The three major functions of our educational system are: (1) socialization, (2) cultural transmission, and (3) the development of self-identity. The respective purveyors and objects of these functions are teachers and students. Educators and parents, for the most part, are in agreement on these functions. Disagreement lies in the contextual embodiment of these functions. We submit that the embodiment of these functions must be in a context of multicultural education.

Multicultural processes should be an intimate part of the teacher's instructional activities. One must eschew monocultural processes which foster the development of cultural alienation and self-degradation in most students. In its stead, teachers should strive for their students to acquire a respect for diversity — which is a basic principle of multicultural education. Instruction which has, as an objective, a respect for diversity, should begin with activities which focus on self-enhancement or self-concept. It should be apparent that students must feel good about themselves (i.e., family, community, cultural heritage) before they can relate positively (i.e., accept, respect and trust others) to other cultural groups.

Designing learning activities which will enable students to explore their self-concepts is often the beginning stage for multicultural processes. The enhancement of self-concept is undeniably related to the belief of having some control over one's environment. Subsequently, teachers should make a constant and conscientious effort to create instructional environments reflective of power-sharing, equality and decisionmaking, but being mindful that shared power and decisionmaking must flow in two directions — between teacher and students.

The classroom setting mirrors a small society which is much closer to the society of adults than it is to that of the family. Students and teachers are not brought together by personal feelings or preference, but for altogether general and abstract reasons. In a social system as tightly organized as that of most classrooms, the position and activities of any role depend upon those of its role-mates. In this sense, the student is dependent on the teacher. Being a student is a role-playing activity, with students developing strategies to cope with the "institutionalized dominance and subordination" built into the classroom-role structure. The teacher is in control of most of the action and does most of the talking. The conventional classroom situation allows academic success through a very limited range of intellectual approaches or styles. Most curricula and teachers reward skills in role-learning and a cognitive style characterized by analytical, abstract modes of thinking.

The two most critical roles in the classroom are those of the teacher and the students, with the quality of life in the classroom largely based upon the interaction between them. Age and status differences, as well as discrepancies in goals, contribute to disequilibrium in the teacher-student relationship; but another factor, the teacher's socio-economic background may contribute significantly to this disequilibrium. The teacher, like the student, comes to the school with a socio-economic history which affects his attitudes toward and interaction with students and other persons in the school.

More often than not, parts of what the student brings to the school have been ignored or even suppressed to the point the student is forced to lose self-esteem. Teachers usually bring to the classroom one set of values and beliefs and assume that these are the values and beliefs of the students in that classroom. Development of respect for diversity should become a part of the teacher's behavior and the school's curriculum. How a person develops this respect for diversity is one of the most important jobs that teachers and schools must assume.

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values and cultural beliefs that students bring to the classroom are largely ignored and the person believes his values and culture are not worthwhile. A tenet of multicultural education is to help students believe that who they are is important and what they value is worthwhile. Multicultural education deals with all aspects of the human being: his uniqueness, his differences, and his racial, ethnic and cultural heritage. A cultural-pluralistic philosophy demonstrates that a student is not only a part of a cultural and/or family group, but that he is born with characteristics which are unique and belong to no other person. The total society does not always recognize that we live in an ethnics society made up of many culturally-different groups.

Socio-economic status, race, ethnic group membership, religion and family attributes relate strongly to a student's school career. All affect academic success, both directly and indirectly, through their interaction and through their effects on other variables related to achievement. Individuals are born into families. The family in which the child is born is one of the major determinants of his subsequent success in school. Two kinds of family effects are important. First, the family has certain characteristics, including socio-economic status, race and religion which are attributed to the child simply by virtue of his family membership. The second set of variables has to do with the way the family is structured and the attributes and behavior of the members with respect to one another. No other characteristics besides family and race, which the child acquires at birth, have been the subject of more educational argument, analysis and soul searching.

It has been argued that the basic needs of people are the need for love and the need for self-worth. The schools are much more directly concerned with the second basic need, the need to feel worthwhile. Love and self-worth are so intertwined that they may properly be related through the use of the term identity. Thus, it may be said that the single basic need that people have is the requirement for an identity: the belief that we are someone in distinction to others, and that the someone is important and worthwhile. For most people of school age, only two places exist where they can gain a successful identity and learn to follow the essential pathways of social responsibility and self-worth. These places are the home and the school.

Inability to gain a successful identity does not mean that a person will have no identity. Each student comes to school with feelings about self and his self-worth. Very few people lead a life with no real knowledge of who they are. What happens in school interactions can strengthen or weaken these concepts.

Inherent within multicultural education are the following basic principles: (1) recognition of all cultural, ethnic and racial groups within the total society, (2) development of respect for diversity, and (3) acknowledgment of each human being as a unique individual as well as a member of a cultural, ethnic and/or racial group.

Instructional activities designed by the teacher to include the abovenamed basic principals will include introducing the students to the fact that every person needs a feeling of security, recognition and self-worth. "Knowing Me and You" is an example of a series of such activities. This example included the objectives designed by the teacher and students, namely: (1) the student will be able to describe himself in terms of self-pride and self-identity, (2) the student will recognize that every other student/teacher has some worth and dignity regardless of his ethnic, racial, cultural or economic classification, (3) each student will show, at the conclusion of the activities/experiences, some type of improvement on an undesirable self-trait that he had previously identified and chosen for self-improvement, and (4) the student will be able to appreciate and respect others, to some degree, for their right to be unique individuals and not necessarily like him.

The teacher's role in self-esteem and interpersonal activities is very crucial because these activities usually focus on the following categorizing factors — socio-economic status, age, religion, race, sex and culture. The teacher must demonstrate a positive attitude toward diversity in these categories. Students will quickly detect, within the teacher or any other authority figure, negativism toward difference. Students expect the teacher to be honest about himself, to be knowledgeable about individual differences, to be willing to share his values, opinions and beliefs, and to be trustworthy. Most importantly, the teacher must be able to communicate to the students that he, too, is in the process of knowing who he is. This tends to put the student and teacher on an equal, self-actualizing basis within the school environment.

There is some reason to believe that students learn better when their teachers know about them as individuals. Students' school records yield basic data, but how the student perceives himself as an individual cannot be gathered from these records. Any other information noted on the records is usually written as a result of some interaction between the student and teacher.

"Knowing Me and You" is an example of a series of
activities which promote interaction between student and teacher and among students. Activities such as: (1) self-portrait, (2) games designed to show social responsibility, body language and sharing with others, (3) collages to abstractly depict the person — within and without — and (4) journals about self, friends, desires, et cetera, build on personal and interpersonal relationships within the classroom setting. It is hoped the students who, at the beginning of these activities, are shy and insecure about their lives, or have negative feelings toward self will begin to feel better about themselves. Success in school is very basic to the individual, and building self-worth cannot be ignored.

Teachers must realize that the degree of effectiveness of self-concept units/activities is determined by the extent of their own involvement. Teachers who maintain an aloof attitude with their students tend to depersonalize the self-concept activities and dehumanize the students. An unwillingness to share yourself through participation in the self-concept activities can adversely affect the interactive sharing activities; thus producing a mechanistic atmosphere instead of the appropriate humanistic activities which should characterize self-concept activities.

Designing learning activities which will enable the student to explore his self-concept is often the beginning stage for multicultural education. The undeniable link of self-esteem and worthiness to the feeling of one having some control over his environment dictates flexible activities which will allow student input. One must remember that before a person can begin to accept others, he must feel good about himself.

Revealing one's self indicates a very significant step in the process of becoming. "Knowing Me and You" contains activities which allow the student to draw the boundaries himself. The journals kept by one set of students who were involved in this unit serve as examples of this activity. Topics such as, The Inner Me, The Outer Me, and Why I'm Proud To Be A Chicano were used as titles by the students, and with their permission, they are being reproduced.

THE OUTER ME
I'm 4'9½" tall,
My hair is brown
and I have brown eyes.
I have fair complexion.
That is what I look like.
T.G.

THE INNER ME
The inner me is beautiful. Then
sometimes I feel sad and sometimes
people make me happy again.
The inner me is
sometimes I feel mad to.
T.G.

WHY I'M PROUD TO BE A CHICANO
I am proud to be a Chicano
because when people go to the beach
they don't go to swim. They
go to get a suntan, well at least
most of them. The other reason is I
can Speak a different language.
M.G.

Footnotes
2 Hansom Prentice Baptiste, Jr., Mirabelle Baptiste and Barbara Sherman. 
   "Knowing Me and You," A Self Awareness Module Series, University
   of Houston: Professional Development Center, 1974.

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