Content Resources

Young Children Are Aware of Racial Stigmas
A recent study out of UCLA (http://www.theroot.com/views/study-minority-students-are-aware-stigmas-against-them) says that minority students as young as second grade are aware of stigmas against their ethnic groups and have increased academic anxiety as a result. But in a compelling twist, researchers also found that children from minority groups are more motivated about school than their white classmates.

The study raises interesting questions about what is happening to the motivation of the children surveyed over time to create persistent achievement gaps. One interpretation is that this is an important reminder of how negative social cues impact children early on and factor into their futures. What do you think?

Instructional Resources

Questions Better Than Answers?
In an article in The Harvard Education Letter, Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana of the Right Question Institute write to say they have found that teaching students to ask their own questions can stimulate students’ curiosity and engage them more effectively while teaching a critical lifelong skill. The authors describe a step-by-step process called Question Formulation Technique (QFT) that helps students to produce their own questions, improve them, and strategize how to use them. Teachers can use the QFT at different points: to introduce students to a new unit, to assess students' knowledge to see what they need to understand better, and even to conclude a unit to see how students can, with new knowledge, set a fresh learning agenda for themselves. The QFT has six key steps: teachers design a question focus; students produce questions; students improve their questions; students prioritize their questions; students and teachers decide on next steps; and students reflect on what they have learned. When teachers deploy the QFT in their classes, they notice three important changes in classroom culture and practices: using the QFT consistently increases participation in group and peer learning processes, improves classroom management, and enhances their efforts to address inequities in education. Read more at http://www.hepg.org/hel/article/507#home

Application:
Are you currently preparing your students/participants to ask questions? How might you build that capacity in a face-to-face course or workshop? In an online course or series of interactions?
**What Would You Say?**
On September 8, 2011, Donna Bryant testified at a hearing of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families. She was asked to discuss challenges and opportunities related to the Child Care and Development Block Grant with a particular focus on issues related to quality and safety. A copy of her testimony is at [http://help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Bryant.pdf](http://help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Bryant.pdf) A video of the hearing, including the testimony, is at [http://help.senate.gov/hearings/hearing/?id=247dea24-5056-9502-5d3c-b8c13be16d96](http://help.senate.gov/hearings/hearing/?id=247dea24-5056-9502-5d3c-b8c13be16d96) (Audio begins just before the 24-minute mark.) In her testimony, Dr. Bryant raises several really important issues related to improving quality for young children.

**Application:**
*Discuss the evidence and concepts that Dr. Bryant presented related to improving quality. Are there any issues related to quality that you wish she’d mentioned? What additional evidence sources related to promoting quality for young children who are culturally, linguistically, and/or ability diverse might she have used?*

**Finn-tastic**
In Smithsonian Magazine, LynNell Hancock writes that Finland’s vast improvements in education over the past two decades are in large part because its teachers are trusted to do whatever it takes to turn young lives around. If one method fails, teachers consult with colleagues to try something else, and Hancock says they seem to relish the challenges. **Nearly 30 percent of Finland’s children receive some kind of special help during their first nine years of school.** There are no rankings and comparisons between schools or regions. People in the agencies running schools, from national officials to local authorities, are educators, not business people, military leaders, or career politicians. Every school has the same national goals and draws from the same pool of university-trained educators. The differences between weakest and strongest students are the smallest in the world, according to the most recent survey by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Read more at [http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/Why-Are-Finlands-Schools-Successful.html#ixzz1XkywtGBc](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/Why-Are-Finlands-Schools-Successful.html#ixzz1XkywtGBc)

**Application:**
1. *Discuss the approach being taken in Finland. Could this approach work at a school in your community? At a school in which the children reflect significant cultural, linguistic, and ability diversity? Why? Why not?*
2. *Discuss what supports would be necessary to transform a school from the current model to the Finnish model (e.g., professional development, time for early childhood and early childhood special education partners to collaborate).*

- Find additional resources and measures related to diversity, and previous Care Packages, at the Crosswalks website [http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~scpp/crosswalks/pages/carepackages.cfm](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~scpp/crosswalks/pages/carepackages.cfm)
- To learn more about resources, measures, and professional development related to increasing the emphasis on diversity in preservice coursework, practica, and program practices, please contact Camille Catlett at (919) 966-6635 or [camille.catlett@unc.edu](mailto:camille.catlett@unc.edu).