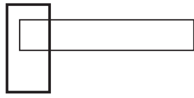

Cultural Discontinuity: Toward a Quantitative Investigation of a Major Hypothesis in Education

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Education researchers have suggested that the academic challenges faced by many ethnic minority students are linked to perceived cultural discontinuity between students' home- and school-based experiences. However, there has been very little empirical inquiry into the existence and effects of cultural discontinuity for these students. The purpose of this article is to offer a definition and methodology to be used in the quantitative investigation of cultural discontinuity. A description of the cultural values and corresponding behaviors of African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American students, along with those values and behaviors salient in most public schools, is offered. Next, a method for investigating cultural discontinuity is proposed. Finally, future research directions to further examine cultural discontinuity are offered.

Keywords: cultural discontinuity; ethnic minority students

Several years into the 21st century, many ethnic minority students continue to fare poorly in public schools. Native American students have the highest dropout rates among all students participating in public schooling (M. T. Garrett, Bellon-Harn, Torres-Rivera, Garrett, & Roberts, 2003). An overwhelming majority of low-income African American and Latino students remain at or below basic performance on standardized achievement tests (Meece & Kurtz-Costes, 2001). Although many Asian American students typically do not experience these academic difficulties, some research has shown that their schooling experiences are replete with social interactions that foster anxiety and depression (M. R. Lee, Okazaki, & Yoo, 2006; S. J. Lee, 1994; Tse, 1994; Yoo & Lee, 2005). Given that more than two thirds of the public school population in the United States will be African American, Asian American, Latino, or Native American by the year 2020 (U.S. Department of Education, 2007), it is important to understand the sources of the schooling difficulties faced by these students.

One hypothesized source of these difficulties is the perceived cultural discontinuity between these students' home experiences and their classroom-based learning and social experiences (Deyhle, 1995; Gay, 2000; Ndura, 2004; Nieto, 1999; Parsons, 2001, 2003; Parsons, Travis, & Simpson, 2005; Solano-Flores & Nelson-Barber, 2001; Webb-Johnson, 2003). Although researchers have begun to explore conceptually the link between cultural discontinuity and school performance and psychological well-being outcomes for ethnic minority students (Cartledge & Loe, 2001; Foster, Lewis, & Onafowora, 2003; T. C. Howard, 2001), few have actually provided empirical data to support the claim that cultural discontinuity (a) exists and (b) precedes the academic difficulties experienced by this student population.

The purpose of this article, therefore, is to propose a methodology designed to empirically investigate cultural discontinuity and its psychological and behavioral corollaries among ethnic minority students. The first section of this article addresses various descriptions of cultural discontinuity. The second section identifies the multiple factors involved in cultural discontinuity. Specifically, the cultural values and practices said to permeate the home and schooling experiences of ethnic minority students are discussed. Throughout this section, empirical and conceptual literature is used to support the existence of these cultural values and practices. Also in the second section, a description of the cultural discontinuity process is offered. In the third section, a quantitative methodology is offered to assess the presence and effects of cultural discontinuity between ethnic minority students' home- and school-based experiences, particularly those linked to or reflective of specific cultural values.

Prior to proposing a methodology to examine cultural discontinuity, it should be acknowledged that the cultural values of many ethnic minority students should not be viewed as static characteristics or cultural traits (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). Although some believe there is significant variability between particular ethnic groups (American Psychological Association, 2003; Strickland, 2000), there may be equal or even greater degrees of variability within cultural groups, especially when the endorsement of particular cultural values is considered (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Mehan, 1998; Wainryb, 2005). For example, participation in U.S. society necessitates some orientation toward Western or mainstream cultural values, particularly in institutions such as the public school (American Psychological Association, 2003; Boykin, 1986; Constantine & Sue, 2006; Gay, 2000; Rogoff, 2003). Thus it is tenable that members of

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ethnic minority groups are socialized toward and exhibit behaviors that reflect mainstream cultural values (Boykin, 1986). Similarly, many individuals may not endorse or exhibit the cultural values typically associated with their ethnic minority group.

Therefore it becomes important to examine multiple cultural value–based behaviors rather than just those typically associated with a given ethnic minority group. Also, examining the salience of these cultural value–based behaviors in multiple contexts—at home and at school—duly takes into consideration the role of context in the exhibition of these cultural value–based behaviors (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). In addition, both examinations can reduce stereotypes that suggest that ethnic minority groups are culturally homogeneous or possess only certain cultural values and not others (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Irvine & York, 1995).

These messages are adhered to throughout this article. Specifically, this article proposes a methodology that seeks to investigate the multiple cultural value–laden behavioral expressions of ethnic minority students at home and throughout their schooling experiences. Rather than just examining the salience of particular cultural values typically associated with various ethnic minority groups, the research methodology proposed in this article is intended to determine whether multiple cultural values—those associated with given ethnic minority groups and those associated with mainstream culture—are salient throughout the home- and school-based socialization and learning experiences of ethnic minority students. This methodology, it is believed, can provide more insight into the salience of cultural discontinuity between home and school for this population while acknowledging the variability of endorsed cultural values and behavioral expressions.

Cultural Discontinuity

Theoretical Framework

Ethnocentric monoculturalism, proposed initially by Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, provides the theoretical framework for the empirical investigation of cultural discontinuity (Sue, 2004; Sue & Sue, 2003). Sue and Sue define ethnocentric monoculturalism as "the individual, institutional, and cultural expression of the superiority of one group's cultural heritage (e.g., its values, language, customs and practices) over another combined with the possession of power to impose those standards" (p. 71). Conceptually, ethnocentric monoculturalism is analogous to cultural racism, the individual and institutional expression of one group's perceived cultural heritage superiority over another's (Jones, 1997; additional descriptions of ethnocentric monoculturalism can be found in Sue & Sue, 2003).

Sue and Sue (2003) write that the cultural heritage of the dominant group typically pervades mainstream institutions, programs, policies, and structures. One of these institutions is the public school. For many ethnic minority students, their introduction to public schooling in the United States includes an introduction to sanctioned behaviors and expectations that often reflect Western or mainstream cultural values. Moreover, given the belief that the dominant cultural heritage found in mainstream society is superior to that of ethnic minority students, exhibition of nonmainstream cultural values is discouraged or ceases in public school classrooms, whereas the display of mainstream cultural behaviors is deemed appropriate. Thus ethnocentric monoculturalism is a conceptual precursor to the cultural discontinuity experienced by many ethnic minority students, as it provides a rationale for the actual discontinuance of the cultural value–based practices brought to the public school by ethnic minority students.

Defining Cultural Discontinuity

To begin, the term *cultural discontinuity* is represented in the educational research literature by many analogous phrases (e.g., *cultural conflict*, Vega, Khoury, Zimmerman, Gil, & Warheit, 1995; *cultural dissonance,* Bell & Clark, 1998; M. W. Garrett, 1995; Hale, 2001; Gordon & Yowell, 1992; Hollins & Spencer, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Portes, 2001; Tharp, 1989; Tillman, 2002; *cultural misalignment,* Tyler, Boykin, & Walton, 2006). Cultural discontinuity is conceptually defined here as a school-based behavioral process where the cultural value–based learning preferences and practices of many ethnic minority students—those typically originating from home or parental socialization activities—are discontinued at school. Mathematically, cultural discontinuity is conceptualized as the difference between ethnic minority students' reports of their cultural value–based behaviors exhibited at home and those exhibited at school. As is shown later, cultural discontinuity is evidenced by the relative differences between cultural value–based behaviors exhibited at home and those exhibited at school.

Although Ogbu (1982) suggested that all students experience home-school discontinuities throughout their schooling experiences, such discrepancies are considered more pronounced for ethnic minority students (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Nieto, 1999). Many believe that the curriculum and/or classroom practices and norms that ethnic minority students are exposed to at school reflect mainstream cultural values, which are rooted in Western or European worldviews (American Psychological Association, 2003; Baker, 2005; Bohn, 2003; Boykin, 1983; Deyhle, 1995; Gay, 2000; G. R. Howard, 1999; Loewen, 2007; Nieto, 1999; Strickland, 2000; Sue, 2004). Indeed, many psychologists and education researchers are convinced that there is an inherent bias held for mainstream or Western cultural norms and values (Loewen, 2007; Sue, 2004; Sue & Sue, 2003). Such bias often results in the cessation or discontinuance of those cultural value–based behaviors many ethnic minority students bring to public school classrooms. Some work has corroborated this claim associated with cultural discontinuity. For example, early work by Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) suggested that the educational system tends to strip Mexican American children of their culture and identity. In his description of cultural discontinuity, Hugh Mehan (1998) suggested that "all students, but especially those from low-income, ethnic- and linguistic-minority families, are forced, under normal circumstances, to learn the tacit rules of the classroom culture" (p. 249).

Similarly, Geneva Gay (2000) wrote that

> most teachers . . . expect all students to behave according to the school's cultural standards of normality. When students of color fail to comply, the teachers find them unlovable, problematic, and difficult to honor or embrace without equivocation. Rather than build on what the students have in order to make their learning easier and

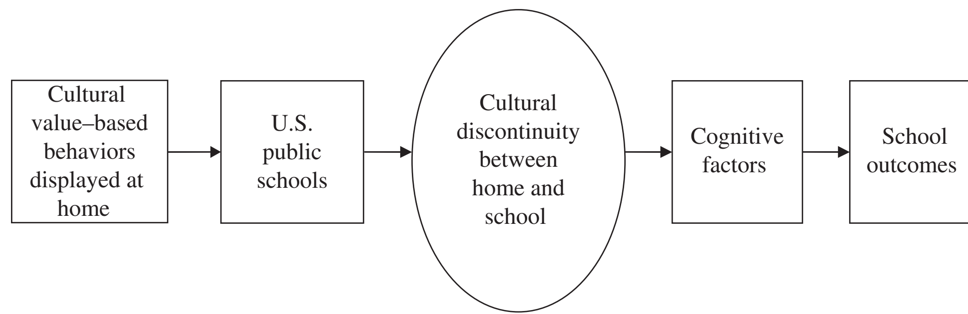

FIGURE 1. *Cultural discontinuity process for ethnic minority students.*

> better, the teachers want to correct and compensate for their "cultural deprivations." This means making ethnically diverse students conform to middle-class, Eurocentric cultural norms. (p. 46)

For Gay, cessation of specific cultural value–based behaviors and conformity toward mainstream cultural norms precedes the academic difficulties faced by many ethnic minority students. Similar articulations for Latino, Asian American, and Native American populations have been made by Nieto (1999), G. R. Howard (1999), S. J. Lee (1994), Deyhle (1995), and M. T. Garrett and colleagues (2003).

According to these works, many ethnic minority students must discontinue their cultural value–based behaviors in school to optimize their psychological well-being and overall schooling experiences. Although there are some examples in which ethnic minority students' cultural values are systematically incorporated into their formal schooling experiences (Durden, 2007; Sefa Dei, 2008), many of these students typically have to negotiate between the two sets of cultural values—those extant at home and those at school. Thus the essence of cultural discontinuity is captured in the school-based cessation of ethnic minority students' cultural value–based practices, particularly those found throughout their home socialization experiences.

Processing Cultural Discontinuity

The process of cultural discontinuity in education describes several activities that form a unique, dialectical phenomenon. First, from birth, children are socialized in contexts where specific cultural values are salient (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003; Mehan, 1998; Rogoff, 2003; Spencer, 1995; Tharp, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978). The socialization of these cultural values—typically from parent or adult to child—informs the manner in which children engage in tasks, whether cognitive, behavioral, or emotional (Mehan, 1998; Rogoff, 2003; Tharp, 1989).

The activity that follows the development of cognitive skills in the cultural context (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003) is students' behavioral manifestations of their home-based cultural values in public school classrooms (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Given the link between culture and cognitive development, it is likely that many ethnic minority students bring their home-based cultural values to the classroom setting (Gay, 2000; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Many researchers have argued, however, that the sanctioned cultural value–based behaviors found in most U.S. public school classrooms reflect a Western or mainstream cultural value or belief system (American Psychological Association, 2003; Constantine & Sue, 2006; Delpit, 1988; Gay, 2000; Hilliard, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Pai & Adler, 1997). This Western or mainstream value system is also found throughout the classroom infrastructure and the sanctioned learning activities that students must adhere to at school (Boykin, Tyler, & Miller, 2005; G. R. Howard, 1999; Johnson, 1982; Loewen, 2007).

The third activity in the cultural discontinuity process involves the cessation of ethnic minority students' cultural value–laden behaviors and preferences. Once ethnic minority students enter the classroom, it is communicated—either explicitly or inadvertently—that their culturally informed behaviors are not conducive to optimal learning (Gay, 2000; G. R. Howard, 1999; T. C. Howard, 2001). These behaviors are consequently discouraged by teachers and school administrators and often coercively discontinued (Boykin, Tyler, et al., 2005; Deyhle, 1986, 1995; Gay, 2000, 2005; G. R. Howard, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Nieto, 1999).

The fourth activity in the cultural discontinuity process is the conscious or unconscious decision made by ethnic minority students to either adhere to sanctioned classroom rules regarding appropriate learning behaviors or maintain preference of the culture-based behaviors they brought to school. Some research has shown that African American students, among others, are placed in situations where they have to adhere to mainstream cultural value–based behaviors in school to remain in good standing with classroom teachers (Tyler, Boykin, Miller, & Hurley, 2006). Others have shown that teachers' expectations for student achievement are associated with their perceptions of whether students adhere to mainstream cultural value–based behaviors while at school (Boykin, Tyler, Watkins-Lewis, & Kizzie, 2006; Tyler, Boykin, & Walton, 2006). Thus the message communicated throughout schooling is that, to achieve, ethnic minority students must decide to cease exhibition of their specific cultural value–based behaviors. Such decisions may inform the cognitive factors that precede academic performance (e.g., academic motivation, academic self-efficacy) and academic performance itself.

The conceptual model (see Figure 1) more fully illustrates the process of cultural discontinuity experienced by many ethnic minority students. According to the conceptual model, the difference between cultural value–based behaviors exhibited at school and at home is considered cultural discontinuity. That is, cultural

discontinuity begins when those cultural value–based behaviors typically exhibited at home are discontinued or exhibited to a much lesser degree at school. Based on Sue's (2004) ethnocentric monoculturalism concept, school-based bias toward specific mainstream culture–based activities promotes the discontinuity of ethnic minority students' cultural value–based activities throughout their schooling experiences. Such discontinuance has been conceptually linked to the cognitive antecedents of academic performance for many ethnic minority students (Gay, 2000; G. R. Howard, 1999; Nieto, 1999). Consequently, such cognitive factors are believed to be associated with ethnic minority students' schooling performance.

Assessing Cultural Discontinuity

Despite this articulation of the cultural discontinuity process, only certain aspects have been examined in the education and psychological literatures. For example, some evidence shows that low-income African American children are socialized more toward cultural values such as communalism and verve (Gay, 2000; Marryshow, Hurley, Allen, Tyler, & Boykin, 2005; Sankofa, Hurley, Allen, & Boykin, 2005; Tyler, Boykin, Boelter, & Dillihunt, 2005; Tyler, Dillihunt, et al., in press). Yet these same students and their parents were not asked—in the same study—about their perceptions of whether these cultural values and behaviors are rejected at school (Tyler, Boykin, Miller, et al., 2006). Moreover, regarding African American children's schooling experiences, there is ample evidence to suggest that many classroom instructors maintain bias toward instructional practices and classroom infrastructures that reflect Western or mainstream cultural values such as individualism or competition (Boykin, Tyler, et al., 2005; Boykin et al., 2006; Neal, McCray, Webb-Johnson, & Bridgest, 2003; Tyler, Boykin, & Walton, 2006; Webb-Johnson, 2003). Yet in these same studies, reports of ethnic minority students' preferred culture-based activities are not queried.

To investigate cultural discontinuity, education researchers would have to provide evidence to suggest that specific cultural values are being displayed through certain behaviors at home, and in that same study, there would have to be evidence of these specific cultural values not being displayed (or not being allowed to be displayed) at school. To date, the literature has little empirical evidence to suggest that the frequencies with which culture-based behaviors are exhibited at home and at school are actually different for ethnic minority students or for any students. Moreover, to support the claims made by some researchers regarding the effects of cultural discontinuity, the cessation or discontinuance of ethnic minority students' cultural value–based behaviors would have to be statistically associated with some psychological factor and/or academic performance outcome. In the current literature, there is very little empirical evidence to support either the existence or effects of cultural discontinuity.

The next section explores the specific cultural values and behaviors found among four ethnic minority student groups and those found in mainstream public institutions such as the public school. If cultural discontinuity is to be studied quantitatively, researchers will need to understand which cultural values are being discontinued for which ethnic minority student group. Prior to this discussion, a brief history of the study of culture in psychology and education is offered to historically situate the discussion of cultural discontinuity.

Culture in the Study of Psychology and Education

Culture has been defined as the values, traditions, and beliefs mediating the behaviors of a particular social group (American Psychological Association, 2003; Parsons, 2003; Solano-Flores & Nelson-Barber, 2001). The role of culture in human sociocognitive functioning was not fully appreciated or even recognized in the social sciences until the mid-20th century (American Psychological Association, 2003; Cole, 1995; Rogoff, 2003; Shweder, 1995). During this time, the declining significance of behavioral explanations of human phenomena made room for the emergence of several theoretical propositions calling for an examination of human mental processes and their role in behavior (Gergen & Gulerce, 1996; Strickland, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). In psychology, educational psychology in particular, culture began to be recognized as a major shaper of these mental processes (e.g., thinking and knowledge acquisition).

Culture was and continues to be viewed as a major influence in cognitive development (American Psychological Association, 2003; Sue, 2004). It has been linked to cognitive and behavioral tasks carried out in formal contexts, such as public school classrooms, and in informal learning contexts, like home environments and community settings (Greenfield et al., 2003; Luria, 1976; Rogoff, 2003; Wertsch, 1985). Specifically, the research stemming from the Russian troika (Alexander Luria, Alexander Leontiev, and Lev Vygotsky) during the second and third quarters of the 20th century was instrumental in helping education researchers better understand that task performance was a function of the historically situated, socially transmitted cultural values individuals possessed (Cole, 1995; Luria, 1976; Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1994; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). Later research, that of Michael Cole, Sylvia Scribner, Patricia Greenfield, Jean Lave, and Barbara Rogoff, also confirmed the mediating role of culture in human activity and thought processes (Shweder, 1995). Since the emergence of these works, psychologists have been charged with a more dutiful recognition and incorporation of the role of culture into psychological and educational research (American Psychological Association, 2003; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff & Chavajay, 1995; Strickland, 2000).

Emerging from this new focus on culture was the identification of specific culture-based values and belief systems held by many ethnic minority groups, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. Researchers also sought to examine how these values informed cognitive skill development and academic task performance for these populations (Au & Jordan, 1981; Boykin, 1983, 1986; Cole, 1995; Constantine & Sue, 2006; Deyhle, 1995; Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Irvine, 1985; Rogoff & Chavajay, 1995). Using Vygotsky's (1978) genetic law of cultural development as a theoretical guide, several education researchers began to gather evidence to illustrate that many ethnic minority students utilized an alternative set of cultural values—orthogonal to Western or mainstream cultural values—when engaged in activities that fostered cognitive skill development.

These lines of research led to the belief that the cultural values and corresponding behaviors of ethnic minority populations were

(a) different rather than deficient compared to Western or mainstream cultural values and ways of knowing and (b) integral to their lived experiences both inside and outside formal learning contexts such as the public school (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). A more in-depth discussion of the cultural values found in specific ethnic minority student populations is provided below. First, however, the cultural values permeating mainstream institutions in general and considered appropriate to school functioning in particular are discussed (Gay, 2000; Pai & Adler, 1997; Sampson, 1977; Strickland, 2000; Triandis, 1996).

Culture and American Schooling

Mainstream Cultural Values

Individualism. Individualism refers to one's disposition toward fundamental autonomy, independence, individual recognition, solitude, and the exclusion of others (Moemeka, 1998; Spence, 1985). Several aspects of this Western or mainstream cultural value are presented in the literature. For instance, the description of self-contained individualism lies in the ideal that, to be successful, one must achieve without depending on others for assistance. Another type of individualism is possessive individualism, where an individual's identity and status are bound to what he or she owns or possesses (Boykin, 1983). Still another form of individualism includes rugged individualism (Hsu, 1983) or the feeling that one's ultimate responsibility is to oneself.

More recently, the work of Harry Triandis has provided greater distinction for the individualism cultural value (Triandis, 1996, 2000; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998; Triandis & Suh, 2002). Specifically, Triandis and Gelfand found that the multiple forms of individualism that exist in the United States and abroad can be attributed to either horizontal or vertical social relationships, with the former emphasizing a balance between equality and uniqueness and the latter emphasizing independence through the preservation of hierarchical relationships (Komarraju & Cokley, in press). With these depictions, Triandis and others (Komarraju & Cokley, in press) have determined that horizontal individualists promote and foster the ability to express themselves while maintaining equal relationships with others. Vertical individualists, on the other hand, espouse autonomy and independence, particularly through competition.

Competition. Competition refers to one's preoccupation with doing better than others (Boykin, 1983). Competition manifests itself as individual competition, where an individual is trying to be the best among others (e.g., "Me against the world"); interpersonal competition, where an individual is attempting to beat out another in direct rivalry; and group competition, where an individual's "team" is attempting to surpass others (Boykin, Tyler, et al., 2005). Among U.S. citizens, competition is viewed as a central component of life (Rogoff, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2003).

Research Support for Mainstream Cultural Value Salience

Some early articles suggested that mainstream or Western cultural values exist throughout public schools, particularly those where ethnic minority students predominate. For example, Gay (1975) asserted that public school students are taught to be individualistic and competitive. Later, Morgan (1980) suggested that public schools minimize social interaction and expect individualized, competitive efforts, which are characteristic of the Western or mainstream society. Research by Johnson (1982) concluded that the classroom infrastructures in the public schools reinforce the mainstream cultural themes of individualism and competition. In particular, Johnson's work exemplifies the fact that, in just six years of schooling (from kindergarten through sixth grade), the public school—through its classroom infrastructure and curriculum—accomplishes the goal of reinforcing mainstream cultural ways of operating, particularly being competitive and individualistic.

More recent work has corroborated the existence of Western or mainstream cultural values in formal learning settings such as the public school (American Psychological Association, 2003; Greenfield, Quiroz, & Raeff, 2000; Raeff, 1997; Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Trumbell, 1999). For example, in a study by Sheets (1996), elementary school teachers serving predominately African American students reported feeling pressure to maintain controlled, quiet classrooms where students worked by themselves. It was concluded that teachers in this study felt that these practices and learning conditions were optimal for student learning. Similar findings have been reported in the literature (Boykin, Tyler, et al., 2005; Boykin et al., 2006; Tyler, Boykin, & Walton, 2006).

Ethnic Minority Group Cultural Values

African American Cultural Values

Wade Boykin, professor of psychology at Howard University, has researched the association between culture and achievement for the African American school-age population for more than three decades. His work has advanced the argument that a set of authentic culture-based values does, in fact, govern the behavioral, thought, and interactional patterns of many African Americans. Although there are several cultural values said to exist among this population (Boykin, 1986), his research program has collected data to uncover the presence and impact of three specific cultural values. These include communalism, movement, and verve.

Communalism. Communalism is defined as the perceived fundamental interdependence of people (Moemeka, 1998). Under communalism, a person acts in accordance with the notion that duty to his or her social group is more important than individual rights and privileges. Hence among biological and fictive kinship families, social identity is intricately tied to group membership, not to individual status and possessions. Sharing is promoted because it affirms the importance of social interconnectedness, whereas self-centeredness and individual greed are discouraged (Boykin, 1983).

Communalism is viewed as conceptually similar to collectivism, which, in psychology, is typically juxtaposed to individualism (Raeff, 2006; Triandis, 1996, 2000; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998; Triandis & Suh, 2002). Some research has used the terms interchangeably, both in text and research (e.g., Jagers & Mock, 1995). Moemeka (1998), however, has argued that this juxtaposition between individualism and collectivism is incorrect and suggests that "the extreme right of the continuum (between individualism and collectivism) is not collectivism, but communalism" (p. 119).

For Moemeka (1998), collectivism is a cultural value that facilitates individual pursuits, particularly by having individuals come together and form an aggregate or collective that will serve to protect the rights of the individual group members seeking to purse their self-interests. Thus for Moemeka, individualistic tendencies and goals lie at the core of collectivism. Communalism, on the other hand, embodies a social orientation toward the maintenance of the community and focuses exclusively on the welfare of the group rather than on the individual interests and goals of group members.

Movement. Movement indicates a premium placed on the amalgamation of movement, polyrhythm, dance, percussiveness, and syncopation embodied in the musical beat (Boykin & Allen, 1998). A person with a movement orientation prefers or is oriented toward physical movement, music, and rhythm, particularly in speech, thought, and behavioral patterns (Boykin, 1983). Coupled with a movement orientation is the preference for rhythmic activity, particularly with syncopated music in the background (Boykin & Allen, 1998).

Verve. Boykin (1983) defined verve as the propensity for high levels of physical or sensate stimulation. This physical stimulation has been coined in terms of qualities of intensity or liveliness, variability, and density of stimulation. The first is intensity, or liveliness, where the volume of stimulation and behavioral vigor is an important component of the cognitive and/or behavioral task. The second factor, variability, connotes levels of changeability or alternation between activities or stimuli in a person's environment. This variation in activity can also be induced by the individual. Finally, density refers to the number of stimulus elements or activities simultaneously present. Density focuses on (a) the number or distinct events occurring at the same time, (b) the simultaneous engagement in more than one activity, and (b) the focus on one or more tasks while there is discernible (audible or visual) background activity or stimulation present (Boykin, 1983, 1986).

Research Support for Communalism, Movement, and Verve Among African Americans

Throughout their research, Boykin and colleagues have examined the effects of incorporating aspects of African American students' home cultural values and experiences in formal and experimental learning settings. A consistent finding throughout each of their research studies is that low-income African American elementary and middle school students perform at optimal achievement levels when their experimental and actual classroom tasks build on the aforementioned cultural values brought to school (Bailey & Boykin, 2001; Boykin, 1983, 1986; Boykin & Cunningham, 2001; Boykin, Lilja, & Tyler, 2004). Such achievement outcomes have been found across tasks in language arts (i.e., reading comprehension and recall, metacognition, and analogical reasoning), mathematics (i.e., multiplication, product estimation, addition, subtraction, and multiplication with fractions), and social sciences (i.e., geography). Similar findings have been garnered in other studies with low-income African American elementary students with the communal, movement-expressive, and vervistic learning conditions (B. Allen & Butler, 1996; Bell & Clark, 1998; Hale, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2001; C. D. Lee, 2001a; Neal, McCray, & Webb-Johnson, 2001; Neal et al., 2003; Teel, DeBruin, & Parecki, 1998; Webb-Johnson, 2002).

Boykin and colleagues have also examined the presence of and preference for these cultural values among African American parents and their school-age children (Boykin, Albury, et al., 2005; Boykin & Bailey, 2000; Marryshow et al., 2005; Sankofa et al., 2005; Tyler et al., 2005; Tyler, Boykin, Miller, et al., 2006). Across each study, African American respondents reported significantly higher preferences for and socialization toward cultural values such as communalism over mainstream cultural values such as individualism and competition. In addition, African American parents reported significantly higher preference for and socialization toward communalism over individualism and competition, thus supporting the idea that students are exposed to contexts that foster the development of communal practices more so than individualistic or competitive practices (Tyler et al., 2005; Tyler, Dillihunt, et al., in press). Across these most recent works, there have been no main or interaction effects for gender or grade, thus emphasizing the idea that the socialization of these cultural values is not limited to male or female participants or to age.

Despite the salience and utility of these cultural values in the lives of low-income African American elementary and middle school students and their parents, public schools often discount these value-based practices in favor of those that reflect mainstream cultural values (Boykin, Tyler, et al., 2005; Boykin et al., 2006; Rogoff, 2003; Tyler, Boykin, & Walton, 2006). For example, African American parents and their school-age children have reported that communalism, verve, and movement are relatively absent from public school classrooms (Tyler, Boykin, Miller, et al., 2006). Similarly, teachers also have reported or are perceived to endorse mainstream classroom learning behaviors significantly more than cultural value–based behaviors such as communalism or verve (Tyler, Boykin, Miller, et al., 2006).

Although the classrooms of many African American school-age students are rich with individualistic and competition-based behaviors, some work has shown that these behaviors are also present—to some degree—throughout the household socialization activities of African American adults (i.e., college students and parents of school-age children; Tyler et al., 2005; Tyler, Dillihunt, et al., in press). In addition, some research shows that African American adults report significantly higher individualistic attitudes and behaviors than do their European American counterparts (Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001; Gaines et al., 1997; Hofstede, 1980; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). However, when individualism and collectivism are examined vis-à-vis Triandis and Gelfand's (1998) horizontal and vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism, African American adults score higher on horizontal individualism (i.e., uniqueness, freedom of expression), whereas European Americans score higher on vertical individualism (i.e., independence, autonomy; Komarraju & Cokley, in press).

Thus it appears that most of the research examining cultural value endorsement among African American school-age students and adults has shown that both individualism and collectivism/communalism are endorsed, albeit not at equal levels. Moreover, given Triandis and Gelfand's (1998) conceptualization of the individualism construct, some evidence has

determined that many African Americans endorse vertical individualism (Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2001; Gaines et al., 1997; Oyserman et al., 2002; Tyler et al., 2005). Thus it is tenable that cultural discontinuity between home and school may not be present for vertical individualism, as the research and theoretical literatures suggest that mainstream institutions (e.g., public schools) promote this cultural value (American Psychological Association, 2003; Boykin, Tyler, et al., 2005; Rogoff, 2003; Spence, 1985).

However, it is likely that cultural discontinuity between the home and school could exist for horizontal individualism. Horizontal individualism is conceptually aligned with the expressive individualism cultural theme forwarded by Boykin (1983, 1986), where, for many African Americans, there is a propensity toward expressing the self in unique and distinctive, albeit nonhierarchical, ways. Some evidence of this cultural value among African Americans is found in the work of Simons (2003), where he argues that many African American athletes engage in behaviors that promote their individual status while maintaining equal or horizontal relationships with peers and opponents.

In particular, Simons (2003) notes that many African American athletes engage in "trash talking," excessive celebrating, spiking, dancing, dunking, and inciting opponents in an attempt to establish psychological advantage. Webb-Johnson and colleagues (Neal et al., 2003; Webb-Johnson, 2002, 2003) have also shown that many African American students engage in expressively individualistic behaviors (e.g., style of dress, walking in a certain way) while preserving equal status with peers. The research of Irvine and York (1995), Gay (2000), and C. D. Lee (1995, 2001a, 2001b) also supports the presence of expressive or horizontal individualism behaviors, such as "signifying," among African American students.

Despite research findings suggesting that horizontal individualism is a significant component of the cultural socialization experiences of many African Americans, many of these activities are often prohibited in public school classrooms and, in some cases, outlawed in the professional sports industry (Gay, 2000; Irvine & York, 1995; C. D. Lee, 1995, 2001a; Simons, 2003; Webb-Johnson, 2002, 2003). Thus cultural discontinuity may not ostensibly exist for vertical individualism but may exist for horizontal individualism.

Asian American Cultural Values

The term *Asian American* is used to refer to a number of ethnicities including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Filipino. Asians have been immigrating to the United States since the 1800s and are now considered one of the most diverse and fastest growing groups in the country (B. S. K. Kim, Li, & Ng, 2005). Given the number of ethnicities represented in Asian American culture, some within-group variability in terms of cultural values is expected (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). However, there is a core set of values that have been empirically shown to be salient across many Asian cultures (B. S. K. Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2005). Bryan Kim and colleagues have explored these cultural values of Asians and Asian Americans, which include collectivism, conformity to norms, emotional self-control, humility, family recognition through achievement, filial piety, and deference to authority (B. S. K. Kim et al., 1999; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2005; B. S. K. Kim & Omizo, 2005).

As with African American and Latino cultures, collectivism is frequently mentioned in the Asian American literature. In Asian American culture, many values, including collectivism, are influenced by the teachings of the philosopher Confucius, or Confucianism. According to Confucianism, benevolence, respect for authority, cooperation, harmony, and a duty toward the group should always take precedence over individual needs and desires (Huang & Charter, 1996). Collectivism, for many members of Chinese and Japanese cultures, is defined as being able to establish interdependence between the "little me" (the self) and the "big me" (the group) rather than being independent from the group (Yeh & Huang, 1996).

Conformity to norms is related to the concept of collectivism in that a connection to one's group is readily apparent. Many Asian American cultures consider conforming to norms a safe way to provide order to the community and maintain within-group harmony (B. S. K. Kim et al., 2005). Emotional self-control is also conceptually linked to collectivism, as it suggests that holding emotions inside is preferable to expressing them, so that others will not be burdened with disharmonious ideas or notions. Emotional expression is not seen as a sign of strength; rather, it is preferable to "suffer quietly" and "behave appropriately rather than to act on what one is feeling" (B. S. K. Kim et al., p. 192). Similarly, humility, or refraining from expressing pride, is an important cultural value for many Asian Americans, as accomplishments are viewed as contributing to the welfare of the community.

Family recognition through achievement is another cultural value held in high regard by many Asian Americans. Achievement is considered a way to show appreciation to one's family and reflects on the family's reputation. Although humility is important, having a child succeed academically is a source of pride for parents and families (B. S. K. Kim et al., 2005). Education is often considered among the most important tenets of Confucianism. Asian Americans often display adherence to this tenet through substantial familial and financial support for education (American Psychological Association, 2003; K. H. Kim, 2005).

Deference to authority figures is important to many Asian Americans and is instilled early in life. Along with the importance of education and academic success, children are taught that teachers deserve the utmost respect. Teachers are addressed as *sensei* in Japan, *master* in China, or *seonsangnnim* in Korea—all of which convey respect and deference (K. H. Kim, 2005). Parents and the elderly are also afforded high levels of respect among Asians and Asian Americans, as they are seen as a source of wisdom. Filial piety involves seeing the family as "the main source of trust and dependence," thereby creating a sense of obligation in children to care for their parents and elders as they age or become ill (B. S. K. Kim et al., p. 345).

Research Support for Asian American Cultural Value Salience

An ever-growing body of literature has empirically examined the cultural values of Asian Americans and their relationships to education and learning, communication, and emotional expression (K. H. Kim, 2005; B. S. K. Kim et al., 1999; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Nguyen, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2006; Park & Kim, 2008). With reference to collectivism,

Markus and Kitayama noted that many Asian Americans believe that individualism should be discouraged and that collectivistic tendencies are optimal. The research, however, has yielded mixed findings. For example, in a study of undergraduate students of self-identified Asian ancestry, Yeh and Huang (1996) found that participants reported collectivism/conformism-related ideas and experiences (social context, relationships with others, values of the society) to be among those that had the most significant influences on their ethnic identity development. Another study showed that Asian American undergraduates reported higher scores for individualism than for collectivism (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997).

Regarding humility and emotional self-control, Park and Kim (2008) found an association between each of these Asian values and high-context communication, which involves being indirect, using silence, and being interpersonally sensitive. Park and Kim also noted that Asians and Asian Americans reported being more indirect in their communications with superiors to protect the superior from potential embarrassment or to avoid a disagreement. The authors posited that this is likely due to desire to maintain harmony and avoid conflict.

Regarding the association between Asian cultural values and cognitive and performance factors, Yu (1974, cited in Markus & Kitayama, 1991) found a positive correlation between achievement motivation and familism and filial piety for this college student population. Later research by Oyserman and Sakamoto (1997) found a significant association between reports of collectivism and collective self-esteem among a sample of Asian American undergraduates. Similarly, B. S. K. Kim and Omizo (2005) found that Asian Americans' endorsement of collectivistic values and behaviors was associated with collective self-esteem, whereas endorsement of individualistic tendencies was associated with cognitive flexibility and self-efficacy.

Latino Cultural Values

Latinos are considered one of the more diversified cultural groups in this country. Latinos in the United States come from and represent many different countries, including Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Bolivia, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Panama (Canning, Salazar-Guenther, & Polanco-Noboa, 2002). The research illuminating the cultural values salient among Latino populations has been carried out by several researchers, each of whom has examined Latinos in both their native and their U.S. contexts.

The early research of Manuel Ramirez and Alfrerdo Castaneda (1974), for example, helped to construct the cultural discontinuity hypothesis in education. In particular, their work with Mexican American students suggested that many are socialized toward values that promote strong identification with the ethnic group of origin, cooperative activity and social interaction, heightened sensitivity to the feelings of others, and respect for adults within the community (Cox & Ramirez, 1981; Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974). Ramirez and Castaneda also suggested that the classroom experiences of many Mexican Americans were based on mainstream culture. They argued that school success for Mexican Americans was contingent on how frequently and successfully they adopted and exhibited behaviors that reflected mainstream cultural values while ceasing to exhibit those behaviors reflective of their home cultural experiences. The cultural values of the Mexican Americans in the study were considered to be systematically omitted from the classroom context in general and from learning and instruction in particular, as these values were not considered by teachers to be aligned to academic success.

Some current researchers on Latino culture include Barbara Rogoff and her colleagues, whose research has uncovered several underlying cultural values in the daily activities of Mayan populations (Mejia-Arauz, Rogoff, Dexter, & Najafi, 2007; Mosier & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003). Patricia Greenfield, Ronald Gallimore, and Claude Goldenberg have also investigated longitudinally the esteemed cultural values and practices of several Latino generations (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2001; Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001; Greenfield et al., 2003; Greenfield et al., 2000; Reese & Gallimore, 2000). Much of their work, along with the work of other researchers, has helped to improve instructional practices and understanding of how culture influences cognitive skill development for Latino populations (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Tapia, 2004; Wortham & Contreras, 2002).

Similar to literature on African American and Asian American populations, the literature on cultural values among Latino populations frequently cites collectivism as a major cultural theme (Greenfield et al., 2000; Oyserman et al., 2002; Triandis, 1989). Some qualitative work has found that a sense of interconnectedness is found not only among families within the same household but also among family members in different households (Rogoff, 2003). This, then, makes interconnectedness a customary cultural value in Latino households, particularly among U.S. Mexican and Puerto Rican families (Tapia, 2004).

Greenfield et al. (2000) describe the collectivistic ideal as one in which an individual is interdependent, and he or she strives to make personal contributions and achievements that benefit the family. Like the communalism found in African American cultures, social responsibility is centered on the good of the whole group or family, and a person's responsibilities are geared toward advancing or maintaining the group. As families are viewed as the primary source of social support among Latino families, isolating the family to focus on one individual often results in interpersonal conflict (Conchas, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Suarez-Orazco & Suarez-Orazco, 1995; Trueba, 1998).

Another cultural theme infused in the behaviors of many Latinos is what Wortham and Contreras (2002) call spatiotemporal fluidity. Similar to Velez-Ibanez's (1996) description of simultaneity in Latino homes and Boykin's (1986) verve description of African American households, Wortham and Contreras characterize spatiotemporal fluidity as multiple activities occurring at the same time. It is also viewed as the active engagement in such activities simultaneously.

Research Support for Latino Cultural Value Salience

Research on collectivism or interconnectedness has been found across several activities and orientations in the lives of many Latino families. Collectivistic tendencies, for example, have been found in the sleeping arrangements of Mayan families (Morelli, Rogoff, Oppenheim, & Goldsmith, 1992). Research by Patricia

Greenfield, Claude Goldenberg, Ronald Gallimore, and colleagues has shown that the moral development of Latino children strongly emphasizes collectivistic or familial tendencies (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). In most Latino families, deference to older family members is also central to cultural socialization and resulting cultural beliefs.

For example, among Mexican and Central American citizens, the term *educación* focuses squarely on the child's ability to behave and address elders and social others with respect. In addition, Latino parents who endorse *educación* expect their children to be obedient, quiet, and cordial (Wortham & Contreras, 2002). *Educación* is conceptually linked to collectivism, as many Latino families believe that what the child does both in and out of the home is a reflection of the type of rearing and socialization experienced at home. Therefore children whose activities and behavioral preferences do not reflect *educación* are believed to be reared incorrectly and can project an image of inadequate socialization, which could, from a collectivistic perspective, be detrimental.

A study by Greenfield et al. (2000) corroborated this claim. In particular, they found that among parent-teacher conferences with Latino parents and European American teachers, the parents were more often concerned with the children's social behavior in the classroom (i.e., "Is the child respectful toward the teacher?"), whereas teachers placed more emphasis on the children's academic and self-expressive capabilities. Research by Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, and Goldenberg (1995) also found that, of 12 activities that Latino parents reported as important to do with their children, teaching the children right from wrong and establishing respect and good manners, particularly in social situations, were the top socialization priorities.

Regarding spatiotemporal fluidity, qualitative research by Wortham and Contreras (2002) noted that most Latino students were highly engaged in classroom activities when the teacher allowed the classroom to be spatiotemporally fluid. In another study, rural Mayan families maintained more simultaneity throughout their household experiences than did more affluent U.S. families (Rogoff, Mistry, Goncu, & Mosier, 1993). In a similar study, Chavajay and Rogoff (1999) found that Mayan parents were more likely to attend to multiple and often competing events than were European American parents, who often alternated their attention to one event at a time. This finding of attention variation also surfaced for the Mayan children in the study.

Native American Cultural Values

The qualitative work of Michael Garrett, Donna Deyhle, and others has uncovered the specific cultural values found among Native American students and their families (Bee-Gates, Howard-Pitney, LaFromboise, & Rowe, 1996; Bryant & LaFromboise, 2005; Deyhle, 1986, 1992, 1995; Deyhle & LeCompte, 1994; M. T. Garrett et al., 2003; M. W. Garrett, 1995; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981; LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006; LaFromboise, Trimble, & Mohatt, 1990; Rieckmann, Wadsworth, & Deyhle, 2004). In unpacking Native American cultural values, it is important to acknowledge that cultural value variation is highly likely among the 550 federally recognized tribes in the United States (M. T. Garrett et al., 2003). As a result of their unique cultures and languages, Native American tribes tend to have very different perceptions of child-rearing, medicine, and learning (Allison & Vining, 1999). M. T. Garrett and his colleagues (2003), however, have led a research program seeking to unveil the cultural values that span the majority of Native American tribes. Some of these cultural values include sharing and cooperation, noninterference, harmony with nature, a present-time orientation, and a deep respect for elders.

Under cooperation, whatever is possessed by the individual also belongs to the group. Survival of the individual is synonymous with survival of the family and larger community (M. T. Garrett et al., 2003). This orientation toward group and family functioning is evidenced in interaction patterns among most Native Americans. For example, Garrett et al. found that most persons socialized toward Western cultural values tend to ask, upon meeting someone, "What do you do for a living?" as opposed to "Where do you come from?" or "Who is your family?" The former is perceivably aligned with mainstream notions of individualism in which the individual inquires about another regarding his or her relation to himself or herself (e.g., "What do you do?"). Also implied in the former question is the idea that an individual's identity is linked to his or her profession (M. T. Garrett et al., 2003). In Native American culture, however, the latter greeting inquires about who one is in relation to one's family and background ("Where do you come from?" or "Who is your family?").

With the noninterference value, Native Americans typically believe that everything was created to fulfill a specific purpose. Thus personal interference in fulfillment of that purpose is discouraged. As a result of this line of thinking, many Native American parents, adults, and even children are allowed to withdraw and be left alone during an emotional or even academic disturbance. For example, it is not uncommon for Native American adolescents to leave the home while they are grappling with various psychological or emotional issues (M. T. Garrett et al., 2003; M. W. Garrett, 1995). Furthermore, the individual is welcomed back into the larger group without any explanation needed (M. T. Garrett et al., 2003).

This notion of noninterference complies with the cultural value of harmony with nature, which is found in many theories articulating the cultural values of African Americans (Boykin, 1983; Cokley & Williams, 2005). Allowing situations to occur uninterrupted promotes a sense of harmony not only between a troubled individual and an intervening one but also within the troubled individual. These situations are seen as something the individual is supposed to experience. Therefore the situation should remain free of outside intervention (M. W. Garrett, 1995; Sue & Sue, 2003).

A present-time orientation is another Native American cultural value that focuses on belief in the "here and now." Unlike the future-time orientation present in mainstream culture (Sue & Sue, 2003), where a timepiece (i.e., clock, watch) indicates when activities are to occur (e.g., the beginning and end of a workday), present-time orientation among Native Americans suggests that activities begin when everyone arrives and end when they are socially completed (e.g., when everyone agrees that the end has arrived).

Finally, among Native Americans, there is a strong reverence for elders. Elders in the Native American community are believed to possess wisdom acquired throughout their lives (M. T. Garrett et al., 2003; M. W. Garrett, 1995). Thus they often play important

roles such as parent, teacher, and spiritual leader (M. T. Garrett et al., 2003). This reverence for elders is taught to Native American children at young ages and is often manifested by avoidance of eye contact by the younger individual with the elder. Reverence for elders among Native Americans is also captured by an absence of critical analysis or refutation of an elder's knowledge (M. W. Garrett, 1995).

Research Support for the Salience of Native American Cultural Values

Several researchers have examined the salience of many cultural values held and honored by Native Americans (Amerman, 2007; Brown, Gibbons, & Smirles, 2007; Bryant & LaFromboise, 2005; Deyhle, 1986, 1995; M. T. Garrett et al., 2003; M. W. Garrett, 1995; LaFromboise et al., 2006; Rieckmann et al., 2004). In addition, researchers have noted that these values and practices are not duly acknowledged or reinforced in Native American students' school experiences. Safran and Safran (1994), for example, noted that in public schools serving predominantly Native American populations, there is often some misunderstanding of Native American children's behaviors.

In particular, the downward glance or lack of eye contact exhibited by Native American children is often viewed by their teachers as being unassertive or uncertain (Lake, 1991; Safran & Safran, 1994). Similarly, a Native American student who does not participate in competitive classroom activities is likely to be viewed by his or her teacher as unmotivated or antisocial (Amerman, 2007; Deyhle, 1995; M. W. Garrett, 1995; Lake, 1991). Also, those students raised to not question or verbally analyze situations or statements, but rather to learn through careful observation and listening, are most likely to be viewed by teachers as inattentive, slow, withdrawn, or lazy (M. W. Garrett, 1995). In addition, mainstream public school–based performance evaluations—which are invariably timed—do not accommodate the culturally situated performance characteristics of Native American youth, which are typically premised on a present-time orientation, patience, and reflection (M. W. Garrett, 1995; Hilberg & Tharp, 2002). There are additional instances in which Native American cultural values, traditions, and customs have been misrepresented and/or de-emphasized in public school classrooms (Charleston & King, 1991; Deyhle, 1986; Pewewardy, 2004; Stokes, 1997).

Despite these perceptions of Native American cultural values by teachers and school personnel, some research has shown that these values facilitate students' academic performance (N. Allen et al., 1999). For example, Hilberg and Tharp (2002) reviewed several empirical studies in which Native American students outperformed students from other ethnic groups when testing activities were aligned with their cultural values and corresponding behaviors. An earlier study by Cardell, Cross, and Lutz (1978) found that students exposed to an experimental condition characterized by Native American cultural values outperformed their peers in mathematical assessments. One reason provided for the superior performance yielded by the students in the experimental condition is the fact that they were allowed to be self-directed; that is, there was no intervention on behalf of the experimenters, parents, or classroom instructor. Similar findings were garnered in a study by Hopkins and Bean (1999) in language arts and Hilberg, Tharp, and DeGeest (2000) in math.

Table 1
Research-Supported Cultural Values Among Mainstream and Ethnic Minority Cultures

Culture/Group	Salient Cultural Values
African American	Communalism
	Movement
	Verve
Asian American	Collectivism
	Conformity to norms
	Emotional self-control
	Humility
	Family recognition through achievement
	Filial piety
	Deference to authority
Latin American	Collectivism
	Spatiotemporal fluidity
Native American	Sharing and cooperation
	Noninterference
	Harmony with nature
	Present-time orientation
	Deep respect for elders
U.S./mainstream	Individualism
	Competition

Toward the Quantitative Assessment of Cultural Discontinuity

Operationalizing Cultural Discontinuity

Table 1 summarizes the cultural values typically associated with each ethnic minority group discussed above. The literature on the academic lives of African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American school-aged youth has noted a discrepancy between the frequencies at home and at school with which their specific cultural values are exhibited. Much of the literature reviewed above shows that most of these cultural value–based behaviors are not wholly accepted, recognized, or utilized in public school classrooms, despite having academic and psychological benefits to many ethnic minority students (Boykin, 1986; Boykin, Tyler, et al., 2005; Boykin et al., 2006; Deyhle, 1995; M. T. Garrett et al., 2003; Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974; Tse, 1994; Tyler, Boykin, & Walton, 2006; Tyler, Dillihunt, et al., in press).

The discontinuity between home- and school-based behavioral expressions of ethnic minority students has been conceptually linked to their academic difficulties (Deyhle, 1995; M. T. Garrett et al., 2003; Gay, 2000; G. R. Howard, 1999; Nieto, 1999). However, there is little research to empirically substantiate the presence and/or effects of cultural discontinuity in the lives of these students. In fact, much of the current research offers only anecdotal or qualitative evidence to support the existence of cultural discontinuity (Deyhle, 1986, 1995; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1999).

Some studies have quantitatively (a) examined discontinuity between school and home and (b) utilized ethnic minority students in their samples (Arunkumar, Midgley, & Urdan, 1999;

Hauser-Cram, Sirin, & Stipek, 2003). In particular, Hauser-Cram and colleagues operationalized educational value discontinuity in their work with elementary school teachers as a mismatch between educational values and practices espoused at home and those found in the classroom. This mismatch of educational values and corresponding activities was believed to affect student performance outcomes and their psychological antecedents.

Hauser-Cram and colleagues (2003) found support for this claim. In particular, it was found that teachers' perceptions of dissimilar educational values between themselves and parents resulted in the teacher-held belief that kindergarten students were inadequately supported for learning. That is, the more teachers believed that ethnic minority parents held values toward education that were dissimilar to their own, the more the teachers maintained inadequate support for these students. Hauser-Cram et al. also found that teachers rated students as less competent and had lower expectations for students' future success when they believed that parents' education-related values differed from their own. Finally, these researchers found that perceived educational value discontinuity was significantly linked to teacher-based perceptions of poor literacy and mathematics skills.

Another study sought to examine the effects of discontinuity between school and home. Specifically, Arunkumar et al. (1999) sampled African American and European American fifth-grade students on their perceptions of what the researchers referred to as home-school dissonance. It was found that students who reported high home-school dissonance also reported lower levels of academic and emotional well-being, efficacy, self-esteem, and grade point average (GPA) and higher levels of anger and self-deprecation. The stated effects of home-school dissonance had implications for student achievement, both directly (e.g., significant association with GPA) and indirectly (e.g., significant association with achievement antecedents such as efficacy, esteem, and academic and emotional well-being).

Although limitations such as grade homogeneity were noted in these works, researchers benefited greatly from these studies, as there was finally empirical evidence to suggest that home-school dissonance is (a) a significant part of ethnic minority students' schooling experiences and (b) associated with academic performance and its psychological antecedents. However, several additional limitations in these studies are worthy of mention.

One limitation is that, in both studies, students' perceptions of home-school value discontinuity were not assessed. In Arunkumar et al.'s (1999) study, home-school dissonance scores were not derived from students' actual reports of what happened at school and what happened at home. Rather, the scores used in that study were derived from responses to an instrument assessing only perceptions of home-school discontinuity itself. Although the latter is sufficient to determine perceptions of home-school dissonance or discontinuity, it is more effective to compare students' reports of their cultural value–based behaviors at home with reports of such behaviors at school.

Similarly, in Hauser-Cram et al.'s (2003) study, teachers' perceptions of educational value discontinuity between themselves and their students' parents provided limited information regarding the actual existence of this type of discontinuity. Moreover, there was little discernment of whether teachers' perceptions of parents' educational values were accurate. A better way to determine educational value discontinuity would have been to allow parents and teachers to report their educational values and then to compare the scores descriptively.

Furthermore, in both studies, it is likely that the home- and school-based values and behaviors assessed were linked to culture. However, there was no mention of perceived or possible cultural factors in either study. In Arunkumar et al.'s (1999) study, it is plausible that some of the major differences that African American students perceived between their homes and their school were reflective of cultural values found in each context. However, the cultural nature of the home-school dissonance is not assessed in the study. Similarly, Hauser-Cram et al. (2003) did not put forth items that could have assessed the cultural nature of perceived educational value discontinuity.

Quantifying Cultural Discontinuity

To assess cultural discontinuity, two important factors must be considered. First, there must be some behavioral manifestation of the specific cultural values held by ethnic minority students. Culturally based attitudes, beliefs, and values are important antecedents to the exhibition of these culturally laden behaviors, but for discontinuity to exist, there must be some empirical record of these behaviors and their salience in out-of-school contexts, in particular, students' homes.

The second important factor in assessing cultural discontinuity is providing data to show evidence of cessation of these culturally aligned behaviors and activities once ethnic minority students enter public school classrooms. That is, researchers must record whether these same cultural value–based behaviors and activities found at home are discontinued once students enter the classroom in particular or the public school in general. Otherwise, education researchers can only presume the existence of cultural discontinuity. In other words, in measuring cultural discontinuity, there must be a score or numerical report for the salience of ethnic minority students' cultural value–based behavior at home and another score or numerical report for the salience of that same cultural value–based behavior at school.

A first step in quantifying cultural discontinuity is identifying those cultural values and customs that many researchers believe are germane to the cognitive skill development, beliefs, and behavioral patterns of ethnic minority students. Several of these values have been identified in the literature for African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American populations (Boykin, 1983, 1986; Boykin & Ellison, 1995; Cokley & Williams, 2005; Deyhle, 1995; M. T. Garrett et al., 2003; Gay, 2000, 2005; B. S. K. Kim & Omizo, 2005; Nieto, 1999; Rogoff, 2003). The next step in the quantitative investigation of cultural discontinuity would be to operationalize such cultural values so that they are reflected in specific behaviors, activities, or practices. Using much of the literature on the cultural values of ethnic minority students, researchers could begin to create statements in which the activity or beliefs of interest are manifested through individuals' behaviors and activities.

These statements, once deemed content valid, could serve as potential items on survey instruments to assess the salience and frequency of the cultural value–laden behaviors. Because the

cultural discontinuity literature suggests that the cultural value–based behaviors of ethnic minority students are discontinued at school, it is best to measure the presence of cultural value–based behaviors using numerical item responses that record the frequency of the behavior in question. Here, a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = *never,* 2 = *rarely,* 3 = *sometimes,* and 4 = *all the time*) could be used to determine how often ethnic minority students engage in the cultural value–based behaviors at home.

Once the statements reflecting the said and/or observed cultural values of ethnic minority populations have been derived and the response scales are constructed, preliminary validation work should be performed to determine whether the items in a given scale assessing a particular cultural value–based behavior coalesce under a specific factor structure. Factor validity of the derived scale should be examined with elementary, middle, and secondary school students of color, as much of the literature on cultural discontinuity indicates that this phenomenon is part of the academic realities of these populations.

The resulting factor structure and corresponding variables or items could be used to create a new questionnaire. This questionnaire would change the location of the cultural value–based behavior in question from the home context to the school context. For example, in addition to asking African American students, "In my home, people usually do work while talking with or listening to other family members," students would respond to another item, "In my classroom, people usually do work while talking with or listening to other students." The type of classroom would depend on the sample obtained (e.g., elementary vs. middle school students).

Given that the scale would have already been factor analyzed, researchers would essentially keep the root of the item (e.g., "doing work while talking with or listening to others") while modifying the within-item context to examine whether the cultural value–based activity actually occurs in both the home and school. In other words, the factor structure or structures from the initial scale measuring home-based culturally aligned activities would be transferred over to the second scale measuring school-based culturally aligned activities. Thus, the factor structure would be retained in both the home-based cultural activities scale and the school-based cultural activities scale. The only modification would be the location or context in which the cultural value–based behavior in question has been displayed.

The work of Barry Fraser (D. Allen & Fraser, 2002; Byrne, Hattie, & Fraser, 1986; Fisher & Fraser, 1983; Fraser, 1998; Fraser & Fisher, 1983; Fraser & O'Brien, 1985) has used a similar methodology where the factor validity of a scale measuring actual classroom learning environments is assessed and, based on the emerging factor structure, a second scale is created where preferred classroom learning environments are able to be assessed. According to Fraser (1982), the advantage of using multiple forms—in his research, forms examining actual and preferred classroom environments—is that they enable education researchers to examine students' perceptions of ideal or preferred and actual learning environments. Significant differences between the two can also be discerned. Research examining the presence of cultural discontinuity would follow a similar methodology, specifically by using two forms of a previously validated measure of culturally aligned behaviors. One form would assess home-based cultural experiences and the other, culture-based experiences at school. The scale items would reflect those cultural values found in the lives of ethnic minority students.

Following these procedures, the factor-validated cultural activities scales could be used to assess cultural discontinuity in the lives of ethnic minority students. In particular, in another sample, scores for each identified subscale could be totaled for both the home-based cultural activities and the school-based cultural activities. The computation of a cultural discontinuity score for a given cultural value–based behavior would be described mathematically as the difference between scores indicating home cultural value–based practices and school cultural value–based activities. Scores for each home- and school-based cultural activities subscale would be totaled and averaged. The average score from the school-based cultural activities subscale would be subtracted from the corresponding average score from the home-based cultural activities subscale. A cultural discontinuity score for the given cultural value would emerge.

For example, on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all,* 2 = *rarely,* 3 = *sometimes,* and 4 = *all the time*), a student could report that his or her total score on a four-item verve subscale was 16. This would indicate that, for all four verve items, the child reports that he or she is exposed to a context very rich in vervistic activities (Boykin, 1986). Taking the average for this home-based verve activities subscale would result in an average score of 4 for this subscale. Similarly, if the total score for the school-based verve activities subscale was also 16, then the average of the scale—given four items with a maximum score of 4 per item—would be 4. For the student reporting these home- and school-based verve activity scores, the averages of 4 for both subscales would indicate that verve activities are salient in his or her home and school experiences. Thus, for the verve cultural factor, the cultural discontinuity score would be zero: 4 (home verve) minus 4 (school verve) equals 0 cultural discontinuity. There would be no discontinuity between home and school for the verve cultural factor, as the student would have reported that verve-based activities are frequent and salient in both contexts.

Given that the cultural discontinuity scores focus on the difference between home and school cultural value–based behavior scores and given that the minimum score is 1 and the maximum score is 4 for each item, the scores for cultural discontinuity (defined as the home score minus the school score) will always be less than 4. In this case, cultural discontinuity could range from 0 to 3, with 0 indicating no cultural discontinuity, 1 indicating a little cultural discontinuity, 2 indicating some cultural discontinuity, and 3 indicating a lot of cultural discontinuity. For example, if the average at-home communalism score is 4 and the average at-school communalism score is 1, then a score of 3 would indicate that there is a lot of discontinuity between home and school with respect to communalism-based behaviors. Similarly, if the average at-home movement orientation scores is 3 and the average at-school movement orientation is 1, then the discontinuity between home and school would be a score of 2 for the movement cultural factor. This would indicate some cultural discontinuity between home and school for the movement cultural factor.

Only positive cultural discontinuity scores (where the school-based discontinuity score is equal to or less than the

home-based discontinuity score) would be included in further analyses. That is, only students whose scores evidence discontinuity from home to school (home cultural activity scores minus school cultural activity scores) would be used in further analyses. Currently, there is no conceptual literature to support the possibility that students' reports of their cultural value–based behaviors activities will be higher at school than at home (e.g., school-to-home discontinuity). Thus, such scores would not be fully interpretable.

Assessing the Impact of Cultural Discontinuity

Once a cultural discontinuity score has been established for a given cultural value–based behavior for a given ethnic minority group, additional questionnaires could be used to determine if there is any association between cultural discontinuity scores and either school achievement or its psychological or cognitive antecedents (e.g., motivation, psychological well-being, school belongingness). For example, some literature suggests that exposure to learning contexts that do not reflect the cultural values of many ethnic minority students reduces the amount of motivation these students have for completing tasks in such contexts (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 1999; Rogoff, 2003). Inputting the calculated cultural discontinuity scores of ethnic minority students, along with their reports of motivation, would allow regression analyses to determine if cultural discontinuity is associated with motivation. This information would also enhance current efforts to promote greater appreciation for diversity and social justice in educational contexts, particularly by (a) identifying the integrity of culture-based experiences that ethnic minority students have outside school, (b) determining whether these experiences are actually utilized in formal learning contexts, and (c) understanding what results from the discontinuance of these cultural value–based behaviors in schools. Some scales for consideration include the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (Midgley et al., 2000). Here, the relationships between cultural discontinuity scores and various performance goal orientations (e.g., mastery vs. performance goals, academic self-efficacy, and school belongingness) could be assessed.

Conclusion

Cultural discontinuity has been viewed as a source of the academic and psychological challenges faced by ethnic minority students. However, the research to support such claims has been limited. In this article we outline a proposed methodology for measuring cultural discontinuity. We argue that cultural discontinuity should be premised not on perceptions of its existence but rather on ethnic minority students' actual reported frequency of cultural value–based behaviors both at home and at school. Cultural discontinuity cannot be said to exist unless there are data to support the idea that there is a difference between the cultural value–based behaviors found in the home and classroom experiences of ethnic minority students.

We offered in this article a review of cultural value–based behaviors for African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American students. In the service of gathering such data to answer the question "Does cultural discontinuity exist and if so, what are its effects?" we discussed the development and validation of a questionnaire to assess the presence of cultural discontinuity. We also offered a method to compute a cultural discontinuity score to accurately assess its salience. Finally, we discussed methods to examine the association between cultural discontinuity scores and various scores from previously validated scales assessing various psychological antecedents of academic performance.

If education researchers and psychologists are to fully understand the effects of cultural discontinuity and the value of promoting multiculturalism and diversity appreciation throughout academic curricula at all levels, they must first be able to measure and articulate what cultural discontinuity is; its degree of salience among various ethnic minority student populations; and what its psychological, academic, and behavioral effects are for each. This article is a step toward providing this understanding to education researchers interested in assessing and reducing the salience and effects of cultural discontinuity between the home and school experiences of many students, particularly ethnic minority students placed at risk for academic failure.

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