alignment with Vygotsky's notion that classroom learning is first and foremost a social event mediated through communication between the students and the teacher, and among students as they converse with more capable peers. One of Vygotsky's major principles is that teaching and learning entail a two-phase process that first requires the student to receive assistance through social interaction with the teacher or more capable peers before individual learning can take place (Vygotsky 1978). A more capable peer is a student who, similar to the teacher, possesses certain skill preparation that is particularly appropriate to assisting a fellow student in the completion of a task (DeVillar and Faltis 1991). By talking through a problem with the teacher or a more capable peer and then practicing it, for example, the student ultimately internalizes the ability to solve similar problems unassisted. It is important to note that the student does not merely internalize the teacher's or more capable peer's higher level of ability; rather, the student reconceptualizes it into a novel form of understanding. That is, the student gains a unique, internally organized method of re-

sponding to and solving problems of the type with which he or she initially needed the assistance of the teacher or more capable peer (Díaz, Neal, and Amay-Williams 1990). In effect, this socially interactive communicative process, in combination with the student's own internal foundations, enables the cognitive transformation of the student. Moreover, novel forms of understanding in one area tend to transfer to other areas of cognition. Vygotsky (1978) refers to this language mediated, two-phase process as moving from other-regulated to self-regulated learning.

Another of Vygotsky's social learning principles is that jointly constructed social interaction must fall within the student's *zone of proximal development*. When students talk and work in collaboration with their teacher and among their peers, they gain access to new areas of learning potential beyond those they are able to accomplish alone. These areas of learning potential comprise each student's zone of proximal development; that is, the difference between a student's actual level of ability and his or her immediate potential for development. It is fundamentally important to underscore that a student's immediate potential for development can be realized only with assistance through joint interaction (Tudge 1990).

Vygotsky's social learning principles thus provide a theoretical frame of reference that gives communication a pivotal role in socioacademic achievement. With its emphasis on social interaction through assisted performance in the zone of proximal development, the Vygotskian perspective supports the socioacademic principle that students must have opportunities to communicate and exchange ideas both among themselves and with their teachers. A classroom must be a place where students are able to talk with one another about ideas and have the ideas make sense to them so that they can reconceptualize them into their own system of knowledge.

The *experience-text-relationship* (ETR) method (Au 1979; Au and Mason 1981; Au and Kawakami 1984, 1985; cited in DeVillar and Faltis 1991) provides an illustration of how Vygotskian principles may be adapted to culturally diverse learning settings. In ETR lessons, the teacher models and guide students through the process of applying background knowledge to understand and interpret text. In the experience (E) phase, the teacher elicits the students' personal experiences relevant to the topic of the text to be read, then passes to the text (T) phase, where the students silently read a section of the

text in order to locate specific information (e.g., characters and setting) before discussing the details of the text as a class and generating hypotheses regarding the story. In the relationship (R) phase, the teacher uses assessment and assistance questions to help the students generate relationships between their own experiences and the text immediately read. The object of the ETR strategy is to gradually transfer the students from their relative dependence on teacher assistance at each phase to relative student independence across all phases. Au and Kawakami's (1984, cited in DeVillar and Faltis 1991) study of five Hawaiian children in the Kamehameha Early Education Program in Honolulu, Hawaii, demonstrates the value of adult and peer assistance in leading students from an other-regulated to a self-regulated learning stage. Their research found that successful teachers in the program generally

1. Instructed within the students' zone of proximal development, sustaining interaction by balancing the student's background knowledge with new knowledge available within their socially assisted grasp
2. Enabled students to arrive at their own generation of new knowledge through waiting for alternative responses after incorrect responses, ignoring the incorrect response, or asking an assisting question after the incorrect response
3. Engaged students in quantitatively more complex verbal interactions than simple verbal interactions, but used simple verbal interactions to check comprehension and establish simple propositions required for understanding information presented in the text
4. Consistently reinforced appropriate student responses, modeled comprehension processes, and, through discussion, focused students' attention on critical textual information
5. Facilitated and integrated into the lesson student-generated topics for discussion that were not directly elicited by a teacher-generated question.

The research cited below (and elaborated upon in DeVillar and Faltis 1991) provides additional support for the application of Vygotskian social learning principles to enhance individual learning and performance outcomes of students,

particularly those within nontraditional classroom settings (e.g., culturally diverse, low-income, racially or ethnically segregated). The strategy of reciprocal teaching, for example, has resulted in improved reading skills for designated poor readers through teacher-assisted small group settings (Palincsar, Brown, and Campione 1989; Palincsar 1986; Palincsar and Brown 1984; Brown and Palincsar 1986). With respect to the role of peers in a student's learning development and content area outcomes, Bruce, Michaels, and Watson-Gegeo (1985) found that students in a low-income, urban school improved their writing and developed a sharp sense of audience through working together, in this particular case at computers, to compose critical reviews of events within a variety show. Bruce et al. also found that students' interest in their tasks was heightened and extended to their informal as well as formal learning settings. Informally, students paid attention to each other's writing and shared comments about it when not at the computer; formally, when working together at the computer, they generated discussion about the immediate task. Additional research findings in support of the use of peer interaction within culturally diverse learning settings as a positive means to successful task completion and individual cognitive development—fundamental features in Vygotskian social learning theory—include Weisner, Gallimore, and Jordan (1988), relative to Hawaiian American students; and García (1990) and Moll (1988), with respect to Hispanic-American students among others (see DeVillar and Faltis 1991).

Communication Principles and Second-Language Acquisition

A related and no less important schooling outcome that we, as a nation, desire our students to achieve is the ability to speak, read, write, and understand English, particularly in the context-reduced sense that Cummins (1981, 1989) associates with being required to succeed in school. The socioacademic elements of social integration, communication, and cooperation each, and in combination with the others, are present in the socially and verbally interactive communicative settings required for both native-like second-language development and, we propose, enhanced academic outcomes. DeVillar and Faltis (1991), in their analysis of selected research related to peer interaction and second-language acquisition, reported

advantages for second-language learners interacting with native speakers (e.g., Hawkins 1988), and less than satisfactory outcomes in native-like second-language acquisition in the case of students being segregated from native-speaking school contexts (e.g., Swain 1985). The benefits derived by second-language speakers from their access and participation in authentic communicative contexts with native-language speakers, especially with peers, are compelling in their support for integration and cooperation (Gaies 1985; McGroarty 1989; Wong-Fillmore 1985), as are the disadvantages wrought from second language schooling contexts where segregation and communicative artifice prevail, whether by design or accident. (Milk 1980; Neves 1984).

Socioacademic Success: Communication, Integration, and Cooperation

The principles that comprise the socioacademic framework are in an interdependent relationship with one another. It is through their combined presence that the *minimal necessary conditions for universal quality schooling* can be met. Allport (1959), for example, both explicitly understood the nature of his focus to be *integration* and the relationship of *communication* to that focus:

If the prejudiced style of life can be learned—and certainly it is not innate—then surely . . . in Gandhi's terms, the "equi-minded" outlook can also be acquired. In schools, I suggest, we discard [aspects] of the present content and replace it with suitably chosen instruction and experience in the *principle of integration*....[Humans'] choices can be only among sequences they have known, and so our problem of training involves also the giving of experience, especially in childhood, that will enlarge the cognitive style and turn the mind automatically toward the *integrative mode of handling conflict*. (Emphasis added; 14–149)

Addressing the relationship of communication to integration, Allport added:

The successful resolution of *social* conflict proceeds always along the same lines. Take the issue of desegregation, a problem of the first magnitude not only in this country but in the

world at large. On the social level . . . [and on] the personal level . . . the principle of inclusion fails. At the moment this particular problem is most acute in the United States and South Africa. . . . The policy of [exclusion] extends to housing, transportation, schools, public assemblies, recreation, and politics, so that there is no . . . opportunity to become acquainted. And needless to say the precondition of all normative compatibility is communication. (Original emphasis; 142)

Vygotsky (1962) also clearly understood the interdependent relationship of the principles of integration, cooperation and communication, which he identifies and applies throughout his social learning theory, although not necessarily from a cross-cultural or interracial perspective. Nevertheless, like Allport (1954), his writings reflect the interdependence between equimindedness among participants (an integrative and cooperative feature) and successful communication, most notably in the contrastive examples he supplies using a passage from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and an uncredited poem about three hearing-impaired men in court. In the former case, for Tolstoy's characters, Kitty and Levin, to understand each other's declaration of love required nothing more (at the concrete, decoding level) than writing the initial letter of each of the words one wished to express to the other, regardless of the complexity of their syntax. Thus, the strings of letters

*W y a : i c n b , d y m t o n ; I c n a o t ;
s t y m f a f w h ; and I h n t f a f . I n c l y ,*

absolutely void of meaning for all others, expressed an emotionally charged, even passionate declaration of unrequited love between Kitty and Levin (as it did in real life for Tolstoy and his future wife) due to their ideal degree of equimindedness (see Vygotsky 1962: 140–41). Vygotsky then presents the following doggerel verse to exemplify the effects on communication when an insufficient degree of equimindedness exists:

Before the judge who's deaf two men bow.
One deaf man cries: "He led away my cow."
"Beg pardon," says the other in reply,
"That meadow was my father's land in days gone by."
The judge decides: "For you to fight each other is a shame.
Nor one nor t'other, but the girl's to blame." (141)

Although ostensibly referring to the participants' lack of the necessary auditory tools with which to communicate, Vygotsky purposely used the doggerel analogously to illustrate the inevitable "total misunderstanding, even with full speech, [that occurs between] any two people who give a different meaning to the same word or who hold divergent views" (141).

Applying the Socioacademic Framework in Schools: Future Prospects, Present Limitations

The following illustration of the interdependent relationship among the principles of integration, communication, and cooperation within a culturally heterogeneous classroom context will address concerns of teachers and other educators with respect to applying the socioacademic framework.

As each student may have a different zone of proximal development, it would be difficult for a teacher to adjust his or her interaction to the learning needs of a broad range of students at the same time. In light of the present teacher-student ratio, and that of the foreseeable future, the two most promising contexts for the effective application of social learning principles appear to be teaching in small groups (e.g., reciprocal teaching and ETR methods illustrated earlier) and learning in small groups, particularly in the form of cooperative learning. In both contexts, students of different language and cultural backgrounds exchange and develop ideas, and otherwise collaborate with one another cooperatively, participating in formally structured cooperative learning methods such as *Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD)*, *Teams-Game-Tournament (TGT)*, *Teams-Assisted Individualization (TAI)*, *Jigsaw I and II*, and *Group Investigation*, as well as methods associated with Johnson and Johnson, Weigel, and others (see Slavin 1985, and summary of same in DeVillar and Faltis 1991).

As stated earlier, physically integrating students of diverse language, ethnic, and racial backgrounds by assigning them to "work together" in small groups will not generally lead them to cooperate with one another. For multiple reasons, students do not automatically feel bound through talk and past experiences to their fellow students (Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec 1986). The principle of cooperation, then, must be complemented by the concurrent application of additional principles—specifically, communication and integration—to ensure

that all students are contributing through talk and action to the group effort. The four elements identified by Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1986) as supporting equitable participation in cooperative group work are particularly compatible with the accompanying two tenets comprising the socioacademic framework. These elements, which are interconnected and mutually supportive, are (1) preparation in interpersonal and small group skills; (2) face-to-face interaction; (3) positive interdependence; and (4) individual accountability for learning the concepts and information germane to the task.

Cooperative learning activities that are built upon these elements are critical to the socioacademic framework because they theoretically satisfy several of the conditions that favor successful social integration and social interaction. Additionally, there is widespread agreement among cooperative learning adherents (cf. DeVillar and Faltis 1991; Kohn 1986) that cooperative learning methods must adhere to the criteria associated with Allport (1954) to achieve effective integration of interracial/interethnic groups, specifically: (a) equal status among participants, (b) individual attributes that successfully challenge the negative minority stereotype, (c) mutual interdependence, (d) promotion of individual perception, and (e) promotion of egalitarian norms.

Thus, to promote successful social integration at the classroom level, students must assign equal status to themselves and others, exhibit attributes that successfully challenge negative stereotypes, see themselves as mutually responsible for their own learning, and adhere to egalitarian norms of interaction.

In addition, successful social integration in the heterogeneous classroom requires the institutional promotion of supportive policies and practices among administrators, parents, and students alike. Schools need to openly advocate and celebrate the importance of intergroup contact through communication and cooperation. In combination, these efforts help schools to transcend ethnic, linguistic, and social divisions, and at the same time set the stage for successful cooperation, the social context for learning that best facilitates social integration and communication.

Implementing principles of the socioacademic framework means that considerably more instructional time will have to be allotted to small group teaching and cooperative learning. These two social contexts, however, will not automatically lead

to equal status among participants or to prosocial behavior, particularly in the form of, but not limited to, new friendship patterns. Brief examples from DeVillar and Faltis (1991) relative to these two areas will lend evidence to this claim.

Friendship Patterns and Other Prosocial Behaviors

Research in desegregated junior and senior high school settings by Weigel et al. (1975), found that Anglo-American students' attitudes toward Mexican-American students improved, but not their attitudes toward African-Americans; likewise, the Mexican-American students' attitudes toward African-American and Anglo-American students did not improve, nor did those of the African-American students toward Anglo-American students (Slavin 1985). Thus, DeVillar and Faltis (1991) describe improved friendship pattern outcomes as potentially characterized by one-way and two-way improvement. The one-way pattern reflects a nonreciprocal friendship pattern improvement, where the attitude improvement on the part of one group (Anglo-American students in the above instance) is not balanced by an improved attitude on the part of the other group (African-American students). A two-way pattern would reflect a reciprocal friendship pattern improvement, where both groups would demonstrate improved attitudes toward each other. Research by Johnson and Johnson (1981) serves to illustrate this condition. Again, as DeVillar and Faltis (1991) point out, caution must be applied when interpreting research results too generally since, in this case, the increased interaction patterns between racially different students were greater only at free time rather than throughout the students' general school day or during any content-area class within that day, where no improvement was evidenced. Other studies indicate that cooperative learning effects among heterogeneous groupings vary with respect to the type of cooperative learning method utilized and whether or not the cooperative task was successfully completed. For example, *competition* between cooperatively-structured teams can neutralize some of the positive gains made through cooperation at the intrateam level; further, cooperative assignments resulting in task failure can diminish intergroup appeal (cf. Miller, Brewer and Edwards 1985). Thus, while there are distinct prosocial advantages associated with cooperative learning, there remains much to be done at the process level to develop student experiences in a manner that will result in

both widespread cross-racial and cross-ethnic social integration at the two-way level, prosocial behaviors, and enhanced academic performance.

Equal Status among Participants

Equal status among peers will not automatically ensue from grouping strategies. Allport (1954) clearly noted the conditions under which equal-status misperceptions by a dominant group toward a perceived subordinate group were changeable: where the minority group members, *already equal* in skill level to their majority member counterparts, are *misperceived* as having less than equal skills, and subsequently demonstrate their equality in situations where both groups strive together toward a common goal. Further, Allport (1954) was clear in the need for explicit institutional support by management in the form of setting policies and implementing practices that communicated to members within the institution that social integration and equal status were valued:

To hire [minority members] with minimum friction it seems advisable for management to lead the way in breaking down discrimination at the top level. Likewise a firm policy ruling will probably offset the initial protests that are likely to occur. . . . In short, equal-status contact may lead to a dissociated, or highly specific, attitude, and may not affect the individual's customary perceptions and habits. (263–64)

Hence, educational sites (at federal, state, county, district, school, and classroom levels) must take a long-term leadership role in setting concrete policies and engaging in visible practices that actively and articulately demonstrate integration.

Also, as we noted earlier, competitive learning contexts, classroom organizational contexts which physically segregate learners from one another, and teacher-centered instructional delivery systems that value a knowledge-dispensing philosophy over one that encourages discovery learning, continue to work against social integration in schools and in classrooms. Evidence presented here and elsewhere (DeVillar and Faltis 1991) supports the notion that students will continue to be segregated interactionally at the classroom level, *even though they are physically integrated in groupwork*, unless a conscious effort is made to attend to the features that are most likely to bring about successful social integration.

An effective socioacademic context results when students perceive themselves and are perceived by their peers and their teachers as resources for learning, without regard to their language, ethnic, or other background variables; and when administrators, teachers, and parents actively endorse communicative, prosocial, and integrative endeavors. In current classroom life, cooperative learning methods that attend to the constraints of intergroup communication have the potential to bring students of diverse background together to collaborate on problems and to interact in ways that other social classroom contexts we have described cannot offer. The socioacademic framework, with its attention to communication, integration, and cooperation, can lead to the social harmony and academic achievement that we are seeking for all students, can align our national practice within the context of the school more closely with our national rhetoric, and can move us as a nation toward metacultural unity (see DeVillar this volume).

Conclusion

A summary of the rationale for the socioacademic framework has been presented together with an illustration of the types of contributions it could make toward school success and, ultimately, national cohesion. Since all of our nation's children experience formal schooling as part of their socialization into adulthood, schools have an extraordinarily significant role to play in leading students to metacultural unity through equitable and socially responsible teaching practices and learning experiences. In so doing, they will have enabled students to internalize through concrete experiences values that promote respect for multicultural understanding. Such values, in turn, are a critical means to secure, sustain, and enhance metacultural unity at the national level. Thus, students who emerge from socioacademically-based schooling will be better prepared to live, work, and coexist amicably with one another in the 21st century (Cummins 1991). The final advantage to implementing the socioacademic framework is of utmost importance: In their future roles as socialization agents, students will be in the historically singular position to model for succeeding generations both the rhetoric that embodies our national image and the inclusionary practices that enable us to realize it.

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