

# Acceptance and Insistence: Four Head Start Teachers' Views on Successful Emergent Literacy Development of Urban African American Boys Living in Poverty

John Michael Holland  
*Virginia Commonwealth University*

*This paper reports on a mixed methods study that used a sequential explanatory design to explore the culturally relevant teaching beliefs of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty. The study utilized emergent literacy gain scores as a measure of success, a survey of culturally relevant teaching beliefs to describe variation in beliefs within the sample, and two rounds of interviews to explore the context of teacher agency with urban African American boys living in poverty. The four teachers interviewed expressed culturally relevant beliefs through a lens of acceptance and insistence that are integral to their teaching practices. These beliefs were conveyed through descriptions of parent/child/teacher interactions in and out of the classroom, through awareness of the conditions and challenges of poverty in students' and parents' lives, and through close relationships with parents. This study provides some insight into the role that culturally relevant teaching beliefs play in Head Start teachers' agency in developing emergent literacy of urban African American boys living in poverty.*

*Keywords: boys, Head Start, agency*

*Treat them just like you would another child. Be sensitive to what they're going through, but don't be overly empathetic or you know, to the point of you're going to be a pushover because I know . . . his dad was locked up and he wants to talk to him, but I still wouldn't let him just go, completely spazzed out. Because he didn't need that either. - Jasmine*

In the above quote, Head Start teacher Jasmine (pseudonym) describes what it takes to successfully teach African American boys. She describes the complex socio-cultural environment teachers must consider in supporting literacy development of urban African American boys living in poverty. The socio-cultural context includes teacher experiences, teacher beliefs, student experiences, and community culture.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to John Michael Holland, Virginia Commonwealth University, Email: [johnmholland@gmail.com](mailto:johnmholland@gmail.com)

Critical race research suggests the necessity of further study of emergent literacy development in the context of low-income, urban African American Head Start communities. This would uncover new solutions to address the complex and unfair social systems that create inequities in learning for students (Connor & Craig, 2006; Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Lee & Burkham, 2002). Urban families develop a rich and varied knowledge base that is capable of supporting children's success including approaches to literacy comprehension and language development (Gupta, 2006; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). The lifeworld of children includes the histories, beliefs, and values of children as they are expressed through social interactions (Culatta, Kovarsky, Theodore, Franklin, & Timler, 2003). Head Start teachers interact with the rich lifeworld of children in a way that can lead to emergent literacy development (Culatta et al., 2003). Moll et al. (2006) suggest that when teachers interact with children and families in an ethnographic context such as home visits required by the Head Start program (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008), they can find multiple points of connection and develop deeper understandings of their students' cultural and linguistic strengths. Culturally responsive teaching, also a Head Start requirement (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008), is the intentional process of drawing on students' backgrounds to the advantage of the student and classroom. Simultaneously, this approach helps students understand their potentially untapped strength, beauty, and power, which can be a source of success if understood and applied to learning (Au, 2006; Boutte & Strickland, 2008; Leafstedt, Richards, & Gerber, 2004; Zipin, 2009).

This paper explores the perspectives of four Head Start teachers on their successes in teaching African American boys living in poverty. For the purposes of this article I use the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines, as Head Start programs use these guidelines to determine program eligibility (see U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). This article also examines four teachers beliefs about agency (Bandura, 1997, 2001) and considers if these Head Start teachers' culturally relevant beliefs are a critical or tangential part of successful emergent literacy development in these students. The concept of the Head Start teacher as a dreamkeeper was adopted as the theoretical foundation of this study (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The study utilized a two-phase, integrated method, comparative case study design (Green, Camilli, & Elmore, 2006) that was sequential and explanatory (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

### **Literature Review**

Emergent literacy development is a critical aspect of school readiness (Kagan, Moore, Bredekamp, 1995). What teachers believe about culture and literacy has been found to affect their practice of emergent literacy development curriculum (Anders & Evans, 1994; Barbarin et al., 2006). While there are numerous studies related to culturally responsive beliefs and teacher practice (Ball & Pence, 1999; Espiritu, Meier, Villazana-Price, & Wong, 2000; Souto-Manning & Mitchell, 2010), this study addresses a gap in the research, which does not consider Head Start teachers' culturally relevant beliefs, especially with regard to the relationship between those beliefs and how successful teachers describe their practices (Love & Kruger, 2005).

In defining Head Start teacher agency in emergent literacy development, it is necessary to consider what literacy is and what literacy does (Bartlett, 2008). Literacy, at the micro level, is the ability to communicate and learn through reading and writing. It is the ability to produce meaning from letters. At the macro level, it is the ability to communicate toward an end. It is the

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

ability to influence circumstance, and it is the currency of economic mobility in the dominant culture of power in America (Delpit, 2006). As the face of federal poverty intervention, Head Start teachers are uniquely situated to empower children and families to influence their circumstances through micro and macro-literacy.

The research literature's assumption that mainstream culture should be the template for all emergent literacy development creates a deficit model for at-risk children's literacy development (Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim, & Johnson, 2005). Literacy development varies across cultures (Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994; Bloome, Katz, Solsken, Willett & Wilson-Keenan, 2000; Hammer, Nimmo, Cohen, Draheim, & Johnson, 2005; Heath, 1983; Wang, Bernas & Eberhard, 2005). Heath (1983) describes the rich language interactions that include nuances of relationship present in African American children's homes that differ from the language interactions children typically encounter in school. African American mothers have been found to read stories differently than White mothers and develop different emergent literacy skills through that reading (Anderson-Yockel & Haynes, 1994; Hammer et al., 2005). African American children have been shown to demonstrate metalinguistic awareness in their use of African American English across contexts (Connor & Craig, 2006; Delpit, 2006). Therefore, in order to meet the needs of poor, urban African American boys, teachers should acknowledge and put to use the culture and knowledge of their students, especially in the preschool years (Au, 2006; Delpit, 2006; Wang, Bernas & Eberhard, 2005).

Parenting in any culture is a complex communication between immediate family, child, and community. Language development methods of parents and children vary across socioeconomic and cultural distinctions (Hammer & Weiss, 1999; Hart & Risley, 1995). If teachers hope to effectively educate urban African American boys living in poverty in their first interaction with schooling, they must understand and accommodate the parenting strategies their students have lived with since birth (Wang, Bernas, & Eberhard, 2005). Wang et al. assert that ways of learning are developed over time through interactions with family members, peers, and other adults in their communities. In honoring urban African American boys' funds of knowledge, teachers have the opportunity to support positive racial identification, which can support school achievement (Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995; Perry, 2003). In acknowledging that learning is culturally embedded within the family, it follows that the best way to teach emergent literacy in one community may not necessarily transfer to another community with a dissimilar culture.

Historically, teachers have been the focal point for the transmission of beliefs regarding privilege and power in society (Giroux, 1994). African American education has implemented pedagogy that supports the dominant culture of power's attempt to protect its inherent privilege while simultaneously training children and families of color for underclass roles (Benjamin, 2003; Delpit, 2006). The class struggles of African Americans in the early 1800s played out in the teaching styles of teachers who were uncomfortable with the potential and power of black children (Duane, 2010). White teachers taught African American students to recite texts that celebrated the popular sentimental image of the poor slave child saved by abolitionists from their parents. In the 1920s, segregated African American students in Texas were taught to read but excluded from progressive child-centered curriculum that promoted problem solving. Narratives of the subservient African American child pervade history but, they have also been challenged by heroic African American teachers who enacted resistance in individual classrooms (Benjamin, 2003). While, in the past, control of schools and curriculum has briefly been influenced by urban African American communities in a few cities, educational decisions have historically been

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

made by the dominant culture outside of local communities (Goldstein, 2014). Today, education remains an intervention done to, as opposed to with, urban African American boys, their families, and communities of poverty. Head Start is an educational program that relies on local control of budget, human resources, services, and curriculum by families and communities through its Policy Council and Parent Committee structure (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman & Zigler, 1989; Head Start, 2007).

The plight of poor children in America has been a focus of federal child welfare policy since before the turn of the 20th century (Auleta, 1969). As the country became more industrialized after the Civil War, the government took an active interest in families and the welfare of children (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman, & Zigler, 1989). The Freedman's Bureau spread the ideal of free public education in the south while, as W.E.B. Du Bois (1901) stated in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the Freedmen's Bureau was also complicit in negotiating employment of freedmen that utilized “paternalistic methods that discouraged self-reliance” (para. 11). Government concerns about child labor spurred federal regulations in the late 1800s, but policies broadened during the first 50 years of the 20th century to include the general welfare of poor children (Auleta, 1969). The role of poverty in federal education policy decisions continued to be enacted with the implementation of Head Start in 1965 (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman & Zigler, 1989). In 1965, Head Start was created as a comprehensive approach to early childhood education established by the federal government to fight poverty through comprehensive services to families and children. The program’s goals were to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, nutritional, and psychological needs of poor children and, in doing so, break the cycle of generational poverty (Garwood, Phillips, Hartman, & Zigler 1989; Zigler, Gordic, & Styfco, 2007). Since that time, the program has been transformed with each new reauthorization. Head Start has always focused on children’s welfare, but it has become increasingly concerned with academic achievement as well (Klein, Samuels, & McNeil, 2013). The *Child Outcomes Framework*, a guideline for the implementation of Head Start performance standards, has a large focus on emergent literacy skills, including letter recognition, phonological awareness, book knowledge and appreciation, print awareness and concepts, early writing, and alphabet knowledge (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). The most recent bill focused on children’s school readiness, specifically addressing the language and literacy skills of Head Start children (Head Start Act, 2007).

Head Start aims to eradicate poverty through encouraging participation in the dominant culture of power. It has represented the hopes and fears of the dominant culture about education. Head Start is based on the belief that the individual must change to become successful in the dominant culture, not the society that created the conditions of poverty that must change. Even today, the Obama administration's support for interventions such as charter schools and the Harlem Success Zone decontextualize the experiences of African American families and suggest a policy ethos of segregation and/or assimilation (Payne & Knowles, 2009; Rotberg, 2014). Throughout history, policies of insistence in the lives of African Americans living in poverty have been grounded in questions of culture and assimilation, with schools representing the culture of power (Delpit, 1988, 2006).

Research indicates that teachers can and do play a role in the achievement of disadvantaged students (Tucker, Porter, Reinke, Herman, Ivery, & Mack, 2005; Konstantopoulos, 2009). Teachers of young children are particularly influential in how culture is transmitted (Test, 2006) and in helping children become aware of the codes of power communicated through language (Delpit, 1988). Through their ability to translate and interpret

the codes of power for parents and children, Head Start teachers, because they operate at the point of contact between federal policy and families, play a powerful role in the empowerment or disempowerment of urban African American boys living in poverty (Delpit, 2006).

In *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, Ladson-Billings' (1994) documents the beliefs, practices, and culture of successful teachers. The culturally relevant teaching beliefs (CRTB) survey (Love & Kruger, 2005), which this study employed, was based on common traits of successful teachers of African American students described in *The Dreamkeepers*. These traits include beliefs that the profession of teaching is a way to give back to the community and that teaching is more of an art than a skill. Dreamkeepers are concerned with connecting students to the curriculum, the community, and themselves. These teachers see their students as a community of learners or a family in which both teachers and students learn and teach. They believe all members of the community are responsible for each other's' learning. Dreamkeepers see knowledge as socio-culturally constructed. They believe it should be approached critically in order to encourage student participation in society.

Culturally relevant beliefs align with the descriptions of culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1994) that include regard for student perspectives, cooperative learning, connections to the community, professional commitment to teaching in urban public schools, and the importance of students' culture (including race and ethnicity) in teachers' decisions. The culturally relevant teacher practices share qualities with child-directed approaches also described as developmentally appropriate (Harlin, 2010; Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000).

The assimilationist perspective shares traits with traditional conceptions of teaching described in teacher-directed preschool practices (Marcon, 1999). Cultural assimilationist beliefs in the survey built on Ladson-Billings' description of non-culturally relevant beliefs as a "teaching style that operates without regard to the students' particular cultural characteristics . . . the teacher's role is to ensure that students fit into society" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 22). This distinction between culturally relevant and assimilationist beliefs is particularly applicable to the sample due to Head Start's position as an anti-poverty policy intervention that aims to empower families to be successful in mainstream society. The explicit interpretation of this policy, at the micro level, is the teaching of emergent literacy skills to both children and parents. However, the implicit goal of Head Start, at least as it relates to macro-literacy, is to enable children and families to negotiate the cultural codes of power represented by the school and literacy (Delpit, 1988).

## Methods

The setting of this study was a mid-sized Southeastern, urban city. The school system serves approximately 24,000 students, 21,000 of which are African American (U.S. Census, 2009). In accordance with school board policies, all 32 Head Start teachers, whose classrooms are in the public schools, are required to be certified to teach by the state department of education. The target population of this study was successful Head Start teachers of 4-year-old African American boys.

Phase I combined three years of boys' emergent literacy growth scores on the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS; Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004) a pretest (fall)/post-test (spring) assessment to identify a pool of optimally successful teachers (n = 20). In addition, 50 Head Start teachers were administered the CRTB survey with a response rate of 40% or 20 teachers. The CRTB survey (Love & Kruger, 2005) was developed to

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

correlate which culturally relevant and assimilationist beliefs influenced academic success, specifically for African American students living in poverty (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Love and Kruger found correlations between assimilationist beliefs of teachers and high academic achievement in math and reading in six elementary schools serving urban African American students living in poverty. The CRTB survey provided a basis for two rounds of interview questions and a way to check and recheck participants' teaching beliefs as compared to the theoretical construct of culturally relevant teaching. The CRTB survey described the variety of culturally relevant beliefs within the sample. Out of 20 Head Start teacher respondents, nine agreed to further contact for potential participation in the interview phase of the study. Of the nine participants, four were linked to three years of PALS scores. Only two of the four consented (Pam and Candice) to joining the study. It was determined by the research team that two respondents who taught 4-year-old students but had no PALS scores (Sara and Jasmine) would also be contacted for interviews.

Phase II consisted of two rounds of semi-structured interviews. Participants completed the CRTB survey and were asked, in a non-judgmental manner, to explain both their culturally relevant beliefs and their assimilationist beliefs in the qualitative phase of the study (Groulx & Silva, 2010; Justice, Mashburn, Hamre, & Pianta, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Love & Kruger, 2005). Participants' responses to the CRTB survey, used to describe variation in beliefs in the total sample, helped define questions for first-round interviews. Constant comparison (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008) was applied to the analysis of the first-round interviews, in comparing the CRTB data to the first-round interviews, and in construction of the second-round interview questions. Participants' individual CRTB responses were compared to their first-round interview responses. Analysis of the CRTB survey and first-round interview responses led to the hypothesis that the participants' views may align with the warm demander approach. The second-round interview was designed to explore this hypothesis and clarify puzzling interview responses as compared to their individual CRTB responses. Participants who completed the CRTB survey were asked, in a non-judgmental manner, to explain both their culturally relevant beliefs and their assimilationist beliefs in the qualitative phase of the study. The flow chart below describes the quantitative and qualitative methods, processes, and data collected (see Figure 1).

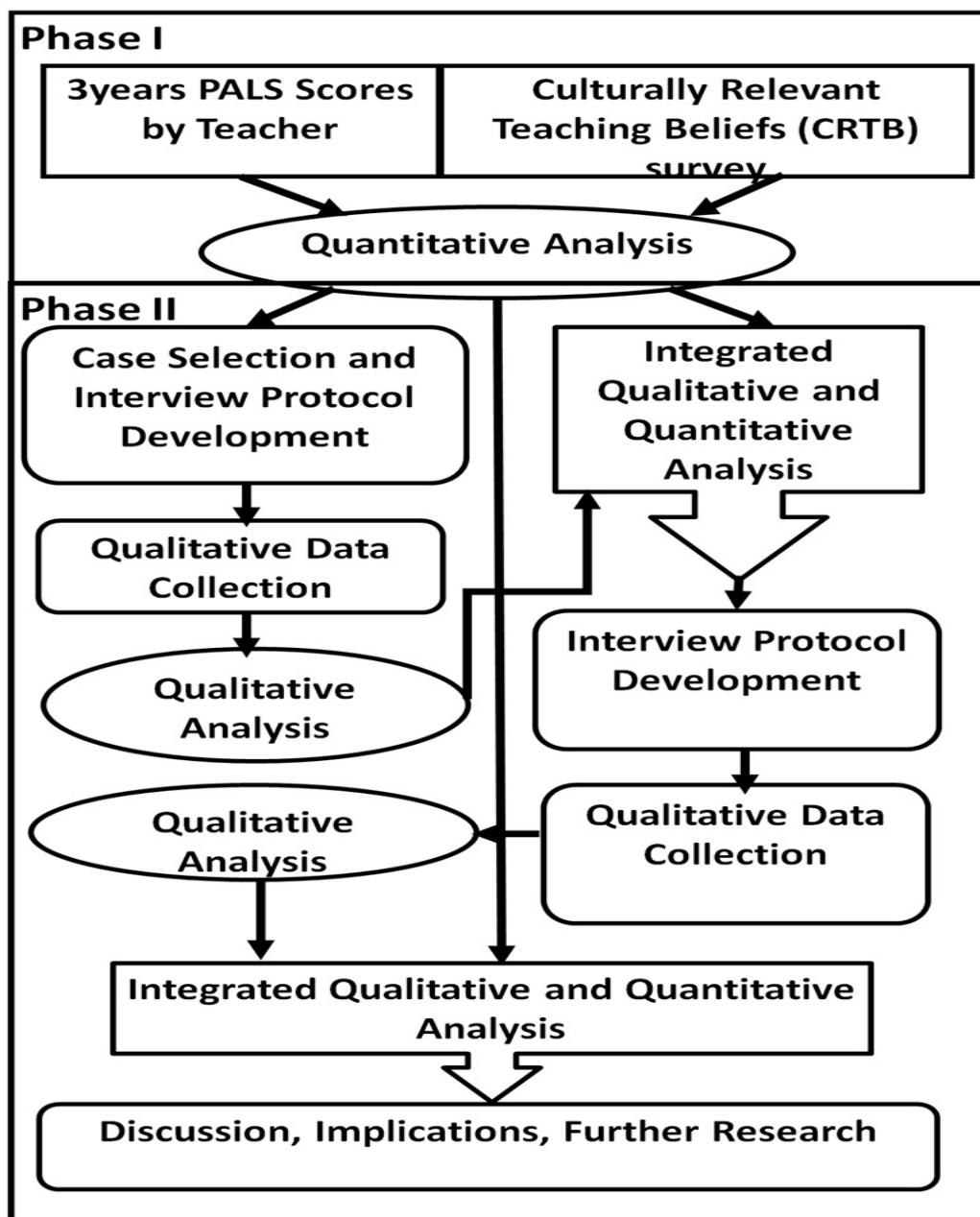


Figure 1. Analytic Flow Chart. Adapted from “Students’ Persistence in a Distributed Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership in Higher Education: A Mixed-Methods Study,” by N. Ivantova and S. Stick, 2007, *Research in Higher Education*, 48(1), p. 98.

## Findings

In answering research question one (RQ1), “How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African-American boys living in poverty vary, if at all, in their responses to a measure of culturally relevant teaching beliefs?”, the study sample (20 teachers) responded with predominantly culturally relevant beliefs. A tendency of the sample toward directional agreement with responses of “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” or “Disagree” and “Strongly

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

Disagree” seemed to indicate that responses may be a function of the Head Start program in which the participants work or of a cultural understanding that is a result of the context of the study sample. The participants presented divergent views to survey items that included children’s previous experiences; the tension between individual and communal responsibility; and teacher-led, child-directed, and child-initiated learning. These divergent views, related to culturally relevant teaching, also emerged in participants’ interviews.

The inquiry process produced and confirmed perspectives on culturally relevant teaching that were not considered in the CRTB survey but were, according to the participants, integral to successful emergent literacy development. These beliefs included forming close relationships with parents and the value of responding to the basic physical and emotional needs of students in order to engage them in learning. The survey responses, when viewed alongside the participants’ descriptions of their beliefs and practices, put into perspective the role of acceptance and insistence in teacher-child and teacher-parent interactions.

In answering RQ2, “How do successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of poor, urban African American boys, with differing culturally relevant teaching beliefs, describe what makes them successful?”, the participants described individual beliefs about boys’ learning and social emotional development as well as teacher-led, child-directed, and child-initiated learning practices.

In the following section, the participants’ individual views are presented. The participant’s agency with urban African American boys seemed to be intricately tied to the relationships they built with parents as well as their approaches to culture and learning. The participants’ answers are presented in the order in which the data were collected and referred to by the pseudonyms Pam, Sara, Candice, and Jasmine.

### **Pam**

Pam taught Head Start for approximately 19 years at the same school. Her demeanor was matter of fact and often humorous. She responded to a total of 38 out of 47 CRTB survey items. Her response was culturally relevant to 29 items (62%) and assimilationist to 9 items (19%). In the CRTB survey, she indicated "Strongly Disagree" to the assimilationist statement, "I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children." Her answer to this item was the only culturally relevant response within the entire sample. In clarifying her perspectives on race and ethnicity, she explained,

Children are children but . . . in the environment that I've worked. African American and poverty . . . parents who don't have . . . financial means, education, I think that I have to take into consideration some of those things...I mean there are just some differences.

In describing the learning of boys compared to girls, Pam said, “Learning as a boy, at four and five years old, I didn’t really see much difference. Most times more active than girls. They like to run and jump and hit and push.” The following passage describes how girls do not necessarily need to move to learn.

A girl, you can say, “Let's count” and they'll count easily. And boys will too. But if you say, “Let's jump as far as we can every time we name a number; listen for the numbers,” I do think that boys learn if you're having trouble . . . getting them to get a concept or skill,



## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

if you add some activity . . . some movement and it happens with girls as well. So, boys are just more active. They just need to have fun, move.

Also, Pam showed concern for the emotional development of boys. She seemed worried that African American parents did not want boys to be fully emotionally developed. She described that some parents wanted boys to live up to images of men they valued:

The parents would come in and I would hear them say to their son, “Don't cry. Be tough.” That kind of thing at four years old, that was always hard for me. Because, you know, you want them to understand that they are human and that they have emotions and they can deal with them. Just like everybody else.

These statements allude to conflict between the gender expectations of students' parents and her personal views on healthy emotional development of boys.

Though she observed boys as being more active than girls, she noted no difference in their learning. It could be that the lack of distinction in describing learning in boys and girls is due to her adoption of an active learning approach that puts learning in a context of movement and sensory experiences. She said,

If you provide an environment that's nurturing. You provide the boys, those I know, they need a lot more, I feel they need physical stuff but girls need that too. So if you incorporate that active learning hands-on . . . and in pre-k that's appropriate for everybody, that kind of thing, just being busy and moving around and learning through the play.

Pam described an approach to teaching boys that is intended to accept their unique need to “move around” without penalizing girls for their specific needs, which may not require so much movement. Pam seemed to insist that boys need an accepting and emotionally safe environment for learning. Teachers should acknowledge the potentially conflicting messages boys receive from parents about behavior and emotions. She described several beliefs that seemed to indicate a warm demander approach (Ross, Bondy, Galligane, & Hambacher, 2008) that integrated culturally relevant and assimilationist practices and perspectives, including an understanding of student factors beyond the classroom and insistence on positive student behavior and high academic achievement.

### **Sara**

Sara, who lives in the same community in which she works, had taught kindergarten for more than six years before becoming a Head Start teacher. She responded to a total of 44 out of 47 survey items. Her responses were culturally relevant to 33 items (70%), assimilationist to 11 items (23%), and undecided to 3 items (7%). In the CRTB survey, she agreed with four seemingly contradictory statements and was asked to explain her responses. The statements are as follows:

1. I view my students' identities as rich with color and culture.

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

2. Every child is a unique composite of his or her racial, cultural, home, and peer experiences.
3. I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children.
4. I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children.

When asked to explain these opposing statements, Sara seemed to experience some cognitive dissonance as she tried to communicate her perspective. This was indicated by several attempts to describe her beliefs, punctuated by changes in direction and stumbling on first and second person tenses. As she explained her responses, she seemed to speak from a different perspective:

I read a lot of slavery and escaping from the south and going to the north, . . . because I wanted to touch on that. I do take consideration of their race and their heritage. . . . But on the other hand, . . . you still got to remember that they're children...So, I can see why somebody would disagree, and agree, and agree, and agree you gotta be aware of where the child comes from. . . . In this day and age, you just see children. You just can't. I mean when I was growing up, yeah maybe they just saw children. In this day and age, nah, you gotta come correct . . . you can't just see children . . . if somebody said I just see children in my classroom I don't see individuals then you're not going the extra mile. To address all your children's needs. I would disagree with it. You can't just see children... Individually they're children. But when you identify them with their race you have to you have to have your lesson so that they can make some kind of identification.

In the preceding passage, Sara explained that she uses race, ethnicity, and culture in making curriculum decisions, such as what stories to read. She seemed to accommodate the perspective that students' cultures should be accessed so teachers can respond to students' identities. At the same time, she also held the opinion that students should be supported through accommodating their needs. To summarize her perspective, Sara said, “when you identify them with their race . . . you have to have your lesson so that they can make some kind of identification.” This identification is an aspect of culturally relevant teaching in that it makes the student's culture a part of the school experience and is used to support their learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Sara expressed the importance of accepting the influence of outside factors on African American boys' learning in the following passage:

He gets angry at the drop of a dime. . . . By the time you work around/through the anger and . . . get him to trust you or get some kind of rapport with him, part of the day is already gone. Mondays is his rough days because he's coming back from the environment. . . . I find myself listening to the news to make sure if anything happens down there in [the city] that I'm prepared for what to come in and hear what the struggling kids that live down there have to say and give them my full attention that day.

Sara described boys as active learners. She expressed belief in the perspective that boys' brains develop differently than girls and that the most effective way to teach them is through movement and visual methods. She believed that “girls are more verbal” and “boys are more physical” in their communication. She described how she came to this perspective through personal experience and training she received in Head Start:

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

It gave me a better understanding of how boys think and what boys need in a classroom. They need to move. They need to be up and about. You can't have them sit and expect them to sit crisscross apple sauce. That's not goin' to work for boys. So in my class, you see a lot of movement with the music. And we go outside even if we don't go to the playground. . . . Boys have to run around. . . . Kids, you know, they have to see. They're visual; they have to see a lot. And they gotta see it in increments. . . . So, my whole lesson plan is different now from that workshop.

In reference to boys' language development, Sara described the challenge of helping boys communicate when they are frustrated or angry. She said,

Well, boys usually can't verbally tell you. They know physical, they cry, and they're not crying because they're hurt. They're crying 'cause they can't verbalize it. And if you're sitting up there, saying, "Well, tell me." That's not going to work.

She seemed to accept that boys often communicate emotions through physical expression. Sara was unique in the sample in that she viewed boys' brain development as different from girls. However, her practices of adopting active learning and proactively addressing emotional development were similar to the other participants'. She identified with her students' families because of her own background. She lived in poverty and put herself through college with young children. She described several viewpoints that combine culturally relevant and assimilationist beliefs into a warm demander approach. She insisted on high academic achievement independent of students' prior knowledge. She also seemed to struggle with describing her beliefs about student behavior, often moving between insistence on positive behavior and a more child-centered approach that aimed to develop students socially and emotionally. Sara expressed the belief that boys learn differently than girls and described practices used to accommodate those differences.

### **Candice**

Candice has been teaching for twenty years in the city where she grew up. She has taught in several high poverty areas of the city. She is generally positive and humorous. Candice seemed to express in her interviews and survey a culturally relevant perspective related to individual and communal responsibilities. Candice responded to a total of 38 out of 47 survey items. Her responses were culturally relevant to 31 items (66%), assimilationist to 7 items (15%), and undecided about 9 items (19%). In the CRTB survey, Candice agreed with one assimilationist statement ("I don't see children with any particular race or cultural identity in my class; I just see children") and strongly disagreed with another ("I don't see children of color in my classroom; I just see children"). Candice was asked to clarify these seemingly contradictory perspectives. She said,

You try to treat them all equally, but you do want to kinda show respect for another culture so they won't get left out. You understand what I'm saying? . . . It's not really culture. It's that they don't see color. So they treat everyone, want to treat all children, the

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

same. There's no prejudice against the child. But you still want, you want to embrace them and let them know that we accept your culture, too. We embrace you.

Candice explained her perspective as acceptance of student culture. When asked to describe the relationship between a family that is struggling to survive and a boy's learning that happens at school, she said,

Sometimes it can be a little bit more difficult for that child to learn because there is so many different [things] that's kinda tearing him, keeping him from learning. He might not have anyone at home that can read to him . . . or help him write his name. So sometimes it can be a struggle for that child. [I] just try to give as much attention and as much love to that child as possible. And sometimes maybe help the family seek outside help.

Candice believed that “boys are taught to be aggressive” by society and that they need to learn when to be rough. She expressed concern for one particular boy’s emotional development when she described what boys' learning looks like. She said,

The boys are pretty much up and all over the place and loud when they’re excited because they're learning. I have one little boy in particular who just gets all excited, and if he can’t get something right, he just starts crying. And he's actually one of the smartest boys in here. So, if he can’t get it, he’s crying.

In describing boys' learning and how to be effective with boys, she shared that “the most important thing is . . . to keep them encouraged . . . they can be successful. Let them know that you're there for them. And you will help them.” Candice did not discriminate between boys’ and girls’ learning. She said, “To be a boy in my classroom, I want them to feel like they are accepted and feel like they can learn... just as well as everybody else...I don't think I treat ‘em really different.” Candice also described working with boys in small groups to meet their learning needs:

I know I probably give 'em more individual attention. Ms. E [instructional assistant] and I . . . [will] pull the group of boys together. Cause we only have, like, five. She'll get ‘em and she'll work with ‘em. And, you know, just drill ‘em, so yeah we do a lot of individual teaching. Real small groups, two or three kids.

She reported using open-ended questions. She believes all students learn from hands-on [teaching]. She seemed to accept that boys are rough but insisted they need to learn "when to be rough and when not to be rough. . . . Boys want to wrestle and jump around. And a lot of the times, boys don’t always want to actually sit down and do work.” The themes of accepting boys’ physically active learning style and the influence of outside factors on boys’ development are interwoven throughout her interviews.

Candice valued the trust of her students' parents and described friendships she had developed with several of them. She was sensitive to her students' backgrounds and explicitly described the influence of culture on their development and her classroom. In this way, Candice seemed to embody a culturally relevant approach in her teaching. She described developing a classroom dependent on communal responsibility that included clear behavioral expectations.

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

She focused on teaching students to take care of each other and learn from each other. Candice described boys as learning similarly to girls but as more active and emotional than girls. She cited the influence of culture on boys' development, including their social emotional development.

### Jasmine

Jasmine began teaching 4-year-old students in the Head Start program three years ago. She is a single mother to a 5-year-old boy. Jasmine is generally soft-spoken and positive. She responded to a total of 46 out of 47 CRTB survey items. Her responses were culturally relevant to 32 items (70%), assimilationist to 13 items (28%), and undecided about 1 item (2%). Jasmine was the only participant who agreed with the CRTB survey statement, "A good lesson is only tentative." This belief was affirmed by her descriptions of following her students' interests, offering choices to students that do not want to engage in lessons, and having a plan but being willing to change it if students' interest seems to be going in another direction.

Jasmine described learning in her classroom as student led, busy, open, and engaging. In describing student learning, she focused on their ability to learn from each other. Emergent themes in Jasmine's interview included students' emotional development (that of boys in particular), the importance of feeling valued and a part of something, and the importance of meeting students where they are with the goal of making progress academically.

Jasmine expressed her approach to behavior and her sense of humor when she explained that "teachers have control issues. And some teachers want little soldiers. And some kids are not going to be little soldiers." The phrase *little soldiers* was repeated by Jasmine as she described some teachers' insistence on unrealistic behavior expectations for students. Jasmine recalled some mothers' relationships with their sons.

If mom is no longer in a relationship with dad, depending on how dad treated her . . . I've had comments [like], "He's just like his father. He looks just like his daddy." And she has her own personal issues with that father, and she'll reflect that on that little boy. And so he comes to you, . . . "Gosh, I'm just like my dad." And she says it not in a positive way, but in a very negative way. And then I have a lot of little boys that deal with their father being incarcerated. I have a little boy right now, and my heart breaks for him because he's stressed. And his mother won't tell him that his father's in jail. She'll let him talk to him, but she won't say. So he's thinking, "My daddy can call me but won't come and see me." And he sat in here today and he cried.

At this point in the interview, Jasmine's eyes began to water and she started to speak in a whisper:

He said, "I just want my daddy" and as a teacher I . . . talked to her and I said, "I think if you just told him, he would feel better." And she's like, "I don't want him to know he's in jail." So these boys come with a lot.

To support her students who come in with a lot, Jasmine said,

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

Treat them just like you would another child. Be sensitive to what they're going through, but don't be overly empathetic or, you know, to the point of you're going to be a push-over because I know your dad. I understand his dad was locked up and he wants to talk to him, but I still wouldn't let him just go completely spazzed out. He didn't need that either.

After Jasmine let the boy calm down, she suggested that he help a classmate learn his colors. She said, "And it did something for him. It was empowering to him." She went on to explain further:

I guess because he doesn't have any control of his little life. And he doesn't understand why his dad's not coming but I can talk to him. But in five minutes, I can help this little boy and I can feel so important because I showed him something he didn't know.

Jasmine likes boys to feel empowered in her classroom. She explained that she tries to keep boys busy with jobs and responsibilities. She seemed to accept that boys' learning can be influenced by outside factors, such as strong emotions and relationships with parents. She also seemed to insist that these same boys express themselves in appropriate ways. She worried about the emotional development of her boy students. Her concern was that when boys did not feel they knew how to do something, they would not take the emotional risk of trying.

### Discussion

The participants disagreed as to whether there were significant differences between boys and girls that affect learning. The participants generally described boys as different than girls in level of physical activity and social emotional development but similar in how they learn. In holding these diverse beliefs simultaneously, the participants held tight to values of equity by describing differences in activity and behavior but then making statements like, "I don't think I treat them really different," "Young kids at this age, I don't see a lot of difference there," and "If it's a boy or a girl, every child's . . . needs are different." Three of the participants seemed to see the differences between boys and girls as tangential to active learning practices that are considered valuable to all students. In contrast, Sara described believing that boys' brains develop differently than girls'. In describing the ways in which those differences affected her classroom decisions, she referred to classroom routines and procedures that addressed boys' activity level and challenges in emotional development. For example, she described using visuals to teach things like class rules.

The role of language development and how it affects emotional regulation seemed to be factored into how Sara addressed boys' difficulty with expressing anger and frustration. For example, she asked boys to wash their faces and come back to her ready to resolve a conflict. Jasmine described differences that were rooted in seeing students as individuals. She seemed to focus her discussion on a perceived need of boys to feel important, valued, and loved. She did not describe general procedures or practices that differed based on gender. But she did acknowledge that boys want to be active and that they seem to respond to requests to be helpful in the classroom. She also noted that boys seem to be more engaged with certain themes in the reading curriculum because the content appeals to boys' sensibilities.

Through applying the lens of culturally relevant teaching to the context of Head Start teachers, and then enabling these teachers to explain their beliefs, a third perspective emerged from analysis of the data. The warm demander perspective emerged as a possible perspective to

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

explain these four teachers' descriptions of their beliefs and practices. This approach is context specific and responsive to the complex social systems that create inequities in our schools for students. The warm demander approach may be a valuable frame to use to understand Head Start teachers' practices because of its' views on student achievement, behavior, and care (Boutte, & Strickland, 2008; Irvine & Frazier, 1998; Ross, Bondy, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2008; Ware, 2006).

Analysis of the data revealed context-dependent use of acceptance and insistence in interactions with boys. The participants described accepting the backgrounds and experiences of students and parents. They described accepting that students might have had certain experiences before coming to school that could distract them from learning. They also accept that boys are more physically active than girls and that parents who struggle to care for their families might put learning on the back burner. Shared beliefs included empathy and understanding of the effect of poverty as well as the belief that all parents love their children and do the best they can to raise them. Finally and most tellingly, in relation to culturally relevant and warm demander approaches, the participants described acceptance of student behavior as an expression of the students' experiences.

Alternatively, the participants insisted that students and parents engage with the culture of power represented by the culture of the school (Delpit, 1988, 2006). Parents who put learning on the back burner because of challenges of survival were engaged through home visits, parent conferences, and informal interactions. They also insisted that even though students come to school having experienced hunger, violence, and anger, they express themselves within acceptable parameters for the school setting, such as talking to peers about feelings and not expressing anger and frustration physically through hitting and pushing. The participants also described interactions where they encouraged students and parents to embrace the school culture. The participants expressed insistence when they encouraged parents to interact with their children in certain ways, including supporting learning at home, volunteering in the classroom, and not exposing children to inappropriate media. This view was enacted through the participants' expectations that students meet certain behavioral requirements and maintain a high level of academic achievement. Taken together, the integration of acceptance and insistence into the participants' views suggests that they may be expressing what the literature terms the warm demander perspective.

The warm demander perspective, as described in the literature, is a culturally relevant approach specific to successful teaching of urban African American children (Irvine & Frazier, 1998; Ross et al., 2008; Ware, 2006). Central to the warm demander philosophy is the idea of student engagement through insistence and viewing problem behaviors as a puzzle to be solved (Ross et al.). The few differences among the participants' perspectives as explored through the survey and first-round interview helped the presence of this perspective to emerge. The warm demander approach holds very few differences from the culturally relevant perspective and may be a reflection of an aspect of a culturally relevant approach with urban African American boys living in poverty. However, within the frame of this study, the seemingly contradictory terms of culturally relevant beliefs and assimilationist beliefs played out as acknowledgement of a culturally relevant approach specific to the context of the African American boys living in poverty. This approach indicates possible warm demander tendencies that were noted in Pam and Sara's responses but not Jasmine and Candice's. The overlap of the culturally relevant and warm demander perspectives includes a commitment to the school community, viewing teaching as a way to give back to the community, a family-like approach to relationships, and an emphasis on

communal responsibility. It was in these participants' descriptions of their agency as Head Start teachers that the variations in these perspectives came to light. These variations included views on behavior as a puzzle and high expectations independent of students' prior experiences.

### **Conclusion**

This inquiry into the agency of successful emergent literacy Head Start teachers of urban African American boys living in poverty uncovered processes at work in the context of emergent literacy development. These processes include the role of teachers and the context of Head Start as influences on the development of emergent literacy. Head Start performance standards create a context of success through applying culturally responsive teaching, including home visits and respect for culture, to assimilationist purposes. This approach to the implementation of Head Start is not present in other areas of federal policy that support students living in poverty. Perhaps an expansion of the role of family engagement in Title 1 implementation (No Child Left Behind, 2002) to include the conditions that create strong relationships between teachers and families could increase the federal provision's effectiveness at addressing achievement gaps.

At the micro level, the Head Start teachers' agency in this study was reflected by numerous active learning approaches to literacy development, such as racing for letters, building words, and acting out stories that developed alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, concepts of print, and comprehension. These activities serve as the basis for a skills-based approach to literacy supported in much of the current literature about emergent literacy development (Hammer, Farkas, & Maczuga, 2010; Lonigan, 2004; Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008; Whitehurst, et al., 1999). Skill development was approached by the participants with a sense of insistence and a "whatever works" attitude (Ladson-Billings, 1994) that incorporated small-group instruction, drill and practice, and parental support of literacy at home. Teachers' descriptions of accepting and accommodating the extenuating emotional and physical needs associated with poverty worked in collaboration with high expectations, social emotional development, and pragmatic approaches to create an environment that fosters the knowledge and skills necessary for emergent literacy success.

The Head Start teachers in this study played a role at the macro level of literacy development by accepting student factors while insisting that students and families engage with literacy and the culture of the school. The interview participants described proactive relationship-based approaches to addressing student and family factors that hamper emergent literacy development. They formed close relationships with parents for whom they acted as mentors, advocates, and friends. They supported students and parents through acceptance and insistence in discovering the value of literacy as a mode of communication.

Literacy is often considered able to confer benefits through its acquisition. However, when considered from a cultural perspective, its power is related to its context and use. Economic mobility and personal agency, as literacy benefits, result from the relationships and networks associated with the types of literacy found in schools and other dominant culture settings (Bartlett, 2008). By engaging in settings where literacy is valued, these Head Start teachers encourage and support parents to become involved. As Jasmine expressed, "we not only teach reading, writing, [and] letters, we also teach how to survive [and] how to thrive in a school environment." It is through the application of acceptance and insistence as a relational and cultural influence on literacy development that the cycle of poverty is addressed.



## References

- Anders, P., & Evans, K. (1994). Relationship between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practice in reading. In R. Garner & P. Alexander (Eds.), *Beliefs about text and instruction with text* (pp. 137–153). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Anderson-Yockell, J., & Haynes, W. (1994). Joint book-reading strategies in working-class African American and White mother-toddler dyads. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research, 37*(3), 583–593.
- Au, K. (2006). *Multicultural issues and literacy achievement*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Auleta, M.S. (1969). *Foundations of early childhood education*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Ball, J., & Pence, A. R. (1999). Beyond developmentally appropriate practice: Developing community and culturally appropriate practice. *Young Children, 54*(2), 46–50.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman & Company.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*(1), 1–26.
- Barbarin, O., Bryant, D., McCandies, T., Burchinal, M., Early, D., Clifford, R., & Howes, C. (2006). Children enrolled in public pre-K: The relation of family life, neighborhood quality, and socioeconomic resources to early competence. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 76*(2), 265–276.
- Bartlett, L. (2008). Literacy's verb: Exploring what literacy is and what literacy does. *International Journal of Educational Development, 28*(6), 737–753.
- Benjamin, K. (2003). Progressivism meets Jim Crow: Curriculum revision and development in Houston, Texas, 1924–1929. *Paedagogica Historica, 39*(4), 457.
- Bloome, D., Katz, L., Solsken, J., Willett, J., & Wilson-Keenan, J. (2000). Interpellations of family/community and classroom literacy practices. *The Journal of Educational Research, 93*(3), 155–163.
- Boutte, G., & Strickland, J. (2008). Making African American culture and history central to early childhood teaching and learning. *Journal of Negro Education, 77*(2), 131–142.
- Connor, C., & Craig, H. (2006). African American preschoolers' language, emergent literacy skills, and use of African American English: A complex relation. *Journal of Speech, Language & Hearing Research, 49*(4), 771–792.
- Culatta, B., Kovarsky, D., Theadore, G., Franklin, A., & Timler, G. (2003). Quantitative and

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

- Qualitative documentation of early literacy instruction. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 12(2), 172–188.
- Delpit, L. D. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(3), 280–298.
- Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Duane, A. M. (2010). “Like a Motherless Child”: Racial education at the New York African free school and in my bondage and my freedom. *American Literature*, 82(3), 461–488.
- Du Bois, W. B. (1901, March). The freedmen's bureau. *The Atlantic Monthly*. Retrieved from <http://theatlantic.com>.
- Espiritu, E., Meier, D., Villazana-Price, N., & Wong, M. (2000). Promoting practitioner research in early childhood education: A collaborative focus on language, development, and diversity. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Garwood, S. G., Phillips, D., Hartman, A., & Zigler, E. (1989). As the pendulum swings: Federal agency programs for children. *American Psychologist*, 44(2), 434–440.
- Giroux, H. A. (1994). Doing cultural studies: Youth and the challenge of pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(3), 278–308.
- Goldstein, D. (2014). *The Teacher Wars: A History of America's Most Embattled Profession*. New York N.Y. Anchor Books.
- Green, J., Camilli, G., Elmore, P. (2006). *Handbook of complementary methods in education research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Groulx, J., & Silva, C. (2010). Evaluating the development of culturally relevant teaching. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 12(1), 3–9. doi:10.1080/15210961003641120.
- Gupta, A. (2006). Early experiences and personal funds of knowledge and beliefs of immigrant and minority teacher candidates dialog with theories of child development in a teacher education classroom. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 27(1), 3–18.
- Hammer, C., Farkas, G., & Maczuga, S. (2010). The language and literacy development of Head Start children: A study using the family and child experiences survey database. *Language, Speech & Hearing Services in Schools*, 41(1), 70–83.

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

- Hammer, C., Nimmo, D., Cohen, R., Draheim, H., & Johnson, A. (2005). Book Reading Interactions between African American and Puerto Rican Head Start Children and their mothers. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 5(3), 195–227.
- Hammer, C., & Weiss, A. (1999). Guiding language development: How African American mothers and their infants structure play. *Journal of Speech, Language & Hearing Research*, 42(5), 1219–1233.
- Harlin, R. P. (2010). Connecting classroom practice and research: A review: Journal of research in childhood education. *Childhood Education*, 86(3), 188–192.
- Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*. Baltimore, MD: Brooks.
- Head Start. (2007). Head Start Act of 2007. Washington, DC: Head Start Bureau.
- Heath, S. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in community and classrooms*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Invernizzi, M., Sullivan, A., Meier, J., & Swank, L. (2004). *Phonological awareness literacy screening: Preschool (PALS-Pre-k)*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia.
- Irvine, J., & Fraser, J. (1998). 'Warm demanders'. *Education Week*, 17(35), 56.
- Ivankova, N., Creswell, J., & Stick, S. (2006). Using mixed-methods sequential explanatory design: From theory to practice. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 3–20.
- Ivankova, N., & Stick, S. (2007). Students' persistence in a distributed doctoral program in educational leadership in higher education: A mixed methods study. *Research in Higher Education*, 48(1), 93–135.
- Justice, L., Mashburn, A., Hamre, B., & Pianta, R. (2008). Quality of language and literacy instruction in preschool classrooms serving at-risk pupils. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 23(1), 51–68. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2007.09.004
- Kagan, S. L., Moore, E., & Bredekamp, S. (Eds.). (1995). Reconsidering children's early development and learning: Toward common views and vocabulary. National Education Goals Panel 95-03.
- Klein, A., Samuels, C. A., & McNeil, M. (2013). Obama pressing boost for pre-k. *Education Week*, 32(21), 1, 26–27.
- Konstantopoulos, S. (2009). Effects of teachers on minority and disadvantaged students' achievement in the early grades. *Elementary School Journal*, 110(1), 92–113.

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers. Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995a). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34(3), 159–165.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995b). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Association*, 32(2), 465–491.
- Leafstedt, J., Richards, C., & Gerber, M. (2004). Effectiveness of explicit phonological awareness instruction for at-risk English learners. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 19(4), 252–261.
- Lee, V. & Burkham, D. (2002). Inequality at the starting gate: Social background differences in achievement as children begin school. *Childhood Special Education*, 25(4), 232–242.
- Leech, N. L., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2008). Qualitative data analysis: A compendium of techniques and a framework for selection for school psychology research and beyond. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23(4), 587–604.
- Lonigan, C. (2004). Emergent literacy skills and family literacy. In B.H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of family literacy* (pp. 57–81). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Love, A., & Kruger, A. (2005). Teacher beliefs and student achievement in urban schools serving African American students. *Journal of Educational Research*, 99(2), 87–98.
- Marcon, R. (1999). Differential impact of preschool models on development and early learning of inner-city children. *Developmental Psychology*, 35(2), 358–375.
- Maye, D., & Day, B. (2011). Teacher identities: The fingerprint of culturally relevant pedagogy for students at risk. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 78(2), 19–26.
- Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141.
- Neuman, S., Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (2000). *Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. 107–110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).
- Oyserman, D., Gant, L., & Ager, J. (1995). A socially contextualized model of African American identity: Possible selves and school persistence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(6), 1216–1232.

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

- Payne, C., & Knowles, T. (2009). Promise and peril: Charter schools, urban school reform, and the Obama administration. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(2), 227–239.
- Perry, T. (2003). Achieving in post-civil rights America: The outline of a theory. In T. Perry, C. Steele, & A. G. Hilliard (Eds.), *Young, gifted, and Black: Promoting high achievement among African-American students* (pp. 87–108). Boston: Beacon Press.
- Phillips, B., Clancy-Menchetti, J., & Lonigan, C. (2008). Successful phonological awareness instruction with preschool children: Lessons from the classroom. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 28(1), 3–17.
- Ross, D. B., Bondy, E., Galligane, C., & Hambacher, E. (2008). Promoting academic engagement through insistence: Being a warm demander. *Childhood Education*, 84(3), 142–146.
- Rotberg, I. C. (2014). Charter schools and the risk of increased segregation. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(5), 26–30.
- Souto-Manning, M., & Mitchell, C. (2010). The role of action research in fostering culturally-responsive practices in a preschool classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37(4), 269–277.
- Test, J. E. (2006). Infant and toddler teachers as transmitters of culture. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 38(1), 47–63.
- Tucker, C., Porter, T., Reinke, W., Herman, K., Ivery, P., Mack, C., et al. (2005). Promoting teacher efficacy for working with culturally diverse students. *Preventing School Failure*, 50(1), 29–34.
- U.S. Census (2009). *Quick Facts*. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/news.html>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Annual update of the health and human services poverty guidelines. Federal Register. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). Head Start performance standards and other regulations. Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
- Wang, X., Bernas, R., & Eberhard, P. (2005). Maternal teaching strategies in four cultural communities: Implications for early childhood teachers. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 3(3), 269–288.
- Ware, F. (2006). Warm demander pedagogy: Culturally responsive teaching that supports a culture of achievement for African American students. *Urban Education*, 41(4), 427–456.

## ACCEPTANCE AND INSISTENCE

- Whitehurst, G., Zevenbergen, A., Crone, D., Schultz, M., Velting, O., & Fischel, J. (1999). Outcomes of an emergent literacy intervention from Head Start through second grade. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 91*(2), 261–272.
- Zigler, E., Gordic, B., & Styfco, S. (2007). What is the goal of Head Start? Four decades of confusion and debate. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Intervention Field, 10*(2), 83–97.
- Zipin, L. (2009). Dark funds of knowledge, deep funds of pedagogy: Exploring boundaries between lifeworlds and schools. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 30*(3), 317–331.