

Multicultural and Academic Learning Taught Simultaneously

Two new handbooks tell teachers and parents how to use math, reading, and language arts activities to help children learn about their own and other cultures while they master academic skills. Unlike other multicultural curriculum guides, the Responsive Multicultural Basic Skills Handbooks offer not only sample activities but also explicit teaching methods and principles.

Among the specific "how-to's" are techniques for giving children a sense of control over their own learning, methods for making positive use of each child's unique background, and techniques for creating a feeling of cooperation among children in ethnically diverse classrooms. Readers also learn how to adjust activities to children who may learn best kinesthetically, aurally, and/or tactilely rather than visually.

The *Overview* presents a rationale for emphasizing the cultural diversity that exists in most contemporary classrooms and utilizing differences in beliefs, behavior, appearance, language, and thought processes to enrich learning activities. References to children's literature and other media enable primary school teachers to plan individualized lessons for their students. The second volume, *Children's World View: The Basis for Learning Activities*, includes instructions for combining academic with multicultural learning activities as well as examples, sample lesson plans,

and a model curriculum framework.

Most of the activities outlined were developed in conjunction with teachers and parents of primary school children in Fresno, California, and Reno, Nevada.

For more information or to secure copies of the two Responsive Multicultural Basic Skills Handbooks (\$23 per set), contact: The Responsive Education Program, Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94103. Phone: (415) 565-3171.

After-School Strategy for Third World Students

A new strategy for helping black and other Third World children survive in traditional American public schools is the focus of a two-day conference to be offered in Chicago and elsewhere this spring. The conference, entitled "Re-Directing Intelligence," was presented in several cities in California last November and December.

In discussing the high failure rate of black and other Third World students, conference presenters emphasized that traditional public schools still are not equipped to deal with children whose cultural history, primary language, and preferred learning styles differ from those supported by the schools. For example, black students' strong need to talk and interact while learning is often interpreted as a behavioral problem. Also, teachers must discontinue putting down these children's use of Ebonics,

the hybrid of West African and standard English spoken to some extent by 85 percent of black people in the United States.

The solution presented by the conference speakers, who included Asa Hilliard, Georgia State University, and Carl Mack, Superintendent of the Del Paso Heights school district, is to combine self-knowledge and specific strategies for developing intelligence into a curriculum for after-school classes for black and other youngsters, to be paid for by their parents.

The classes, which cost the parents \$10 a week, teach the children standard or "cash" English through English-as-a-second-language techniques and help them develop academic "process" skills, such as evaluating, classifying, memorizing, and thinking divergently and convergently. At the same time, students learn about their own cultures so that they can identify myths and stereotypes, understand that information about many different cultural groups has been suppressed for political reasons, and develop a sense of motivation and self-esteem.

A procedure and curriculum manual that describes how to create "REDI"™ schools is available (for \$15) from John and Kathrynne Favors, the school administrators and curriculum developers whose organization devised the two-day seminar. For more information, contact the Favors at Jonka, Inc., P.O. Box 19002, Oakland, CA 94619. Phone: (415) 465-8300.

Learning Styles

RITA DUNN AND NANCY RECKINGER

School and Home Cooperate on Learning Styles

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District in Danville, California, has de-

veloped a plan for implementing optional programs that meet learning style needs. The plan calls for assessment of learning style and right/left brain preferences, followed by conferences using the Parents' Record of Educational Progress with parents of participating students. The challenge, according to the planners, is to incorporate current knowledge of learning style into the classroom on a daily basis with the support and involvement of parents. The first phase of the plan being implemented this year centers on the develop-

ment of a year-round school.

For more information: Joan Greenfeld, San Ramon Valley USD, 699 Old Orchard Dr., Danville, CA 94526.

Learning Style Part of L.A. City Inservice

Administrators in Los Angeles are in the second phase of a clinical supervision inservice program, one-third of which is devoted to learning modalities using the Swassing-Barbe model. All principals,

assistant principals, head counselors, administrative deans, and Title I secondary compensatory education educators are increasing their awareness of modality preferences in addition to Castaneda's work in field dependence-field independence. The inservice procedures use reading, lecturates, process activities, and summary sessions to increase administrators' understanding of students' needs and the implications for teachers.

For more information: Robert T. DeVries, Director of Staff Development, Los Angeles Unified School District, 450 N. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012.

Brain Function Research Raises Educational Questions

Recent research by Sergent seems to indicate that some things learned mostly on one side of the brain are tested on the other. He found that very brief exposure or low frequency stimuli—most test items—are best processed by the right hemisphere of the brain. The left side of the brain requires longer exposure or higher frequency for processing. See: J. Sergent, "The Cerebral Balance of Power: Confrontation or Cooperation?" *Journal of Experimental Psychology* (April 1982): 253-272.

Hynd and Scott have found evidence that Native Americans develop language in the right perceptual hemisphere due to the characteristics of their native language. Hynd proposes that the language function shifts to the left hemisphere as students learn English, a more propositionally-oriented language. See: G. W. Hynd and S. A. Scott, "Propositional and Appositional Modes of Thought and Differential Cerebral Speech Laterization in Navajo Indian and Anglo Children," *Child Development* 51 (September 1980): 909-911.

Brain Science Doesn't Translate Into Classroom Techniques

Psychobiologist Jerre Levy of the University of Chicago has criticized inter-

pretations of research insinuating that: (1) lessons should be designed to respond to the left or the right hemispheres. She insists that all successful attempts at education "necessarily educate the whole brain"; (2) the number of music and art classes should be increased, or that there should be more stimulation of intuition; and (3) traditional practices have educated only the left side of the brain. Levy says such statements are "derived from a total misconception of how the normal brain functions" and that such procedures "can only have the result of doing untold damage to the child."

Levy further reports that there is no evidence of which she is aware that children gain new conceptual understanding only during "spurt" periods; nor is there any that corroborates that they can consolidate and elaborate old concepts only during plateau periods.

According to Levy, the variations among students' skills, personalities, ways of seeing the world, and abilities suggests that different and optimal ways of responding to individuals should be sought, but that those are outgrowths of our developing knowledge of learning style, not brain science. Levy says "there is very little, if anything" of brain science that presently "can be translated into educational practice."

For reference: Jerre Levy, "What Do Brain Scientists Know About Education?" *Learning Styles Network Newsletter*, New York: Center for the Study of Learning and Teaching Styles 3,3 (Autumn 1982): 4-8.

For additional information, see also Jerre Levy, "Research Synthesis on Right and Left Hemispheres: We Think with Both Sides of the Brain," *Educational Leadership* 40, 4 (January 1983): 66-71.

Puzzled About Your Learning Style?

Do you do your best work most of the time? Or do you cut corners when no one is checking? Is your efficiency increased—or reduced—by the people you supervise? Or the ones to whom you report? Would you perform better in a

different office, or with different colleagues, or with different students?

The journal *Early Years* has been helping teachers answer questions like these. In a four-part series that included an introduction to learning styles and questions that could be answered to identify individual styles, graphs revealed how to analyze style and explained how certain types tend to behave at work and at home (January 1983). February's installment described how teachers could make the most of their styles and the March issue suggests a variety of approaches for beginning to teach students through their different styles.

For more information: Patricia Broderick, *Early Years*, Hale Ln., Darien, CT 06820.

Basic Skills Taught Through Modalities

Basic skills are taught through modality strengths in a Montessori classroom at the Booker Elementary School in Sarasota, Florida. The Swassig-Barbe Modality Index and Mills Learning Method instruments are used to identify modalities.

For more information: Diane Riva, 3601 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota, FL 33580. This program will be presented in an Action Lab on Learning/Teaching Styles at ASCD's Houston conference.

Note to readers: The authors of these columns welcome feedback and contributions. Address all items to Editor, *Educational Leadership*, 225 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

Robert C. McKean and Bob L. Taylor are both Professors of Education, University of Colorado, Boulder.

Francione N. Lewis is Director, Responsive Education Program, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco; and Ramón L. Santiago is Director, Bilingual Education Service Center, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

Rita Dunn is Professor of Education, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York; and Nancy Reckinger is Professor of Education, California State University, Fullerton.

Copyright © 1983 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.