Multicultural & Diversity Newsletter   Newsletters

1999

UNLV College of Education Multicultural & Diversity Newsletter

Steve McCafferty
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, mccaffes@unlv.nevada.edu

John Filler
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, john.filler@unlv.edu

Nancy P. Gallavan
University of Central Arkansas, ngallavan@uca.edu

Le Ann Putney
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, leann.putney@unlv.edu

Nancy Sileo

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Authors

Steve McCafferty, John Filler, Nancy P. Gallavan, Le Ann Putney, Nancy Sileo, Kyle Higgins, Porter Troutman, Stanley Zehm, Cyndi Giorgis, Aimee Govett, Jean Henry, Bill Pankratius, Susan Rumann, and Joyce Nelson-Leaf

UNLV COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Multicultural & Diversity Newsletter

Members of the Multicultural & Diversity Committee:
Steve McCafferty, John Filler, Nancy Gallavan (Co-chair), LeAnn Putney, Nancy Sileo,
Kyle Higgins, Porter Troutman (Co-chair), Stanley Zehm, Cyndi Giorgis, Aimee Govett,
Jean Henry, Bill Pankratius, Susan Marie Rumann, and Joyce Nelson-Leaf

Kyle Higgins, Editor

Notes From the Field: Savoring San Juan
by Marilyn McKinney

Each morning I wound my way up the steep hill along the deeply rutted dirt path, exchanging daily "maaa's" with five bleating sheep and shouting out, "¡Hola!" in response to the children who gleefully identified me as "¡Gringa!" Women and children, colorful bowls of cooked maize balanced atop their heads, sauntered to and from Maria Elena's where their maize would be ground; at home the dough would be shaped and flattened into tortillas, the mainstay of every meal in the small Guatemalan village of San Juan.

For 11 days in December and January, this village was "home" to Alek, my 21 year old son; Suzanne, the leader of our very small Global Citizens Network (GCN) team; and me. Typically winter breaks provide a time for me to flee Las Vegas, academic work, and daily planners; this year the escape meant leaving behind our personal comfort zones of language, culture, and living amenities to embrace a once in a lifetime opportunity to live and work in another country, to experience the culture and language of San Juan, to grow as human beings, and to attempt to give something back in return for the riches of our own lives. Our work project involved contributing to the building of a latrine for the primary school (la Escuela Rural Mixta) in San Juan.

Located in the central highlands, about two hours northeast of Guatemala City, San Juan is home to approximately 2000 people, Latinos who wear westernized clothing and speak Spanish. The women and girls work very hard, grinding corn, cooking over outdoor fires, washing clothes in the ubiquitous pilas (large stone, 3-sectioned sinks and basins), sweeping and cleaning, and caring for children. Many of the men and boys travel to distant fields to tend a variety of vegetable crops which they sell in markets; they are often gone for part of each week but return on the weekends.

Although school was closed between November and January 18th, I was still able to learn about the structure of the educational system. A preschool, with about 30 children, ages 4-6, was completed several years ago with help from previous GCN teams. A second school, the site of our latrine project, operates in the mornings as a primary school (250 students, ages 7-13, and 8 teachers) and in the afternoon as Basico or secondary school (approximately 30 students, ages 14-16). Basico is essentially a private school for students who want to continue their education and whose parents can afford to send them. We heard from several sources that most of the boys quit school around 2nd or 3rd grade and work to support their families. Many women begin their families, often comprised of 7 or 8 children, by the time they are 15 years old.

Emaciated, flee-infested dogs roam the streets alongside pigs, chickens, goats, and roosters. In the wee hours of each morning, we awoke to the incessant sounds of crowing roosters and mooing cows. There is only one telephone in the entire village, but many homes have electricity with televisions, refrigerators, and stereos. Although there is no running water, agua did not seem to be in short supply. At least once a week, each home could tap into the water supply and fill the multiple barrels scattered throughout each yard. This water is used for everything from washing clothes and food products, to brushing teeth and bathing. "Showers" typically consisted of sponging off, pretty much out in the open -- at least that was the story I heard from both Alek and Suzanne. Although Alek dealt with the absence of showers as he knew them in the U.S., he described the long, hot shower in Guatemala City at the end of our trip as "the best shower of my life!" I lived with a family that had constructed a private bathing area, where we showered by pouring bowls of water over us. Most homes had outdoor latrines, and the few that had western toilets were manually flushed with bowls of water.

The work of building the school latrine was to be a three-month project, and so our team could only help with the beginning stages.

Before we arrived, the village padres had hired a back hoe to dig a hole, approximately 15 feet deep, 8 feet long, and 6 feet across. It was lined with rocks, boulders, and the most amazing mud I've ever seen. I know this because our first task was to clear the mud, rock, and debris out of the hole -- hard physical labor. Loncho, the man hired from the community to head up the project, worked from the bottom of the pit, filling up bucket after bucket with earthen treasures. Alek, Nando (Loncho's 16 year-old brother, the kid with a million dollar smile), or other village kids hoisted the buckets up by pulling a rope leveraged against a tree branch which lay across the hole. Suzanne and I dumped the mud and rocks nearby and then we, along with a few of the 8-10 children who appeared each day to help, relocated it in another part of the school yard. I was intrigued by the cooperative, noncompetitive spirit of the children as they shared tools, laughed, played, and proudly practiced saying "thank you," "you're welcome," and "see you later!" in English. They tolerantly helped me learn "tool" words like "pala" (shovel) or working words like "trabajo." I marveled at the patient manner in which Nando unobtrusively watched the younger children like Julio and Luis use the pick ax to chip away at the pile of dirt and rock. It was clear he trusted them to act responsibly, but would be there to help should anyone get hurt.

Another part of the project entailed building reinforcement columns of rebar rods and steel brackets which were eventually inserted into the corners of the hole to support the cinder block walls. This, too, became a community effort---Alek sawed, Loncho or other local men bent the steel into square supports, and Suzanne and I wired the squares onto the rebar at hand-length intervals. I realized that once we had begun to construct these columns (and I'd constructed my knowledge of how to make them and understood their purpose) I began to notice them everywhere walls were built, even sticking out through the roofs of "finished" buildings.

Each of us lived with a different family, which meant that we found ourselves both fascinated and challenged in different ways. Alek's conditions were most "primitive" (I can guarantee that his journal entry about the first time he had to use the "commode" will become a family classic!). He shared a room with several species of rodents and insects and his family spoke no English. However, his madré constantly sought out opportunities to wash his work gloves and shoes. Suzanne was fluent in Spanish which made communication "easy." But she encountered several bouts with stomach "bugs" and found the restroom facilities less than comforting during her times of need! My family was very generous and gregarious. I shared a room with Grisel, who turned 16 on January 3, also my mother's birthday. She had three older brothers and an 11 year-old sister, Evelyn. Grisel had been learning English in school from Barbara, a volunteer from Holland; I was relying on Spanish I'd learned in elementary school many years ago and the audio tapes I'd been frantically listening to for several months prior to our departure. Our proficiency level with each other's language was similar and we often communicated by resorting to passing the dictionary back and forth.

In the days before I left for San Juan, and while I was there, I began to ponder what I would take away from the experience. David Heflich, reminiscing about his travels in other countries, counseled me to find ways of savoring it once I returned. Knowing only too well how easy it would be to find myself sucked back into the frenetic pace of academic life, I kept his suggestion in the back of my mind throughout my days in Guatemala. Now I've returned and had some time to step back and reflect, wondering at times just how one does savor the specialness of such an adventure, pondering what I've learned that has become a part of who I am.

What have I learned? Or perhaps I should say, "What am I learning?" because every time I write or talk about this experience I discover new insights.

•Even though I thought I wasn't, I realized that I've taken many things for granted; I have often been guilty of thinking of my life as the norm. But in San Juan, I was confronted with the reality that my language was no longer the language of power and my academic rank really didn't matter to the typical person.

•While they were patient with my feeble attempts to communicate, I learned so much about how second languages develop. It was brought home to me over and over that language is first learned through comprehending conversations, that comprehension is immeasurably aided through some knowledge of the content of the discussion as well as through verbal gestures. Production comes next and produces its own set of challenges and frustrations. As I tried to speak and remember words and phrases (sometimes for what must have been the 25th time, sometimes confusing Spanish words for the few French words I remembered from high school and college), I often grew impatient with myself. My difficulty with Spanish has increased my compassion for the many children in our schools and their parents who are struggling not only to survive, but also to learn English. At the same time, I've also become a bit more brave in just trying to speak my second language; I know it is really the only way I can ever get better.

•Among the things I've taken for granted (but thought I hadn't) is the role of schooling in our society. It's one thing to "tell" preservice teachers about class and cultural differences between white, middle class, Anglo teachers and the diversity of the children of color and poverty who inhabit many of our classrooms. I learned about how it was "normal" for boys to not attend school so they could work in the fields and for girls to marry early and have many children. Why *would* school seem important when survival needs had to be first? And yet I found myself questioning my own values, wondering why I found it "strange" that in a town with one telephone and no running water, there was an abundance of televisions and stereo systems.

•I was reminded of the importance of family structures and the need to appreciate the simple things of life. At the heart of who we are and what we do with our time on this planet is an essential humanity that really isn't so very different from one part of the world to another. My life is rich and it became richer because of the time I spent living and working together with some of the villagers of San Juan. I want to hope that part of savoring the experience will mean renewing my commitment to remembering and enacting what is really important about life.

Guatemala will always be a part of me, and I will savor this precious time I had the fortune to spend with some incredibly kind and generous people. And right up there at the top of my list of things to savor is the opportunity I had to share this experience with my son.

Further information about Global Citizens Network is available at their website: www.globalcitizens.org or through their e-mail address: gcn@mtn.org

INVITED GUEST COLUMN

WHAT IS A FAMILY?
by Jeff Gelfer and Peggy Perkins

Recently, University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) preschoolers were asked, "What does a family mean to you?" The following are a few responses:
•"My family is my grandma. My mom has got her boyfriend. They live together. I like grandma." (female, 4 years-old)
•"I have 2 sisters, but I don't like them. My big sister is too crabby. My little sister always throws books. I like my dad. And I like to play outside, riding bicycle." (male, 5 years-old)
•"My family has no dad. My dad doesn't live at home. He left us for work for 5 months. Five months is a long time. I have two babysitters and a sister. I like to ride bicycle outside the home and play with neighborhood friends. They are big boys. I also watch TV at home, but I don't like my sister." (male, 5 years-old)

In recent years, families have become the most addressed, examined, and maligned institution in the United States. In the past families have been defined as two heterosexual parents---a working father and a mother who is home at least part time---and their children.

For some the most pressing problem plaguing the United States is that the concept of the family is changing. And, as a consequence, crime, violence, and a deterioration of the traditional work ethic threaten the nation's security and prosperity. The solution often proposed is that the family and society can be fixed by restoring "traditional" family arrangements and values.

But this is not an accurate view of family life, past or present, and it does not help solve a range of difficult problems. Too much of the national discussion of the rapid and stressful changes of the past decades has become politicized under a rubric of "family values" that actually harms many families and their concerns.

Family composition today is much different than ever before. Because of the rich and diverse makeup of the United States there is no one single definition of the composition of a family. There are two parent families (male and female, female and female, male and male) with children, single parent families with children, two partner families (male and female, female and female, and male and male) without children, and extended families (with and without children).

In the 1960s, fewer than 10% of all children under age 18 lived with one parent---now almost 25% do. This trend is primarily due to the rising divorce rates and births to unmarried mothers. Almost half of all children can expect to experience a divorce during childhood and to live an average of 5 years in a single parent family.

Over one-fourth of all children in the United States are born to unmarried mothers (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1994). Half of these children are born to teen mothers, and half of these mothers are single parents (Taaffe, 1994). Zimilies (1986) calls these changes in family lifestyle (e.g., more divorce, more single parent families, fewer extended

families, more teenage parents) the diminishing mothers factor.

The number of children under age 5 with mothers in the work force has doubled since the mid 1970s (Casper, Hawkins, & O'Connell, 1991). Over 57% of women in the workforce have preschool age children. Only about 12% of the families in the United States are comprised of a father who is the sole bread winner and a mother who is a full time home maker (Walter & Goldsmith, 1990). Johnson (1987) estimated that 64% of all new entrants to the workforce will be women and that early childhood care and education demands will increase dramatically overtime.

In order to make family life more predictable and to meet family needs, most families very early form what become relatively enduring patterns of decision making, communication, and displays of affection. Some families conform closely to the kinds of patterns that were traditionally modeled in their families of origin. Other families construct patterns of behavior that seem to fit the emerging life-styles of the dual-employed, single parent, blended, never married, and extended family forms.

Over time, all families encounter turning points (Neugarten, 1976). Examples of turning points are the birth of children, the beginning and ending of formal schooling of children, the entry of other members through marriage, a member entering a new career or losing a job, or a crisis such as substance abuse by a member. These changes include both expected and unexpected events and require adjustment by the family in terms of identity and self-concept. Family systems, like other complex systems, do not change smoothly but rather in a disjointed transformation or "leaps" in response to pressures from the surrounding environment. Old patterns of family functioning behaviors do not work any longer. The family system is forced to alter its patterns to allow new options and possibilities to emerge (Carter & McGoldrick, 1980). During these periods of disruption, two characteristics determine how well the family will cope with the disturbance: family cohesion (members providing emotional support for one another) and adaptability.

Families who can cope with problems, and who provide both psychological and material support during times of disruption and conflicts, tend to operate more effectively with more self-contentment than those who are not supportive of one another. Families who are less adaptable have fewer options available to them when they confront these internal and external demands.

On the other hand, families who are able to assimilate new social and emotional roles are better able to adapt and regain stability. How adaptable a family is has much to do with the degree to which family limits are permeable. In the family system, members serve as the gatekeepers to screen and interpret information between the family and those external to the family. Limitations that are too stringent may deprive the family of necessary information to support the growth and development of its members. Optimally, families operate best when they clearly have defined, semi-permeable limits and continue to be flexible enough to allow change to occur while maintaining a predictable, growth enhancing environment.

What is the Exemplary Family?

Each of us has a different perspective of what the exemplary family might look like. We view the concept of family from retained experiences within our own family of origin and from what we know and perceive about the families of our colleagues, friends, acquaintances, and those who live in our communities. We have also become familiar with "media" families---few of which realistically depict the wide experiences possible in family life.

Competent service professionals are those who avoid judging family worth based on stereotypical or familiar personal constructs. For example, in the past several years it has become fashionable to assume that intact family systems automatically operate better than those in which not all adult family members are present (Boss, 1980). Even in intact family systems, family members can be physically present but psychologically absent. For example, a parent/partner may be so consumed with a work role or with personal problems that she/he is truly unavailable to a child or partner, despite the fact that they both physically reside together. Conversely, a parent/partner can be

physically absent but play such an important role that he/she is a positive psychological presence in the child's/partner's life.

In addition, one cannot assume that families with multiple children are the same as those with one child---or that families experiencing crises such as the death or chronic illness of a member, divorce, or loss of a job function the same as families not experiencing these events. Nor can we expect families who have a wealth of resources to behave in the same way as families who are experiencing scarcity.

Families experiencing scarcity have increased in number in the United States. Over one-fourth of young children live in poverty in the United States (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1993). Twenty-seven percent of all children under the age of three living in the United States live in poverty. And, child poverty rates continue to move higher for Anglo, Black, and Latino children (Children's' Defense Fund, 1994). Families make up more than one third of all homeless people (McChesney, 1992) and 43% of all homeless families have children (Children's' Defense Fund, 1994). More than 50,000 children under age 5 are homeless (National Institute of Medicine, 1988).

Since there is no one "correct" family form, value system, tradition, or lifestyle, it is best to remain flexible as to what constitutes typical family behavior and to perceive both children, partners, and their families within an ecological perspective. Although the family is a significant system and plays a vital role in one's health and daily life, it is important to remember that all families are different in their makeup. Families differ in many ways---their influence, culture, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, composite, etc.---all of which contribute to how an individual learns, grows, develops, and perceives the world. Exposure to the multiple systems and definitions of family living and functioning provides the basis for educators to understand that the concept of family is not a 'one size fits all' paradigm. Through learning the different definitions of family and how families function, educators come to understand their own family better as well as understand the varieties of families who exist in our world.

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A special thank you to Ms. Yaoing Xu, graduate student in the Department of Special Education. Ms. Xu interviewed several UNLV Preschoolers for this article.

PREPARING TEACHERS FOR A CULTURALLY DIVERSE WORLD
by Stanley Zehm

In the last issue of our Newsletter, I shared with you some of the findings of the research conducted by Dr. Donna Mahler. Dr. Mahler's research has implications for how we prepare teachers to involve minority parents in the education of their children. Donna, now an assistant principal at Aggie Roberts Elementary School in Henderson, completed her doctoral dissertation in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction in 1997. I have asked her to share more of the implications from her study with us in this column. Her excellent special guest column appears here.

SPECIAL GUEST COLUMN

CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS
by Donna Mahler

The African American parents, who participated in the study that Dr. Zehm described to you in the last issue of the *Multicultural & Diversity Newsletter*, made a number of suggestions for the improvement of home-school relationships that have implications for the preparation of teachers. I am pleased to share these implications with you in this column.

The findings of this study clearly support the case for coursework in multicultural education as an integral part of all teacher preparation programs. The African American parents who participated in this study affirmed that teachers who worked most effectively with their children were those who were culturally sensitive and who knew and respected the home cultures their children brought with them to school. They believed that culturally sensitive teachers were able to build genuine, caring relationships with their children. Additionally, the results of my study suggest that, since both families and schools share responsibility for the education of children, prospective teachers can benefit from family studies and learning about the sociological aspects of education.

If current demographic trends continue, our student population will become even more diverse while the teaching population will remain predominantly White. This fact will impact future teachers who often lack experiences with people of other ethnic backgrounds and have rarely been instructed by anyone but Anglos using an Anglocentric curriculum. If these teachers are to be effective in working with this increasingly diverse student population, they must be prepared to teach students of color and to work effectively with their families. Providing future teachers with a strong background in multicultural education can help them understand the role culture plays in the teaching / learning process and how student achievement is affected. Teacher preparation courses should aim at providing future teachers with both a theoretical knowledge base in multicultural issues as well as effective classroom practices that embrace the dimensions of multicultural education, including content integration, equity pedagogy, and knowledge construction.

In addition to the curricular and instructional aspects of multicultural education, my research supports the need for future teachers to gain an understanding of the process of racial identity development. The African American parents involved in this study expressed concerns about their children growing up in a predominantly White, often racist, society. They expected the teachers of their children to know and be sensitive to the emotional and psychological needs of their children. Coursework for preservice and inservice teachers that focuses on developmental theories such a James Banks' Stages of

Ethnicity can help teachers understand the racial identity development of minority children. This understanding will provide teachers with insights that will improve their instruction and assessment of culturally diverse children and adolescents in their classrooms.

Finally, preservice teachers need to learn how to put theory into practice by exploring the various types of parent involvement practices. At present, there are few field experiences that provide future teachers with opportunities to work with parents prior to entering the classroom.

Teacher preparation coursework and field experiences must be designed with the role of the family and the power of parent involvement in mind. When teacher educators provide future teachers with opportunities to learn how to build effective home-school relationships with culturally diverse families, the academic achievement of students of color will become the direct beneficiary of this involvement.

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

PLAYING BY UNEQUAL BEHAVIORAL RULES
by Rheba Washington-Lindsey

Rules, who needs them!?! Rules are intended to guide the behavior of individuals, groups, or society at large. One is led to believe that the same rules apply to all. However, a close look at recent research reveals that this is not true. There appears to be different rules for different people based on ethnicity, gender, economic class, culture, religion, and virtually any other label applied to distinguish one group from another. It is possible that institutional rules mismatch cultural rules which results in nonconforming behaviors from students of color.

Diverse rules are evident in institutional responses to unacceptable or nonconforming behaviors of students. In 1984 and again in 1989 the *NASSP Bulletin* reported that approximately 52% of the total student population in the United States was comprised of minority students. A close look at the suspension rate of one group of minority students indicates that African-American students comprise 25% percent of all suspensions. Sixty-five percent of African-American students who are suspended are assigned to opportunity schools, as opposed to 50% percent of European-American students.

Barbara Sizemore, Dean of DePaul University's School of Education, contends that the behavior of Black students, particularly that of young men, is often misrepresented as confrontational or disrespectful (1996, 1997). She concludes that their behavioral style is quite different than the style required by school.

The list below illustrates typical infractions associated with the behavior of African-American students, an example of a teacher's response, and a suggested response.

1.) **Seemingly inattentive** (no eye contact or silence)
•**Example of Teacher Response**
•Yell or ignore student. Asks student to be attentive by participating a certain number of times.
•**Suggested Teacher Response**
•In an authoritative manner walk over to student and stand. Continue talking and ask the student if he/she is with you.

2.) **Socializing during lesson** (without a purpose)
•**Example of Teacher Response**
•Verbally embarrasses student in front of peers, bangs on desk, or threatens the student.
•**Suggested Teacher Response**
•Set up a conference with the student. Set the standard(s) and be consistent in applying them.

3.) **Constant disregard for turn-taking rule**
•**Example of Teacher Response**
•Verbally reprimands student in front of peers, thus yielding the floor to student.
•**Suggested Teacher Response**
•Recognize student in an accepting manner and reassure him/her that you

will come back to his/her question or comment when it is his/her turn.

4.) Excessive tardies
•Example of Teacher Response
•Locks the classroom door, reprimands student in front of peers, refers student to the office.
•Suggested Teacher Response
•Set up a conference with the student. At the conference remind the student of tardy policy and explore a variety of solutions with him/her.

5.) Clowning in class
•Example of Teacher Response
•Yells at the student to sit down and/or ignores the behavior.

•Suggested Teacher Response
•Calmly and firmly let the student know that the behavior will not be tolerated. Set specific limits and make sure that the student understands them. If appropriate, use humor. If necessary, remove student from class.

The high percentage of suspensions of African-American students may be directly linked to culturally determined communication behaviors and communication rules that guide their behavior. These are often deemed inappropriate by those outside the culture. It cannot be said that cultural differences concerning communication rules account for all misbehavior in school-aged students, however it is important that teachers and school administrators become knowledgeable of cultural behaviors and begin to explore alternatives for responding to behavioral differences that may be culturally related.

Sizemore (1996, 1997) offers the following solution, "Teachers and administrators can benefit from an understanding of how they perceive student behaviors within the framework of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in the school environment." Understanding the cultural complexities involved in communication behaviors is the initial step toward predicting potential behavioral conflicts. Knowledge of potential communication behavior mismatches is

important for future educators. In learning about communication similarities and differences we, as educators, expand our understanding of our students.

THE "ALL-AMERICAN" AND CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS
by María G. Ramírez

Greg Evans, in his cartoon strip titled LUANN, depicts high school students struggling with the typical crises adolescents experience. The timeless themes depicted in the cartoon strip are relevant to each generation as they try to survive the teenage years Luann, the main character, has had a host of problems, including bad hair days, pimples at the most inopportune time, and having nothing to wear (in spite of a closet full of clothes). Her conflicts with her brother are typical of sibling rivalries exacerbated by the surges of hormones pulling and tugging at the fragile emotional thread linking childhood to adulthood. She doesn't like her brother or think he's very smart or attractive. Their fights are fierce as are their bouts of silence.

While she doesn't do her homework or study much, she doesn't think she's learning anything in school and is generally bored and unimpressed as she goes off to school each day. School is a place for meeting and talking with her friends about the serious problems of personal appearance, dreaded siblings, and love interests.

For years, since grade school, Luann has loved only one person,---Aaron Hill. He, on the other hand, has rarely noticed her and has never thought of her romantically. The small circle of friends that supports Luann suggests that she consider the person who does have romantic feelings for her,---Gunther. However, Luann considers Gunther a sweet, but immature substitute for Aaron Hill.

Few females, or males for that matter, would have trouble relating to Luann's high school traumas of unrequited love and absolute bewilderment concerning girl-boy relationships. To complicate matters, enter Miguel, a handsome, charming Hispanic who finds Luann delightful and attractive. Naturally, Aaron Hill

begins to notice Luann when Miguel's affection for her becomes apparent. Aaron decides that he's overlooked Luann's charm.

Not only is Luann caught off guard by Miguel's romantic pursuit, but her friends are baffled as well. Even Luann's mother is puzzled by Luann's desire to go out on a date with someone other than Aaron Hill,---until she sees Miguel when he arrives to pick Luann up for the much anticipated date.

After the date with Miguel, in the first frame of the cartoon strip, Luann, while reclining in bed, dictates to her diary, "Well, diary, I did the mature, honorable thing. I gave up Miguel to the person he belongs with - Delta. Second frame, "To be honest, Miguel was a bit too fast for me. Too bold. I guess what I need is a sweet, shy, all-American guy . . . " The third frame of the cartoon strip shows Luann visualizing Aaron Hill.

More and more cartoon strip writers are attempting to incorporate characters representative of American culture into their otherwise homogeneous depiction of America as a White society. These efforts are worthy of praise even though, at times, they fall short of the mark. The cartoon strip, LUANN, not only has Miguel, a Hispanic, but Delta, an African American who has undergone chemotherapy for Hodgkins. Good efforts on depicting a culturally diverse society and for dealing with contemporary themes as well as time honored problems, however, the cartoon sequence described fails because it stereotypes Miguel as "fast, too bold" and Aaron Hill as a "sweet, shy, all-American guy." In addition, Miguel "belongs with Delta." Delta is African American.

The cartoon sequence lacks cultural sensitivity and the writer is devoid of cultural consciousness,---understanding someone else's view from the perspective of that person. This sequence stereotypes Miguel and Aaron Hill. If Aaron Hill is an all-American, what is Miguel?

Recently, the governor of Minnesota, Jesse Ventura, stated on the David Letterman show, "Whoever designed the (St. Paul) streets must have been drunk. I think it was those Irish guys. You know what they like to do," as he gestured pretending to gulp down a drink. When he was later criticized for his remarks, he apologized by saying that he was sorry that Minnesotans had apparently lost their sense of humor. Not recognizing or understanding how the governor's remarks and the cartoon sequence are offensive to others is to lack cultural consciousness.

To the unconvinced let me offer another example. Doug "Greaseman" Tracht, a talk radio host, the day following the Grammy awards, played a song by Lauryn Hill and remarked, "No wonder people drag them behind trucks." Thirteen years before, while at a different radio station, he said (concerning Martin Luther King Day), "Kill four more and we can take a whole week off."

Cultural consciousness is not only understanding what we find offensive, but the ability to understand and acknowledge what is offensive to others.

SAME LANGUAGE DIFFERENT DISCOURSE
by Steve McCafferty

One of the things that escapes most teachers is that the classroom is really more of a discourse community than perhaps anything else. Going to school, whether it is elementary, secondary, or university, involves students becoming accommodated to the language of school because language is the primary vehicle for mediating learning. What's interesting to note here is that the same language can be used for quite different forms of discourse, and that we all actually belong to a number of different discourse communities. For example, we converse with our students in a different way than with our colleagues, and of course the way we speak to our in-laws is not quite the same as how we speak to our immediate family members.

James Gee, in his book *Social Linguistics and Literacies*, takes a critical look at the use of language in the classroom. He examines classroom discourse and provides convincing evidence for both how and why some language varieties are privileged over others. The most compelling instance has to do

with the difference between two 7-year old girls during share-time and how the teacher responds to what they say.

The first speaker is an African American girl who tells a story about her grandmother's birthday, but to the Anglo teacher the story seems disjointed, not following the "script" she expects for a narrative. What she does not realize is that the words may be the same, but the discourse is not. Gee goes on to explicate the story, demonstrating the rich oral tradition to which it belongs within the African American community and how it is reminiscent of the epic poems of long ago. The teacher, on the other hand, cuts the speaker off in a manner that suggests that the student has nothing to offer to the rest of the class.

The next child to speak is an Anglo girl who relates how she went about making candles. The way she relates the information is immediately recognizable to the teacher, who can easily anticipate what is supposed to happen as the different steps unfold, and, as such, is able to provide the sort of back channeling to the speaker that indicates that she is doing just what she should be doing. The contents of this performance are quite limited and comparatively uninteresting to the first speaker but that of course doesn't matter as the teacher is more interested in enforcing what she perceives as the correct way to talk, or school-based discourse.

Although Gee does not discuss the need for students from different discourse communities to be able to operate bi-dialecticly, this definitely is something that, in the case of the African American community, has been debated for a long time. Those who are in favor of the idea emphasize the need to be able to work with members of the mainstream community for employment purposes. This of course was what was behind the ill-fated Ebonics movement that virtually every linguistic and language education association in the country has come to publicly endorse.

At the same time, however, it should be clear that teachers in an urban setting, like Clark County, need to have a sense that language is basically a social mechanism, and that how it is used will naturally vary depending on the background of the individual student. Even this simple awareness would help a lot. I also think

it is long past due to take a much closer look at school discourse in general as it clearly has a tremendous influence on what happens in the classroom. As advocated by many in the area of Applied Linguistics, I think that all pre-service teachers should be exposed to relevant dimensions of language use in education, but there are surprisingly few such courses being taught in the United States today. The result is that there are many teachers who react like the teacher in Gee's book,---despite the potentially devastating consequences.

CONNECTING CULTURES THROUGH STORIES: THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF FAMILIES AS PORTRAYED IN LITERATURE
by Cyndi Giorgis

Historically, children's literature has mirrored society and the family structure that existed within the time period. However, during the 50s and early 60s, families in literature seemed to resemble those portrayed in the media---mother and father raising their two children---than in society itself. In the late 60s, researchers also realized that families of color were not represented making it difficult for many children to see their own family in the books they read.

Fortunately, over the past few years, both aspects have changed within the text and illustration of children's literature. In *Jalapeno Bagels* by Natasha Wing, Pablo is faced with a dilemma of what to share from his family's bakery for International Day at school. He cannot decide between his Mexican mother's *pan dulce* or his Jewish father's *challah*? Pablo's choice of jalapeno bagels is not much of a surprise as he attempts to share a blending of two cultures. Robert Casilla's realistic watercolor paintings reflect the individuality of each character without resorting to stereotyping.

Another picture book recently published that portrays a culturally diverse family is *Two Mrs. Gibsons* by Toyomi Igus. Growing up in a family of mixed race yields many joys and celebrations. Igus' story is told through the eyes of a young girl celebrating the differences and similarities between her Japanese mother and

her African-American grandmother. Daryl Wells' colorful illustrations paint portraits of both the loud and quiet Mrs. Gibson in this thoughtful personal story.

After trying on a kimono sent by her grandmother, *Allison* realizes she resembles her doll more than the family who has adopted her. Allen Say shares this poignant story of a young girl struggling with her identity as she withdraws from family and friends. Allison's adoption of a stray cat helps her to gain perspective that family members may look differently. Say is able to capture the range of Allison's emotions through his masterful watercolor illustrations. This subtle portrayal of interracial adoption provides a resolution that is a bit too convenient yet is still able to present a difficult situation realistically.

Rachel introduces her nontraditional family---Mom, Nana, and younger brother Josh---in *By the Dawn's Early Light* by Karen Ackerman. Each night, mother leaves for the graveyard shift just as Rachel, Josh, and Grandmother are setting the table for dinner. The story parallels what is happening at home throughout the evening with mother's role at work. Luminous watercolor illustrations by Catherine Stock show a family who finds special times to share when mother returns home from work "at the dawn's early light." This thoughtful story is also available in Spanish.

Single-parent families are beginning to be portrayed in children's and adolescent literature. *December* by Eve Bunting is an understated holiday story focusing on Simon and his mother who live in a cardboard box. On Christmas Eve, an old woman asks to share their space in order to get out of the cold and Simon willingly shares what they have including one of two cookies he was saving for Christmas Day. The next day, it appears the old woman was actually an angel and by the following Christmas Eve, Simon is living in an apartment that can be afforded by his mother's new job. David Diaz adds his acrylic, watercolor and gouache paintings against collage backgrounds of roses and angels. *Fly Away Home* also by Eve Bunting features another homeless family, but this time a young boy and his father find refuge by living in various airport terminals. There are few single parent families portrayed in

literature and generally they are struggling financially.

Fathers are often absent from children's and adolescent literature and their portrayal is not always positive. *Somewhere in the Darkness* by Walter Dean Myers is a compelling adolescent novel focusing on Jimmy, age 14, who has been raised by "Mama Jean" a friend of parents he doesn't remember. Jimmy's mother is dead and his father "Crab" is in prison for allegedly killing a man during an armed robbery. Crab shows up one day claiming to be on parole and wants to forge a relationship with his son. However, Jimmy gradually learns the truth about his father, the choices he made, and the betrayal he experienced. Myers is able to create a well-written, touching story of a man who attempts to reach out to his son.

A poetic plea to fathers everywhere is shared in Candy Dawson Boyd's, *Daddy, Daddy, Be There*. The simple yet emotional text pleads with fathers to be there for the good times and the bad, to share joys and sorrows, and to hold the family together always. Floyd Cooper's dramatic pastel illustrations show the joy, vulnerability, hope, and possibilities of children's lives when fathers are present and involved. "Daddy, daddy be here/when my questions need your ears, listening/your eyes, searching/and your heart, loving me."

Mothers are portrayed also both positively and negatively in children's literature. In *Journey* by Patricia MacLachlan, Mama left her two children, Journey and his sister Cat, with their grandparents. Journey struggles with his memories as well as his mother's desertion, often by searching through photographs that he believes may provide the answers. This metaphor laden short novel takes readers on their own journey with the memories they possess---real or imagined. MacLachlan has created unique individuals, each with their own "journey" to understand the family that was and the family that now has become.

Finally, Walter Dean Myers celebrates mothers through his poetry found in *Angel to Angel: A Mother's Gift of Love*. Myers' own mother died when he was two years old and left no photos of the two of them together. This beautifully designed book is filled with poetry and sepia-toned photographs of African-

American mothers, grandmothers, and children. Myers has written 10 poems that range from the everyday to the whimsical. Poetry is language to be read aloud and this short collection is no exception. "Speak softly in the morning/And light it with your smile/You will soft-speak Mama/And I will soft-speak Child."

Families are an important aspect of our lives. Being able to see ourselves and our family within the literature that we read is critical. Today's literature is beginning to reflect the diversity of the family structure as well as cultural diversity. Reviews focusing on grandparents as well as gay and lesbian families have been previously highlighted in this newsletter. These books will provide additional information on literature available that represents various family structures.

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HIV / AIDS PREVENTION EDUCATION: MYTHS AND FACTS
by Nancy Sileo

HIV/AIDS awareness efforts, particularly those aimed at young people, must focus on HIV prevention education. In the United States, adolescents and young adults account for an increasing number of new HIV infections each year and are now affected by HIV more than any other population group. In 1998, AIDS was the second leading cause of death among Americans aged 25-44 and the leading cause of death among African-American men and women in this age group (CDC, 1998).

In recent years, new drug therapies have significantly lowered the number of AIDS-related deaths and slowed AIDS incidence. However, the rate that Americans are becoming infected with HIV has not diminished. In 1999, more information about HIV prevention is known than in years past. Unfortunately, the incidence of HIV infection among adolescents and young adults indicates a large discrepancy between what is known about prevention and what is actually done for protection.

HIV prevention education must place an emphasis on "truths" about HIV/AIDS. In order to do this, educators must first address the many myths and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. The following information [adapted from materials from AACTE (1997), AAHE (1998), AAWH (1998) and CDC (1998)] is provided to address common myths and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS, and to provide accurate facts about HIV/AIDS.

Myth/Misconception - HIV is an airborne contagion and is easily spread.

Fact - HIV, a blood borne pathogen, is found in blood, semen (and pre-ejaculation fluid), vaginal secretions, and breast milk.

Fact - HIV does not survive long outside the body and therefore can only be transmitted when any of the above body fluids from an infected individual enters an uninfected individual.

Fact - HIV is most frequently transmitted sexually.

Fact - You do not get HIV from donating blood; mosquito bites or bites from other

bugs; sneezes or coughs; touching, hugging, or dry kissing a person with HIV; the urine or sweat of a person infected with HIV; public restrooms, saunas, showers, or pools; sharing towels or clothing; sharing eating utensils or drinks; or from being friends with a person living with HIV/AIDS.

Myth/Misconception - In the U.S., men who have sex with men are the only population group in the high risk category for becoming infected with HIV.
Fact - In the U.S., racial and ethnic minority groups, particularly African-Americans and Latinos, and women are in the highest risk category for becoming infected with HIV.
Fact - Many racial/ethnic minorities, especially African-American and Latina women are at even greater risk of becoming infected with HIV due to disparities in access to quality health care services between socioeconomic class, the lack of success in effectively addressing substance abuse issues in the U.S., and a lack of prevention and awareness programs and messages designed to impact behaviors of and educate individuals in high-risk groups.

Myth/Misconception - In the U.S., the highest rate of new HIV infection is among men who have sex with men.
Fact - Recent data from CDC indicates the highest rate of new HIV infection is among heterosexual African-American males and females 13 years of age and older.
Fact - Heterosexual African-American males represented 50% of all new HIV infections among males last year, and heterosexual African-American women represented 69% of new infections among women.
Fact - Among women, 44% of HIV/AIDS cases are accounted for by injection drug use and 39% are accounted for through heterosexual contact.

Myth/Misconception - In the U.S., the rate of new HIV infection is decreasing among all population groups.
Fact - In the decade between 1986 and 1996, HIV/AIDS rates among Latino men infected through heterosexual contact increased 11%, while incidence among the same group infected through men who have sex with men decreased by 8%.
Fact - In 1986, the rate of HIV/AIDS incidence among Latina women infected through heterosexual contact was 30%, in 1998 the HIV/AIDS incidence among Latina women in the same group was 60%.
Fact - In the U.S., from 1990 to 1998, the number of children 13 years of age and younger infected with HIV tripled.

Myth/Misconception - In the U.S., current HIV prevention education and awareness programs are effectively targeting all population groups.
Fact - Asian Americans and Pacific islanders comprise less than 1% of all reported HIV infections in the U.S. However, complex language and cultural barriers make HIV prevention education and awareness campaigns among the Asian American and Pacific Islander sub-groups extremely challenging.
Fact - Last year, more than 40% of Asian American/Pacific Islander men were infected through unsafe men who have sex with men contact.
Fact - 25% of all reported Asian American and Pacific Islander women infected with HIV/AIDS are between 20-24 years of age.
Fact - Of the reported HIV infections among Native American adolescent and adult males, nearly half (48%) were transmitted trough unsafe men who have sex with men contact, and 15% were reported to be transmitted through injection drug use.
Fact - 43% of Native American women infected with HIV in 1998 were infected through injection drug use, and almost 25% of the same group were infected through unsafe heterosexual contact.
Fact - In the U.S., adolescents and young adults 13 to 24 years of age accounted for approximately 50% of newly reported HIV infections in 1998.

Myth/Misconception - In the U.S., equitable HIV/AIDS treatment and therapy programs are available to all population groups.
Fact - Due to a combination of economic,

social, and cultural inequities, women in the U.S. are 3 times more likely to die from AIDS than men.

Fact - AIDS is the third leading cause of death among women ages 25-44 and the single leading cause of death among African-American women in this group.

Fact - AIDS rates among African-American and Latina women are 18 and 8 times higher, respectively, than for white women.

Fact - African-American and Latina women 13 years of age and older comprised 80% of reported AIDS cases among women in the U.S. in 1998.

Myth/Misconception - HIV/AIDS prevention education and awareness programs for adolescents and young adults in the U.S. are effective.

Fact - Adolescents and young adults are disproportionately at high risk for HIV infection. In the U.S. last year, 1 in 4

reported HIV infections occurred in persons under 22 years of age.

Fact - In the U.S., every hour 1-2 adolescents are infected with HIV.

Fact - Three out of four infections among adolescent and young men occur through men who have sex with men contact.

In order for HIV/AIDS prevention education and awareness programs to work, culturally sensitive education programs must be directed not only at men who have sex with men, but at all members of our population at-risk for HIV infection. Furthermore, for HIV/AIDS prevention education programs to effectively reach those in high-risk categories, general education programs on HIV/AIDS must be reinforced by culturally sensitive strategies. It also appears essential that HIV/AIDS prevention education materials and programs be available to all populations by early adolescence, since one to two teenagers in the U.S. are infected with HIV every hour (AAHE, 1998).

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SUGGESTED MULTICULTURAL INFUSION ACTIVITIES
by Nancy P. Gallavan and Porter Lee Troutman, Jr.

Service-learning---a teaching strategy to connect young people with their teachers, schools, families, and communities---is gaining much support nationwide. This strategy encompasses methods of teaching that promote student mastery of academic and personal growth outcomes by engaging students in authentic learning experiences that address real world problems.

Participation in well-designed and efficiently implemented service-learning programs provides positive impacts on academic achievement, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision making skills. It also involves career exploration, cooperative behavior development, and civic connections with the community. Above all, effective service-learning offers limitless opportunities to introduce and reinforce multicultural, cross-cultural, and global awareness for students, families, teachers, and administrators.

According to Lynne Boyle-Baise in *The Impact of Philosophical Orientation on Community Based Service-Learning for Multicultural Education,* five different philosophical approaches influence an

individual's sense of self and vision of society. The individual's sense of self and vision of society determine the goal(s) of the service-learning. The goal(s) of service-learning may or may not offer a supportive match for the infusing of multicultural education and valuing of cultural diversity naturally and authentically.

The first philosophical approach is the *functional* approach. In this approach, the sense of self is instrumental and one's vision of society tends to focus upon a common culture that behaves harmoniously and industriously. Goals of functional service-learning are to provide charity for people who are less fortunate, to redress problems through volunteerism, and to foster altruism. These goals stimulate giving, but leave deficit views related to cross-cultural relationships intact. The functional philosophy tends to gloss over problems of inequality. This philosophy is commonly found in schools and is the most popular philosophy held by citizens in the United States. This approach supports a contributions approach toward the infusion of multicultural education in schools and classrooms.

The second philosophy is the *liberal* approach. In this approach, the sense of self is more autonomous and rational and involves a vision of society that features a democratic, rights-based, and principled view of justice. The goals of this approach are to assume civic responsibility, to work toward justice through equal rights and opportunities, and to promote civic participation. This approach may involve rights-based arguments to assist equality, but it tends to treat people as unencumbered actors, not authentic players. The liberal philosophy reflects the additions approach toward multicultural education.

A third philosophy is the *communitarian* approach. The sense of self is moral and pragmatic with visions of society that feature democratic, communal, pragmatic, and progressive viewpoints. The goals of communitarian service-learning are to communicate with others, to develop common interests, to work toward common goals, and to build a consensual community. Through this approach community-building is a goal, but among a diverse collective. This approach requires taking chances, crossing borders, and

making changes. This approach describes the first step toward personal professional transformation.

The fourth philosophy is the *radical democratic* approach and involves a political and decentered vision of self as well as a democratic, pluralistic, radical vision of society. This radical view strives to extend democracy to more areas of everyday social life. The goals of the radical democratic approach seek to use rights to fight discrimination, to discover equivalent struggles across groups, to coalesce and improve social welfare, and to foster major changes. This approach propels the transformative approach toward multicultural education in which multiple views of freedom are encouraged. Multicultural education is seen as a social and moral movement.

The fifth and final philosophy is the *post-modern* approach with a sense of self that is relational and caring. The vision of society is pluralistic, decentered, and humanistic. Goals of post-modern service-learning seek to help students and teachers to construct connections, to care for others, to foster dialogue across differences, and to collaborate to ensure change. The post-modern approach can demystify differences and build trusting relations while developing caring for self and others simultaneously. This approach matches the social justice or social action stage of multicultural education.

Teachers and administrators who promote service-learning programs benefit from a thorough examination of their programs' purposes and personal philosophies. Schools and communities work together in solving problems and make education more relevant for all participants---students, families, and teachers.

SHARED EXPERTISE SYSTEM OF TEACHING / LEARNING
by LeAnn Putney

We have a community, because the teacher and the students work and give ideas and make the community together. (Fanny C., May 23, 1996)

What Fanny illustrates for us in this excerpt from her essay is that her classroom community members work together and share ideas with each other. She shows she is aware that the sharing of ideas is part of what makes their classroom special, a community of learners. The teaching and learning in this classroom moves beyond a traditional transmission model of education toward a socially constructed and dynamic system of education. In his work that explores the culture of education, Bruner (1996) suggested that students should become aware of their thought processes and that classrooms should be forums for expression of those thoughts. From this perspective, students and teachers construct knowledge and negotiate meaning together through their interactions. If expression of thought, constructing knowledge, and negotiating meaning are all pieces of a cultural view of education, then a multicultural view might well take into account similar processes, but acknowledging and valuing the fact that we all come to the forum with different experiential backgrounds that reflect our varied cultures.

Another way to think about what a forum for learning would look like is to contrast an expert model of transmitting information to students with a shared expertise system of teaching and learning. I use the term system because sharing expertise happens in a dynamic and reciprocal relationship, rather than as a static or prescriptive model. This is illustrated below in a comparison of an expert model and a shared expertise system.

Expert	Shared Expertise
Top Down	Co-constructed
Limited to knowledge shared--limited room at the top	Unlimited potential shared--plenty of room for all
Teacher is dispenser of knowledge, student is vessel to be filled	Teacher and students share information from their lived experiences
My way is preferred	Our ways are different

In a shared expertise system, knowledge is jointly constructed by the participants who bring varying degrees of expertise from their past experience. The role of the teacher is to bring the expertise together in a coherent manner that assists students in negotiating meaning. If we were to envision an expert transmission model as a pyramid, only the person standing at the top would have the knowledge to be shared with those below. In a shared expertise system, not any one person has all of the expertise of the knowledge to be attained. With teachers and students sharing information from their lived experience, the potential for problem solving is greater than in an expert system where the teacher is the dispenser of knowledge. Another contrast is in acknowledging that our ways are different and one way of doing is not necessarily better.

So what would happen if the expert model were changed to a collection of experts, in this case students and their teacher? This would change the teaching and learning to a more cooperative situation. How would cooperation of experts differ from a shared expertise collaborative?

Expert Collaboration	Shared Expertise Collaboration
Joint construction of individual pieces of information	Joint construction of shared information
Loose construction-- easily dismantled	Tightly woven-- durable yet pliable
New information, separate ideas, maintaining prior point of view	New concepts, commingled ideas, taking up various points of view

From the perspective of expert collaboration, the knowledge would be jointly constructed, but the joining compound would be similar to a basting stitch that holds the pieces together on a temporary basis. A garment made from such stitching would have gaps in the seams from the long and imprecise stitches, and the stitching could come apart easily. The construction of knowledge in the shared expertise collaboration would result in a finer and more precise stitching, as if creating a garment that would be more durable through multiple wearings.

The product of these collaborations would also be very different. In the sharing of experts, we all walk away from the experience with some new information, such as facts to recall on a later exam. In this scenario, we would maintain our prior point of new and would not strive to understand a concept from a different perspective. After all, we are sharing some information with each other, with no expectation of coming to understand our own thinking and learning process. Our goal is just to learn some new information that may help us in our own individual efforts at a later date.

The sharing of expertise, however, results in a co-mingling of ideas and construction of new concepts from different perspectives. Because we are dealing with multiple perspectives, we often have to go away and think about what we have constructed together. We continue to collaborate, struggle with new concepts, decide whether to incorporate the new ideas into what we already know, or decide to set them aside for a while and come back to them at another time. In this sharing of expertise, we don't own the ideas and we continue to generate new ideas, building them into solid constructs that help us to understand our learning process. Because we generate ideas together, there are plenty to go around, and we each have agency to take up what works for us in our current situation.

It is the reflexivity of the shared expertise system that creates powerful learning. Learning to view life and experience from another's point of view is what can move us beyond our own limited thinking and gives us the opportunity to try on different perspectives. In the process of learning about others, we learn more about ourselves and about our own thinking and learning process. This is the value of multicultural education from a shared expertise system perspective.

I AM WHO I WILL ALWAYS BE
by Susan Marie Rumann and
Camille Stevens-Rumann

Identity, self-identity, is a life long process. Naturally there are pivotal moments that define who we are, epiphanies in a sense. Some of those moments are imposed upon us and others we invite. For many, the experience of being the "other" is not necessarily one consciously chooses but is one in which one finds him/herself. In sociological terms of gender, race, and ethnicity, becoming the "other" is typically defined by dominant paradigms. Beverly Tatum in her book, *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria"* , speaks to the notion of identity by asking, "Who Am I?"

As an educator in the field of multicultural education I have engaged with many adults still struggling with notions of self-identity. A critical moment for many of my students has been when I ask them to define themselves culturally. Typically the response from my white student population has been "I

am from the normal culture," or "I don't know how much culture a Caucasian can have."

The connection between the professional and the personal was solidified for me when I found myself in a critical discussion with my white twelve-year old daughter as she struggled with who she is. Through the environment of Camille's primary socialization she has embraced notions of tolerance, acceptance, and confirmation. Through the environment of Camille's secondary socialization she has been too often given a different message (hooks, 1989, 1994, & 1996). From the engagement of one's primary and secondary socialization comes one's story.

Camille's Story

My name is Camille. I am thirteen years old. I have lived many places with my mother, but experienced most dramatically a change we made a year or so back.

I went from being the majority to being the minority as I moved from a small town in southern New Mexico to inner city Houston, TX. I had never been in the position before that I was one of the only white people, over a long period of time. I have done lots of traveling, and have been aware of being the only white person in that situation, but never before on a daily basis. I felt as though I went from being a "person" to being a "white person." I was no longer just myself, but also white.

I had never been judged by the color of my skin before. I had a hard time making friends both black and white, because other white kids tried to fit in just like me and shoved me off. One boy even called me, "White bitch." I kept pretty much to myself and I felt very much alone. Hardly anyone even talked to me. It was like I wasn't wanted. It was like I was desolately alone.

One day during the fall semester everything had just built up for me. All the turned backs and cold stares finally came to the max. for me. When I got home I cried to my mom, "Why can't I be Black? I just don't fit in." I felt like it was all my fault that I didn't fit in and that I needed to change myself, instead of just trying to deal with the big issue.

Now as I think about it, I believe this experience made me realize who I was and that I didn't need to change because of what color I

was. Who I am inside is never going to change no matter how I try and how others try to change me. I am who I will always be.

Susan's Story

My story comes from my adult experiences. I have traveled extensively throughout my life. I have been in foreign countries near and far. Through these travels I have experienced many self-defining moments wherein I had to confront and comfort my identity. A defining moment for me includes an encounter I had in Ecuador.

I was a fourth-grade teacher at an international school in Quito, Ecuador. My everyday was immersed in a multicultural environment. I had fifteen students in my class representing fourteen different countries. The experience was enriching. A natural part of my job responsibilities was to hold many teacher parent conferences. During one conference, the father of one of my young ladies blurted out, "Where did you get those eyes?" Momentarily, I was dumbfounded. He elaborated by stating that he thought all real American women only had blue or green eyes. Mine are BROWN!

Upon reflection, after the conference, it did not take me long to understand his paradigm. Perhaps, it only took a bus ride home. You see, on the ride home the bus would pass many movie houses covered with posters advertising the latest film recently arrived from the United States. I leave it to your imagination to visualize what predominantly was represented on these posters that would support this father's paradigm.

This experience has often come back to me in my teachings with Latina young ladies struggling with notions of identity. While teaching in a middle school, bilingual program a couple years back, I regularly heard myself state, "Brown is beautiful" when my young female students would walk into the classroom with blue or green colored contact lenses intact.

The process of self-identity is one always in motion. Through this movement, the moments of epiphany become tangible. Camille's story, a powerful epiphany at a very young age, perhaps illustrates what many children experience as they engage with society bent on defining others. Susan's story reflects

experiences of what many adults have gone through.

As non-consequential as one's everyday may seem, we all warrant the human right to define our histories, identify our realities, and establish our identities (hooks, 1989).

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THE RESILIENCY OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
by Kyle Higgins

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity. It was the season of light. It was the season of darkness. It was the spring of hope. It was the winter of despair. We had everything before us. We had nothing before us.....

A Tale of Two Cities
Charles Dickens

Facts

•Three million crimes a year are committed in or near schools (Ruby, 1993).

•Every 5 seconds of the school day, a student drops out of public school (Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

•Every year, 2,695,010 children are reported abused or neglected (Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

•Every 4 hours, a child commits suicide (Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

•Every 59 seconds, a baby is born to a teen mother (Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

•Every 7 minutes, a child is arrested for a drug crime (Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

•Every 4 minutes, a child is arrested for

an alcohol-related crime (Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

•Every 30 seconds, a baby is born into poverty (Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

•Every 2 hours, a child is murdered (Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

These statistics are inconsistent with what we vision to be the best of times. A significant number of children and youth in the United States today are in peril for illness, injury, and compromised development (Martin, 1992). In the United States, more than one third of our children are not healthy, one fourth are raised in poverty, a growing number are not educated properly, and an alarming number live under social and psychological distress (50,000 children and youth died by violence between 1979 and 1991). The state of our nation's children received the overall grade of C- on the 1993 Child Health Report Card (Wynder, 1994).

In the midst of plenty and great progress, children and youth are being robbed of childhood and adolescence---the joy of learning, the joy of creativity, the joy of trust, the joy of innocence. As a country we often acknowledge the problems, but we do not address them through actions. Preventative measures have small support, continue to be underfunded, and are under researched (Peterson, Zink, & Farmer, 1991). There is no national mandate or commitment of resources to the rising peril children and youth experience as they attempt to move unscathed toward adulthood .

Resiliency

What makes some young people resolute and sturdy enough to chip away at the ore, locate the diamond, and polish it...while others weakly and feebly patter in the soil, haphazardly searching for a gem, finding only dirt? (McWhirter, 1966)

Many children and youth arrive at adulthood in tact despite extremely debilitating environmental, familial, and personal experiences. They are competent, autonomous human beings who apply effective and efficient strategies to their world. Many youngsters who experience adverse developmental conditions go on to live productive and normal lives. We often refer to these youngsters as invulnerable, stress-

resistant, or invincible. They exhibit resiliency. This resiliency has enabled them to grow, thrive, and succeed in spite of what appears to be insurmountable odds.

Resiliency has been defined as "the capacity to cope effectively with the internal stresses of vulnerability....and external stresses" (Werner & Smith, 1982, p. 4). We often refer to this as 'beating the odds.' This perseverance enables the child or youth to bounce back---it protects them from the effects of family dysfunction, substance abuse, neglect, physical or emotional abuse, chronic illness, violence in the community, poverty, mental illness, or other factors that may place them at risk for a poor developmental outcome.

Specific elements of resiliency identified in the literature are the ability: (a) to see obstacles as something to be overcome, endured, or changed; (b) to persevere in finding ways to improve situations; (c) to develop a range of strategies and skills to address a situation; (d) to focus on a broad range of interests and goals; and, (e) to cultivate a sense of purpose, future, or strong aspiration. It appears that these characteristics act as protection and allow the child or youth to avoid, regulate, or cope with aversive environmental or developmental conditions (McWhirter, et al., 1993).

America 2000 (1991) and *Healthy People 2000* (1991) call for an agenda in which prevention is the theme for the 21st century. If prevention is the goal, how can we, as educators, work to promote resiliency within the children, youth, and families with whom we work? How can we structure learning environments so that children, youth, and families living in high stress situations understand that their lives can be different.

Developing Resiliency

Much of what needs to be done to facilitate the development of resiliency involves nothing out of the ordinary---instead, "we need to build on and tie together proven ideas" (Minow & Weissbourd, 1992, p. 17). What follows is a list adapted from Simeonsson and Thomas (1994) with added suggestions. Many are already in place in schools while others require all who work within a school environment to develop new, inventive,

idiosyncratic methods of interacting with the children, youth, and families who reside within their care.

Guiding Principles of Resiliency: Promoting the Well-being of Children, Youth, and Families (adapted from Simeonsson & Thomas, 1994)

1.) Life is to be lived now, not in the past, and lived in the future only as a present challenge....

•resiliency efforts address the immediate contexts and realities of the children, youth, and families and not the realities of school personnel---multiple realities exist and we must respect and understand those realities

•resiliency efforts are a joint effort utilizing the skills and expertise of all involved ---clergy, community leaders, nurses, social workers, teachers, etc.

•resiliency efforts consider and are involved in the social and political realities of the communities they serve

•resiliency efforts recognize that schools must be shaped by their communities

2.) Time is an ally, facilitating the development of child and family in a life phase of significant forward thrust...

•resiliency efforts capitalize on the opportunity to enlarge the child's, youth's, family's view of the world, their sense of possibilities, and their view of alternatives

3.) Trust between child and family and between children, their families, and helper is essential...

•resiliency efforts work on building trust through communication, support, and genuine caring

•resiliency efforts focus on the formation of new alliances

•resiliency efforts realize that trust takes time and effort

4.) Needs and concerns can and should be addressed directly...

•resiliency efforts recognize that face-to-face decision making among all parties is imperative

•resiliency efforts include parents and students in the identification of needs and concerns

•resiliency efforts ensure convenient access to a wide array of services

5.) Competence makes a difference; children and families should be assisted to be good at something...

•resiliency efforts provide children, youth, and families with a future by believing in them and by verbalizing that belief

6.) Skills can be acquired and the children and families assisted to be in control...

•resiliency efforts establish community ownership of the school

•resiliency efforts acknowledge that the community-school relationship is a two-way process---not simply defined as how to bring the parents into the school, but how the school can be taken out into the community

•resiliency efforts provide activities in nontraditional settings, at nontraditional hours, and with nontraditional personnel

7.) "Family" is of primary importance..

•resiliency efforts recognize the embeddedness of children and youth in the ecology of the family

•resiliency efforts recognize and take into account family diversity

•resiliency efforts recognize that every parent wants the best for their child

8.) "Community" is important for children and families, offering resources and support...

•resiliency efforts recognize the embeddedness of children, youth, and family in the ecology of the community---the sense of belonging is important

9.) Values, beliefs, ceremony, and ritual give order, stability, and confidence to children and families...

•resiliency efforts acknowledge that a family's sense of identity is often framed by the values, customs, and practices of their culture

•resiliency efforts are culturally based

•resiliency efforts focus on reducing the incongruity between the school, the home, and the community

10.) Physical well-being is the foundation of psychological well-being...

•resiliency efforts invest in nutritional programs, immunization, and expanded physical education programs

•resiliency efforts acknowledge that school/education is meaningless to the child/youth whose energies are tied up in day-to-day emotional or physical survival

11.) Feelings should be nurtured and respected...

•resiliency efforts recognize that the role of the adult in the school must change---ALL children/youth must interact with ONE adult on a consistent and regular basis in a one-on-one nurturing and caring relationship

12.) Children, youth, and families should know joy...

•resiliency efforts focus on the development of joy......

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FOCUS ON FAMILY: THREE PROJECTS IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

FAMILY TO FAMILY CONNECTION
by Samantha Morales

Family to Family Connection is a non-profit project open to all Nevada families who have an infant from birth to twelve months. There is no qualifying for services and all services are free. The UNLV New Baby Center (Infant Support District #11) is located in the Carlson Education Building in Room 115A. Catherine Lyon, Director of the UNLV / CCSD Preschool, is the Project Director for the Family to Family Project located here at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

There are three components to the program: (1.) Resource Lending Center, (2.) New Baby Center, and (3.) Home, Hospital, and Community Visits. For more information, please call 895-3550.

INSTITUTE FOR LOW INCIDENT DISABILITIES
by Tom Pierce and Judy Terpstra

The Institute for Low Incidence Disabilities is a program funded through a grant from the Nevada Developmental Disabilities Council and is located in the Department of Special Education. The program works with children with low incidence disabilities in their homes, schools, and communities. The goal is to help the children be successful in the areas of communication, behavior, socialization, and academics. Program staff undergo intensive training prior to working with the children and their families. This training has resulted in significant growth for participating children in the targeted areas. For more information please contact Judy Terpstra or Tom Pierce at 895-1100.

PROJECT UPLIFT: University Partnership for Lasting Interventions to Families & Toddlers
by Sherri Strawser

Project UPLIFT is a collaborative project among the UNLV Department of Special Education; Sunrise Hospital & Medical Center; University of Nevada School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics; Children's Therapy Center; Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP); CCSN; and six Family to Family Infant Support Districts that serve the entire southern portion of the State of Nevada. The project delivers assessment, evaluation, and early intervention services, within natural environments in local communities, to infants and toddlers who have developmental delays provided for under IDEA, Part H/C. The goal of the outreach activities is to raise awareness of parents concerning possible special needs of their child and to determine the child's eligibility for intervention services. The project also provides training for individuals participating in on-going activities with this and other Family to Family Connection programs. Sherri Strawser, Department of Special Education, is the Project Director for Project UPLIFT; Carla Brown is the Project Coordinator; Shannon Altenhofen is the Child Development Specialist; and, Karen Miller is the Project Assistant. For information concerning Project UPLIFT, please contact project staff at 895-1140.