There is a current need to identify dimensions other than those associated with federal financial support and traditional institutional contours.

The ten most critical dimensions of cross-racial, cross-ethnic teaching and learning

by James Boyer

Analysis of school challenges in this decade demands a more careful and precise identification of cultural dimensions associated with formal schooling. Curriculum researchers and social scientists have attempted to describe some of the complexities of public schooling in America but there is currently a need to further review the "parts" which make up the "whole" of pluralistic educational effort. In view of some research effort which attempted to deny the impact of the American school (Steinberg, 1981 and Paddock's Review, 1981), there is urgent need to identify dimensions other than those associated with federal financial support and traditional institutional contours.

Cross-racial, cross-ethnic teaching and learning occur when the teacher and student are of different racial or ethnic identities. While many social scientists still deny the ecological impact of such differences, curriculum specialists recognize the additional element which accompanies culturally pluralistic school programs. Following are the ten most critical dimensions of cross-racial, cross-ethnic teaching and learning which must be analyzed by school personnel during this decade:

Dimension Number 1: Human Service Provision

The **human service delivery role of teaching** involves the teacher's adoption and interpretation of the **public** hu-

James B. Boyer is a professor and multicultural curriculum specialist at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

man service role at large. The concept involves membership on a team of related professionals like social workers, physicians, ministers, nurses, mental health facilitators and family service workers who are expected to be committed to serving all human beings of all races, colors, creeds and ethnic identities. This dimension necessitates a new examination by human service deliverers of their career motives to determine if their professional service capacity is adequate for cross-racial, cross-ethnic instruction. Such assessment involves review of one's personal-life experiences with racially and ethnically different individuals—plus an increased knowledge of research on cross-racial interactions and on several aspects of racism.

Dimension Number 2:
Multicultural Competence of Instructional Staffs

This dimension (encompassing multilingualism and ethnic intelligence) involves the **knowledge base**—held by teachers, administrators, secretaries and other staff—of people, agencies, programs and services which relate to racial/ethnic concerns different from one's self. It is concerned with the broad effort at diminishing the monocultural impact of curriculum and it includes the sociological implications of the coping skills developed by people unlike one's self. It further includes the functioning patterns which grow out of one's self. It further includes the functioning patterns which grow out of one's ethnicity and the content employed in teaching across racial/ethnic lines.

For teacher educators, the major implication involves the nature of clinical preparation as well as inservice assistance being provided which may need to increase the multicultural/multilingual competencies of teachers. The dimension implies that preparation should include instruction in the associative skills of relating new and different information to traditional disciplines—and a new pattern of **research consumption** of authentic language and linguistic data involving ethnically diverse subjects and settings. **How much do we know about people different from ourselves?**

Dimension Number 3:
Economic Implications of Formal Schooling
(Addressing the Element of Poverty)

Institutional response to poverty involves the teacher's prevailing concepts of economics on the learner's potential in academic pursuits. What is the relationship of academic progress and success to employment, housing and social mobility? The extent to which instructional behavior **responds to alternative learning styles** will dictate progress or success for learners who are economically poor in almost all instances—but particularly when there is cross-racial, cross-ethnic interaction in the schooling process. The impact of the school's response to poverty in the classroom is enormous.

Poverty is rarely treated in curriculum substance with guidelines for instructional performance. Clinical practice, however, may need to be especially designed so that guided-supervised experience may be acquired with student populations from families of extremely limited income. In rural areas of America, such experience is even more critically needed than in some urban areas. While clinical practice is emphasized, it is suggested that inservice efforts also be similarly designed (Morris, 1978; Boyer, 1979).

Dimension Number 4:
Cross-Racial, Cross-Ethnic Management of Learning

The **mentality** held of **race and ethnic relations** (by school people) will dictate the quality of professional/client relationships in teaching-learning settings. This dimension is often more difficult to categorize because it involves **belief systems** of educators which manifest themselves in racially mixed and ethnically mixed settings. Belief systems which mythisize that racial and ethnic minorities are intellectually less capable than others only serve to support prevailing **academic racism**. (Sedlacek & Brooks, 1976). This also involves understanding the notions of **cultural assets** and **variations** rather than cultural deprivation. This further extends to the quality of **parent-conferences, counseling sessions, library interactions and laboratory practices** carried on in cross-racial, cross-ethnic schooling.

The management of learning experiences tends to be so critical that the broad range of race relations needs to be incorporated into inservice and professional preparation of educators. This need may involve the establishment of a minimum quantity (clock hours) of time in training involvement for improved cross-racial mentality regarding academic service delivery. Levels of cross-racial interaction between teachers and non-teaching adults—as well as between teachers and learners—may need to be the focus of additional communications training. Belief systems which place extensive limitations on students because of their human profiles can be modified through keener understanding of race and ethnic relations (Kitano, 1974 and Katz, 1978).

Dimension Number 5:
Curriculum Bias and Instructional Discrimination
(Associative Academic Compatibility)

This dimension relates specifically to the selection, purchase, and utilization of **curriculum materials for ethnic diversity**—designed toward reducing curriculum bias (over-emphasis on monocultural thrust) and toward reducing instructional discrimination which is incompatibility of learning style with teaching style. Analysis of library collections, textbooks, mascots, and other curriculum artifacts all suggest **program content is unbalanced**. New attention may need to be given to cross-ethnic, cross-economic and cross-racial instructional behavior associated with curriculum materials chosen by educators for implementing learning programs. The goal is to employ curriculum materials which lead us closer to **educational equity** and this will include (1) identification of unbiased materials, (2) selection and utilization of more equitable print and non-print materials as well as (3) curriculum assessment for multi-ethnic, non-racist curricular substance.

The other part of this dimension involves greater need for proficiency in identifying one's own instructional style and the professional modification thereof when instruction must be delivered in cross-racial, cross-ethnic settings (Deyoe & Solis, 1978).

Dimension Number 6: Experiential Base of Educators
(General Affected Response)

This dimension is primarily the educator's personal reaction to certain "code words" in America which create explosive emotional impact (welfare, busing for racial balance, etc.). Included in this dimension also is the educator's perception of learners, particularly the strong reality of **equalitarian values** held by many minority students. Such values are often reflected in behavior and are perceived as being in conflict with the teacher's self-perception of the instructional role. This is perhaps the least-designable dimension of them all because of the complexity of the concept of "discipline." The most productive avenue for offsetting the impact of negative affective response to student behavior is the clear analysis of one's instructional behavior as impacted by the cross-racial, cross-ethnic element. Resource persons in this area should be highly skilled in cross-racial communication and in facilitative techniques. An understanding of value constructs which influence our responses to personal experience would help to build a better foundation for educators (Sedlacek, 1976).

Dimension Number 7:
Diminishing Psychological Victimization in Schooling
(Legal mandates, student freedoms, and social distance)

This involves the legal ramifications of legislation which makes it illegal to avoid cross-racial, cross-ethnic teaching and learning—coupled with the need for exercising student freedoms and building meaningful cross-racial, cross-ethnic client/professional relationships. A primary thrust of this dimension is the reduction of human-social distance between racially different people in the academic marketplace (the school). Psychological victimization occurs when affective growth fails to keep pace with cognitive growth, and when the learning and instructional experience **lacks mutual respect between participants**. Recognition of the student's perception of academic services being provided has now become essential. Assessment by students of social distance reflected in human interaction might be a beginning point. Psychological victimization is keenly felt when school policies and procedures fail to provide an ecological setting in which academic nurturance flourishes (Baptiste & Baptiste, 1979).

Dimension Number 8: The Dilemma of Scientific Racism
(Competency in multi-ethnic, multiracial instructional assessment)

This dimension relates to the execution of traditional behaviors in academia which relegate persons/students to lower positions in the schooling experience based on seemingly objective assessment practices and other procedures. **Scientific racism** is any act, behavior, or practice which employs traditional research and/or evaluation techniques which consistently result in a lower academic concept of minority student performance and student populations. Any necessary labeling of students should carry **positive connotations** rather than the traditional negative ones. All scientific behavior (including testing) should be initiated and/or re-examined for scientific legitimacy—as well as for the quality of life for economically poor learners and ethnic and racial minorities. Who's qualified for school activities? Who is rewarded for school effort in which categories? (Boyer & Boyer, 1975).

Dimension Number 9: Positive Student Visibility
(Toward Educational Equity)

This dimension encompasses the academic and psychological uses of bilingualism, biculturalism, ethnic identity and expanded diversity. The adequate "positive

visibility" of racial/ethnic minorities in school-related matters is urgent. The minority learner in traditional and non-traditional roles becomes a **silent indication of stereotype reduction** and a strengthened self-concept. (Is the Honors Program reflective of the racial/ethnic diversity in America? What is emphasized in the student newspaper? Which activities appear to bring credit to the school — and are they racially/ethnically comprised? Is the gifted program racially/ethnically diverse?) The total student activity image of any school should re-examine itself to determine its degree of equity for all learners (Gay, 1981 and Boyer, 1978).

Dimension Number 10:
Conflict Resolution and Institutional Racism
(Policy Implementation and Program Quality)

This dimension involves the full pattern of decision-making in resolving conflict between members of the school-community (student-to-student, student-to-teacher, teacher-to-parent, paraprofessional, teacher-to-teacher, etc.). The programmatic execution of policies and decisions which communicate a "superior/inferior model" of human worth tends to be reflective of institutional philosophy embracing racist mentality. What is the pattern of cross-racial conflict resolution? What is the nature of curriculum prerequisites? What is the pattern of student suspensions from school? **What are the chances for conflict resolution between teacher and learner in cross-racial settings which appear equitable to the student?** What guidelines govern the grouping and tracking patterns in secondary schools? (Boyer, 1978).

Basic Assumptions

The foregoing critical dimensions are offered on the assumption that certain administrative and personnel conditions are being met: (1) interracial, interethnic faculty and staff are employed; (2) there is continuous professional development with the professional and non-professional staffs; and (3) budgetary priorities and curriculum resource balancing are equitably executed on a continuous basis. How is the school viewed by **ethnic minorities?** How is it viewed by **ethnic majorities?**

By design, these dimensions did not treat the problems of sexism, of handicapism, or of ageism—considered social ills equally as detrimental as racism and elitism.

The degree of concern registered is drawn from the state of curriculum implementation in America as synthesized through the eyes of those responsible for academic implementation and social policy. **Dimensions are critical in that they could become sources of major disruption in the academic programming of America during this decade.**

References

1. Baptiste, H. Prentice & Myra Lanier Baptiste. **Developing the Multicultural Process in Classroom Instruction: Competencies for Teachers.** Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1979.

2. Boyer, James. B. **Administrator's Checklist on Multicultural Curriculum.** College of Education, Kansas State University, 1978.

3. Boyer, James B. **Racial Integration and Learners from Limited Income Families.** Manhattan, Kansas: Kansas State University, 1979.

4. Boyer, James B. & Joe L. Boyer (Editors). **Curriculum and Instruction After Desegregation.** Manhattan, Kansas: Ag Press Publishers, 1975.

5. Deyoe, Rita M. & Juan D. Solis, "Curriculum Development" in **Bilingual Education for Latinos.** Leonard A. Valverde, Editor. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 1978, pp. 17-33.

6. Gay, Geneva, "What is Your School's MEQ?" **Educational Leadership,** Volume 39, No. 3, December 1981.

7. Institute for the Study of Educational Policy. **Equal Educational Opportunity: More Promise than Progress.** Washington, D. C.: Howard University Press, 1978.

8. Katz, Judy H. **White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training.** Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978.

9. Kitano, Harry H. L. **Race Relations.** Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974.

10. Morris, Lee (Editor). **Extracting Learning Styles from Social Cultural Diversity.** Norman, Oklahoma: Southwest Teacher Corps Network, 1978.

11. Paddock, Susan, "Essay Reviews"—**Journal of Educational Equity and Leadership,** Volume 2, No. 1 (Fall 1981), pp. 71-73.

12. Sedlacek, William E. & Glenwood C. Brooks, Jr. **Racism in American Education.** Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, Inc., 1976.

13. Steinberg, Stephen. **The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity and Class in America.** New York: Atheneum, 1981.