

## CONCERNING THIS ISSUE

The focus of this issue is multicultural education and bilingual education. There is much disagreement and variety in the definitions and program operationalizations of these concepts nationally; in Hawaii, the problems and promises have special significance to its ethnically diverse population.

In broad terms, the articles included in this issue may be viewed as either of the following:

- those which deal more with clarifying these concepts and identifying implications for educators and policy-makers; and
- those which describe programs or curricula that operationalize these concepts on a practical level.

Although there is much overlap among the articles, those by Gay, Fruehling, Nagtalon-Miller, and Trifonovich are of the first type; the articles by Baptiste and Baptiste, Forman and Mitchell, and Moore and Lundquist are of the second type.

The initial article provides an excellent assessment of the "state of the art" of multicultural education. Gay views multicultural education as evolving and maturing in three identifiable stages. (Educators, too, are at different stages of development throughout the country.) She argues effectively for Stage III which requires viewing multicultural education as "process" rather than "product." For Gay, multicultural education must become "a way of being and behaving in the context and expressions of the cultural and ethnic diversity which exists in our schools and our society."

Against an elaborated summary of the meaning of culture and its major characteristics, Fruehling raises some serious questions regarding the role of educators as transmitters of culture. If educators "consciously and deliberately perceive themselves" and "perform as cultural transmitters," then certain sets of culture-related questions become paramount. How are cultural values to be transmitted through curriculum materials? Can teachers provide the supporting context which would allow the original meaning of a cultural element under study to be represented accurately? Fruehling claims that more important than a consideration of the educator's role as cultural transmitter is the issue regarding his role in

determining the nature and content of cultural patterns and the degree to which these patterns enhance or diminish the quality of life.

Nagtalon-Miller states that the common use and acceptance of the word "pluralism" in Hawaii, and the rest of the nation, have implications for public policy, including educational policy. She clarifies this complex concept with the use of a typology and points out that the most common conceptualization of pluralism in Hawaii, and elsewhere in the nation, has inherent contradictions. The "structural assimilation" of a "melting pot" type of pluralism is a "make-believe" pluralism because cultural and ethnic diversity cannot survive in such a setting. She argues that it takes more than individuals and families to insure cultural diversity. Bilingual education is one concrete and appropriate way of assuring the survival of diversity in American life.

Trifonovich presents four stages of cultural adjustment and stresses the fact that these are cyclical and not linear. He precedes this discussion with a description of some barriers to cross-cultural communication and learning. Realizing what the hurdles are and what the process entails will enable us, he maintains, to build toward a world-conscious citizen — to develop "cosmopolitan nationals."

Baptiste and Baptiste argue that "self-concept" is intimately and instrumentally linked to multicultural education. They posit "that before a person can begin to accept others, he must feel good about himself." Teachers must participate fully in the activities which reveal and share information about themselves. Baptiste and Baptiste describe activities which teachers and students can do that are intended to enable the student to explore his self-concept as a beginning stage for multicultural education.

Forman and Mitchell describe distinctive features of the Hawaii Multicultural Awareness Pilot Project. One of the major features of the program is the organizing of "themes" such as life-cycle celebrations to point out similarities and differences of the various ethnic groups in Hawaii. Every attempt is made to make the unit culturally relevant. They also support the need for utilizing community resource persons and multilingual translations of the materials.



Moore and Lundquist maintain that institutions of higher education have favored pre-service programs in the area of bilingual/bicultural education. They see a need to develop in-service programs in this field of study for the experienced educator. They describe the goals, assumptions, methodologies and other significant features of an "extern program" developed at the University of Colorado at Denver. Noting the fact that, as with all programs, there are limitations, Moore and Lundquist claim the advantages of this type of program far outweigh the limitations.



They further claim that, on the basis of their experience with the developing program, it holds great potential for responding to the real and significant needs of experienced educators wishing to gain practical knowledge and skills to deal with the bilingual child.

Virgie Chattergy  
Amy Agbayani-Cahill  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
University of Hawaii at Manoa