Schools embrace multicultural trend

by Lorraine V. Forte

On a recent Thursday morning, students at Albany Park Multicultural Academy compared accounts of creation written by Mayan Indians, the Cupeno Indians of California, the Ainus of Japan, the Negritos of the Malay Peninsula and the ancient Egyptians.

At Alexander Hamilton Elementary School in Lakeview, parents and community residents will speak to children about their own cultural heritage.

And at Mayo Elementary School on the South Side, teachers and parents are learning about African civilization and culture as the first step toward bringing an Afrocentric curriculum to their children.

These activities reflect one of the first trends to emerge from school reform in Chicago: Lessons are becoming more multicultural.

"The word multicultural is on people's lips more now than in the last 10 years," says Joseph Frattaroli, manager of urban and ethnic education for the Illinois State Board of Education.

The push in Chicago is, indeed, part of a national trend. School systems in Atlanta, Ga.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Minneapolis, Minn.; and New York City, for example, are fashioning guidelines, lesson plans and materials for multicultural programs. Portland, Ore., is the acknowledged leader. Ten years ago a coalition of minority groups there launched what has become the most comprehensive, though still incomplete, multicultural education program in the country. (See separate story on page 6.)

Different meanings

Multicultural education means different things to different people, ranging from a curriculum that includes information about the history and cultures of a variety of racial and ethnic groups to instruction designed to connect with the communication styles, values and other attributes of children's cultural backgrounds. For some, multicultural education goes beyond ethnic considerations to include other groups that have suffered discrimination, including women, people with disabilities and the poor.

With roots in the civil rights movement of the 1960s and early 1970s—when black students demanded black studies courses—the multicultural education movement is powered in part by a desire for simple curricular justice. Schooling that deals overwhelmingly with the contributions of Europeans and their white U.S. descendants is wrong for everyone and damaging to minorities,
advocates point out.

"Every African American who goes through the educational process is damaged," says Jacob Carruthers, executive director of the Kemetic Institute and a faculty member at Northeastern Illinois University. Black children who succeed in school are even more damaged in some ways because they absorb more of the myth that their culture is inferior, he adds.

Many advocates of multicultural education believe that teaching children about contributions from their racial or ethnic group will increase the children's self-esteem and, in turn, their achievement. Others draw a connection with a fundamental of good teaching: Build on what children already know—in this case, their culture.

James A. Banks, a professor of education at the University of Washington in Seattle and a nationally recognized expert on multicultural education, also notes a "demographic imperative": In a country whose population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, public education must be multicultural. Currently, a third of this country's schoolchildren are children of color, Banks says, and by the year 2020 the proportion will grow to almost half.

This demographic shift "is causing people to see increasingly that we can't go on as we have been," Banks says. Schools must teach about and foster respect for the various groups that make up American society, he says.

Not surprisingly, there are strong differences of opinion over approach and content. Some groups advocate a curriculum centering around the accomplishments and culture of the group being taught. The National Black United Front, for example, seeks to develop an Afrocentric curriculum in schools with African-American children. Black children need to know that success is not solely the province of whites, that succeeding is not "acting white," they stress.

**Afrocentric curriculum**

Carruthers rejects a multicultural curriculum for black children because, he says, it still views the achievements of non-Europeans from a Western perspective. For black children, only an Afrocentric curriculum will do, he says, adding that such a curriculum does not ignore other groups and traditions. "We want our children to learn more about Shakespeare, about Confucius," he says.

An outspoken opponent of the "ethnocentric" approach, Diane Ravitch, an education historian at Columbia University in New York City, decry's "the particularists [who] neglect the bonds of mutuality that exist among people of different groups and encourage children to seek their primary identity in the cultures and homelands of their ancestors."

Writing in the Spring 1990 issue of *American Educator*, she says: "What we should be teaching our children is that race hatred is wrong, racial chauvinism is wrong and racism is wrong."

**Melting pot or tossed salad?**

"Unless the children live strictly in a monocultural environment, they [the ethnocentrist] are shortchanging them," adds Frattaroli, of the State School Board.

To some extent, the dispute boils down to whether the United States should be considered a melting pot...
or a tossed salad, observed one Chicago teacher. Banks believes that, in the end, “Neither side will be totally victorious. We’ll come up with some kind of synthesis.”

Other disputes revolve around the “truth” of some of the new lessons being taught. For example, scholars disagree over whether Egypt, which is featured prominently in a number of Afrocentric curricula, is part of black Africa or of a multicultural Middle East.

The name of Carruthers’s institute is a case in point. Kemetic is drawn from the word “kemet,” the name the ancient Egyptians gave themselves. Carruthers says “kemet” means “black people.” Edward Wente of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago says it means “black land” and refers to the color of the land’s soil.

Where history is in dispute, says Ravitch, the dispute itself should be brought into the classroom. “Every subject field has disagreements among experts, and the study itself becomes more interesting if students are let in on these disagreements.”

Racism all around?

The controversy over content goes beyond facts to the volatile arena of race relations, past and present. “What is worrisome is not just the way the facts are put together, but throughout there is a sense that they are teaching that racism and evil are all around,” Gilbert T. Sewall, director of the American Textbook Council, recently told the New York Times. The council is a private organization that reviews social studies textbooks.

Responds Carruthers: “There is a pronounced Eurocentric bias [in history] that has not been removed. Before we can talk about multicultural education in any sense, we will have to remove that bias.”

In Chicago, the Board of Education has issued curriculum objectives and standards that call very generally for knowledge of various cultural groups. Only the sections on math have any specificity. The Department of Language and Culture is serving as a resource center for schools, which apparently will have wide latitude in crafting their own programs.

“This is the most critical aspect of school reform,” says Sokani Karanja, executive director of Center for New Horizons, a Grand Boulevard community group, and chair of the multicultural education committee of the City-Wide Coalition for School Reform. “If [curriculum changes] don’t occur, nothing will change in any meaningful way.”

Now that reform is here, parents have the opportunity to question how their children are being taught, says Otha Henderson, chair of the Mayo Local School Council. “This [Afrocentric curriculum] should have been in place long ago. If children know where they come from, what others before them have done, then it gives them a perspective to be able to say, ‘Hey, I can do it too.’”

The leading proponents of multicultural education reject the group-of-the-month approach to teaching about minorities.

“In the past, there’s been a lot of filling in holes, with International Day, Polish Day, or whatever,” says Margy McClain, executive director of Urban Traditions and director of the pilot multicultural education program at Hamilton School. “We want to go beyond that.”

The goal of her program is to enable teachers and parents to develop a curriculum that reflects the ethnic diversity of the school and to help students develop research and other skills “by using their own lives and the lives of those around them as the raw material.”

“You don’t teach multicultural education, you teach education multiculturally,” explains Frattaroli, of the State School Board. “It’s not just a subject, it’s a way to teach.”

Some teachers at Fuller Elementary School on the South Side have been teaching multiculturally for more than a decade as part of a federal Follow Through program. Called the Cultural-Linguistic Approach, the program strives to create a “culturally responsive classroom” by teaching teachers how to recognize and work with behavior patterns of black children, explains director Naomi Millender, who is on the staff of the Chicago Teacher’s Center at Northeastern Illinois University.

Not a panacea

The approach has been used with Appalachian and Native American children, too. “The main thing is to use their own culture to help them learn better,” Millender says. “We know they [minority children] can learn, we just have to find ways to help them.”

At Fuller, discipline problems have declined markedly and test scores are up for children participating in the program. A formal study is now under way.

Proponents of multicultural educa-
Albany Park compares cultures

Albany Park Multicultural Academy has a student body that speaks 24 languages. It is now working on No. 25, German.

In a school devoted to multicultural education, learning a foreign language is important, explained Principal Mary Lee Lasher.

Lasher chose German because it fulfills state requirements for teaching a foreign language in elementary school: (1) children attending the school must not already speak the language and (2) the language must be taught in a district high school.

German lessons are but one part of the multicultural program that Lasher and the local school council have crafted for the 177 seventh- and eighth-graders who attend Albany Park, which is tucked in a corner of Von Steuben High School.

Every Thursday morning, students gather for “Socratic” seminars to explore a topic, such as creation, through the eyes of different cultures. First they read passages from literature, and then they discuss similarities and differences. Teachers encourage students to think by asking questions that have no right or wrong answers. “What do you think?” replaces “What do you remember about what I taught you last week?”

Students who do not speak English—about half the student body—get an assist from bilingual “buddies.”

For 10 weeks at a time, students delve into the culture of one of the broad racial and ethnic groups represented in the school, African, Hispanic and Mayan Indian, Asian and Pacific Island, and Eastern European and Middle Eastern.

Lasher’s solution to the lack of teaching materials in these areas is to “go everywhere,” including museums, cultural associations, universities, conferences and libraries. She also searches magazines, newspapers and books.

“What I think I’m creating more than anything is an atmosphere of acceptance,” Lasher says. “Multicultural education works when you create that atmosphere of dignity. I never want to cause a learner to lose his dignity.”

L. V. F.

Asian children are taught to keep one’s eyes lowered when talking to elders. As a result, Asian children might well be considered disrespectful or indifferent by their teachers.

Teachingmulticulturally, stresses Frattaroli, “takes a lot of hard work.”

One of the mistakes that black-studies and women’s-studies advocates made in the early ‘70s, he notes, “was that they taught as badly as they knew regular history, substituting one set of irrelevant names and dates for another set of irrelevant names and dates.”

Illinois law requires teacher preparation programs to provide some training in teaching children from different cultural backgrounds, but it does not spell out how that require-

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Portland schools struggle to meet multicultural goals

by Bill Graves

Sandy Booker was both unsettled and inspired by what he discovered about his African-American heritage after transferring to Jefferson High School in Portland last year.

“Most African-American children my age are pretty much in the dark about who we are and where we came from,” said Sandy, a senior.

Jefferson High pulled Sandy out of the dark, teaching him that Africans built complex civilizations, complete with universities, before the European slave trade began; teaching him that Lewis Howard Latimer, son of a slave, invented a long-lasting carbon filament that helped pave the way to street lights; teaching him that slave revolts began as early as 1663.

“People you have trusted have taught you certain things about other races and other people, and then you learn it is not like that,” said Sandy. “I learned a significant amount of that here at Jefferson.”

Spotty use

Velynn Frazier had a different story to tell after her junior year at Grant High School, another Portland school.

“I didn’t see the scientists or researchers or architects—all these people that black people have been,” she told the Portland School Board in June. “I taught myself what I know about my race and my heritage.”

Sandy and Velynn exemplify the promise and shortcomings of Portland’s 10-year, pioneering effort to develop a multicultural curriculum of sweeping scope. The curriculum reached and stimulated Sandy. Velynn didn’t even know it existed until she stumbled across a copy as she cleaned a teacher’s desk.

Portland aims to teach students the contributions all peoples of the world have made to history, science and culture. Its method is to teach the teachers first and then help them weave the material into their lessons—in essence, desegregating the curriculum. For example, a math teacher introducing the Pythagorean theorem might note that the theorem was being used by Mesopotamians and Egyptians, which is to say Africans, centuries before Pythagoras was born.

African-American essay themes

Portland’s African-American baseline essays have these recurring themes:

- Early civilizations evolved in Africa; Africa is the cradle of civilization.
- Egypt was, and still is, a significant African civilization.
- People of African descent have a history that precedes slavery and civil rights.
- The culture of African people was not destroyed by slavery.
- Cultural unity is evident among African people on the continent of Africa and throughout the world.
- Even under slavery, coloniza- tion and segregation, African/African-American people have made significant cultural contributions in the arts, sciences, human- ities, politics and other facets of the human experience.
- African people have been victims of misinformation about Africa and the distortion of the history, culture and contributions of African/African-American people.
- African people consistently resisted attempts to subjugate them.

Portland’s is the most fully developed multicultural education plan in the nation, said Asa Hilliard III, educator and psychologist at Georgia State University and consultant to Portland schools.

“It covers all grades,” he said. “It is multidisciplinary. It is generated out of a profound scholarly base that is generally unknown. It is unique in that it presumes the curriculum is the teachers.”

Unlikely leader

Portland seems an unlikely leader in multicultural education. Nearly three-fourths of the district’s 54,000 students are white. About 15 percent are black, 8 percent Asian, 2 percent Native American and 2 percent Hispanic. But Portland’s relatively small minority community forged a powerful coalition of 37 organizations to seize the lead in reshaping the district’s desegregation plan. That plan gave rise to the multicultural curriculum.

The curriculum is far from complete and sits on the shelf in some classrooms. But where it is being used, it seems to be making a difference. Students like Sandy Booker are “meeting” hundreds of role models—scientists, artists, writers, scholars, mathematicians, leaders—who rarely show up in textbooks or at events like international fairs and Black History Month celebrations.

At Tubman Middle School, teachers and students are more accepting of ethnic differences, said Principal Paul Coakley. “I can remember back in 1980 kids would see something different, and they would giggle and laugh,” said Coakley. “I don’t see that anymore.”

A brief visit last spring to Jefferson High, with a minority enrollment of 64 percent, found abundant evidence
that teachers there are taking the curriculum seriously.

In Ellen Goldberg's freshman English class, a student reads a poem she wrote lamenting social intolerance: "Why can't we all be different and still be the same?" Mira Shimabukuro focuses on a similar theme in the graduation speech she gives to her fellow students in Linda Christensen's writing class. Criticizing unfounded labels, she says: "These stereotypes get us nowhere. We have a responsibility to tear these labels apart."

**Starts in preschool**

In a combined history and literature class, a visiting Vietnam veteran gives students a black soldier's perspective on the war. Students already had read essays and poems on the war written from other viewpoints, including those of the North Vietnamese. The veteran describes patrolling the jungle and stumbling upon an enemy banner. It read: "Soul brother, what are you doing here? This is not your war. You don't have any freedoms in your own country."

At Ball Elementary School, students begin learning about other cultures in preschool, largely through dance, song, food, art and holiday celebrations. Then, in Sharon Martine's kindergarten class, they tap into other cultures in their daily lessons. When focusing on the letter T, for example, Martine might print "tostado" on the blackboard.

When complete, Portland's multicultural curriculum will consist of so-called baseline essays on the culture and history of the major ethnic groups in American society: African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, European Americans, Hispanic Americans and Pacific Island Americans. Teachers are required to read the essays but are free to decide how and when to use them in their teaching.

No culture is singled out in a patronizing way as has often been the case in textbooks and in narrower curricula that, say, set aside a week for studying black writers.

The district started with African Americans, its largest ethnic group. The Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee, a citizens' watchdog group, helped identify authors. Scholars were brought in from across the country to describe the contributions of Africans and African Americans to art, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and music. After numerous revisions, the African-American essays, totaling 550 pages, were published in 1986.

At Marshall High School, a computer is helping teachers digest the essays by calling information on specific subjects. Principal Colin Karr-Morse has set the stage by turning the school into a map of the world. Each building is a continent, each classroom a country. Kenya, for example, is a room in the south building that is flanked by rooms labeled Somalia and Tanzania.

**Parent reaction mixed**

Portland's multicultural program requires deep commitment from teachers. They must not only learn more, but also take a fresh look at what they already have been taught.

The Westward movement in American history, for example, might look more like the Eastern invasion from the perspective of the Sioux Indians. Or, as comedian and activist Dick Gregory said during a visit to Jefferson High in February, "If Columbus can discover a country that's already occupied, I can walk out of here tonight and discover your car with you in it."

The district has used consultants, often authors, as well as its own instruction directors to train teachers. But it has been a struggle, said Carolyn Leonard, multicultural office
director. Some teachers resisted change or objected to investing the time and study the plan demands.

Parent reactions have been mixed too. While many applaud what their children are learning, others complain that teachers spend too much time on multicultural education.

Ije Iheanacho, who has three children in district schools, said the curriculum helps improve the self-esteem of minority children. But she, like many members of the minority community, is frustrated because only some teachers teach it. With racially motivated crimes on the rise in Oregon, as elsewhere, many parents see an urgent need for widespread multicultural literacy.

"It really galls me that we have a curriculum that we create here in Portland that is known nationally and internationally, and this school district has not made it a mandate that it be used," said Halim Rahnson, chairman of the desegregation committee.

No one in Portland is satisfied with the time it is taking to complete the program. Leonard's office and the American Indian Curriculum Committee have drafted four of seven essays. Lesson plans have been written on Hispanics for all grade levels, but essays have not been written. Little has been done on Asians or Pacific Islanders.

The district has wasted time, Leonard conceded. But she said the hardest work has been done. With the African-American model in hand, district educators know what they must do to complete the other ethnic groups: Set specific goals and deadlines, involve staff and community, develop evaluation standards, get help from experts and provide intense teacher training.

Training teachers is the most difficult yet most important task in making the curriculum work. "People can't teach what they don't believe," Leonard said.

Despite problems, Portland educators, prodded by a watchful minority community, remain determined to give students a full multicultural education. Students like Velynn Frazier remind them why they must press forward. And students like Sandy Booker show them the rewards for doing so. "I learned about who I am," Booker said.

Bill Graves is the education reporter for The Oregonian, Oregon's leading daily newspaper.

African-American baseline essays: An excerpt

The following, about Egypt, is from the language arts section of the African-American baseline essays.

The Protests of Innocence, also called The Negative Confessions, were the deceased person's affirmation that he had lived a good life on earth and was worthy of immortality. The Ten Commandments, which appear much later in history, are very similar in content to The Negative Confessions. (See below.)

The inscription of Never-Seshem-Re of the Sixth Dynasty provides further evidence of the African origins of

Protest of Innocence
I am not one who telleth lies instead of truth
I am not a murderer.
I am not an adulterer.
I have not robbed the poor.

Ten Commandments:
Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
Thou shalt not kill.
Thou shalt not commit adultery.
Thou shalt not steal.

norbert Rillieux 1846
Improvement in sugar making
J.E. Matzeliger 1872
Shoe lasting machine
T.J. Marshall 1872
Fire extinguisher
Lewis H. Latimer 1881
Electric lamp
W. Johnson 1884
Egg beater
Granville T. Woods 1884
Steam boiler furnace
Granville T. Woods 1887
Telephone system & apparatus
A. Miles 1887
Elevator
R.F. Flemmings Jr. 1888
Guitar
W.H. Richardson 1889
Child's carriage
W.B. Purvis 1890
Fountain pen
John Stanard 1891
Refrigerator
J.T. White 1892
Lemon squeezer
A.L. Lewis 1892
Window cleaner
Sarah Boone 1892
Ironing board
R.P. Scott 1894
Corn silker
L.S. Burridge 1895
Typewriting machine
C.B. Brooks 1896
Street sweeper
J.L. Love 1897
Pencil sharpener
J.H. Smith 1897
Lawn sprinkler
J.H. Sweeting 1897
Device for rolling cigarettes
J.H. Evans 1897
Convertable settee & bed
J.A. Burr 1899
Lawn mower
L.C. Bailery 1899
Folding bed
John F. Pickering 1900
Airship
Issac Johnson 1914
Bicycle frame
Garrett Morgan 1923
Automatic stop signal
Gas mask
Source: Baseline essays, Portland Public Schools
Cultural mismatch in schools: a barrier to learning

by Jacqueline Jordan Irvine

When educators and researchers look at minority children who fail in school, they typically see a chain of shortcomings. The first link is poverty. Next comes an unstable and unsupportive home environment, followed by lack of motivation and discipline. Rarely do educators and researchers see the assets minority children bring to school or ask how schools and classrooms can be organized to make use of these assets.

One thing that all children bring to school is their culture, which includes their ethnic group's history, language, values, norms, rituals and symbols. Put simply, culture amounts to "the way we do things around here." To survive in any particular environment, including school, a person must come to know its cultural elements and incorporate them into his or her life.

Unfortunately, minority children's ways of doing and knowing often conflict with—indeed, are opposite to—the ways in which schools do and know. In schools serving minority children, administrators and teachers often ignore, discount, put down or do not understand their students' behavior, physical movements, values, worldview, home environment, learning styles or verbal and nonverbal language.

Not surprisingly, the result typically is a clash of wills—and sometimes verbal and even physical confrontations between students and their families, and teachers and administrators. Hostility often remains and erodes students' self-esteem, leading eventually to failure in school.

Literacy tied to culture

Language is one of the major areas in which conflict can occur. As researchers Y. N. Padron and S. L. Knight have pointed out, "Language and culture are so intricably intertwined that it is often difficult to consider one without the other." Minority students and their teachers customarily have obvious differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, rhythm, pacing and inflection. Less obvious, but as critical, are differences in assumptions about what is spoken and left unsaid, and whether it is appropriate to interrupt, defer to others and ask direct or indirect questions.

Hispanic and Asian students who are not proficient in the English language often fall academically because teachers view the acquisition of literacy—that is, spoken and written language—as a purely mechanical task involving sounds and symbols. It is a rare teacher who understands that the acquisition of literacy involves culture.

On different wavelengths

Black students whose language does not match the requirements of standard English often suffer in the same way that Hispanic and Asian newcomers do; but the situation for black students is complicated by the language of hip-hop and rap, languages of resistance and alienation used to exclude and intimidate authority figures.

Another major source of cultural
conflict in schools is the way children view and make sense of the world around them. Schools generally take an "analytical" approach to curriculum and instruction. This approach is characterized by rules, conformity, standardization, restrictions on movement, convergent (or focused) thinking, deductive reasoning (which proceeds from the general to the specific) and an emphasis on things.

require radical changes in school practice. Teachers and administrators must not only be more tolerant and accepting of minority children's culture, they also must integrate minority students' cultural knowledge into the curriculum and use culturally familiar speech and events in instruction. This is not special treatment; it is simply good teaching. Children learn when they see how new concepts are connected to what they already know, including their personal cultural knowledge. A teacher's job is to make these connections, using children's everyday experiences as examples and grounds for comparing and contrasting.

To thrive in both the culture of their communities and the culture of their schools, minority children must use two different cultural codes. Schools should help them do that by identifying the behaviors that lead to success in school. But schools offer no such help. Instead, they punish and fail students who bring their culture into the school and reward those who abandon or neutralize it.

To serve as cultural translators or brokers, educators first must become knowledgeable, sensitive and comfortable about minority children's language, style of presentation, community values, traditions, rituals, legends, myths, history, symbols and norms. They must be positively oriented toward the minority culture as well as the dominant culture of the school.

This transformation of teacher and administrator roles will require the assistance of parents and community leaders, staff development specialists and teacher educators who will require teachers to be more than mere products of their own culture. What is needed are teachers who, in the words of G.D. Spindler, have been "freed from the tyranny of their cultures" so that they will "free children from the damaging effects of premature, inaccurate or prejudiced estimates and interpretations of their behavior that are culturally induced."

Jacqueline Jordan Irvine is on the faculty of the Division of Educational Studies, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga. Her most recent book is Black Students and School Failure: Policies, Practices and Prescriptions.

References


Handbook helps teachers correct history textbooks

by Beatrice Lumpkin

Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History is a strong antidote to the racism, sexism and class prejudice implicit in many history textbooks. A provocative quiz, “Test your U.S. History I.Q.,” sets the stage. It asks, for example, what is wrong in the following statement, taken from a textbook: “The people watched the slaves pick cotton.” The answer, of course, is that the statement implies that slaves are not people.

Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History analyzes 12 history textbooks, two written for elementary schools, five for junior highs and another five for senior highs. Some of the textbooks were found to have made important changes in recent years, largely in response to criticism by people of color, by women and by working people in general. However, none of the 12 wins complete approval.

“The most telling of the indictments that may be made against the texts [is] their total lack of compassion for the ordinary people who lived, breathed, struggled and suffered in the past in the United States,” the authors say.

In this regard, the manual acts as a textbook supplement, offering selections from the history of African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, women and labor unions. (Study of these groups is required by Illinois state law.)

THINKING AND RETHINKING U.S. HISTORY


For example, textbooks do not tell readers who Africans were before they became enslaved. Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History does: “Some captured Africans were miners, others blacksmiths, metal workers, weavers or potters. Some were traders, some hunters, fishermen or farmers; some were scholars or religious teachers.”

“By denying textbook space to the range of African civilizations, texts imply that they were nonexistent or nonimportant,” the authors say. “This is invalid as history and is a reinforcement of racism.”

Valuable documents are supplied by the principal writer, Howard Dodson, who is chief of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York City. Dodson decryes the failure of textbook writers to use original sources, such as slave narratives, women’s writings and reports by travelers on the high level of African culture before it was disrupted by the slave trade.

Written from a social-justice viewpoint, Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History is far more than a survey. It is a handbook for teachers and parents to help students develop the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills that are essential for informed citizenship.

The sample lesson plans and handouts encourage teachers and students to probe four lines of inquiry for each historical period from precolonial America to after the Civil War. These lines of inquiry can be summarized as: (1) What are the opposing social forces and what do they want? (2) Which force’s perspective is presented in the textbook and are differing perspectives presented? (3) What social-justice issues are involved? (4) What information about the event is pertinent to social issues of today?

Another major thrust of Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History is to include the effects of religion as a social force in history. The manual was, in fact, prepared with an ecumenical advisory board that included many Christian church groups. However, this reviewer believes that teachers should select from these materials with great care. Some may not be suitable for public schools serving Christians, Jews, Muslims and adherents of other faiths, as well as unbelievers. Consider, for example, the discussion question: “Is it possible
to reconcile the Bible and feminism?"

The chief strength of Thinking and Rethinking U.S. History is that it can sensitize readers to social-justice issues, especially to the rights of Native Americans, African Americans, women, colonized people (including the Irish under British rule) and working people in general. I would have liked to have seen more on Asian Americans.

However, the manual says little about the role of Africa and Asia in providing the foundation for our modern civilization. In a handout entitled "Africa during the Slave Trade," a slave-ship captain reported on the Bager people in a part of Muslim West Africa still free of the slave trade. The captain's account concludes with this commentary: "Indeed, it seemed somewhat questionable whether it were better for the English to civilize Africa, or for the Bagers to send missionaries to their brethren in Britain!" I found little else on Africa.

Perhaps it is expected that this issue would be handled in another course. However, "History of the United States" is the only required history course for Chicago high school students. If the contributions of Africans, Asians, Native Americans and women to science, mathematics, philosophy, literature, art and government are not specifically included, then the misconception is reinforced that only white men contributed to the building of modern civilization.

Beatrice Lumpkin is a writer who has taught math and social studies in Chicago Public Schools and math and physics in City Colleges of Chicago. She was the mathematics consultant for the African-American strand of the multicultural curriculum of the Portland (Ore.) Public Schools and is a math writer for Chicago's curriculum department.

A sample of resources

Books, articles


Urban Gateways, 343 S. Dearborn St., Suite 510, Chicago, Ill. 60604. Contact: Roberta Ehre, director of residency, (312) 922-0440. (Arts education.)

Urban Traditions, 55 E. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1880, Chicago, Ill. 60604. Contact: Margy McClain, executive director, (312) 663-5400. (Using the community as a resource.)

National resources

Los Angeles Public Schools, Office of Instruction, Multicultural Unit, 1320 W. Third St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90017.

What's available: Multicultural concepts and skills for the elementary curriculum. A cultural awareness course for secondary students. "In Celebration of Diversity," a publication offering sample lessons at all grade levels. A reference guide with resource materials and activities on a variety of individuals and cultural groups, including Asian and Pacific Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, Martin Luther King Jr. and American Indians.

Contact: Bernadine Lyes, instructional advisor, (213) 625-6791.

Dade County Public Schools, 1450 N.E. Second Ave., Room 920, Miami, Fl. 33132.

What's available: Learning goals
on various groups at the elementary level. Also, a bibliography of films and videos.

Contact: Paul Hanson, director of curriculum development, (305) 995-1951.

- Buffalo Public Schools, Department of Curriculum, Evaluation and Development, 229 Floss Ave., Buffalo, N.Y., 14215.

What's available: Guidelines for infusing African-American contributions into English, language arts, social studies and math at all grade levels. Also, an eighth-grade book on U.S. history from an African-American perspective.

Contact: Samuel Alessi Jr., director of curriculum, or Joann Sadler, curriculum supervisor, (716) 893-9651.

The REACH (Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage) Center, 239 N. McLeod, Arlington, Wash. 98223.

What's available: A variety of multicultural materials for school districts. For example, REACH for Kids is a multicultural curriculum involving all subject areas at the elementary level. It includes a "seed curriculum" with sample lessons.

Contact: Gary Howard, executive director, (206) 435-8682.

Minneapolis Public Schools, 807 N.W. Broadway, Minneapolis, Minn. 55413.

What's available: A highly regarded plan outlining six major goals for achieving multicultural education in all grades. The plan includes model lessons and recommendations dealing with learning "climate," hiring practices and student self-esteem.

Contact: Colleen Kosloski, media services coordinator, (612) 627-2179.

- New York City Public Schools, Office of Multicultural Education, Division of Public Affairs, 131 Livingston St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

What's available: Teacher guidelines, at the preschool and seventh-grade level, for showing the contributions of various ethnic cultures to history. A teacher's guide on multicultural philosophical goals.

Contact Evelyn Kalibala, director, (718) 935-4320.

- Atlanta Public Schools, 210 Pryor St., Atlanta, Ga. 30335.

What's available: Middle-school lessons on African-Americans.

Contact: Murdell McFarlin, public information officer, (404) 827-8786.

- St. Paul Public Schools, Urban Affairs, Fourth Floor, 360 Colborne, St. Paul, Minn. 55102.

What's available: A comprehensive multicultural plan for all grades.

Contact: Teresa Mardenborough (612) 293-5162.


What's available: Guidelines for developing an education that is multicultural and gender fair.

Contact: Linda Garrett (612) 297-7156.

- Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of School Administration and Accreditation, Grimes Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

What's available: Guidelines on how to infuse multicultural objectives into all areas of the curriculum. Pamphlets with multicultural information for specific school jobs and subjects, including administrators, counselors, vocational education, home economics, computer science, mathematics, science and social studies.

Contact: Tom Anderson or William Bean (515) 281-3848 or (515) 281-3022.

Compiled by Lorraine V. Forte and Bill Graves.

Video explains school funding

by James Drake

There are great inequities in how Illinois collects and distributes money for schools. To remedy that, it is important for parents and citizens throughout Illinois to learn more about school finance.

A new 25-minute videotape produced by the League of Women Voters of Chicago brings the key information together. A question-and-answer format is used, with news anchor Diane Burns of WLS-TV (Channel 7) asking the questions and League President Edna Pardo giving the answers. Accompanying illustrations and charts are simple and make the intended points very well. The material has been published in an eight-page booklet as well.

Entitled "What Price Good Education in Illinois?" the videotape and booklet highlight some startling differences. For example, Central Stickney Elementary District in west Cook County spends $7,264 per child while Queen Bee Elementary District in DuPage County spends $2,774 per child, even though Central Stickney's tax rate is three times lower than Queen Bee's. Central Stickney gets a lot of money from a low tax rate because its boundaries include a lot of industry, which generates more tax dollars than homes do.

Another form of inequality is that districts with wealthier residents tax themselves at higher rates than do poorer districts. Chicago is in the middle range on spending, but low for the needs of its many low-income children, Pardo explains.

The League's videotape not only spells out the problem, but also offers some solutions. As such, it would make a good program for local school councils, PTAs, community organizations, school organizations and others seeking to mobilize support for changes in school funding.

The videotape raises the question of rallying citizens without a direct interest in schools, who constitute a large majority, but it offers no guidance.

The videotape and booklet can be purchased for $10. Contact the League of Women Voters of Chicago, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1142, Chicago, Ill., 60604 (312) 939-5935.

James Drake is director of Urban Leadership Center, which supports school leadership on the South Side.
Opinions

Ways to ease, prevent racial conflict

by David Morris and Michael Selinker

The phrase "state of emergency" terrifies us. We normally associate it with repressive dictatorships and natural disasters. We are not accustomed to hearing it associated with our schools.

But last month, Principal Steven Newton Jr. declared that a "state of emergency" existed at Farragut Career Academy, the violence-plagued high school at 2345 S. Christiana in Little Village. He was not exaggerating; both blacks and Latinos at the integrated school have said they are afraid to come to school for fear of becoming victims in the racial and gang battles there.

State of emergency

In this state of emergency, Newton tried to eliminate flashpoints. He cancelled the homecoming dance, barred all students from attending the homecoming football game and suspended all extracurricular activities for 30 days. But which of us doesn't remember these social events as vital parts of our education that made school a complete experience for us? For a short while at least, the behavior of some of the students means all will not share in that experience.

For several weeks, we at the Chicago Commission on Human Relations have poured much of our energy into diffusing tensions at Farragut. Members of our Education and Intergroup Relations Division have conducted dozens of meetings with Farragut officials, administration representatives, the local school council, parents, teachers and students at the school.

Our efforts there and at other schools suggest some actions LSCs and others involved in school reform can take to stop crises from escalating into violence.

1. Recognize that a crisis can break at any school. Our school system contains hundreds of schools that have changed racially and ethnically. Farragut's blacks and Latinos are hardly unique in bringing grudges to school.

LSCs must be aware that conflicts between Asians, blacks, Arabs, Jews, whites and Hispanics exist throughout the city, and no school is immune. Each school's character must be analyzed to identify the best strategy for dealing with racial issues.

2. Play the hand you're dealt. Nothing discourages peaceful relations between students more than seeing principals and LSCs at each other's throats. Reform requires us all to work together to solve our common problems for the good of our students.

LSCs need to assert authority in this formative stage of school reform, but they must welcome the experience of principals and the Board of Education. Principals should not be so afraid of the LSCs' power to fire them that they cannot lead effectively in crisis. Indeed, LSCs should encourage principals to take bold steps to solve problems before they get out of hand.

3. Call in the experts. Though school reform acknowledges that experts cannot solve all problems, LSCs and principals need training in racial matters before they can deal with them. LSCs must demand competent training from the Board of Education so they can tackle their schools' unique problems.

LSCs should also invite representatives of the Chicago Intervention Network, the Chicago Police Department's Gang Crimes Unit and Neighborhood Relations Department and others involved in these issues to train them in eliminating tensions. Principals and teachers should be at these training sessions.

Not a police issue

4. Don't treat interracial conflicts as police issues. The tensions at Farragut are far deeper than a few gangs taking potshots at each other, and thus more than a matter of providing more security guards. All of the students have become embroiled in this conflict, and it is crippling their ability to learn.

When it becomes apparent that interracial tensions are boiling, schools should convene student assemblies to grapple with the underlying issues. Racial battles usually are more complicated than one group disliking another's skin color, and if some background issues can be resolved, violence may be avoided.

5. Harness the energy of parents, teachers and students. All three of these interested groups responded to the tensions at Farragut, but more coordination was needed. LSCs and principals need to spread the word that all members of the school community are invited and expected to be
involved in solving these crises.

At Farragut, a parent volunteer group called Parents United for a Better Farragut was formed, but it included only Hispanic parents. More care must be taken to ensure that all racial, ethnic and religious groups in the community are involved.

6. Encourage student groups to take the lead. School reform is at its best when students support action. LSCs can use their funds to promote student groups like Students Together Against Racial Tension (START) to discuss these issues in the classrooms.

Principals should see these groups as links to the community of students. These groups often have their fingers on the pulse of the school and may know what will work better than administrators do.

7. Support multicultural curricula. Farragut teacher Charles Kuner designed a plan for a Critical Thinking Seminar for honors seniors in his history class. Its focus is “prejudice as a factor contributing to man’s inhumanity to man.” This is a good start, but classes and textbooks that stress multicultural interaction must be made part of the curriculum for all students.

8. Bring in the Commission on Human Relations. Since the reorganization of the commission under the Human Rights Ordinance in May 1990, our education division has developed programs which help schools struggle with racial matters. Our experience in dealing with racial tensions at Farragut and other schools may be of use to any school that requests it. We are at your disposal.

All of us—students, educators, parents, the city—are part of a great experiment. But unlike most scientific experiments, school reform has human subjects. We will not have a chance to educate this group of students again, so we must unite to give them an environment in which they can learn.

Michael Selinker heads the research unit of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations. David Morris directs the commission’s Education and Intergroup Relations Division, which helped prepare this article.

Generation clash heightened for immigrants

by Blanca Almonte

Conflict between generations occurs in every culture. Rebellion is a normal part of growing up that allows children to separate from their parents.

But in the United States, parents’ attitudes toward rebellion and the way families handle it are different from those in many other parts of the world. In the United States, separation conforms to the ideal of independence embodied in Pilgrims, pioneers and cowboys. Separation is encouraged; success lies in personal attainment. Parents are not surprised when teens rebel openly. Many parents accept the rebellion as a period that will pass.

The Hispanic ideal of interdependence requires less breaking away. In traditional Hispanic families, conflict stays under the surface. A typical teenager living in the native country will reason, “What [my mother] is saying is not right and I don’t agree with her, but she is my mother; therefore, I will obey.” It is shocking and disturbing to Hispanic parents when their adolescents defy their commands.

Though families from many foreign countries find it hard to handle rebellious teenagers in this country, Hispanics have an especially hard time accepting their children’s Americanized behavior.

Temporary residents

Many Hispanics who move here from nearby countries, such as Mexico or Puerto Rico, regard themselves as temporary U.S. residents—even if they have lived here for 10 or 15 years. While the parents resist change because they plan to return, their children adapt to the American culture.

Other factors come into play. Age differences are less important in Latin America than they are in the United States, where people are stratified into a dozen groups starting with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Hispanics do not have these classifications and do not expect that the young will be different from the old. In traditional, rural areas, childhood is shorter than it is in the United States. In rural areas, it is common for children to marry and support themselves at 16.

Language differences can cause problems, too. Take, for example, the use of the word, “ambition.” In the mainstream, the word means a desire to achieve. To many Hispanic families, the Spanish word, “ambicioso” connotes selfishness. Imagine how confusing it can be to a Hispanic child when his teacher admonishes him with, “You don’t have ambition.”

Schooling itself follows different avenues. Traditional education in many Latin American countries emphasizes memorizing answers and learning facts. It relies on information provided by teachers who expect obedience and respect. U.S. schools teach children to find answers for themselves and to voice their opin-
ions. Traditional Latin American schools also discourage parents from participating. Here, schools ask parents to take part. As a result of these differences, many Hispanic children hear conflicting messages—one from the family and another from the school.

Those of us who work in schools and in social service programs must help ease these conflicts. If we urge

children and teens—knowingly or unknowingly—to oppose their families’ ideals, we are destroying the family and ultimately the child. It is our responsibility to integrate the family into services for the children.

Teachers and service providers who work with families from other countries must encourage parents to express their views. We must go to parents and say, “This is what this society is asking of your children. You must choose what is important and what you’re willing to change. Then, help your children understand your guidelines.”

Blanca Almonte is director of Family Focus West Town. This article initially appeared in the Fall 1989 issue of the Ounce of Prevention Fund Quarterly.

‘How’ as important as ‘what’

by Michael Klonsky

What books should schools require their students to read? Whose history should schools teach? Is there a common body of knowledge that all Americans should share? What should it be? Who should decide?

Long subjects of intense debate at universities, these questions are stirring discussion in elementary and high schools as the push for multicultural education gains momentum. “Academic freedom” is even on the lips of some high school teachers.

Seeing the debate spread, the Illinois Humanities Council, the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Newberry Library last month invited local school council members and Chicago teachers and administrators to join a number of academics for a symposium on “The Multicultural Debate: American Literature and the Schools.”

Unfortunately, it wasn’t much of a debate. All the presenters agreed that teaching only the classics was not good enough. The other side—those who oppose “diluting” the curriculum with works by minorities and women—was not represented. The symposium struck some welcome sparks, however, by challenging local school councils to pay as much attention to the “how” of learning as the “what.”

The keynote speaker was Paul Lauter, an English professor at Trinity College, Hartford, Conn., and the editor of the Heath Anthology of American Literature, which includes many important works by minority and women writers as well as the long recognized standards.

Lauter made clear his opposition to the educational theorists and policy makers who worship everything old, European and male and present their “canons” of classical, Eurocentric literature as the end-all and be-all of education. While not belittling Shakespeare, Plato or other pillars of mainstream thought, Lauter called for a “reconstruction” of the literature curriculum.

Teach the debate

“It is not unimportant to learn the mainstream writers or about classical Greek society,” he explained. “But one also needs to know that [classical Greek society] was a slave society and to feel the meaning that slavery had on it. One does not feel that simply from reading Plato. In other words, we need to study critically both the majority and minority cultures.”

Lauter then turned to “the importance of developing the educational program from the student’s background. The value of any teaching will derive from what the teacher is able to elicit from the experience of his students rather than simply a ‘pouring in’ of things they don’t know.”

Quoting psychologist B.F. Skinner, he said: “Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten.” In other words, education consists of skills, habits and insights, not an accumulation of facts. As such, education can be acquired only from exploration, discovery and social interaction, not from memorization.

Returning to the debate over what to read, Gerald Graff, an English professor at Northwestern University, reinforced Lauter. “Teach the debate itself,” he said. The tug of war between the traditional Eurocentric curriculum and the new multicultural currents is a good thing, he said, and should be used to spur classroom discussion. Absent consensus on what children should read, each side should argue its case, he said.

“It will certainly make the educational process more interesting and lively,” Graff explained. “You don’t necessarily have to get consensus to get coherence.”

In effect, Graff is calling for democracy in teaching and curriculum decision making. That approach is appropriate here. Unlike Texas and California, where there is one unified curriculum for all schools in the state, Illinois has a decentralized educational system. Schools have much freedom in choosing books and materials, and local school councils have some power over curriculum.

As councils struggle to identify what is best for their schools, they should keep Lauter’s advice in mind. Even the
best of textbooks are still only textbooks. They cannot teach. They cannot discern and meet the special needs of each student or group of students. To promote real education, even the best of textbooks need teachers who are free—indeed, encouraged—to raise critical questions and help their students explore.

And that brings us back to universities, where the great debate began.

If our children are to have teachers and administrators who exercise democracy in the classroom, those teachers and administrators must themselves receive a democratic education.

They cannot be force-fed lists of words, phrases or the old canons of literature. If they are, we cannot look forward to much better for our children.

Michael Klosky is a writer with two daughters who attend Sayre Language Academy.

Letters

Use Holocaust requirement to combat hate

"It may be too late for the victims... But not for our children, not for mankind." Elie Wiesel, survivor, author, Nobel laureate.

Beginning this school year, Illinois' public schools are required by law to teach a unit on the Holocaust. The requirement is important because the slaughter of 6 million people, solely on account of their ethnicity or other differences and in relatively recent times, is an event that all civilized people need to know about and understand.

However, our children, indeed our society, will be poorly served if schools implement this law solely by laying out the facts of Adolf Hitler's extermination of Jews. Such a presentation would trivialize and dilute the essential lessons of this terrible human atrocity and ultimate failure of civilized society.

This world has suffered other genocides, including those perpetrated this century against Armenians, Nigerians, Bhiafrans, Cambodians, Sikhs and Bahais. The indifference to Third World starvation, malnutrition of the underclass and the AIDS crisis amount to genocide as well.

All these atrocities should be covered, so that children not only learn about the Holocaust, but also are led to reflect and reason about the threads of prejudice, discrimination, scapegoating and hatred that run throughout history.

Such reflection and reasoning will take more than a unit on the Holocaust and other genocides. Beginning in the earliest grades, children should be taught and encouraged to inquire, analyze, interpret and synthesize. Only when equipped with these skills will children draw meaning from historical events.

Lessons on man's inhumanity to man will show the human capacity both for monumental evil and for indifference to injustice being practiced against others. But they also should show the human capacity for care and compassion. To bring these lessons home, children should be encouraged to see how ordinary citizens demonstrate in everyday encounters the ways our democratic ideals are realized or betrayed.

James Albert Horneas, committee member
Nettleton Local School Council

Councilors: Don't rush into principal vote

As executive director of the City-Wide Coalition for School Reform, it has come to my attention that some principals are putting pressure on their local school councils to hurry up and vote on their contracts. Others are maneuvering to fill vacancies on their councils with people they know will vote to retain them.

As a council member at a school whose principal is up for retention, I urge the 269 other council members in this position at least to conduct formal interviews with their principals.

The City-Wide Coalition (663-3603) has produced videotapes to help you ask the right questions. The Lawyers School Reform Advisory Project (332-2492) has written an accompanying manual. And the Community & Management Assistance Program (606-8240) has published a step-by-step guide for evaluating and selecting a principal.

No principal should approach a council or council member about his or her retention before that council has received training. Community organizations offering training are listed in a directory published by the Board of Education's School Reform Implementation Office. No principal who does not at least encourage his council to search for information should be retained.

Remember councils: Once you vote, you're married to that principal for four years.

Ronald Stinson, member
Price Elementary and King High LSCs

Council helps community

I would like to share an example of how a local school council can help improve the community around the school.

There is a vacant house down the street from Cullen Elementary School that has long been a hazard. There was a lot of concern among block clubs. When that concern was brought to the attention of our local school council, a number of members decided to act. They collected $250 in donations to buy plywood to board up the building. Labor and equipment were provided by neighborhood residents.

The district police commander allowed a patrolman to go through the building first to make sure no one was inside.

Kids can no longer go in that building, or be enticed into going in. This project was a wonderful example of the local school council and community working together.

Ruby Anderson, principal
Cullen Elementary School

For reform to succeed schools need more money

Your publication is doing a terrific job. Dissemination of information in the fragile reform effort is vital to its success.

Another vital ingredient is sufficient funding. It appears that the Illinois
**Bulletin**

**RESEARCH**

**LSC poll.** Almost three-quarters of local school council members say their schools are operating better than they were a year ago, according to a telephone poll taken in early October. Only 4 percent said their schools were worse, with the remainder seeing no change.

Improvement was most visible to parent members (81 percent), followed by community members (74 percent), teacher members (62 percent) and principals (60 percent). Among parents, African Americans saw the most improvement (85 percent), followed by whites (73 percent) and Hispanics (67 percent).

Ratings of the central office moved from negative to positive since a poll taken last January, hovering around 4.5 on a scale of 1 to 10. Asked the effect of central-office decisions and actions on local control, 44 percent said they were an obstacle, 31 percent said they were supportive and 25 percent said they were neutral.

About a third of council members said two or more members of their councils had resigned and another third said one member had resigned. The main reasons: Moved out of the district (37 percent), too busy (29 percent), child left the school (29 percent), got a central-office job (18 percent) and conflicts with other members (10 percent).

The poll was sponsored by Leadership for Quality Education. For copies of the results, call (312) 592-6532.

**Parents satisfied.** In contrast to most appraisals of Chicago's public schools, 53 percent of parents are "very satisfied" with their children's schools, according to a poll conducted by researchers at Northwestern University. Another 29 percent said they are "somewhat satisfied."

Parents of children attending private schools were even more positive, with 70 percent saying they are "very satisfied" with their children's schools and another 23 percent saying they are "somewhat satisfied." The ratings rose slightly when parents were asked specifically about the teaching at their children's schools.

"The most startling finding is the lack of truly dissatisfied parents in the sample, regardless of public or private school, race or child's grade," said project director Dan A. Lewis.

Public-school parents expressed these sentiments about school reform: somewhat satisfied, 44 percent; very satisfied, 24 percent; somewhat dissatisfied, 12 percent; very dissatisfied, 12 percent; and "don't know," 8 percent.

A lack of parent involvement was seen as a bigger problem at public schools than at private schools: 36 percent of public-school parents but only 13 percent of private-school parents said it is a "big problem." Asked about other problems, only 8 percent said safety is a "big problem," and 18 percent said drugs are a "big problem."

For copies of the full report, call (708) 491-3395.

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**REFORM UPDATES**

**10-year commitment.** The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation pledged $40 million over 10 years to support grass-roots efforts to improve Chicago's public schools. The pledge is the largest private-sector commitment ever made to precollegiate education in the city.

Projects receiving 1990 grants include in-school restructuring, support for local school councils, school-community partnerships, coordination between high schools and their "feeder" elementary schools and using a high school as a community center.

Meanwhile, Illinois Bell Telephone Co. and the Ameritech Foundation awarded $260,000 to 26 local school councils in the first year of a three-year, $1.2 million grant program. And The Joyce Foundation awarded almost $250,000 to 53 schools from its Educational Ventures Fund.

**LSC sues.** The local school council at Morgan Park High School is suing the Board of Education for closing teaching positions at the school after the 20th day of class. The Chicago School Reform Act prohibits the board from reducing a school's faculty after the 20th day.

**Trade school guarantee.** Washburne Trade School, 3233 W. 31st St., is issuing warranties with
graduates from its Chef and Home Building Maintenance Repair programs.

Employers are required to evaluate graduates; if an employer finds that the student does not have skills needed for the job, Washburne will retrain the worker for free. For more information, call Principal Charles Lutzow, (312) 650-4410.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS

Dec. 8 a busy day. Three conferences have been scheduled for Dec. 8:

- "Reclaiming Our Parks and Schools: Strategies of Organizing a Drug-Free Zone," sponsored by Project CLEAN of the National Training and Information Center. Agenda: Workshops on ways to combat drugs and gangs in schools. Time and place: 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at All Saints Cathedral, 2022 W. Dickens. Registration: Nov. 26 deadline; $1 fee covers lunch. Contact: Amy Bonitz or Jaci Feldman (312) 243-7075.

- "You and I and We," sponsored by the Board of Education. Agenda: Keynote speech by James A. Banks, author of Multi-Ethnic Education: Theory and Practice; exhibits by more than 100 nonprofit agencies, museums and other groups that provide multicultural materials. Time and place: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Malcolm X College, 1900 W. Van Buren. Registration: Nov. 21 deadline; $10 fee covers lunch. Contact: Chuck Schroeck (312) 890-8060.

- "Expanding the Base: Curriculum Development from a Multicultural Perspective," sponsored by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. Agenda: Speech by Jessie Woods, chair of the Department of Cultural Affairs Advisory Board; panel discussion; workshops on using the arts to reach across cultural differences and on integrating art into school curricula. Time and place: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington. Registration: Contact Jaci Tomulonis (312) 744-9797.

For principals only. New ideas for enhancing the learning environment will be discussed at the third in a series of "principal fellowships" being held at the Community Renewal Society, 332 S. Michigan, Suite 500. The session will be held from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Nov. 28. Increasing parent participation in schools will be the topic of a workshop scheduled for Dec. 7.

LSC communications. Workshops on improving communications on local school councils are available from Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE). The sessions deal with team building, effective communication and conflict resolution. For details, call workshop coordinator Edie Heinemann (312) 465-1646.

SCHOOL BOARD ACTION

School board officers. The newly-seated Chicago Board of Education named Clinton Bristow president and Pamela Lenane vice president. Bristow is the dean of the College of Business and Administration at Chicago State University; Lenane is a lawyer.

Appointments. Supt. Ted D. Kimbrough tapped Burnett W. Donoho, former president and chief operating officer of Marshall Field & Co., to review the board's financial and management operations. Donoho will receive $50,000 from the School Board and an undisclosed sum from Leadership for Quality Education, a corporate group.

Kimbrough appointed Iris E. Sholder as chief attorney. Sholder previously was supervisor of the labor and employment division at the Civil Actions Bureau of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office.

RESOURCES

Principal evaluation. A step-by-step guide to evaluating and selecting principals is available to local school councils from the Community & Management Assistance Program, which links community groups with resources for better management. To obtain a copy or free training in management skills, call Coretta McFerren at (312) 606-8240.

LSC success stories. Limited copies of a 66-page book highlighting the ideas and successes of local school councils during the first year of reform is available to Illinois Bell Telephone customers. To obtain a copy, clip and mail a coupon appearing in Telebriefs, a company newsletter accompanying monthly phone bills. Featured are the first 26 winners of a three-year recognition program sponsored by Illinois Bell, the Ameritech Foundation and the Chicago Public Schools Alumni Association. For more information, call (312) 727-3093.

Principals handbook. Limited copies of a principals handbook written by principals are available to local school councils and principals. "It is one place where we can go to look for policies and procedures," said co-author Sylvia Peters, principal of Dumas Elementary School. For more information, call Irene Berry (312) 890-3710.

Homework Hotline. Students may call (312) 321-3100 from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. Monday through Friday to get help with their homework. The Homework Hotline is co-sponsored by the Chicago Public Schools' Bureau of Volunteer Programs and the Chicago Sun-Times. To volunteer call (312) 890-8435.

Teacher computer guide. A guide to help teachers use computers to enhance the teaching of writing is available from the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, Ill. 61801. The 207-page book, Composing With Old and New Writing Tools, is for teachers of grades 6 through 12. Cost is $9.95 for council members and $12.95 for nonmembers.

Kids magazines. A guide to 123 children's magazines—covering content, audience, cost and ordering address—is available from the International Reading Association, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Del. 19714-8139. Magazines for Children costs $5.25, which includes postage. The Educational Press Association is co-publisher.
LETTERS continued from page 16

Legislature pulled a fast one by holding out the promise that a lottery would generate more money for schools. What they did not say up front is that they would reduce general state funds as lottery money became available. As a result, schools received little or no new money because of the lottery.

Consider school overcrowding in Edgewater/Rogers Park. The community worked like mad to get on-site, temporary facilities so classes could move out of toilet areas, old coal bins, closets, etc.

The Interim Board of Education resisted, using cost and specters of "Willis wagons" as excuses. Finally, it came through with $1 million, or about 40 percent of what is needed. Now the schools will get a limited amount of relief, probably in 1991, but will still be overcrowded. They will gratefully share the bane.

So we are still faced with a basic problem while our tax dollars are still building nuclear bombs every day and the President is not dismantling our armed forces in Europe. Can you, will you help tackle this problem?

Lester Schlesberg
West Ridge

Arts bridge culture gap

The fine arts offer a way to help children understand the positive differences among cultures.

For three years as director of the Chicago Coalition for Arts in Education, I scheduled children's performances during Arts in Education Week. Every year, 55 to 85 Chicago public schools sent their children to dance, sing, play instruments and dramatize poetry at the Cultural Center, Daley Center and neighborhood sites.

It was clear that many teachers had used art lessons to teach children to enjoy, understand and develop pride in their ancestral heritage. Children in the audiences of these performances developed respect for children and cultures different than their own.

For all of us, but particularly for young children, it is impossible to define our cultural heritage without learning about its art, music, drama and dance. When children learn about what went into the development of their family's culture, they will grow into adults who will be able to contribute to the development of a harmonious, inclusive, new culture.

Lorraine V. Forte is a Chicago writer.
Bright Ideas

A crosstown cultural exchange

A group of students at an all-black school and another at an overwhelmingly Hispanic school have expanded their cultural awareness through visits to each other's school.

The African-American students from Grant Elementary School, 145 S. Campbell, taught African-American dance to the group of Latinos from Chapin Elementary School, 2450 W. Rice. They also explained rap and house music and served soul food.

At Chapin, the Latino students dressed in Mexican dance costumes, served Mexican food and explained the differences among Mexican, Puerto Rican and Costa Rican cultures.

"The students love it," said Grant teacher Mattie Hayes. "We have students who have already graduated that want to come back (for the cultural exchange)."

Students who participated in the exchange are members of either Peer Power (girls only) or ADAM (boys only), groups that promote self-respect and responsible decision making as ways to prevent teen pregnancy.

Mattie Hayes (312) 997-3250.

In the footsteps of black scientists

At predominately black Holy Angels Catholic School, 545 E. Oakwood, students not only learn that African Americans made significant contributions to science, but also conduct experiments showing how.

For example, students learned that in the 1800s Andrew Beard invented the Jenny Coupler, a device that enabled trains to hook together automatically. "I asked them to look at the invention and tell me where they had seen it before," said science teacher Connie Taylor. "It is the same kind of design that we find on cars or doors that allow them to close and lock automatically."

When students found out that there were black inventors and scientists whose work was valuable in American life, they began to absorb more information and adopt a more positive attitude, said Taylor.

Connie Taylor (312) 238-8309.

Multicultural preschools

Once a month a dozen Chicago preschool administrators and coordinators from a variety of racial backgrounds come together to share ideas about multicultural education.

"Children are aware of racial and cultural differences as early as two years old," explained Dan Scheinfeld, a research associate at the Erikson Institute.

The group is a joint project of Erikson and Chicago's Head Start Multi-Cultural Resource Center. The goals are to dissolve stereotypical thinking and to give children both an appreciation for their own cultural identity and a multicultural environment. New members are welcome.

Dan Scheinfeld (312) 280-1431.