


1974

Report on Six Week Summer Experience Teaching Puerto Rican Migrant Children in Springfield, Massachusetts

Amy Lepon
School for International Training

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/ipp_collection

 Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [First and Second Language Acquisition Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lepon, Amy, "Report on Six Week Summer Experience Teaching Puerto Rican Migrant Children in Springfield, Massachusetts" (1974). *MA TESOL Collection*. 30.
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/ipp_collection/30

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Graduate Institute at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in MA TESOL Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

Report on Six Week Summer Experience Teaching Puerto Rican
Migrant Children in Springfield, Massachusetts

Ms. Amy Lepon

"Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for International
Training, Brattleboro, Vermont."

May, 1974



This report by Amy Lepon is accepted in its present form.

Date 6 - 6 - 1974 Principal Advisor Yonique D. Lemaitre

Project Advisor: Elizabeth Sparkes



Table of Contents

Introduction	pp. 1 - 7
Lesson plans and comments	2 - 21
Evaluation	22 - 29
Appendix	
1. Dittos for use in testing Spanish literacy	30 - 34
2. Copy of Armando Martinez' "An Analysis of Factors that Create the Educational Problems of the Puerto Rican Student in New England." (Graphic Excerpts)	35 - 46



Each year the federal government funds a national summer compensatory education program for children with one or more parents employed in agriculture. These children are called "migrant children." The program is considered compensatory because, according to government statistics, most migrant children are months behind other children in the basic subjects: reading, writing, and arithmetic. The goal of the program, in a broad sense, is to make up for this lag.

Although funded federally, the Migrant Program is administered regionally and staffed locally. In Massachusetts, where I worked, the regional office was in Boston. The coordinating association was the Spanish Apostolate of Springfield (pop. 162,000). Shouldered with the responsibility for the 1973 program in Springfield was Sister Anne Marie, the vice-director of the Spanish Apostolate. It was she who telephoned me at the end of June with the offers of a paid job with the Migrant Program from July 2 to August 10 and a non-paying position teaching Spanish to English speakers at the Spanish Apostolate from June 17 to July 6.

In order to participate in the Migrant Program, I had to attend an orientation at the University of Hartford, Hartford, Connecticut, from June 24 to June 28. People with theories or skills in teaching and people with insights into the migrant culture (Puerto-Rican in our case) were invited to speak. In addition to the lectures, games and other materials were displayed. We learned that our children's parents would be tobacco workers. These children would likely be touched by many of the characteristics of poverty (see Appendix):

low income; lack of magazines and books in the home; under-educated parents. The children, too, would be less than competent in English. As often happens, the reality of the situation doesn't become clear until one is in that situation. There was no context for the lectures so people became bored.

The last day of the orientation week was spent at everyone's respective schools in order to acquaint ourselves with the sites and fellow teachers. My school, the Sacred Heart School, was around the corner from the Sacred Heart Church and Convent in the north end of Springfield. The School had two stories and a basement. There was no gym, the children using the parking lot for outdoor activities. There was a multimedia type room which served us as cafeteria and auditorium. There were two basic room shapes: one large rectangle with blackboards on three walls and windows facing outside; and small claustrophobic rectangles with little blackboard space, little room for classroom reorganization. The desks were independent, fiber glass, each with a compartment for personal materials. For the summer, all materials available were brought to the school from the Spanish Apostolate and placed in a "transitional room" in the basement.

Reading, math, Spanish reading and writing, and Culture (a euphemism for Catholic education) were taught one-half hour daily. At least once a week the students had 30 minute periods for music, health, dance, drama, gym, ESL, and arts and crafts, taught by teachers hired specifically for those subjects. Each Tuesday afternoon there were field trips to local points of interest: the fire station; the newspaper; the police sta-

tion; the Armory museum; nature areas; the Boys' Club; the playground; and the library. All day Thursday there were organized activities (picnics, swimming and recreation) at parks in the Massachusetts area.

This Springfield Migrant Program was not administered through the Public Schools, rather the faculty was hired by Sister Anne Marie. There were many sisters of Notre Dame, who belonged to the convent affiliated with the Sacred Heart Church. In addition, there were lay teachers from the schools in the Springfield area. Each teacher had an aide, usually a high school age student. The aide's role was to help the teacher with attendance, testing and other normal class activities. If the teacher wasn't bilingual, the aide was. There were community members who helped with lunch, field trips and community relations.

My job as teacher entailed quite a lot of paper work. One of the major reasons for the lag among these children is their high rate of transience. Because of this high transience, the federal government decided to begin a central record which would contain information about the health, educational progress, psychological history and family background of each migrant child. A central computerized record would provide each school the child entered with the information needed to immediately take over where the previous school had left off. To help make the computerized record, during the first and last week of the six week program the children were tested for mastery of reading readiness, reading comprehension and primary math. The teacher was responsible for

compiling the results, one set for the federal government and one set for the child's school in September. In addition to these records, the teacher had to complete reports for every field trip, turn in weekly lesson plans, and report home visits.

As I had been hired over the phone, I accepted the job knowing very little about it. I had been anxious to find a place to do my Spanish practice teaching and I was ecstatic that I was to get the chance to do it at the Spanish Apostolate. My greatest concern was getting enough hours to qualify for the degree. Over the phone, Sister Anne Marie had told me that I would be teaching "a little of everything." As it turned out I was assigned to the third grade. This frightened me at first for two reasons: I thought I needed a certain number of hours in Spanish to qualify for the degree and I had no training in teaching reading or math. Therefore, I jumped at the opportunity to divide the major subject areas among the other third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers with me teaching the Spanish. My class would travel to their classes for subjects other than Spanish and their classes would travel to my classroom for Spanish, or vice versa.

With little more than this knowledge, I jumped into the teaching game. I wanted my classes, at least, to get a concept of the syllable, as I felt it was an important key to deciphering meaning and spelling. This course seemed especially logical since Spanish is a relatively phonetic language. As a point of departure, I chose to utilize aspects of the Gattegno Approach: the Word and Phonic Color Charts; the pictures for vocabulary building; the pointer, and the rods.

(The rods are used primarily by Gattegno in the beginning stages of oral language learning and I used them only once myself.) Caleb Gattegno uses color to convey a phonetic clue to words. Normally a person reads for meaning only and pays little attention to the graphemes which make up each word. Color coding encourages the student to focus on the composition of the word as well as on the meaning. Therefore, Gattegno asserts, a person is more likely to write correctly if he has learned this way. The child learns the graphemes which correspond to the sounds of his language through a chart which gives a different color to every phoneme. Therefore, as in Gattegno's South American Spanish phonic code chart, three different graphemes may be the same color (for example {y, ll, hi}) since they are really the same phoneme. Or the same grapheme may be two different colors (for example {y}) and found in two locations on the chart since it differs phonemically depending on its location in the word. (for example, "yo" /yo/; and "y" /i/). I, myself, utilized Gattegno's Approach rather loosely. His color charts were fine attention getting devices, at least at first. The kids enjoyed getting out of their seats to make words and syllables with the pointer. During the first few days we played "games" with the phonic code chart: we formed plurals and we made new words by adding and subtracting letters. After that, most of the class time was spent in other activities. However, I continued to refer back to the charts when there were difficulties in reading and spelling.

The following pages are primarily a report on my experience

teaching reading and writing of Spanish. Nevertheless, they were six weeks of quite varied activities. The field trips we took each Tuesday afternoon and all day on Thursdays were stories in themselves. Actually many of my most joyful times occurred in an atmosphere of recreation. I found I could enjoy the children during these times as I personally enjoy games and sports. Those were times of learning and group interaction as potent as my thirty minute sessions in the classroom. In addition to my half hour sessions, there were times (notably during the first and last weeks) when I was with my assigned class the whole day. At those times I was responsible for teaching reading or math or, merely, for keeping them productively busy. It was then that I would read them stories, bring in or invent games, take them to the auditorium for movies or breakfast or lunch, take them outdoors for sports. It was at those times that I had to really break up fights and comfort the unhappy.

Although my focus for this report is primarily the academic side of the job, my teaching and the extent to which I succeeded was greatly influenced by the daily occurrences mentioned above. I include my lesson plans, usually followed by comments concerning their success as well as comments about the whole day. My purpose for including the lesson plans is two-fold: so that the reader can see from what daily experiences my evaluation is drawn; and so that the reader can see the fluctuations of mood I underwent as a teacher, and which probably are undergone by most teachers. Included in the evaluation are mention of things I wish I had known when I

began teaching. The things I had to learn the hard way may help someone else avoid the same mistakes.

JULY 2 Monday:

I was with the same children all day because everyone was testing. Three children came: Migdalia; Angel; Ildefonso. I had 14 names on my enrollment list, all of them different from the children who showed up. It seems that many children went to the wrong location - probably Carew St. - and they'll be drifting in all week. It was really a long day. We played kickball outside and drew and colored inside.

JULY 3 Tuesday:

Today was very bad. I was given six new children and I was expected to test them and entertain the ones I had already tested. Testing was difficult even though Nora, my aide, helped me.

The seminarian came at 9. He talked to them matter-of-factly. They didn't make noise but many squirmed and "fell asleep."

They all scrambled to the bathroom. I tried to get them to line up according to height, thinking it would be fun, but the boys pummeled each other to the floor, ran around and the girls just seemed somewhat indifferent. I couldn't get anyone to do anything. There were numerous fights with Carmelo crying three or four times. I tried putting them in the corner and some went and others would only stay a few minutes. I tried to get a discussion group going down on the floor. Few wanted to speak although Migdalia did say that we should try to make someone happy if he is sad. Another question - unanswered - was what to do about fights. Ardith Kohn of the regional office observed my class as I was trying to calm it

down. She later reported that there had been "group discussion".

I was near tears.

JULY 5 Thursday:

Still children arriving and the problem of keeping the others busy while the untested children were given the tests that they needed. I introduced the "mystery bag" game. My aide held a bag containing unseen objects which the child was to feel, describe, and then pull out to see. Then the child wrote the name of the object. Purpose: to relieve the strain of testing and to help them in their descriptive language development. It was chaotic, but successful. I should have waited until they finished the test before telling them that there was a game to play. The prospect of a game seemed to make the kids give up more easily at different questions in order to finish the test as fast as possible. Another game which was successful but had little educational value, was "toss the sponge into the trash can." The more rambunctious boys monopolized the game and the others watched from the side lines. Maybe this can be dealt with as we go along.

I discovered that some of elementary school terminology was unfamiliar: words such as "blends" (the CC combinations such as {br, dr}).

JULY 6 Friday:

Objective: Write and identify Spanish syllables

Theme: Gattegno phonic code chart

Procedure: I) Using the pointer, introduce the a) vowels
b) consonant vowel (CV) combinations c) two syllable words CVCV and VCCV. II) Vowel sound game: "a - e - i - o - u".

"a - e - i - o - u

III) Story from Conozcamos

las pasamos y decimos 'phew' Puerto Rico.

cuando para la música

¿qué letra tienes tú?"

Comments: I tried this procedure with all my classes. They enjoyed the syllable and word making (#1). I allowed the students to be the teacher and to use the pointer. We had a couple high moments when the kids got into the fun by spelling their own words. The rhyming game (#II) didn't go over too well. They became bored fast and almost always two or three boys tried to look out the window instead. (Maybe if we'd been in front of the room instead.) I don't think the game was enough of a challenge. I then had them make up words beginning with these letters. I read the story from Conozcamos Puerto Rico and they listened and were fairly interested. I asked them questions as I read but I have to watch this as I tend to forget to require that they raise their hands. In one class, a Puerto Rican aide read the story. They didn't really seem to be more interested even with his native fluency. Actually, my Spanish does not win me points here. I have lots of trouble understanding the Puerto Rican accent as well as vocabulary since I am accustomed to Mexican Spanish. Those who can tend to prefer to speak English with me. Another third grade teacher, Peter Stathis, took half my class for math and said he didn't have any trouble with the students. There are a variety of explanations for this but I think it gets down to my soft line from the beginning. Unfortunately, I've now got to go the other way and it isn't in character. I took the smile off

(it came off easily) and I started getting angry and I raised my voice. However, I don't know what the best punishment is: perhaps not letting them go on the next field trip. I also made a mistake at the beginning by not telling them to raise their hands. At lunch, when they were bursting their potato chip bags, I grabbed the whole bag and threw it away.

JULY 9 Monday:

Objective: Identify sound/graphemes

Procedure: I) Review vowels; consonant with vowels

(¿Cuál es la primera sílaba?)

II) Introduce rods: colors and commands with rods

III) Have them follow commands from the word charts

eg. "Toma una regleta roja y dala a Carmelo."

IV) Make commands up themselves - class reads them as student points words out.

Comments: It's too soon to tell if this is going to "work".

At least I've got a point of departure. It's been hard logistically to carry the charts around and the classes have started to rebel at my use of them. I really am in need of that ability to command attention.

Note: The word charts are utilized in the Gattegno Approach for visual dictation, ie, with the pointer someone indicates words he wished others to read.

JULY 10 Monday:

Objective: (Family picture from Gattegno and phonic code chart)
to continue to associate sound/graphemes.

Procedure: I) Introduce "family picture" and ask class to identify objects and describe what is happening.

II) ¿Cuántos hijos hay? ¿hembras/ varones?

¿Qué llevan los muchachos?

¿Qué quiere el más chico?

¿Dónde viven? ¿en la ciudad?

¿Qué estaciones?

III) I note words that are mentioned by the class.

IV) I have students go to chart to spell the words I have on my list; and others copy the words.

V) I have each student draw and label his own family

Comments: Surprisingly, this went over quite well. In fact, if my future lessons can go this well I'll be happy. The class grumbled about working with the chart again. Some tried to do something else. This part was exasperating. However, I would settle for a minimum of participation and then the reluctant ones usually joined in.

Everyone, including those who presented behavior problems, wanted to be the teacher. Not everyone has the sounds straight - not even the vowels. The students sometimes pronounce the {h} evidence that they don't understand the concept of the column.

{
i
y
hi

(All three graphemes are pronounced /i/. Perhaps this is interference from English .)

The introduction of the family picture was interesting. For one thing, I think it sharpened their powers of observation. I said, "¿Qué estación es?" and they would burst out, "Verano". Then I'd say "¿Por que?" and they would have to think and many would revise their opinions. Good participation.

I then had one student handle the pointer and another write on the board. They all wanted to do this. I also had the kids write the word on a paper at their seats.

The first two classes drew pictures of their families, but they tended not to have time to finish and the words we chose in the family picture - espejo (mirror), bastón (cane), mujer (woman), chiringa (kite), - weren't too adaptable. A less detailed picture might have been better. In a way this was a good exercise because it didn't put pressure on those who really didn't want to write: they could draw.

I saw from the results that some tended to choose the {hã} or the {hã} for the simple vowel sounds: ex. fha-mi-lia. At least they understood that the pronunciation is the same.

JULY 11 Wednesday:

Objective: Continue sound/grapheme correlation

Procedure: I) Pass out "clown" coloring ditto

II) Have someone in class read it aloud

III) Class does it

IV) Use directions to refer back to chart

Comments: This was not really too successful as much time was wasted in coloring. Some could read the instructions, some couldn't. There is still much work to do on the sound/grapheme correlation. They're getting the concept of syllable. Some students ignored the directions and colored the clown any color they liked.

JULY 13 Friday:

Objective: The student can write and read the word for objects in the room.

Theme: Phonic chart and colored construction paper.

Procedure: I) One person thinks of Spanish word

II) One person spells it on chart sounding the syllables.

III) Class repeats it

IV) One person writes it on paper

V) One person tapes it to the object it represents.

Comments: This went over well in some classes; especially poorly in Martha's class. The kids just were not in the mood for anything at all and they let me know it by not paying attention, not being quiet and actually bad-mouthing me. Some of the problem was that they were a little bored. One girl and boy need something more difficult. The other classes enjoyed the words and everyone was dying to be the writer. I probably should have encouraged them all to write.

A little girl in Marion's class brought me a book to read.

In retrospect, I think that the idea of a daily theme from which to work might help; eg. sports words; clothes words; food words; days of the week. The classes are only one-half hour and don't meet everyday and thus I need something to give the kids a sense of accomplishment and cohesion.

JULY 16 Monday:

Pass out pictures from my picture file

Ask students I) to spell words with me

II) to write sentences on their own.

Comments: I found that some students didn't get turned on to this and actually just sat there and talked. The fact of the matter is that there are at least three levels of participation:

- 1) the kids who for whatever reason just sit and do nothing or disrupt altogether.
- 2) the kids who will work if I help them on a one-to-one basis.
- 3) the kids who will go ahead on their own, with confidence.

Everyone makes these interesting errors:

- 1) confuse /t/ with /d/.
- 2) want to write {l} for {r} because they tend to say /l/ for /r/
- 3) tend to say /j/ for /r/.
- 4) leave off {s} because they don't say it.
- 5) don't hear the /n/ at the end of a breath group

It's interesting to hear all the anglicized words (brown, watermelon, steam) and the words that are peculiarly Puerto Rican (china (orange); chiringa (kite)).

JULY 17 Tuesday:

Color themed letters to get students to write their own words and make "mobiles."

Comments: I really made a big job for myself by cutting all the necessary letters out of paper corresponding to the colors of the Gattegno chart. The color reinforcement probably did little good for the trouble as my approach to the sound/grapheme correspondence hasn't been as systematic as it would be in a "Gattegno" classroom.

JULY 20 Friday:

Procedure: I) Let "slower" students practice sound/grapheme with the aide. (Use flash cards) II) Let others read "Adivina, Adivinador." (Kids guess what the poem is about.) III) Read a line for them to write.

Comments: Overall, kids were anxious to try to write sentences. I had trouble keeping up with their individual paces: every child wanted praise for everything he did and would immediately bring his work over for this. It kept me hopping with trying to help the frustrated kids as well. It is good to use the

aide when one is available.

JULY 23 Monday:

Procedure: I) Review of sound/grapheme with chart.

II) Introduce pictures from "What We Do Day By Day" by asking questions about what they are doing. III) Have Nora work with some students. IV) Choose some of the words from pictures to spell in class. V) Tell kids to write this down as story.

Comments: With some classes I could give everyone a picture and all except the few I had working in the back with the aide could write with a minimum of help or need for constant attention. Peter Stathis' third grade class really can do this. I gave them all a picture from the Dairy industry material (#II). Some didn't even have to be inspired as far as a sentence to write about the picture. My class, on the other hand, has to really be pushed. Ildefonso, Angel L., Migdalia, and Eva could go on their own - if in the mood. Carmelo, Luis, Maria, Evelyn, probably need more individual attention as a psychological crutch. They are volatile in temper and the boys are barely controllable. Paul's class is fairly good. They can write sentences and need to be challenged. There are two who need extra work. Cora's class is at the stage between words and phrases. Marion's class really has many levels.

JULY 24 Friday:

I) Slower students work with aide

Others practice the {gi, ge} {ga, go, gu}, {gue, gui}

II) Read "Golondrinita" - a poem

Ask: ¿Qué es una golondrina?

¿Cuándo viene de lejos?

¿De dónde viene:

¿Por qué viene?

¿Qué va a hacer mientras que está llegando?

III) Read "Los tres cerditos"

Ask: ¿Quién dice "pru, pru, pru, pru"?

¿Quiénes son los más gorditos del corral?

¿Quién los quiso devorar?

¿Por qué están alegres?

En la última estrofa, ¿qué van a hacer?

IV) From "What we Do Day By Day" (Japanese family and Boy with blocks)

Ask: ¿Con qué comen los japoneses?

¿Son distintos sus platos de los suyos?

¿En su vida han comido pescado crudo?

¿Qué bebemos nosotros muchas veces en vez de te?

Ask: ¿Qué hace este muchacho?

¿Qué tiene en la pared?

¿Dónde está?

Peter's class: Procedure(I) was a little abstract for the kids. Too academic. The pictures were more fun. Some of them wrote three sentences or more about each picture. Iris answered the questions and then went ahead to compose her own stories.

Sister Cora's class: I gave a general quiz on sounds and letters. I gave the girls the picture of the Japanese family to answer the written questions. I gave the rest of the class the mimeographed sheets with "La Golondrinita" and had them all stand at the board to write the answers. I had them answer the questions for "Los tres cerditos". Most did the exercises pretty well, and all helped each other.

David's class: Having the faster kids work alone on the pictures was "successful." They finished, however, before the end of the period. I worked with six or eight others on sound/letter correspondence but they tended to lose interest. They are very anxious to write, to be more active.

General Remarks: I felt like writing a more personal account tonight before having to think of Friday's lesson plans. (I tend to want to write these accounts when I'm a little down so when I reread this I hope I'll remember my state of mind.)

I feel about teaching kids about the same way I felt about Spanish as I began studying it in college. It was very hard, yet I could feel a thrill as I made each improvement and was able to communicate and understand more and more. As I recall, I never was satisfied with what I knew and I was always anxious about what I considered my slowness. I think that this is how I feel about my progress as a teacher - too slow.

Today I couldn't quite integrate myself with the kids and the surroundings at Forest Park. It was a dreary day. I can't decide if I'm over-reacting to "discipline" problems. I think I did in this case. A boy was climbing up a slide the wrong way and I reprimanded him. He smarted back, I ended up grabbing him. He, clearly, was on the brink of fighting me. I am in a quandary over "respect" and "discipline." Clearly this boy didn't show me respect when I reprimanded him, however I wonder if I should have intervened in the first place - was it a petty infraction? My voice has begun to take on the tone of the harassed female teacher. That incident shook me up. I also was a little frightened of the boy and he probably sensed

it. I turned to a male teacher who seemed reluctant to insist to the boy that he get down. He merely asked the boy, who refused and the other teacher and I, eventually, walked off. It was a chaotic mess. No one knew where we were headed in the morning. The rest of the day I didn't really organize any activities. I really don't feel the sense of my class due to the fact I move around teaching Spanish. Also, there are so many.

Another incident today was the receipt of a letter from Ardith Kohn of the Regional Office in Boston. She responded to my questions on discipline without really talking "punishment." She talked more of a well-paced multi-faceted classroom in which the tasks are interesting and the kids don't have TIME to slap, hit, bad-mouth. She talked about letting them feel a sense of personal growth by keeping a record of their accomplishments. This last idea intrigues me because I have the feeling that when I walk into the class out of the blue that no one knows where we've been or where we're at.

I wonder if I'm putting too much energy into getting control. Eg. Eddie, a smart kid in Paul's class, was just not participating so I ignored him for awhile and he got bored sitting there and started participating.

JULY 25, Wednesday:

Peter's class: Go over sounds with entire class. Spelling test from errors they make a lot. Ramon and Baltazar with Carmen, Peter's aide. Other students answer the following from "What We Do Day By Day":

¿Qué están haciendo?

¿Dónde están?

¿Qué clase de comida han escogido?

¿Qué hora del día es?

¿Qué tiene la muchacha en el pelo? alrededor del cuello?

Generalmente, ¿Qué comes al mediodía en casa? en la escuela?

Comments: This class, of course, understood almost everything. However, I'd like to give them a little more creative work to do and cut down the phonetic practice. I should try to spend only a few moments with the more advanced kids, and work with the slower ones. I didn't get to the picture of the children in the lunch line from "What We Do Day By Day."

JULY 27 Friday:

Peter's Class: Read "Golondrinita" and practice sounds. Others answer questions about pictures (from Wednesday).

Comments: I had Iris and Juan doing the questions by themselves. Very well done. I worked with three on reading and the sound/grapheme correspondence. Baltazar and Ramón were in the back with Carmen, the aide, on sound/letters.

Martha's class: Half the kids read the poem with the aide, Jose. Half the kids practice sounds.

David's class:

I) Give all a review of the sounds/graphemes

II) ¿Que haría Ud. si fuera (Escoja dos para contestar)

un futbolista?

un bailador de ballet?

el presidente de los EEUU?

Donny Osmond?

la Hermana Anne Marie?

JULY 30 Monday:

Pass out my dittos to all the classes

Comments: Most went right through the exercises. A few got stuck and I found it difficult to help them because I was constantly jumping up to get new papers for everyone else.

EVALUATION:

It is obvious from reading my daily account of this summer that there were definite areas which, from the beginning, provoked concern and insecurity on my part:

- 1) How much my students knew about reading and writing in Spanish.
- 2) Classroom behavior, or discipline, which I needed for good teaching.
- 3) The total educational spectrum and how my class fit into it.

I consider knowing what my students have been taught or know already to be of major importance. I need to have an idea of where to begin. I always knew vaguely who was catching on fast, medium, or slowly; but I never knew precisely what anyone knew or did not know before they entered the classroom. Actually, this summer program possessed the very flaw it was trying to correct for the future: it drew kids from many schools and the teacher had no record of the students' previous educational experience. The pre-tests in math and English shed some light on the level of the students, but there were no pre-tests given in Spanish. There was no discussion of the Spanish aspect of the program during the orientation. In fact, there was little material to be found in the Spanish Apostolate, except a few story books. I personally was not familiar with the Springfield Public Schools so I didn't have much information about what was being taught in the realm of Spanish literacy. Of course, there were some obvious things to be done to better inform myself. I talked with the other teachers who were teaching Spanish and who had taught in the public schools and I observed another teacher's classes three or four times. I asked my

students to bring in work that they had done during the school term. I could have gotten in contact with other knowledgeable sources, but I never really did. Perhaps it was the lack of time in the day; perhaps it was my sense of being alone in a strange city; perhaps it was my interest in doing my own thing. I think that doing my own thing would have been easier if I had had some means of testing the students beforehand (see appendix: dittos). As it was, it was the last two weeks that I started planning lessons for specific classes instead of making one lesson plan to be used in all my classes. Actually, the levels didn't always coincide with grades as some classes had a range of ages and some had students very fluent in English with students who were hardly able to speak English at all. The students who didn't speak English well sometimes were better in my class.

My other main concern was DISCIPLINE. (The caps reflect its effect on me!) Again, my discipline problem might have been less had I better individualized my instruction. Looking at my plans, one sees that this problem surfaced from the beginning. It is interesting to me to see how much I relied on my memories of when I was of elementary school age. I didn't do it consciously but my reaction, I feel, were based on these to a great extent. For example, hand-raising was something that was strictly enforced when I was young, yet I couldn't enforce it consistently and I found that my tendency was to allow people to speak out in a discussion. However, I wasn't able to keep that from getting out of hand. A painful incident was the picnic I refer to (on page 18) when I tried

to stop a boy from climbing up the slide. It almost developed into a fist fight as I told him in a flat voice to "get down", expecting full well that he would meekly and guiltily obey, as I would have. Another example is the awe I felt when another third grade teacher, Peter Stathis, was able to command attention by the fear he instilled in the kids through his height, bearing, and ability to yell. At first I tried to be like him, too. Actually, I do have the ability to create a rapport with children and I could see this on field trips as well as in the classroom. It is necessary to stick to your definition as well. Nevertheless, just as important is to have the well-paced, multi-faceted classroom in which there are interesting tasks. Another important thing is to know where to go if you need to refer to someone else for discipline. I didn't realize right away that I could take the children down to Sister Anne Marie's office if I couldn't handle them. I toyed with the idea of forbidding them to participate in the field trips, but that was frowned upon as the school was responsible for the children during certain hours. The obvious thing would have been to establish a rapport with Sister Anne Marie from the beginning. However, she was not especially outgoing or warm so I was a little put-off. She knew her fellow sisters and some of the other lay teachers but she didn't really reach out to me. For others this wouldn't have been any handicap because taking the initiative is easier. I introduced myself to her during orientation week but after that I hardly spoke with her. Hopefully, as I continue to teach I will overcome my shyness and find out what is expected of me and what

I expect from a teaching experience.

Another point that I think everyone who teaches should take into consideration concerns the importance of what they teach in the greater context, be it my summer school or, even, the total educational process. According to the facts during the orientation week, Spanish reading and writing were to be one-third of the thrust of the program. However, as I mentioned earlier, there were no materials exhibited nor was there a speaker who addressed himself to that subject. There was little material at my site. Perhaps the course wasn't intended to be as important as I thought. Because I felt I was going to be evaluated by SIT staff and it would count towards my degree, I adopted a very linguistically structured approach. However, as I taught a number of questions came to mind. I wondered if, in some cases, I was impeding the students' progress in their English language competence as I tried to get them to learn Spanish vowels and consonants (although I didn't teach the consonants isolated from the vowels). Many, many of my third graders read poorly or not at all. They were not in command of the English vowels or consonants and, at times, seemed to confuse the two languages. Being so unaware of the background and experiences of the students, maybe simple exposure to stories, movies, music and other experiences available in the community would have been a viable alternative. A greater experience with the Hispanic resources might bring very practical results to both the children and to the family and, less tangible, a greater self-appreciation. I think, especially, I should have relinquished my linguistic

approach and adopted this alternative with what I called the "slower" students. It bothers me that I may have contributed to any future reluctance they may have to study Spanish. There are already so many inducements for them to reject their dual heritage.

If I had the experience again, I would, naturally, have a little more insight into what it would be about. Probably the most important consideration for me would be the effect of dividing my time into so many small, one half hour units. In opting to teach one subject to all the classes, I was narrowing my chances for really getting to know my assigned students. The community feeling which is possible when people spend time together in productive activity was stalled by the fact that I was out of the classroom a great deal. Not only that, my students' personal and academic needs never became known to the other teachers because they were taught by whomever was the teacher of the class that needed Spanish that half hour. If I had the choice again, I would either opt for teaching all the subjects to one class or I would decide not to have my own class at all, but rather to serve in the same capacity as the arts and crafts, gym, ESL, teachers (see Introduction), and teach only Spanish.

Another thing I would be aware of is the lack of time really available to teach your subject in a program like this. Although there were six weeks scheduled for the summer program, most of the first week was spent on the pre-testing and the last week was spent on post-testing. In total, I taught only 16 days and not every class was taught those days. This is

all the more reason for concrete experiences in language. Although my underlying intent might still be linguistic (sound/grapheme correspondence), I would probably center each class around something specific such as a sport or a place in the community.

I would probably be better able to utilize my aide (and perhaps those of the other teachers) the next time. Even an aide who doesn't speak Spanish can learn the consonant and vowel sounds enough to give simple drills. A Spanish-speaking aide could do much more.

It is a good idea that a teacher going into a situation such as mine realize some of the differences between the language of his students and the language he may have been most influenced by. In my case, my Spanish was from the university. Generally, it was book-learning rather than actual speaking and I believe that it was "international" Spanish, i.e. Spanish known to educated speakers in all parts of the Spanish-speaking world. My real language speaking experience came in Mexico and it was probably that country which most influenced me. The Spanish which my Puerto Rican students spoke was fascinating in its differences from what I knew. (See July 16.) Some of the differences came from the close association of Puerto Rico with the United States. (Words such as "steam" and "brown"). Phonemically, Puerto Rican Spanish differs from what I learned as well. In reality, Gattegno's South American phonic code chart doesn't reflect the peculiarities that characterize Puerto Rican Spanish and one should be designed which reflects this dialect. For those who

spent months trying to learn the /r/ - but to no avail - Puerto Rican Spanish will save you embarrassment: The {rr} doesn't vibrate with very much intensity. Rather it sounds more like the velar /j/. The little girl with the name of Ramona can sometimes be thought of as something to eat! The {l} and the {r} are interchangeable at times, especially the final {r} which changes to /l/. (example: the infinitive). Another obvious difference is the loss of the final /s/. I mention these peculiarities of the Puerto Rican dialect as things to be aware of, especially if one expects to teach reading and writing using a sound/grapheme approach. As these differences can vary in any particular group that one teaches, the important thing is to expect them and to be prepared for the shock. Actually, these differences can be fun and interesting discussion topics. An interesting fact is that these differences are not really characteristic of only Puerto Rico. Augusto Malaret states in his book Vocabulario de Puerto Rico: "According to studies made by Pedro Henriquez Ureña in his book Observaciones sobre el español en America, Puerto Rico falls within the second of the five dealectal zones of Hispano-America. Also in this zone are Cuba, Santo Domingo, the coast and plains of Venezuela, and parts of Colombia.

In summing up this type of experience, I would say that the key is ambiguity. The traditional approaches may or may not work (for example, my attempts to discipline.) The traditional approaches often yield only frustration. I was appalled by the amount of hitting and slapping among the kids and I tried

to stop it from the first with strong reprimands. Upon discussion with others I learned that the parameters of acceptable behavior in the Latin culture are different. This is true particularly with play: Latin children are allowed much more freedom than American children are accustomed to. The notion of "danger" is not as prevalent as in the United States, especially among lower socio-economic groups. Thus, it is important to find out where the children are at and to accept the findings. Things are not always what they appear.....

.....That cliché applies, too, to the academic aspect. There can be pronouncements of the importance of this or that. The program or an activity may seem all in order. However, looking beneath the surface one finds that appearances are again deceptive. Schedules will be changed: children will be enrolling and dropping out throughout the program; administrators and teachers will be inexperienced.

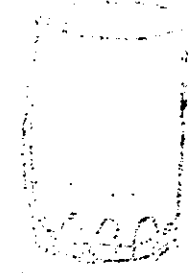
For me this experience continued my maturation as a teacher. Hopefully, I will carry the benefits of the six weeks with me and I will continue to grow and change with each new teaching experience.



cat



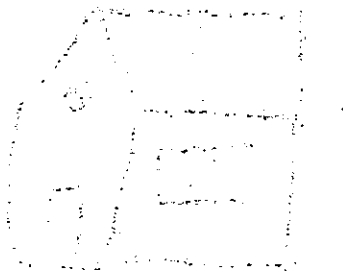
bird



jar



hand



house



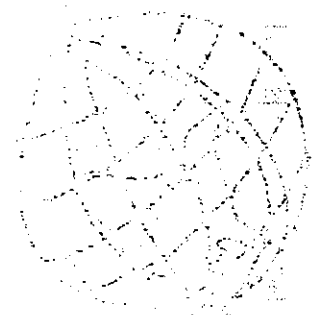
drop



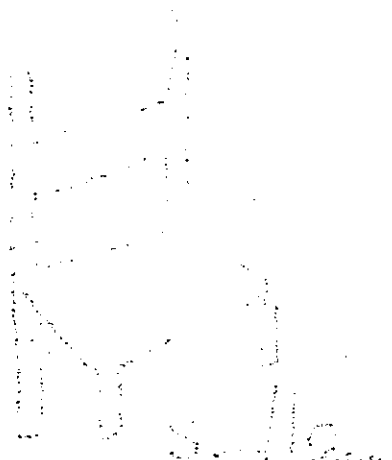
books



papers



globe



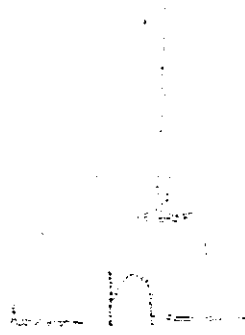
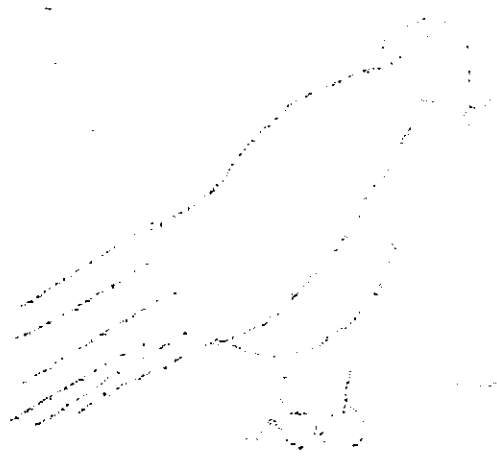
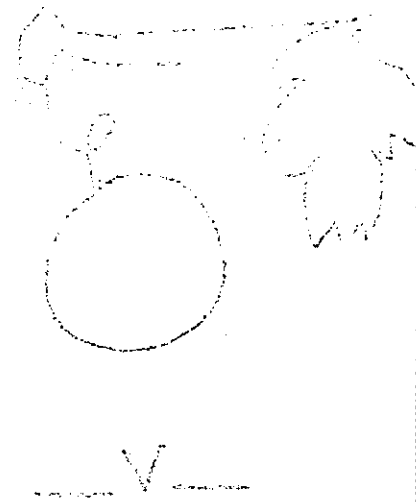
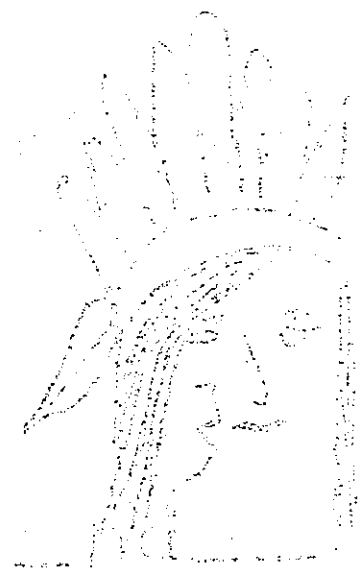
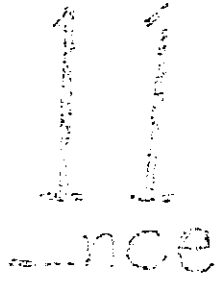
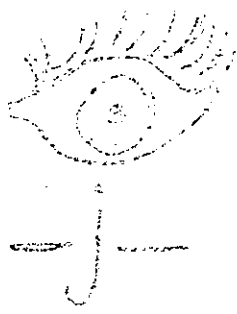
cow

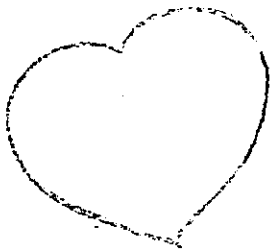


pig

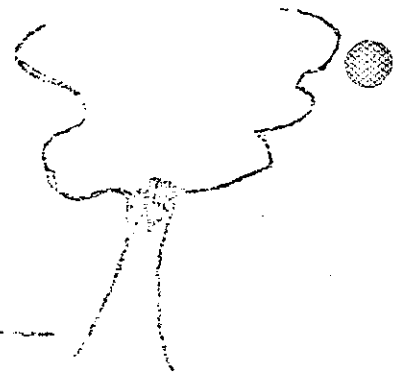


sheep





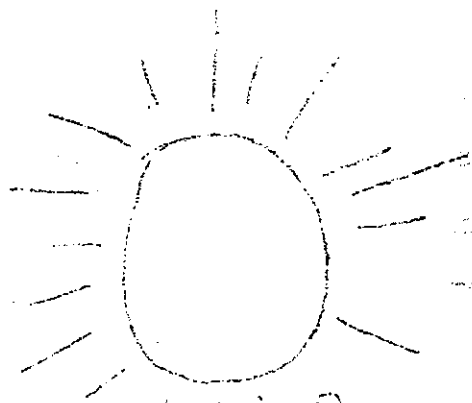
CORAZÓN



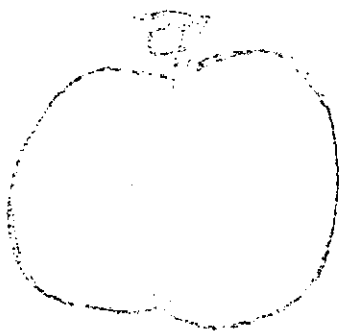
carbo_



pe_



so_

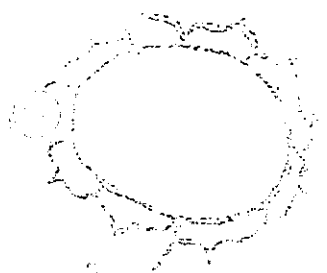


ma_zana



docto_

Escribe lo que falta



El _____ es _____.



El _____ es _____.



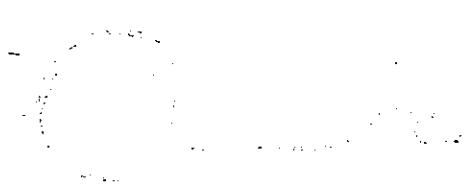
El _____ es _____.



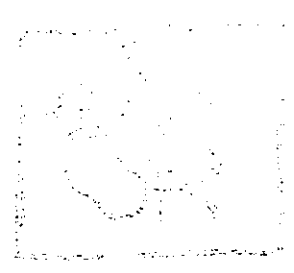
El _____ es _____.



El _____ es _____.



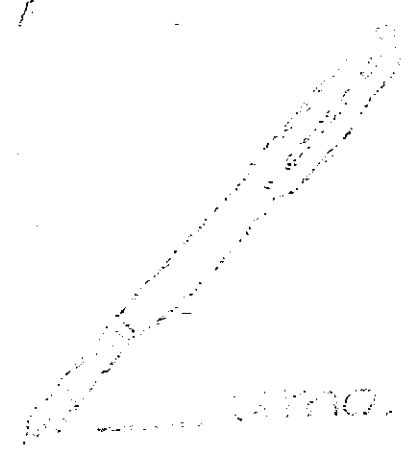
El _____ es _____.



El _____ es _____.



El _____ es _____.



El _____ es _____.

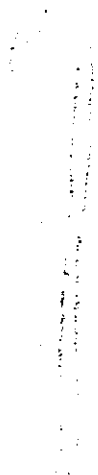
Escreve lo que falta.



tenedor



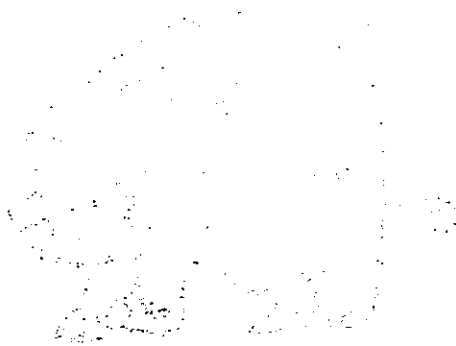
mano



brocha



peixe



elefante



combete



combete

An Analysis of Factors
that Create the Educational
Problems of the
Puerto Rican Student
in New England
(Graphic Excerpts)

Armando Martinez

What follows are profiles comparing some norms for student performance and school environment as they relate to the cultural linguistic, economic and racial factors of the Puerto Rican student.

Cultural Profile PP 26-29*

Linguistic.....P 34

EconomicPP 36-38

Racial.....PP 41-42

*These page numbers relative to original paper presented by Dr. Martinez

Puerto Rican Situation	General School Situation	Resultant Conflict
<p>Puerto Rican socialization in the home follows cooperation among children, rather than competition.</p>	<p>Schools foster competition among students, both by using it as an incentive and by requiring that individual work be a norm in the classroom.</p>	<p>Puerto Rican students are considered lazy by the teachers; also they are thought to be unruly and/or inclined to cheat. This is followed by low teacher expectations for a Puerto Rican student's success in school</p>
<p>Accepts as a fact that he exists subject to God's will.</p>	<p>Upward mobility. Success depends on effort.</p>	<p>The student is seen to lack enthusiasm and self-confidence. 41</p>
<p>Large, closely-knit family. Strong ties and loyalties.</p>	<p>Competition among peers.</p>	<p>The student may lack ability to compete with peers and is thought to be anti-social and dull. 42</p>
<p>Mother primarily to perform household duties. A love symbol. Is submissive to the father.</p>	<p>Frequently, the authority figure in the classroom is a woman.</p>	<p>The Puerto Rican child questions the authority of the female teacher in a classroom and tends to test her. 43</p>
<p>Close sibling relationship. Older children responsible for younger.</p>	<p>Segregated age groups.</p>	<p>The Puerto Rican child functions best in a group situation, whereas most classrooms call for individual accomplishment. 44</p>

Independent at an early age. Highly disciplined by the parents by means of threats, fear and mysticism. Sex education ignored.

The students are asked to be dependent on the teacher's directions. The teacher is the disciplinarian. Sex education is seen to be the responsibility of the school.

The Puerto Rican student does not respect the substitute disciplinarian. Puerto Rican parents do not feel that sex education is the function of the school. 45

Used to verbal rather than written form of communication.

Places demands on the student for written information, expression, ie tests, questionnaires.

The Puerto Rican student tends to appear as if he has no ideas and suggestions when asked to write them down. 46 Prefers the personal approach.

Home is crowded and noisy. Often lacking in educational materials and playthings.

Calls for facility with materials: games, etc. The teacher usually prefers a quiet, controlled atmosphere.

The Puerto Rican student often displays aggressive behavior. Lacks the necessary experiences for conceptual development. 47

Extremely modest.

Sometimes calls for physical display--during physical examinations, physical education.

The Puerto Rican may show embarrassment during physical education and react against participation. 48

Puerto Rican Situation	General School Situation	Resulting Conflict
<p>Education subordinate to family duties. Considered more important to the male, for learning a skill.</p>	<p>Education considered as a priority for all children. Considered natural for a girl to be educated, just as a boy.</p>	<p>The Puerto Rican child considered irresponsible for missing many school days. Might be apathetic in school. Not much relationship between the home and the school on the part of the parents who are embarrassed by</p>
<p>When being disciplined, the Puerto Rican child must not look up or answer any question. Otherwise he is considered impudent.</p>	<p>"Look at me! Answer when you are spoken to...!"</p>	<p>The student is confused as to appropriate behavior while being reprimanded.</p>
<p>Motivated to achieve for the family.</p>	<p>Motivated to achieve for self satisfaction.</p>	<p>The Puerto Rican student's behavior during tasks is misinterpreted as apathy.</p>
<p>Parents received education in another country in another language, on the whole.</p>	<p>Much of the communication and information dispersal to the family is in English.</p>	<p>The child is used to looking to his parents for help and protection. Now he finds that they are uninformed and insecure concerning matters of the school.</p>

Puerto Rican Situation

Children often come from rural areas. If they are placed in the third grade or higher, they have not had the education comparable to that of the other children.

General School Situation

Teacher assumes that lower level abilities have been acquired in previous grades.

Resultant Conflict

Children do not have the basic skills in reading and arithmetic that the teacher assumes that they should have. This lack of education is often interpreted as a natural inability to deal with abstractions. 53

Puerto Rican Situation	General School Situation	Resultant Conflict
<p>Parents who are not even literate in their own native language can not provide assistance to their children with school work, the bulk of which is in English. 60</p>	<p>School work is done in English, homework is in that language as well.</p>	<p>The Puerto Rican student can not rely on outside sources for assistance with school work. Lacking adequate skills in English, and receiving minimal supportive programs, he falls behind in course work, and may eventually drop out.</p>
<p>Puerto Ricans enter the first grade speaking only Spanish.</p>	<p>School curriculum for the first grade centers around introduction of cognitive skills in English.</p>	<p>Students who are not literate in their native language have extreme difficulties in attempting to read and write, as well speak English at the same time.</p>
<p>Spanish is spoken in the home.</p>	<p>Teachers attempt to eradicate the use of Spanish, by supplanting it with English in the classroom.</p>	<p>The use of English outside the school situation is limited; learning to speak the language is much slower. The attempt to supplant Spanish with English, especially with those students who have recently arrived from Puerto Rico, impedes the adjustment and often produces anxiety and confusion. 61</p>
<p>Spanish-speaking students have some type of problem in speaking, reading and/or writing English.</p>	<p>Schools recognize these problems and offer tutorial programs, orientation courses, English as a Second Language classes, etc. 62</p>	<p>The special courses, in general, are an attempt to submerge Spanish in a torrent of English. And while the student may learn English, he falls back in other subject matter. These courses are usually only offered a limited number of hours per week. 63</p>

Puerto Rican Perspective	General Perspective	Resulting Conflict
<p>51.5% Spanish-speaking earn less than \$6,000/year⁶⁵</p> <p>27.9% earn more than \$10,000 per year⁶⁶</p> <p>Median income is \$3,700</p> <p>Less than 1/2 of the families depend on this wage as the major source of income⁶⁹</p> <p>Families emphasize duty to family⁶⁸</p>	<p>27.9% total population in Boston earn less than \$6,000/year⁶⁷</p> <p>45.2% earn more than \$10,000 per year⁶⁸</p> <p>Average Boston family earns \$9,812/year⁷⁰</p> <p>Emphasis is on obtaining an education</p>	<p>School materials are often directed toward the middle class student.</p> <p>The argument that a high school diploma will help students get a better-paying job in the future is too long-range for Puerto Rican students who see the problem as immediate.</p>
<p>30.8% receive some type of welfare.⁷¹ For 30% this is the largest source of income.</p> <p>Income remaining after fixed expenditures: 13% (Housing, food, time payments)⁷³</p>	<p>13.8% of Boston population receives some type of welfare.⁷²</p> <p>Income remaining after fixed expenditures: 44%⁷⁴</p>	<p>Students are expected to provide their own school supplies.</p> <p>Many middle class families own dictionaries and encyclopedias which help students with homework. Spanish-speaking families do not have reference materials in the home, and many cannot provide their children with adequate school supplies.</p> <p>Often the students do not have proper clothing, particularly in the winter. At times, teachers call attention to this fact by asking the child about his lack of clothing, embarrassing him.</p>

Puerto Rican Perspective	General Perspective	Resolving Conflicts
<p>96% rent their homes 75</p> <p>0% own their homes 76</p> <p>Puerto Ricans live on the average of 3 different places in 5.3 years. 15% of those in Boston had lived in five or more different addresses. 77</p>	<p>Average of other ethnic groups in city 78</p> <p>69% rent their homes 78</p> <p>26% own their homes 79</p> <p>Median school years completed: 12.2 81</p> <p>When the head of the family has only completed elementary school, median income was \$5,310; high school, \$6,485; four or more years of college, \$9,709 82</p>	<p>Being poor, many Puerto Ricans are constantly on the move in search of better jobs and more livable housing.</p> <p>Public schools expect students to be generally stable; Puerto Rican families can not provide their children with this stability. Therefore, children have to change schools. Often they tend to be put back with younger children. As their self-concept deteriorates, so does their performance, and they often drop out.</p>
<p>47% of families receive AFDC 83</p>	<p>6% of the average of other ethnic groups in the city receive AFDC 84</p> <p>Schools use materials that center on nuclear families</p>	<p>Long-term emphasis on the value of a high school diploma and on furthering an education is not effective with Puerto Ricans, since their economic problems are viewed as immediate.</p> <p>They drop out of school in order to help with the immediate problems.</p> <p>Many teachers are not sensitive toward asking the student to get signatures from mother (or father) and to have parents come to meetings.</p> <p>Materials which center on nuclear families tend to make Puerto Rican children feel embarrassed about their family situation and inadequate since they are made to feel that by having only one parent, they are missing something.</p>



Puerto Rican Perspective	General Perspective	Resulting Conflict
<p>Average salary \$86/week \$4,472/year for an average family of six mem- bers per family 85</p> <p>The larger families must often live in housing units that are deteriorated or dilapidated, and most crowded</p>	<p>Median income \$166/ week for an average of 3.3 members per family. 86</p>	<p>Teachers expect students, especially those in upper grades, to do some type of studying at home.</p> <p>Overcrowded conditions, noise, lack of privacy, and the expected contributions to family life make it impossible for Puerto Rican students to study in their homes.</p>



Puerto Rican Perspective

General Perspective

Implications for School Situation

The Puerto Ricans are a race of many races, especially in terms of skin color. The children of one set of parents can have skin color ranging from white to extremely dark. ⁸⁸

Color (other than white) is a liability in the USA. Prejudice and discrimination is directed against a difference in skin color, with much attendant suffering and deprivation. ⁸⁹

A young Puerto Rican child with dark coloring may find in school that his brother, who is lighter, is more "acceptable," receiving preferential treatment. Meanwhile, he--categorized as black--is labeled with all the negative connotations that have for so long been the lot of the black child in the public school, in terms of expected underachievement and low potential.

On the island, the Puerto Rican, especially rural residents, has little opportunity to perceive discrimination based on color. ⁹⁰

On the mainland, racial discrimination is an established reality.

The in-migrant is often slow to comprehend the mainland racial situation. ⁹¹ A child in school may tend to interpret the negative reaction towards him as a slur against his personality rather than his skin--with resultant damage to ego development and to his pride in all that he is--touching on culture and language.

If a Puerto Rican is white, he must adjust himself to the white culture of the city; if he is not white he has no choice but to blend with the Negro community. Those in an intermediate classification must assimilate, "become like" the Negro in the community. ⁹²

Puerto Ricans refuse to divide themselves as Black Puerto Ricans and White Puerto Ricans. Forced, increased racial consciousness on the part of the Spanish community often results in limited Puerto Rican participation in programs run or attended largely by blacks. Very few bridges of cooperation and understanding exist between the Puerto Rican and the Black. In schools where Puerto Ricans have been classified as Black, placed in highly Black student populations, defensive competition and trouble has arisen, retarding learning. ⁹⁴



Puerto Rican Perspective

General Perspective

Implications for School Situation

The darker Puerto Rican may attempt to continue his Spanish language and accent in an attempt, realized or sub-conscious, to preserve his foreign appearance and thus separate himself from the plight of the American Black.

This undermines the motivation to learn and use English. It leads to a defensive expression of cultural awareness. The drop-out rate is aggravated, with a high percentage of darker Puerto Ricans returning to Puerto Rico. Within the school competition develops with the Black students.