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Head Start Teachers and their Use of Multicultural Education

Cynthia Czerwin, '02
Illinois Wesleyan University

Teodora Amoloza, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Oral Presentation O5.3

**HEAD START TEACHERS AND THEIR USE OF
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

Cynthia Czerwin and Teodora Amoloza*
Department of Sociology, Illinois Wesleyan University

Multicultural Education is a philosophy that uses a child's culture in the classroom. It was developed in response to disparities between the academic achievement levels between minority and white students in the United States. Head Start, as a program whose clients are 70% minority, should be using a multicultural philosophy in the classroom. However, the United States has a history of using education as a tool to assimilate immigrant and minority cultures into the dominant culture. This study reviewed Head Start policies and literature, observed seven Head Start classrooms, and interviewed seven Head Start teachers in Bloomington-Normal and Joliet, Illinois to determine in what ways and if Head Start has implemented multicultural principles into the classroom. What was found is that while Head Start is interested in implementing multicultural principles, Head Start cannot yet be classified as using a multicultural program to teach their diverse clientele.