1 Building and Sustaining a Foundation for Learning

PRISIM Step 1. Building and Sustaining a Foundation for Learning

Gathering information about incoming students to determine their diverse needs and strengths. Utilizing this information to connect students and their families to available resources in the community. Using the information and prescreening to place students in an appropriate initial instructional environment. Assisting the student's family's access to resources to facilitate their supporting and assisting of the CLD student in the school.

A pyramid is only as strong as its foundation, and in the case of the PRISIM pyramid, the more comprehensive and complete the information gathering, teacher preparation, curricula, and system support can be, the stronger and more effective the instructional program of the school will be. The foundation of personnel, system, curricula, and comprehensive data provides a solid base upon which the building blocks of learning are firmly established. Each block represents a cluster of strategies, content, and settings that may be differentiated for specific strengths and/or needs of learners.

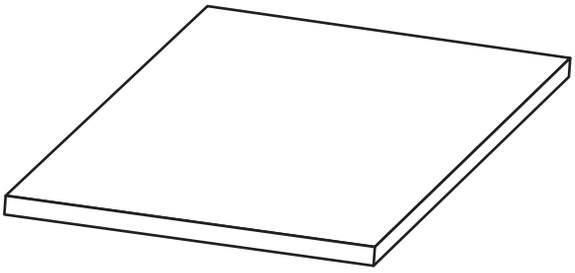


Figure 4 Building a Foundation for the PRISIM Pyramid

Many elements of the foundation for learning are not immediately accessible to school systems but, rather, are part of community services, agencies, religious organizations, or other institutions within the state or community. The function of

these services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children should be to promote and sustain the following:

- Access to safety, food, clothing, and shelter
- Quality preparation of effective education professionals and support staff
- Adequacy of school facilities and resources
- Consistent use of culturally and linguistically responsive evidence-based practices
- Supportive, responsive relationships
- Other effective practices and procedures

Building an accurate and instructionally meaningful set of learning approaches begins when a student from a linguistically or culturally diverse background enrolls in your school district or school. Thus, the capacity to collect and use appropriate and comprehensive data at enrollment must be established and sustained in your school district. Students who have a primary or home language other than English (PHLOTE) are identified at the intake point to assess their need for second language and acculturation assistance. The identification of PHLOTE students occurs as part of the enrollment process or during a special session prior to the beginning of school at an intake center.

At registration or at an intake center, parents are provided with an enrollment form and should be given a home language survey or questioned about their home language and culture. The following are the types of questions that are typically asked:

1. Is a language other than English spoken in your home?
2. Do you speak another language in addition to English?
3. Does your child speak a language other than English?
4. Does your child speak another language in addition to English?
5. Has your child been schooled in a language other than English?
6. What language did your child speak before you enrolled him or her in school?
7. Do any adults in your home use a language other than English?
8. Do you want to receive school communications in a language other than English?

It is also useful to find out about the child's prior schooling and language learning experiences. Some districts have a single form that collects both sets of information. Preliminary identification as a PHLOTE student may be made at this time. If there is a positive PHLOTE identification, students are assessed for language proficiency and acculturation level. Whether or not the PHLOTE child is also an English language learner (ELL) or is a limited English proficient (LEP) speaker in need of English as a second language (ESL) or English language development (ELD) and would benefit from bilingual services and instruction is also determined at this time. The terms *limited English proficient*

(LEP) and *English language learner* (ELL) are used by the federal government and most states to identify those students who have insufficient English to succeed in English-only classrooms (Lessow-Hurley, 1991).

Language proficiency is usually assessed via a standardized instrument, and the scores are used to determine eligibility for services. At this point, it is best to assess the student's proficiency in both the home language and in English, as both sets of data are critical for service placement decisions. Using a process such as the Acculturation Quick Screen (AQS), school personnel should also assess the entering PHLOTE student's level of acculturation at this time. (See Figure 11 in Chapter 2 of this book or Collier, 2004a, for an example.) Making an acculturation or adaptation screen part of the intake process would provide a baseline for monitoring both the rate and level of adaptation, should incoming students later be identified as at-risk for learning or behavior problems.

Teachers and staff follow the same diagnostic procedures at both onsite school registrations and at an intake center. First, the school staff provides the parent with an enrollment form upon entering the school. Typically, these enrollment forms include a number of questions at the top of the form that ask what languages other than English are spoken in the home and whether the parent will need an interpreter. Personnel, usually the school secretary, go over these language and culture questions on the top of the enrollment form and hand a parent information form to those parents initially identified in this manner as potential PHLOTEs. In districts serving small populations, the parent information form about home language and culture may be given to every parent enrolling a child to avoid the chance of leaving out any population needing assistance with adaptation to the school. The secretarial and clerical staff at each building should include at least one person who is bilingual in the languages and knowledgeable about the cultures that are most common in the community. If the parent speaks a language that is not spoken by anyone on the school staff, the secretary arranges for an interpreter through the district or area resource center. After the parent completes the enrollment form and the parent information form, the secretary reviews the forms to ensure that the information is complete. If any parent leaves the questions regarding home language blank, the staff member asks the parent to complete those questions. An assigned staff member reviews the forms, separating them into two categories: (1) those whose home language is English and (2) those who speak a language other than English at home. School staff places copies of the PHLOTE student's enrollment and parent information forms in the individual's cumulative file, which will be maintained until the student graduates.

Education personnel maintain a list of all PHLOTE students at each school. After PHLOTE identification, specific ELL or LEP personnel are responsible for follow-up substantiation after enrollment through documented teacher observation, observations by other school personnel, and student interviews. This should include a language proficiency assessment and an AQS. Following is a list of questions districts should be able to answer when a student from a linguistically or culturally diverse background enrolls in one of their schools:

1. Who receives the student and parents? What training do they have to prepare intake forms and provide information to CLD families about the school system? How are they trained to work effectively with diverse populations?

2. How are the student's language(s) and ethnicity or culture identified? If informal measures are used, how is proficiency determined?
3. If interpretation and translation are necessary, who provides this? What qualifications or training are required for translators?
4. What questions are the parents asked? How are responses quantified, and how is the information conveyed to program personnel?
5. What background information about the student is documented at the initial enrollment? How is this information used to determine service and classroom placement?
6. What criteria are used to determine eligibility for bilingual/ESL services? Who makes this determination, and how is the decision conveyed to school personnel?

In conclusion, a district must be sure that the personnel receiving the parents and students are competent in cross-cultural communication techniques and familiar with district policies and resources for PHLOTE and ELL/LEP students. There should be a procedure for accurately identifying the student's ethnicity, culture, and language(s), including languages used in the home by primary caregivers. A resource bank of qualified interpreters needs to be made available and should be on call in case they are needed. Enrollment information must be available in translation, if needed. Interpreters and translators should be trained in cross-cultural communication techniques and on all relevant intake forms and procedures. There must be a process to document and distribute relevant data about culture and language so that districts have clear criteria to establish eligibility for bilingual and ESL services. This foundation of information provides part of the structural base of the problem-solving pyramid. Additional foundation pieces are building blocks such as highly qualified education professionals effective with CLD and culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional (CLDE) students, appropriate and stimulating curricula that facilitate accelerated learning, and systems that encourage creative, physical, and cognitive growth for all students.

OUR DIVERSE STUDENTS

The population of diverse students in the United States and Canada is increasing steadily, and it will continue to be a challenge to educators for many years. Culturally and linguistically diverse students include those from homes where languages other than English and dialects other than Standard English are spoken. They also include students from families of racial and ethnic backgrounds that differ from the majority population in the United States and Canada, such as African Americans and Quebecois, depending on the region.

CLD, LEP, and ELL students in schools include students from immigrant, refugee, and migrant families, as well as students from indigenous communities (also called First Nations, American Indian, or Native American). Approximately

60% of CLD, LEP, and ELL students in the United States speak Spanish at home, 20% speak an Asian language in the home, and 20% speak any one of 300 other languages or dialects in the home (Baca & Cervantes, 2003).

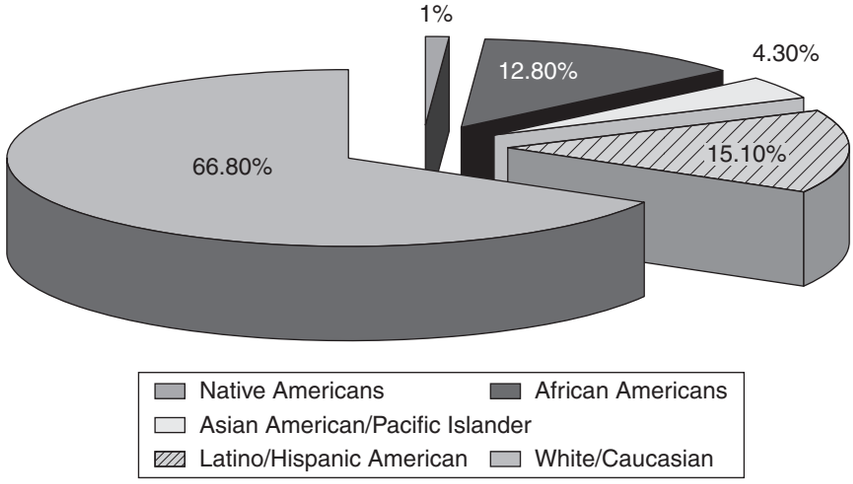


Figure 5 Ethnicity in the US Population (US Bureau of Census, 2005)

According to the 2005 US census (Figure 5), 33% of the US population at that time was non-Caucasian and by 2012, students of color are projected to account for 24% of the total school population, while 90% of teachers will be white females. There are six states and the District of Columbia where white students are the minority: California, Texas, Michigan, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Florida (Samuels, 2007).

Additional diversity factors for CLD students are poverty and other socioeconomic conditions that impact families. Approximately 20% of the students in the average US classroom come from homes characterized by poverty or come from neighborhoods beset with inadequate health, social, or cultural services, low employment opportunities, crime, drugs, and gangs. Yet Bui, Simpson, and Alvardo (2007) noted that within the Latino population in the United States, which is projected to increase to 47 million by the year 2010, 39 out of 100 Latino children live in poverty and 37% of Latinos will not finish high school (Figure 6). Latino students are overrepresented in remedial programs, particularly for students with learning disabilities, and underrepresented in programs for gifted and talented students (Baca & Cervantes, 2003). Another minority group that is often overlooked regarding its CLD and CLDE status is African Americans. While African American students are proficient in English, many speak a dialect called African American English (AAE). They also come from backgrounds that differ racially and ethnically from the majority populations of the United States and Canada.

Among the diverse students mentioned in the preceding paragraphs are those who have special learning and behavior problems, some of which may be due to the presence of disabling conditions. There are currently approximately 600,000 disabled students between the ages of 5 and 12 who are from non-English language backgrounds in US public schools (Baca & Cervantes, 2003). Often, special education students with language or cultural differences do not have their language needs met, either through ESL instruction, ELL services, or

other approaches. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) be developed for each student to comprehensively address the needs of the exceptional student and it includes guidelines about accommodations for culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional (CLDE) learners. The school district may not access such services, however, if it cannot meet the language and cultural needs of the exceptional student due to lack of resources or staff trained in bilingual special education. It is of paramount importance that these students are identified early and that their unique learning needs are addressed as effectively and comprehensively as possible. Some learning and behavior problems may be due to the students' different sociolinguistic and cultural backgrounds, their adjustment to a new sociocultural milieu, the presence of a disabling condition, or the combined effects of these situations.

The learning and behavior problems exhibited by diverse and at-risk students are often similar to the problems that elicit referrals for any students. These include lack of, or seriously deficient, academic achievement and social and classroom behavior that is disruptive to instruction, as well as other problems that are difficult for the teacher to handle in the general classroom setting without specific training. One major difference between CLD students and mainstream students who exhibit these behaviors lies in the interaction (or lack thereof) among cultural and sociolinguistic factors and a suspected disability (i.e., learning disability, mental impairment, emotional disturbance). The level of interaction of these various factors also influences decisions concerning the most effective intervention for resolution of the problem. US federal law requires that school districts demonstrate that they are doing everything possible to facilitate the effective participation of CLD students in their academic programs. Nevertheless, recent research shows that districts have steadily undercounted the rate at which students have left or dropped out of the instructional program altogether (Wallis, 2008).

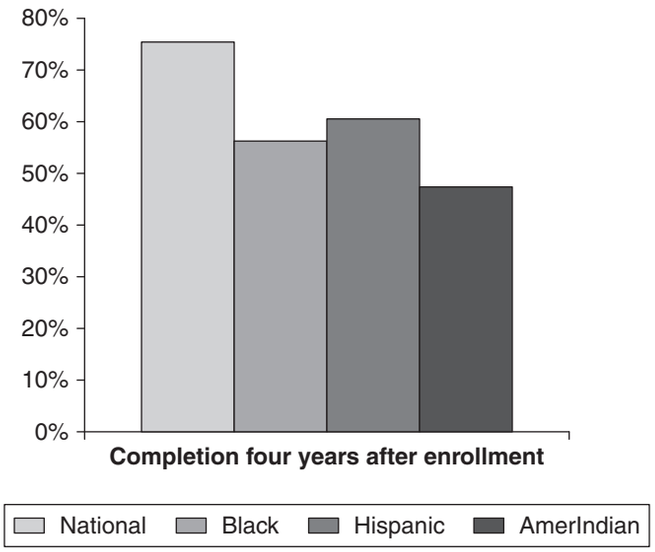
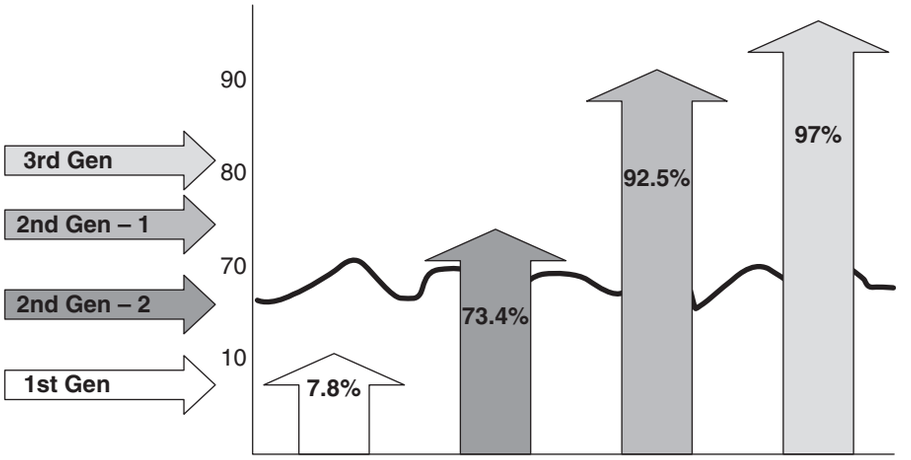


Figure 6 High School Completion Rate, 2005

Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, districts must annually demonstrate that their LEP students are making specific English language proficiency and achievement gains. The US Office of Civil Rights conducts regular monitoring and investigative activities in school districts to assure that CLD and LEP students are able to participate effectively at or near peer level in all programs and content areas, including those at risk and those with special education needs. Students with primary or home languages other than English (PHLOTE), as well as CLDE and LEP students should have the same access to content instruction as their non-PHLOTE peers and the same assistance with learning and achievement as their non-LEP peers. LEP gifted students should have access to the same gifted services as non-LEP, LEP special education students to the same special education services, and so on. The key to all of this is separating difference from disability and using that information to develop appropriate instruction.

Identifying which students are PHLOTE and which are LEP has become more challenging for schools recently, as more linguistically diverse students come from mixed language homes. Figure 7 illustrates data from 2005 that show the number of LEP families where English is also used in the home. By the third generation, over 95% of LEP families use English in the home, in comparison to less than 8% of the first generation.



2nd Gen-1: one parent spoke English and one spoke non-English.
2nd Gen-2: both parents spoke non-English.

Figure 7 LEP Families Speaking English in the Home (Rumbaut, 2005).

The challenge to differentiating PHLOTE from LEP students has been further increased by the fact that more and more of the LEP students in our schools are native born and not immigrants or refugees. Figure 8 shows the proportion of LEP students in U.S. American schools who are native born versus foreign born in 2000. Most students in ELL programs in today's schools are second and third generation limited English proficient students who come to school with a mix of English and the home language, in varying levels of development.

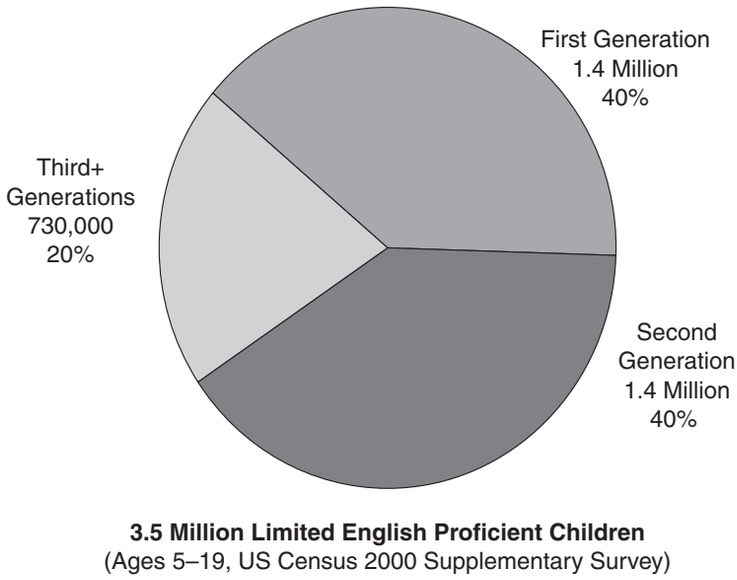


Figure 8 Native Born LEP, 2000

An additional complication is in regard to regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These regulations require that school personnel exclude culture, language, and socioeconomic disadvantage as factors in their at-risk students' learning and behavior problems before proceeding with special education placement decisions. Unfortunately, in CLD students, learning and behavior problems that seem to be indicative of a disabling condition may actually be the manifestation of cultural and sociolinguistic differences, or they may indicate problems related to a combination of cultural and linguistic factors and a disabling condition. When addressing these learning and behavior problems in diverse student populations, one must consider these possibilities and the legal requirements in working with CLD students.

In addition to gathering information about the learning and behavior problems of CLD students, assessment personnel should also gather relevant sociocultural information on those students. Analyzing such information prior to formal evaluation facilitates student placement and programming by demonstrating the extent to which sociocultural and language or dialect factors impact the learning and behavior problems of a CLD student. This consideration in the formal assessment process helps schools meet the legal requirements for assessment of CLD students.

Legislation has addressed the identification and assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional (CLDE) students for many years, and these cases have generated several legal guidelines. The cases of *Dyrcia S. et al. v. Board of Education of the City of New York et al.* (1979), *Larry P. v. Riles* (1979), and *José P. v. Ambach* (1979) are very significant because they address the cultural and sociolinguistic needs, as well as the special education needs, of CLDE students. Baca and Cervantes (2003) summarized pertinent recommendations resulting from these cases and other litigation, including the following:

1. Identification of students who need special education services must include the use of adequate bilingual resources.
2. Appropriate evaluation must include the establishment of school-based support teams to evaluate students in their own environment using a bilingual, nondiscriminatory evaluation process.
3. Appropriate programs in the least restrictive environment must include a comprehensive continuum of services with the provision of appropriate bilingual programs at each place on the continuum for students with limited English proficiency.
4. Due process and parental and student rights must include a native language version of a parents' rights booklet, which explains all of the due process rights of students and parents. Also included is the hiring of neighborhood workers to facilitate parental involvement in the evaluation and development of the individualized educational program (IEP).
5. Education personnel must conduct a language screening at the beginning of each school year to determine if the new students are exposed to or influenced by a language other than English.
6. If this initial language screening indicates the presence of a language other than English, school personnel must conduct an assessment of language dominance and proficiency.
7. School personnel must inform parents of all due process rights in their native or most proficient language. Schools must provide an interpreter at all meetings if parents cannot communicate effectively in English.
8. When analyzing evaluation data for placement decisions, education professionals must draw information from a variety of sources, including socioeconomic and cultural background and adaptive behavior.
9. Education professionals must develop an IEP that reflects the student's linguistic and cultural needs if it is determined that a CLD student is both disabled and has limited English proficiency.

Many of the provisions in the Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act of 2004, which reformed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), led to improved educational success for students with disabilities. The legislation furthered many of the trends seen in education in the past few years, such as increasing accountability for students with disabilities, ensuring the presence of highly qualified teachers in our classrooms, expanding the types of methods used to identify students with learning disabilities, and reducing litigation. Furthermore, the law, for the first time, addresses the paperwork burden in special education, putting in place several measures that streamline IEPs and other paperwork requirements. Other changes from previous legislation include raising the age at which transition plans are required, instituting measures that will make it easier for schools to discipline students with disabilities, and moving special education research to the

Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The new IDEA requires schools to implement measures to reduce the overrepresentation of students from diverse backgrounds in special education through means such as the following:

- Schools must document the degree to which the student's limited English proficiency contributes to learning and behavior problems, and special education is excluded if this is the most significant factor in the presenting problem.
- Schools may use methods other than the IQ-achievement discrepancy model to determine whether or not students have a learning disability.
- Districts with significant overidentification of minority students must implement pre-referral programs to reduce the number of students inappropriately referred to special education.
- To reduce overidentification and misidentification of students from diverse backgrounds for special education, funding is provided to train school personnel in effective teaching strategies and positive behavior interventions and supports.
- Assessments must be provided and administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally.

Unfortunately, the new IDEA's financial provisions offer little relief for the cost of special education. Rather than mandating full funding for special education, the new IDEA maintained the current funding system, providing a "glide path" by which the federal government would pay 40% of the excess cost of educating students with disabilities by 2010. Nevertheless, overall IDEA has more positives than negatives for children with disabilities and special educators.

ENCULTURATION AND THE CLD STUDENT

Each CLD student has arenas in which he or she will attempt to conform to the culture of the classroom and school and other arenas in which he or she will resist the system. An awareness of these cultural productions will allow teachers not to make assumptions about a student's academic needs, desires, or preferences based on cultural overgeneralizations. Rather, the teacher will attempt to get know to each student as an individual, to understand why the student accepts or rejects certain aspects of the school's culture, and perhaps even to work with the student to transform those aspects of the social and academic setting that he or she opposes.

The Nature-Nurture Triangle in Figure 9 illustrates a model for working with CLD learners, which aids in understanding and being able to distinguish difference from disability. The bottom, or *Basics*, tier represents all the things we share as human beings. This is the place where differences and disabilities become most fundamentally apparent: variations in height, color, and gender are differences, while variations in sensory, linguistic, and cognitive processing

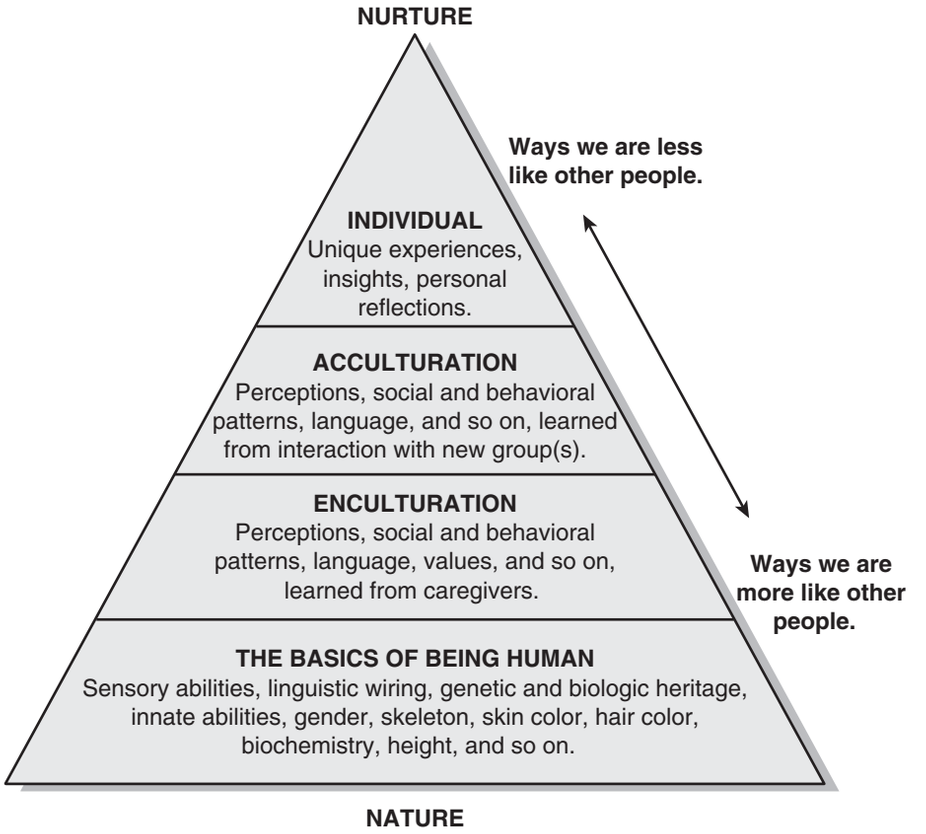


Figure 9 The Nature-Nurture Triangle

abilities could be considered disabilities in some cultures. Approximately 10% of all human populations have some type of condition considered disabling by the community into which they are born (Baca & Cervantes, 2003). These disabilities can be of prenatal, perinatal, or postnatal origin. They can include various organic exceptionalities, such as varying degrees of impairment of hearing and sight, skeletal and musculature abnormalities, hormonal deficiencies, neurological dysfunctions, and other physical, sensory, anatomical, or mental characteristics considered disabling by the birth community. The next tier, *Enculturation,* is where one learns how to interpret the world—a process that begins at birth and includes beliefs, humor, language, and behavior expectations, among other characteristics. The third tier is *Acculturation,* which in this model refers to adaptation to a new culture, language, interaction, or environment. The final tier of the triangle represents all the rest of our *Individual* differences that arise from our experiences, education, associations, and so on.

Enculturation

Of the four tiers in the Nature-Nurture triangle, Enculturation is the most relevant to culturally and linguistically diverse students in US and Canadian schools. Enculturation is the process by which a person acquires his or her native culture. The diversity of cultures that this process brings to our

classrooms makes mainstream standardized education challenging because language and culture issues compound the range of diverse abilities we accommodate within our schools.

Enculturation starts with the newborn child's first interactions with the world, beginning with significant people such as parents, siblings, midwives, or doctors. The presence of particular sounds, sights, smells, and other environmental stimuli are also part of this process. All human beings grow up within a cultural context, and enculturation teaches children how to respond to, interpret, and perceive the culture within which they are reared. "Culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members" (Goodenough, 1957, p. 167). Culture is how we organize our behaviors, communication, values, and emotions; it is the patterns of interaction, communication, socialization, and education held in common by a particular group of people.

All cultural groups teach their children; however, *how* and *what* is taught (and *why*) varies considerably among cultures. This education is generally not a formal process; rather, it is a consequence of child rearing practices handed down from generation to generation. As a result of different child rearing practices, which in turn are based upon different beliefs about how things are to be done, children develop varying ways of dealing with adults and peers and of interacting with the world in general. An example of such differences is the diversity of opinions about dependence and independence. In some cultures, caregivers encourage passiveness and contentedness in children. This is based upon a belief that the toddler or child is independent and must be taught to be dependent. Caregivers and teachers spend a lot of energy during formative years in these communities working on group skills such as sharing and working for the good of the group. Sometimes this is done by carrying the child around close to the caregiver, having the child sleep with family members, having children start caring for their siblings at an early age, and responding immediately or preemptively when the child begins to display discomfort. In other cultures, caregivers encourage assertiveness and self-direction, and adults spend a lot of energy teaching the child or toddler how to function independently. Examples of this are having the child sleep alone, letting the child continue crying without responding, and telling a male child that he must be "a little man."

Another area of diverse enculturation is how people regard intentional actions and one's control over these actions. In some cultures, toddlers are considered to have intentionality in their actions and are expected to think and act as a social partner in interactions. These children are expected to understand that they are responsible for their actions and in control of their interactions (internal locus of control). In other cultures, toddlers are not considered to have intentionality and are not expected to think or act as a social partner (external locus of control). Both of these have implications for educators in US American public schools, where our culture expects internal locus of control and full individual responsibility for actions, even when the individual is still very young.

A third difference in enculturation that impacts education is perceptions of the status of children. On the one hand, there are families and communities in

which the child is not encouraged to talk to those older or higher in rank. Caregivers and teachers will instruct the child not to speak to elders or people of higher ranking except under specific interaction rules. On the other hand, there are families and communities in which the child is expected to speak to everyone. Caregivers and teachers will encourage the child to talk to anyone and will consider there to be something wrong with the child if he or she does not do so.

Four Components of Culture

As mentioned previously, culture is not a material phenomenon but rather an organization of factors including behaviors, values, and emotions. It shapes the way we think (*cognition*), the way we interact (*behavior*), the way we communicate (*language*), and the way we transmit knowledge to the next generation (*education*). These components of culture are not static; they change continually from the influence of both internal and external circumstances. Where several cultures are in contact, or where there is much movement and communication between social groups and geographic areas, some overlapping and blurring of cultural boundaries will occur. In addition, cultural identity and cognitive development occur concurrently and are enmeshed with one another. Both describe perceptions and the manner in which we develop awareness of and interpret our environment. Any effort to assess or provide intervention with cognitive development must be done within the cultural context. Edward T. Hall (1983) likened this cognitive cultural base to the hardwiring of a computer—the essential difference between an IBM and a Mac. One cannot become the other; this does not mean, however, that they cannot communicate or work effectively together. This is where the "software" or learned behaviors come in; that is, once our basic operating system is in place, we can learn new languages, gestures, and customs while still retaining our fundamental processes.

Cognition, the first component of culture, is the process of perceiving, attending, thinking, remembering, and knowing (Blumenthal, 1977). This process begins before birth and continues throughout life. One product of cognitive development is a person's cognitive learning style, which is the stable, typical, and consistent way in which individuals select and organize environmental data. Another outcome of cognitive development is the formation of one's preferred learning style. In essence, a preferred learning style is the specific style or strategy that each student uses to respond to the instructional environment and to accomplish the instructional task at hand. This is not a constant pattern of behavior; a person's preferred learning style changes with age and experience—especially with exposure to novel cognitive and learning strategies. Cognitive development and cognitive and preferred learning styles depend largely on a student's cultural background and experience because they are directly shaped and influenced by it. Identifying these styles becomes an instructionally meaningful part of the assessment of CLD students because it contributes directly to the development of appropriate interventions, problem solving, and IEPs.

To exemplify another product of this cognitive cultural base, consider the fact that all human beings can physiologically perceive the spectrum of

angstroms that we interpret as colors (unless having specific impairments). Each cultural/linguistic community divides the spectrum into colors differently. We see the same colors but do not organize them or have the same model of them in our minds or in our cognitive structures. For example, in English we say the spectrum is made up of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple or violet. We even have names for the colors beyond red (infrared) and violet (ultraviolet) that are not normally perceptible. Other Indo-European languages organize these colors in the same way, using different but related terms. In Spanish, they are *rojo, anaranjado, amarillo, verde, azul,* and *morado,* in some dialects. In French, they are *rouge, orange, jaune, vert, bleu,* and *pourpre*. And in Latin, *ruber, luteus, flavus, viridius, caeruleus,* and *viola.* However, in Navajo, an Athabascan language, there are only three basic colors in the traditional spectrum: *li'chii* (reds to oranges), *li'tso* (yellow), and *dootl'izh* (greens, blues, and bluish greens). In Yup'ik, an Inuit language, the colors are red, yellow, green, and blue. This is not a physiological difference but, rather, a cognitive difference reflecting distinct ways of classifying colors and thereby of organizing the environment. A traditional Navajo or Yup'ik child can certainly learn the English or Spanish words for the colors, and linguists have invented new terms in Navajo and Yup'ik to fill in "the gaps." It is necessary that U.S. American teachers keep in mind that even though students from linguistic backgrounds other than English are physically able to see the same color spectrum that English speaking children are, they may not be accustomed to the division of colors present in English. Such students may present difficulties in the classroom when asked to differentiate between colors that, for them, fall into the same category (e.g., requesting a Navajo child to select the "blue" crayon, while his or her cognitive organization places all colors between blue and green under the category of "dootl'izh").

The second cultural component is behavior, which can be reflected in a student's conduct and interactions at school. For example, some cultures value individual contributions to the success of the group more than the success of the individual. Many Native American and Asian cultures will shun or ridicule an individual who appears to act apart from the group. Since much of the assessment conducted to identify learning and behavior problems isolates and singles out the individual student, assessment may in fact compound the student's problems in the classroom and in the home. The fear of being seen as different by peers may affect the student's performance during individually administered assessment procedures. During group assessment, the CLD student may want to assist other students and may not pay attention to personal performance. In addition, students from cultures that value indirectness and distance as evidence of appropriate behavior may not respond positively to the use of touching or praise as reinforcement strategies. These students' interpretations of "time out" and other teaching and behavior management techniques common in the United States may be quite different from the teacher's intent when utilizing those techniques. Inappropriate responses may lead the teacher to suspect the presence of a disabling condition.

Differences in experiential background also affect CLD students' responses to various elements of the curricula in U.S. American schools. The use of

inquiry techniques, behavior contracting, active processing, and other individualized instructional strategies is very dependent on prior experience. Role expectations and the ability to make quick cause-and-effect associations are prerequisite skills for the optimal effectiveness of many strategies. If a diverse student lacks the appropriate response to the instructional strategies commonly used in the United States, this compounds their learning and behavior problems. Teachers frequently mistake this lack of appropriate response for the presence of a disabling condition.

Some of the diverse students' responses to the school environment may be due to previous school experiences, in addition to cultural differences. Students who have been in school systems in other countries generally know basic school procedures, such as raising their hands for attention, asking permission to do something, and recess and lunchroom behaviors. However, they may be unfamiliar with particular instructional strategies, such as independent or silent reading rather than group recitation, or discovery learning rather than rote memorization. Their inappropriate responses to silent reading, discovery learning, or other activities may be disruptive or troublesome to the teacher and can result in a referral.

Diverse students with no school experience may be unfamiliar with particular instructional strategies, as well as with the basic operational expectations of the school and classroom. They may not know how or when to ask for assistance or permission, may not be familiar with appropriate school behavior in or out of the classroom, and may not have had any exposure to academic language. These students will need to acculturate not only to U.S. American culture but also to the culture of school itself. Many "newcomers" programs provide this type of assistance.

The third cultural component, language, can be evidenced not only in differences in the actual words used, but also in discourse patterns. In relation to students' needs, in English the expectation is that we name the specific thing we are concerned about (for example, a child's learning behavior) and then "stick to the point" and "not beat around the bush." The expectation in Spanish is that our point will include its impact within the family context. In Slovak (and other Slavic languages), it is expected that one will keep the cultural history in mind or use it to reference the matter under discussion. In Japanese, with its context-embedded discourse structures, a speaker is expected to convey the point of concern without direct reference to it (Kaplan, 1966). In Navajo (and many other Native American languages), if a speaker does not include all aspects of the child in the discussion, he or she is seen as incomplete, inconsiderate, or as not having the child's best interests in mind.

Since culture has such a comprehensive effect upon the thinking, perceptions, and interaction patterns of individuals, practitioners must be familiar with the cultural and sociolinguistic background of their students, particularly of those students with learning and behavior problems. Culturally-based assumptions about what students should learn, how and where they should learn it, as well as why and when they will need this knowledge are the foundations of our educational system. Students reared in a different cultural environment will have learned a different body of knowledge and will

have learned it in different ways. Education professionals must be sensitive to the cultural and sociolinguistic backgrounds of CLD students and must consider how these differences may affect a student's performance during the instructional process.

To conclude, in addition to identifying the range of academic and behavior performance for students with learning and behavior problems, school personnel must also consider sociocultural factors of diverse learners in their evaluation. The key sociocultural factors to be identified during the assessment of diverse students include: (1) cultural and linguistic background, (2) patterns of sociolinguistic development, (3) experiential background, (4) cognitive learning styles, and (5) stage and pattern of acculturation. Information about these sociocultural factors is available through a comprehensive review of existing student records, interviews, and observations, and by testing, work sampling, and analytic teaching. School personnel need to analyze differences in response to the school environment to determine if they are really examples of cultural diversity. When the student's inappropriate behavior in the school is clearly not due to cultural differences or to lack of school experience, the teacher may proceed with the analysis of other possible causes, including the presence of a disabling condition. Experiential differences affect both classroom behavior and performance on assessment devices. Practitioners who work with diverse students need to be aware of and be able to identify experiential differences in order to improve the assessment and instruction of diverse students.

JOSÉ CASE STUDY

Throughout this book, an actual student, José, will be used as a case study to illustrate the four tiers of the PRISIM process and some of the additional issues to be considered when separating difference from disability. The case study will include evaluations, test results, observations, and interviews.

PRISIM 1 José's Profile at Enrollment

José was eight when his family immigrated to the United States from Peru. His father and uncle are employed in seasonal farm labor in their new community. His aunt and mother work in a meatpacking plant. José's grandmother helps take care of him and his seven siblings and cousins. She is considered a healer in their native community. She speaks only Quechua, an indigenous language from the Andes Mountains, which is the family's native language. José, his cousins, and his older siblings attended school in Peru and speak Spanish fairly fluently. Both of his parents speak Spanish, though with limited fluency. The family is involved in the local Catholic Church, which has a large immigrant and migrant membership. There are some Mexican food stores and restaurants in the community.

PRISIM 1 Learning Foundation Issues

Culturally, he is from a traditional indigenous group that resides on both the western and eastern sides of the Andes in South America. His family is intact and extended, giving him substantial support for cognitive and linguistic development. Linguistically, his Quechua is developmentally appropriate, but as he never received schooling in his home language, he has very limited cognitive academic schema in Quechua. After two years of school in Peru, first and second grades, he has an appropriate developmental level of Spanish (i.e., at the Speech Emergent, beginning bilingual level). Environmentally, he has access to safety, food, clothing, and shelter, and he has supportive, responsive relationships at home. His family worked hard in Peru to make sure José was able to attend the nearest village school. Educationally, he has two years of elementary schooling, albeit in Spanish—a language other than his home language or English.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the goal for the receiving school district is to promote and sustain the following:

- José's access to safety, food, clothing, and shelter
- Quality preparation of effective education professionals and support staff who will be working with José
- The adequacy of school facilities and resources available to José and his family
- Consistent use of culturally and linguistically responsive, evidence-based practices when working with José
- Supportive, responsive relationships between José and school personnel

Familiarity with José's experience, culture, and language background will be very important when planning initial instruction. Receiving school personnel should begin research for making decisions about service placement by identifying language background, language proficiency, level of acculturation, prior schooling, and other instructionally meaningful data.