

Concerted Cultivation Seminar Conceptualization

Concerted Cultivation

I conceptualized and developed a two-hour seminar for low-income, Hispanic parents who wish to learn the skills they need to advance their children's future. The workshop aims to familiarize participants with the practice of *concerted cultivation* and *practical intelligence*. Concerted cultivation is based on sociologist Annette Lareau's beliefs that families are the best resource for children to acquire social savvy. She believes that wealthy families raise their children to be more unrestricted, while families of low-economic backgrounds raise their children to be more constrained. A constrained childhood prevents children from learning how to cope with highly structure settings, how to adjust to new situations, and how assert themselves among authoritative figures. The lack of assertion holds back the children's social skills and hinders their ability to succeed in the future.

Practical intelligence is based on psychologist Robert Sternberg's theory that individuals who are successful know how to advocate for their own goals. They know what needs to get done and set out to accomplish it. It is important for parents to understand that providing an education for their children is only a part of the process; that children also need to know how to manipulate daily-life circumstances and adapt to different situations when pursuing their objectives. Practical intelligence is not a natural ability. It must be learned. Parents are the principal transmitters of it and it is important for parents to understand that they influence their children's ability to acquire this skill.

Class Objectives

Many low-income families, however, do not have access to this type of information. Most of the information families receive is mostly geared toward education-related issues. Items of social nature are not usually a topic of discussion. No one tells them they need to raise their children a certain way for their children to be successful in the United States. They do not receive this type of wisdom often, if ever. But, this workshop aims to do so. The seminar plays around the word cultivation -- a term that many low-income Hispanic families may find familiar, since many of them come from agricultural backgrounds. It compares the child to a seed and it exposes five main skills parents must foster in their children – morals, ethics, values, manners, and life experiences. All of which form the child's character and which should equip the child to better handle life's opportunities.

Because we are interested in making sure parents have the basic skills needed to help their children succeed, this seminar aims to accomplish the following:

1. To develop awareness of the parents influence in a child's character
2. To equip parents with the basic factors that form a child's character (Morals, Ethics, Values, Good Manners and Life Experiences)
3. To engage participants in creativity and problem solving by exposing them to several moral scenarios that their children may confront in society and to discuss the possible ways to handle those scenarios.
4. To introduce participants to the most basic skills in the area of manners and etiquette and to provide them an opportunity to practice at least one of those skills.

I believe that as a bilingual instructor, I have a great opportunity to reach out this particular public and make a strong connection via a common language. I can also help increase understanding of the class via common cultural similarities.