## Resource 7

### Integrating Culture and Language into Instruction

Students and parents become more engaged in learning at home when curriculum and homework assignments incorporate the perspectives and history of cultures and languages of the school community. Use this tool to review four approaches to integrating culture and language into instruction. Consider your practices and goals for students. Think about how you might modify them based on the descriptions, examples, strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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| Contributions | Heroes, cultural components, holidays and other discrete elements related to ethnic groups are added to the curriculum on special days, occasions and celebrations. | • Famous Mexican-Americans are studied only during the week of Cinco de Mayo (May 5).  
• African-Americans are studied during Black History Month in February, but rarely during the rest of the year.  
• Ethnic foods are studied in the first grade with little attention devoted to the cultures in which the foods are embedded. | • Provides a quick and relatively easy way to put ethnic content into the curriculum.  
• Gives ethnic heroes visibility in the curriculum alongside mainstream heroes.  
• Is a popular approach among teachers and educators. | • Results in a superficial understanding of ethnic cultures.  
• Focuses on the life-styles and artifacts of ethnic groups and can reinforce stereotypes and misconceptions.  
• Mainstream criteria are used to select heroes and cultural elements for inclusion in the curriculum. |
| Additive   | This approach consists of the addition of content, concepts, themes and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its structure. | • Adding the book *The Color Purple* to a literature unit without re-conceptualizing the unit or giving the students background knowledge to understand the book.  
• Adding a unit on the Japanese-American internment to a U.S. history course without hearing about Japanese in any other unit.  
• Leaving the core curriculum intact, but adding an ethnic studies course as an elective that focuses on a specific ethnic group. | • Makes it possible to add ethnic content to the curriculum without changing its structure, which requires substantial curriculum changes and staff development.  
• Can be implemented within the existing curriculum structure. | • Reinforces the idea that ethnic history and culture are not integral parts of U.S. mainstream culture.  
• Students view ethnic groups from Eurocentric perspectives.  
• Fails to help students understand how the dominant culture and ethnic cultures are interconnected and interrelated. |
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<td>Transformation</td>
<td>The basic goals, structure and nature of the curriculum is changed to enable</td>
<td>• Meaning of the revolution to Anglo revolutionaries, Anglo loyalists, Afro-Americans, Native Americans and the British. • A unit on 20th century U.S. literature includes works by William Faulkner, Joyce Carol Oates, Langston Hughes, N. Scott Momaday, Carlos Bulosan, Saul Bellow, Maxine Hong Kingston and Rudolfo A. Anaya.</td>
<td>• Enables students to understand the complex ways in which diverse racial and cultural groups participated in the formation of U.S. society and culture. • Helps reduce racial and ethnic encapsulation. • Enables diverse ethnic, racial and religious groups to see their cultures, ethos, and perspectives in the school curriculum. • Gives students a balanced view of the nature and development of U.S. culture and society. • Helps empower victimized racial, ethnic and cultural groups.</td>
<td>• The implementation of this approach requires substantial curriculum revision, in-service training, and the identification and development of materials written from the perspectives of various racial and cultural groups. • Staff development for the institutionalization of this approach must be continuous and ongoing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision Making and Social Action</td>
<td>In this approach, students identify important social problems and issues, gather</td>
<td>• A class studies prejudice and discrimination in their school and decides to take actions to improve race relations in the school. • A class studies the treatment of ethnic groups in a local newspaper and writes a letter to the newspaper editor suggesting ways that the treatment of ethnic minority groups in the newspaper should be improved.</td>
<td>• Enables students to improve critical thinking, value analysis, decision making and social action skills. • Enables students to improve their data gathering skills. • Helps students develop a sense of political efficacy. • Helps students improve their skills to work in groups.</td>
<td>• Requires a considerable amount of curriculum planning and materials identification. • May be longer in duration than more traditional teaching units. • May focus on problems and issues considered controversial by some members of the school staff and citizens of the community. • Students may be able to take few meaningful actions that contribute to the resolution of the social issue or problem.</td>
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Adapted from Banks (1991)