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## UNLV College of Education Multicultural & Diversity Newsletter

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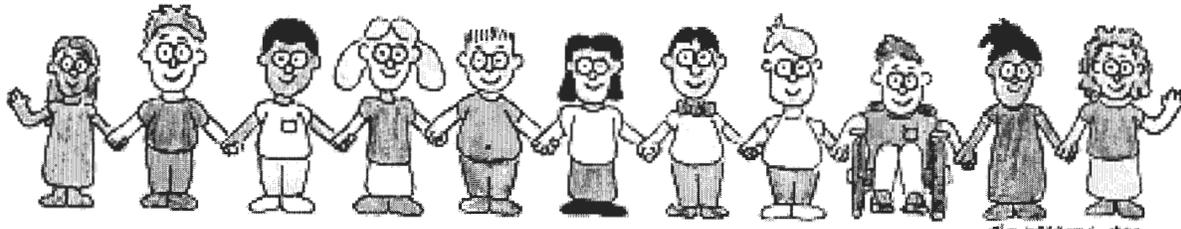
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**“Once we are exposed to an idea  
---whether or not we agree or  
disagree with the idea---our way  
of thinking is changed forever.”**

Oliver Wendall Holmes

## INVITED GUEST COLUMN

### **BETWEEN THE CULTURES: SNAPSHOTS OF MY LIFE IN THE USA**

by Martina Nieswandt

#### **Moving to the USA**

When I told my family and friends in Germany about my final decision to leave Germany and move permanently to the USA, their initial reaction varied between sadness, skepticism, astonishment and pure disbelief. Later, they had more questions about whether I really had thought about this decision, whether I knew what kind of a change this would mean, how I would be able to deal with the new culture (language was not a problem as everybody knew), how I could give up the security and social benefits of Germany for insecurity and fewer social benefits, whether I would appreciate living in a democracy with not really distinct political parties, in a country with such a high crime rate, with racial problems and so on. Only a few talked about some benefits like finding a job as a professor in my field - (in Germany I would have trouble finding such a position), the mixture of cultures, the freedom, the openness of the countryside, etc. We talked about how difficult it will be to find new friends; to get integrated into the culture; how much I have to learn in everyday life like where to get my muesli for breakfast, where to get good cheese, wine and bread, locating a good hair stylist. We discussed the stress of learning to understand everyday things like filling out a form to get your driver's license, getting a credit card, opening a bank account, which health insurance to get, and so on, and so on. I was very optimistic that I would manage all these things. If not alone, then with the help of my US-American partner. And I survive pretty well! Still, there are a lot of things I do not completely understand because they are different from what I was used to.

#### **How are you doing?**

One of these things is the phrase: "How are you doing?", "Wie geht es dir?" would be the phrase in German. It took a while before I realized that most Germans do not use this

anymore and if they do, then they want an honest answer. I was used to an honest answer. But most people here in the U.S. don't want to hear that I am feeling really good because my article just got published or I am in a bad mood because I didn't sleep well last night. I still feel strange when I answer this question with "great" or "I am fine" and then ask right away: "How are you doing?" Or shall I ask right away rather than say "Hello" or "Hi". My students looked strange and puzzled in the first class meetings when I came into class and said "Hello everybody" or "Hi folks, I hope you had a good weekend. Wasn't the weather great?" Now they are used to it and some even give feedback.

I get the impression that feelings are only allowed to be expressed in the public when they are not disturbing, bad or make the other person uncomfortable. Of course, the person at the checkout in the supermarket does not want to hear how I really feel. I do not want to know her feelings either. Why, then, do they ask this question instead of just saying: Hello!?

"How are you doing?" is just a hollow phrase. But there are other things which make me realize that I am in another culture, in a culture which is not mine. Everybody can do and be what s/he wants to be. What a dream! The American dream? I grew up with the idea that I have to work hard to get a good position, that nothing will be handed to me on a plate. School is a tough and hard time but will provide you with a degree, a qualification which opens certain doors that lead to a career you deserve based on your degree; not necessarily on your talents or real qualification. Schooling qualifies but also tracks and integrates you into and/or reinforces a certain social class. Social movement is only possible within your social class and the "top brass" (in politics and business) do what they want. Sometimes, one has the following feeling, living in Germany: "How can I change anything?"

What a different view here in the USA. Little kids not only dream of being a movie star, a star athlete or the future president of the USA, their teachers, parents, and other adults encourage their dreams. Students are told

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nothing about social barriers or, perhaps, that they do not have enough talent to sing or act. Strange! Do my students expect that I tell them they all will be good teachers, and that they can and should tell their students that they can be everything they want? I can not! This is too much. I do not see that everybody has the same chances, the same opportunities. But what to say? I like this dream but should we not be more realistic and teach this to our children? U.S. students did not do well in math and science as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) recently showed. Neither did the German students. But when you look at the results of the survey questionnaires of self-concept and self-confidence, the U.S. students felt much more confident about their math and science results than Germans. I do not understand this. This is not part of myself. Will this ever be part of me?

### **Discrimination?**

I talked with friends in Germany before I left the country about discrimination and how I will feel and act when I am living with all these different races and ethnic groups. But we never anticipated that I might feel discriminated against. Me? A white, highly-educated woman with a good academic position? I know and have experienced a lot of gender discrimination but I never thought about getting discriminated against because I am German. There might be some irritation because of my accent or that I use words which are not appropriate in everyday English. But why should somebody discriminate against me because I am not an U.S.- American? I don't belong to a minority. Or do I? Yes, although I am white and highly-educated, I am part of a minority which has to struggle with the dominant culture here in the USA. Or is it even worse here in Las Vegas?

Why am I confronted here at UNLV with some people's ignorance about those of us who come from another culture, who have a foreign accent, who sometimes use funny words, and who dress differently? Have I ever laughed when I hear a funny accent from a person from New Jersey, Texas or Wisconsin? Is this kind of daily discrimination a reaction based on fear

of the foreign "other", of somebody who is different from oneself?

Before I came to the USA I was thinking how I might feel about the multiculturalism of this country. I was afraid of not using the right words, of not showing the appropriate behavior toward non-majority people. I didn't want to make anybody feel bad, and I didn't want to discriminate against them. Now, here in Las Vegas I feel pretty good with this mixture of cultures and languages around me. I am not afraid of the people who represent all these cultures. I am curious. I want to learn more about them. I realize that I am as I always was: Open for other people and their experiences, trying not to judge them before I know more about them, but to be tough and willing to fight when I see discrimination. Does this make me a member of a minority?

### **A day in class**

The other day I came into my class and started talking in German. I talked about the topics we wanted to do today and gave the students a task. Of course, they did not understand me. Some were embarrassed when I called them by their names and asked why they didn't start with the work or why their neighbor was not in class today. Others started laughing. I can imagine that some thought I was "off my rocker", or didn't realize that I was talking in German with them. But soon they knew my objective. I wanted to show them how their future students who don't speak English might feel in a classroom in which the teacher only speaks English. We had a lively discussion about these students' feelings, fears, and problems and how best to integrate them into the classroom. I think most of my students learned something in this lesson. I hope they will be more open now for people from other countries and that they won't see them as persons with deficits merely because they are not fluent in English.

### **Heidelberg and Muenchen**

Often people in the supermarket, the book shop, or the cafe ask where I am from. When I say Germany, I mostly get nice and

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warm responses: "I was in the military in Germany and lived in Giessen, Hanau, Heidelberg or . . . Do you know Muenchen? Have you been in Berlin? Where are you from? My sister lives in Frankfurt, I wish I could visit her, etc." These kinds of friendly reactions make me feel welcome. I realize that more US-Americans than I thought have traveled in Germany and Europe. They know a bit about my country. I feel I want to talk more about the beauty of Germany, about its people, about life in a country which, as of ten years ago, is no longer divided into two parts, a country which has to struggle with a high unemployment rate. Germany also has more and more immigrants, a fact with which a lot of native-born Germans can not deal. Yet, this is too much to talk about with these strangers. But I appreciate their casual interest. I have friends with whom I can talk about all the other things and I then feel less lost in this new and strange country.

### NOTES FROM THE FIELD

#### **SEARCHING FOR ELSEWHERE . . .**

by Marilyn McKinney

We're so excited! For once, there will be a ready response to the proverbial "What did you do over your summer vacation?" question! Cyndi Giorgis and I along with thirteen other people from Tucson and Seattle are going to Malawi!

The logical next question might be, "Where **IS** Malawi?" And the follow-up question might be, "And why Malawi?"

Located in southern Africa, between Mozambique and Zambia, Malawi is one of the world's poorest countries with few natural resources. Yet from the reports we have received from Robert Kauffman, the music ethnologist leading our team, and from other sources we've been reading, it is unlikely we will observe "any starvation or abject poverty."

Malawi is characterized as a warm and

welcoming country. In fact, it is called the "warm heart of Africa."

The major focus of our trip will be to build a Habitat for Humanity house in Mangochi over a ten day period. Since 1985, more than 4,000 houses have been completed by Habitat, providing shelter to approximately 17,500 people. There is an overwhelming need for permanent housing in Malawi; approximately four out of every five families live in sub-standard housing with little hope of affording a decent home. The typical village hut is built of mud and daub and has dirt floors with thatched roofs, poor ventilation, and lacks natural lighting. During the rainy season, the houses crumble and leak.

We will be able to help build a different kind of home made of kiln-burnt clay bricks with a foundation made from large stones or brick, a cement floor, glass windows, air vents for good ventilation and a cement tile roof. The 3-room house will have a separate latrine and costs \$650 to build; owners repay their loans at \$5-\$6 per month. It sounds like a fantastic learning experience! The story of Elizabeth Galu's new home in Malawi can be found at: <http://www.habitat.org/intl/malawi.html>.

In addition to the 10 days of home-building, we will also be able to travel to Lilongwe, the capitol of Malawi, and hopefully partake in other activities such as hiking, a trip to the beach of Lake Malawi and a visit to Malawi Children's Village. Following the construction project, we will fly to Zimbabwe where we will visit Harare and The Great Zimbabwe Ruins. There we will hear local choirs and traditional musicians as well as visit sculpture and craft centers. Finally, we will travel to Victoria Falls and the Hwange Game Reserve.

Our trip is scheduled for July 9-29 and needless to say, we are looking forward to it with great anticipation. In the next few months, we hope to begin communicate by e-mail with other team members to develop rapport and establish plans for ways we can bring together our various talents and skills. We thank Nancy Sileo and Kyle Higgins for inviting us to share

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beginning thoughts about this exciting adventure, and we plan to provide "a full report" upon our return. In the meantime, we welcome any suggestions for projects you would like to see us try to develop and/or any advice.

## **SPECIAL GUEST COLUMN**

### **HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS**

by Patricia Markos and Daniel Allen

Homelessness is a growing problem in the United States, with recent epidemiological studies indicating that as many as 1 million individuals are homeless on any given night (Interagency Council on the Homeless, 1991). In, 1998, there were over 18,000 people who were homeless in Las Vegas (Continuum of Care Homelessness Assistance Grant, 19998). Primary causes of homelessness are family problems (42%) and job loss (40.8%) (Clark, Williams, Percy, & Kim, 1995). Homelessness is associated with staggering increases in physical and mental disorders (Breakey et al., 1989; Moxley & Freddolino, 1991; Kales, Barone, Bixler, Miljkovic, & Kales, 1995). While the closing of long-term care psychiatrist facilities has contributed to the number of people who are homeless and mentally ill (Markos, submitted), longitudinal studies indicate that homelessness is associated with development of psychiatric and medical disorders in previously healthy people (Winkleby & White, 1992). Increased incidence of severity of medical and mental disorders is partially accounted for by limited access to basic health services (Manderscheid & Rosenstein, 1992).

Presently, many people who are homeless seek medical and mental health services in hospital emergency rooms because they do not have access to basic medical and mental health care (primary care). Due to lack of primary care, conditions that are relatively minor (e.g., minor infection, adjustment problems) or that are easily treated (e.g., diabetes, depression) become acute conditions requiring emergency room care. Delivery of

health care services on primarily an emergency basis has negative consequences including: 1) Poorer health for individuals who are homeless; 2) Inability for local hospitals to provide emergency care because of overflowing emergency rooms; and 3) Increased health care costs for the community at large.

To address these problems, Daniel Allen, Ph.D., Department of Psychology and Patricia Markos, Ph.D., Department of Counseling, acquired an Applied Research Initiative grant to establish a Homelessness Treatment and Research Center (HTRC) in Las Vegas on the ground of the Mobilized Assistance and Shelter for the Homeless (MASH) Village. MASH Village provided services to approximately 9,000 individuals last year, or half of the people who are homeless in the Las Vegas area, making it an ideal location for the HTRC. In order to evaluate the impact of primary care services on health utilization patterns of people who are homeless, two basic components are necessary. The first component is to provide access to basic medical care establishing a primary care clinic. The clinic will provide a continuum of primary medical and mental health care services. The second component requires the initiation of an active health services research program responsible for: 1) developing and conducting interview of people who are homeless who seek services at MASH Village and who receive treatment at the primary care clinic, and 2) evaluating the economic impact of accessible primary care on local hospitals.

This project creates new partnerships for UNLV with MASH Village, Lake Mead Hospital, The Department of Veterans Affairs, and the University Medical Center. Establishing the HTRC also provides opportunities for partnerships with the 35 agencies located at MASH Village (e.g., Center for Independent Living, Nevada Legal Services, Senior Services, Job Corps). As another

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benefit, the HTRC will serve as a training site for UNLV undergraduate and graduate students in Psychology and Counseling as well as several

other departments on campus (e.g., Health Education, Nursing).

Poor access to primary health care services for people who are homeless is a national problem that has not been adequately addressed. The HTRC is the first step in addressing these issues and its intent is to become a national leader in the area of health care for people who are homeless.

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## NEGOTIATING AND PROMOTING LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS

by María G. Ramírez

Understanding what ESL students say can at times be difficult to decipher. While the words and speech are clearly English, the statements are not always recognized as English. Teachers are baffled and confused as ESL students move from a beginning level of proficiency in English, with few or little errors, to an intermediate level where they begin to make what appear to be more errors in spoken and written English. Actually, the transition from memorized language, typical of beginning proficiency, to creative use of the language, an intermediate characteristic, will produce more language errors, as well as language usage patterns atypical of native English speakers. The atypical language utterances can be attributed to a carry over from the first language, while the higher frequency of language errors, characteristic of the intermediate level speaker, is part of normal language progression, not unlike the language development of native English speakers, as their understanding of the rules of language expands, and they begin to over apply language generalizations.

The classroom teacher needs to understand the basis of language misuse among second language students and recognize the meaning of their utterances, in order to know how to respond and adjust the instruction to facilitate the next level of language development. Failure to acknowledge the developmental stages of an ESL student's oral

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language acquisition can impede the natural development of the language. If the teacher corrects each error the students make, the students may develop sufficient mistrust of their language knowledge to stop speaking or revert to speaking in their first language. Instead, the teacher must recognize the errors as natural to

the development of language, in order to establish a teaching-learning context that permits the students to move beyond their current level of oral language development.

To further complicate the teaching-learning context, the teacher must be ever mindful of the cultural understandings ESL students must develop related to the English language, while recognizing and accepting the cultural misunderstandings arising from limited social knowledge. In other words, bilingual and ESL teachers must be ever vigilant to provide second language students with experiences that help develop their linguistic knowledge, along with their social understanding. Most bilingual and ESL programs are designed to provide second language students with access to the core curriculum and, at the same time, develop the students' English language. Unfortunately, these efforts often segregate ESL students from native English speaking students, creating what some might call a separate but equal context for teaching and learning English. The segregated classrooms are neither separate, nor equal. Access to the core curriculum requires more than textbook knowledge. Second language students need to learn to negotiate the language environments of not only second language students but also mainstream English speaking students. The understandings that each group needs of the other are vital for establishing both the academic and social foundations that will lead to cultural understandings.

Cultural understandings do not develop absent language. Cultural understandings develop as part of language, but they also develop within an interactive context that helps define the words and their meanings. Since language and culture are inextricably related, to segregate ESL students from mainstream classrooms is to handicap and marginalize those in most need of a supportive, interactive environment and prevent them not only from learning English but from developing the cultural understandings that will permit them to negotiate the new language, cultural arena.

Connecting cultural understanding to academic and social knowledge requires deliberate, explicit effort, as well as a conscious understanding of the complex and interrelated nature of language and culture. Recent events with the crash of EgyptAir flight 990 serve to

illustrate the importance of understanding how language and culture are inseparable and how not understanding their symbiotic relationship can lead to greater misunderstanding, breeding mistrust and further widening the cultural divide that keeps us from accepting and trusting one another.

## SYNCHRONY

by Steve McCafferty

In my last column I started a discussion of the importance of nonverbal elements of communication in understanding what people mean by what they "say" in face-to-face communication, mentioning that there is often the threat of miscommunicating cross-culturally at this level, something that happens in classrooms. I'd like to concentrate further on nonverbal communication, this time, focusing on one particular element.

One of the "hidden" dimensions of communication has to do with a phenomena that often gets glossed as "synchrony". As a concept this basically refers to both the mirroring of others and the timing of our movements, facial expression, and/or gaze to coincide with those of a conversational participant. For example, you might have noticed that people in the same family often reflect each other nonverbally or produce the same gesture at the same time when in conversation. I remember once being in a bus and looking down just in time to see three left arms with index fingers extended come shooting out to point at the same referent, two

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from the front seat and one from the back, all exactly at the same time.

Synchrony is important not only as a cultural and individual form of identity, it also can have real impact on how others perceive us in relation to themselves. Generally, if we see people who are in sync with one another nonverbally, our interpretation would be that

there is a high level of involvement, that a bond of sorts must exist between them as in my example above. I doubt that this is conscious for the most part, although I'm told that people in sales are explicitly taught how to exploit this to their advantage. It would also seem likely that sensitive classroom teachers would become aware of this interactional feature as a part of working with individual students, and that they might use it to the student's advantage, that is, to accommodate students nonverbally.

Indeed, students from diverse backgrounds may not respond to nonverbal behaviors by trying to synchronize with them if the teacher is not from their culture. It should be easy to see why this could happen as the facial expressions, gestures, etc. they encounter may not be familiar, as in the case of students from another country, or may even be quite opposed to what would be expected in the native culture. I think it important for teachers to accept the possibility that a lack of synchrony is not a hostile act in and of itself: there is no reason why a student cannot hang on to his or her own identity nonverbally, despite the fact that this does not lead to the kind of "harmony" teachers typically like to see.

The next time you are in a face-to-face conversation, try and track what happens between you and the other person(s) you are talking to. See if you don't end up crossing your legs in the same way that person does or if you don't end up making eye contact at the same time. I'm sure this experience will give you something to reflect on.

### **WHY MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE--OR ANY PIECE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE---IS NOT CUTE!**

by Cyndi Giorgis

Each semester begins like the last with the anticipation of sharing incredible examples of quality children's literature with my students. And then it happens! "This is such a cute book!" "The pictures are so cute." "What a cute story." All of which prompts me to try to explain why a children's book, if it is quality

literature, is anything but cute in relation to its text or illustrations.

Why is this such an issue for me? Maybe it is because over the past few years I have met a number of the authors and illustrators who create such extraordinary work in their powerful story lines or museum-quality artwork. Or else it may be because I have come to respect the types of issues that are portrayed in literature---issues such as homelessness, slavery, disabilities, racism, and alternative lifestyles, none of which could be considered "cute." It may also relate to what I see as my role as a teacher educator and reader by informing my students of the personal connections they and their students can make to literature when it is not reduced to "cuteness."

If the only value a book has is being "cute" then it probably has little place in supporting the curriculum. I tell my students repeatedly that "cute cannot be your curriculum." Of course there are cute books that are read for pure enjoyment and that is their primary purpose but these books do not push a reader in their thoughts about themselves and the world around them. I want students to think on deeper levels rather than through superficial responses in discussing literature. And in doing so, I ban the word cute from my classroom in order for them to move beyond initial reactions in order to think about whether this book has a place in their own reading memory and in their classrooms.

Several years ago at a conference, I was standing in line to have Allen Say autograph my

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copy of his Caldecott Award winning, *Grandfather's Journey*. *Grandfather's Journey* is a compelling reminiscence of Say's grandfather's life in America and Japan. This poignant cross-cultural experience conveys the grandfather's love for his two countries and his longing for one place when he is in the other. As Say autographed the books he also drew a small pen-and-ink sketch of his grandfather. The teacher whose book Say was autographing at the moment remarked, "Oh what a cute

picture." Say immediately froze, looked up at the teacher, and clearly stated, "My artwork is NOT cute." I doubt the teacher ever referred to Say's work in that way again. But she needed to be told that just as my students need to be told that children's book illustrations are not cute. I have rarely heard the art of Monet, Picasso, Renoir, or Van Gogh referred to as cute, so why would the exquisite paintings being published in literature today be called cute. Is it because this art appears in a book whose primary audience is children or is it because it has not obtained the respect of a Monet mainly because the readers are not knowledgeable about the style and technique used by the artists.

Author and illustrator Rosemary Wells whose Max and Ruby characters may elicit the "cute" remark feels that the term is demeaning. In a recent *Book Links* article Wells shares the painstaking process of creating her illustrations to the extent that she rejected twenty of her completed paintings until she believed one of her attempts conveyed the loving relationship between mother and child. Wells, like many artists and writers, is a perfectionist who believes that children deserve the best we can give them. She also feels that a book is forever and thus desires to create meaningful stories through both text and illustration.

So how can we encourage our students to become more aware of the value of children's and young adult literature beyond their "cuteness." First, we can become knowledgeable ourselves about the styles and techniques used by children's book illustrators. There are a number of resources out there to assist us and each semester I do at least one class session on visual literacy as well as a course in the summer. We can also encourage students to expand their vocabulary in discussing and describing a book. Is the story diverse, intense, touching, enchanting, accessible, or sensitive? Is the writing style lyrical, humorous, introspective, poignant, or mesmerizing? Are the illustrations executed in oils, acrylics, collage, scratchboard, gouache, or watercolors? Could they be described as whimsical, crisp, expressive, serene, or realistic? Has the illustrator used autumnal coloring, jewel tones, or judicious use of light? And what is the story truly about? Sibling rivalry or two bunnies? Need for acceptance in a diverse

society or hair styles? It all comes down to the *purpose* of why we share literature with our students.

So, the next time you hear the word "cute," I hope that you will take the time to inform the reader that literature is rarely cute, but is more, as Joseph Bruchac stated, "A way to keep us joined at the heart through a bridge of sharing and understanding."

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### **TODOS LOS NINOS TIENEN MEREcido EDUCADORES CONSCIENTES Y ESTUDIOSOS**

by Susan Marie Rumann and Nancy Sileo

Typically, infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities are categorized as having developmental delays or as being at-risk for developmental delays. Generally population parameters for this group are recorded as non-categorical until the child is approximately eight years of age. However, in most cases the category of developmental delays is inclusive of

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all disability categories listed in the Act. In Nevada, infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities are identified as having or being at-risk for developmental delays. This includes disability categories typically associated with low incidence disabilities. (Hanson & Lynch, 1995).

A single categorical early childhood special education teaching credential is awarded to those eligible to provide services to infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities, in Nevada. This credential does not currently require specific course work or experience in

low incidence disabilities or bilingual education. The preparation of early childhood professionals whose areas of expertise include low incidence disabilities and bilingual education would serve to strengthen services that are being provided to infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities.

Nationwide there exists an extreme shortage of professionals trained to work with infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities in the natural environment. Even at the most basic level (i.e. # of licensed early childhood special educators) there continue to be shortages. For example, in the 1997 *Nineteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act* (U.S. Department of Education), 27,000 service providers for infants-toddlers (birth to age three) and teachers of young children (age three to age eight) with disabilities were needed in 1995-1996. A year later the *Twentieth Annual Report to Congress* reported that 32,000 service providers for infants and toddlers (birth to age three) and teachers of young children (age three to age eight) with disabilities were needed. In addition, approximately 50% of early childhood special education positions were either unfilled or filled by under-qualified personnel during the 1996-1997 academic year.

In Nevada the need for trained early childhood bilingual service providers for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities (Parts B and C respectively), specifically those who are traditionally identified under Part B as having low incidence disabilities, is particularly acute. **Nevada has the fastest growing population in the nation.** Between 1988 (Pop. 1,096,130) and 1998 (Pop. 1,852,650) the population of Nevada increased by approximately 760,000. Las Vegas, NV and Clark County are the fastest growing area within the State. Between 1988 (Pop. 661,690) and 1998 (Pop. 1,255,200) the population of Clark County has nearly doubled (Center for Business and Economic Research, UNLV, 1999). Residents of Clark County represent approximately 70% of the population of Nevada and are served by one school district, the Clark County School District (CCSD) and by two local Part C providers.

**CCSD is the 8th largest school district**

**in the country.** CCSD has 203,777 students, 11,860 teachers, and covers an area of 7,190 sq. miles. The district has **1,300** special education teachers, **5** of which are bilingual endorsed, and **163** teachers working specifically with early childhood. The student program placement identifies 20,574 students with disabilities, approximately 10% of the district, and 1189 students with disabilities were identified as limited English proficient. CCSD continues to be one of the fastest growing school districts in the nation. Since 1994, more than 54 new schools have been opened. This tremendous growth continues to challenge CCSD and its current educational models.

The *Nevada Administrative Code* (NAC, #391.363[2]{b} and [2]{c}) clearly defines "early childhood special education (birth to age eight)" as a program of instruction or a program in which services are provided for infants, toddlers, and young children with developmental delays or who are at-risk for developmental delays. CCSD and the local Part C providers serve the largest population of infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities in the State of Nevada.

The population growth of infants, toddlers, and young children identified or at-risk for developmental delays is reflected in an increase in the number of young children with disabilities (three to age eight) in comparison to the growth of all students with disabilities in CCSD. In the past ten years the (a) population

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of students with disabilities enrolled in programs in CCSD has increased 143%, (b) population of young children with disabilities has increased 150%, and (c) the population who are identified under part B as having low incidence disabilities has increased 78%.

In addition, the growth is reflected in the need for the at least one of the Part C provider's to have a "waiting list" for persons seeking services for infants and toddlers with suspected developmental delays or those who are at-risk for developmental delays. The typical "wait time" for infants and toddlers identified as

being eligible for services to receive all of the necessary and appropriate services ranges from 30 days to six months.

The NAC (#388.605) defines "bilingual program of instruction" as a program of instruction for English language learners in which pupils are taught the English language and the content of other courses of study is taught using the pupils' primary language (see Appendix C). Locally CCSD bilingual education program serves children through a Transitional Bilingual Education program, kindergarten to third grade. Reputable studies by Baca and Cervantes (1998) have illustrated a continued shortage of qualified early childhood bilingual special educators to work with children so defined. **CCSD serves the largest concentration of limited-English proficient students in the State of Nevada.**

Since 1996, CCSD has experienced a 12% increase in the number of students identified as African American, a 26% increase in the number of students identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, a 29% increase in the number of students identified as Native American and a 36% increase in the number of students identified as Hispanic. Although these numbers do not reflect specific number of these students who do not speak English as a primary language, they do reflect the increasingly diverse population of children needing educational services.

CCSD and the local Part C providers deliver services to infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities in Clark County. The local Part C providers also deliver services to infants and toddlers living in Lincoln and Nye counties. In rural Clark County (outside of the Las Vegas Metropolitan area) and in Lincoln and Nye Counties approximately 40% of the population speaks a primary language other than English. There is a dearth of qualified personnel in early childhood bilingual special education to provide services to these populations. There are no licensed early childhood special education personnel who are also endorsed in bilingual education, providing services in any of the rural communities such as Hidden Valley, Logandale, Mesquite, the Moapa Indian Reservation, or Pahrump.

Various experts in the field of language acquisition and bilingual education (see August & Hakuta, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Lee,

1996) elaborate on the need for qualified personnel to provide a cognitively, linguistically, and academically enriched environment for the academic success of students with limited English proficiency. At the Eleventh BUENO Summer Institute, Lily Wong Fillmore (1999) highlighted the concern amongst educators that linguistically diverse children are disproportionately miscategorized as students with special needs.

Related to this concern, is the fact that most anecdotal information (the main component in the evaluation) used in an infant's, toddler's, or young child's initial assessment for special services come from the child's parents. If the parent's language is not English, the accuracy of the information may be in question unless the evaluator is fluent in the parent's native language. Valdes (1996) supports this concern by emphasizing the need to close the gap between professionals knowledge of cultural diversity and their use of appropriate skills with culturally diverse populations.

Clearly, improvements to practice are needed for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities living in Southern Nevada. Current Part B and Part C service providers, and preservice educators must receive appropriate training to: (a) work with populations whose primary language is not

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English, (b) work with persons with low incidence disabilities among those identified as having developmental delays or those at-risk for developmental delays, and (c) adequately and appropriately assess infants, toddlers, and young children thought to be at-risk for developmental delays and those already identified as having developmental delays. We must remember that all children deserve conscientious and informed educators.

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## **PROMOTING EMOTIONAL HEALTH IN DIVERSE SCHOOL SETTINGS**

by Jean Henry

Emotional health is a critical component of wellness. The ability to cope with stress, manage change, assess one's values, conduct interpersonal interactions, and resolve conflict are aspects of emotional health. Emotionally healthy people are more likely to develop higher self-esteem. Self-esteem is a composite picture of perceived self-value, and is seen by some as

the most important variable in human development and maturation - the key to actualization of an individual's potential (Nakamura, 1999). The reality is, not all students have equal opportunities to develop positive emotional health. Minorities often do not receive, or perceive, the same confirming messages that others receive within the educational system.

Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Rudolf Dreikurs, Alfred Adler, and William Glasser all supported the theory that, given opportunity and appropriate encouragement, individuals will grow in positive ways. People have certain needs that must be met in order to reach their full potential. Many minorities feel disenfranchised from mainstream society and do not feel that these basic needs are being met.

Nakamura (1999) blended the works of humanistic theorists to develop a list of basic needs. Other researchers have discovered trends among U.S. minority populations that indicate that these basic needs are not being met. The following discussion focuses on applying these needs to students and our response as educators in multicultural settings.

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1. **The need to be accepted and to belong.** Acceptance and belonging are essential elements in building self esteem. Often, minority students do not feel really accepted, but rather tolerated, by mainstream society. Many children from the dominant culture come to school with preconceived negative attitudes toward people who are different from them (Lasker, 1970). To achieve their potential, all children need to feel that there is meaning to their existence in the classroom.

Research on school dropout indicates that a feeling of not belonging is one of the leading causes of dropping out of school. McKay (1988) reported that Hispanic Americans have the highest drop out rates and tend to leave school earlier than do blacks or whites. Sellar (1989) reported particularly high

dropout rates among Hispanic women and teenage mothers. How can we make sure these young people feel as though they belong? Sometimes it is as simple as treating all children the same. Sometimes it means structuring activities to truly honor and celebrate the different cultures represented in our classrooms. Acceptance is based on respect, affirmation, caring, empathy, fairness, sensitivity, and warmth. It means embracing each student because of who they are, not because of what they have done. It is something each and every student deserves.

2. **The need to feel significant.**

All people need to feel that they are important. They need to feel there is meaning and purpose to their existence in school, work, family and society (Nakamura, 1996). For some, the need to feel needed is more powerful than the need to live, and they find an escape in suicide. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in adolescents and young adults and the second leading cause of death for white males in this age group (McKenzie, Pinger, & Kotecki, 1999). Teens who feel alienated from family, school, or the community are more likely to abuse drugs, get pregnant or father a child, fail in school, commit vandalism, develop depression, or commit suicide (Wehlage, 1989).

It is essential that the curriculum in our schools reflect the diverse of our society and our particular student population. The inclusion of teaching materials with diverse perspectives and materials relevant to their culture or gender are particularly motivating to minority students. Learning about one's culture within the basic concepts of a discipline reinforces students' feelings of importance and significance (Love, 1985). Every student should be aware of people like themselves who have achieved success.

3. **The need to feel capable or competent.** Most of us know that our environment can reinforce perceptions of self. If a student fears that he or she is incapable and their environment reinforces that view, they may eventually come to believe it. We begin to believe what we hear consistently. Most educators are familiar with the Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) study that demonstrated that students may assume a role consistent with the treatment they are receiving from teachers, e.g. if a student is treated as though she is bright, she

will act in a way that supports that assumption. Unfortunately, some teachers expect less from certain students, often minorities, and these students do not achieve as much. Various studies have reported such things as minorities receiving less verbal praise, less useful information in response to incorrect answers, and less feedback, in general, on their performance and progress. Classroom treatment grounded in stereotypes and prejudices can adversely affect self-concept and promote feelings of inadequacy.

Teacher biases, district policies, and methods of "tracking" are a few among the many ways that minority students may be subjected to lowered expectations and reduced chances at feeling capable and competent. While the solutions are not all easy, they are critical. Teachers should hold the same expectations of success for all students - perhaps requiring some to revisit their definition of success and their understanding of minority cultures.

4. **The need to feel safe.** Fear can paralyze, both physically and emotionally. To feel safe requires evidence within our surroundings as well as a sense of control of our selves within our environment. We must

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see our environment as a place where (1) precautions are taken to ensure physical safety and (2) emotional well-being is not violated (Nakamura, 1996). Fear and anxiety limit people. For some students, the effect is small, such as fear of a teacher's disapproval for a low test score. For others, sense of physical and emotional safety is so compromised that little beyond basic survival can be accomplished.

Young people today face many perceived and real threats to their safety. Homicide is the second leading cause of death in the 15- to 24-year age group, and the leading cause of death among black Americans. Socioeconomic factors and environment are more significant than race as risk factors for violent death among young people (McKenzie et al., 1999). Even schools are no longer perceived to be sanctuaries of safety for our children. Discipline based on

cultural biases has been noted in several research studies, and is seen as one of the most devastating forms of discrimination in the educational setting.

Regardless of the source of the fear - violence, poverty, lack of financial security, social injustice - children forced to live in unsafe environments become victims of their fear. They are not able to enthusiastically explore new challenges. As teachers, we must do all in our power to ensure that our personal demeanor and our school culture support the sense of safety of all students, regardless of their culture.

To provide all students with an optimum environment for developing positive self-esteem and achieving their full potential, we must develop strategies designed to fulfill these basic needs in healthy ways. To do so, we have to honestly assess our own personal values, the culture of our schools, the cultures of our students and their families, and the culture of the community. We have to be willing to do what it takes to work for change when necessary. It will take a coordinated approach within all aspects of the student's lives to optimize the chances for all students to achieve success. While that may seem a daunting task, we can certainly each start in our own hearts and our own classrooms with our own students.

The following excerpt was written by Glenn Van Eckeran (1988). Though related sports, its implications can be applied to life, in general.

History was made in the baseball world in 1947. It was in that year that Jackie Robinson became the first black baseball player to play in the major leagues. The Brooklyn Dodgers' owner, Branch Rickey, told Robinson, "It'll be tough. You are going to take abuse, be ridiculed, and take more verbal punishment than you ever thought possible. But I'm willing to back you all the way if you have the determination to make it work."

In short order, Robinson experienced Rickey's prediction. He was abused verbally and physically as players intentionally ran him over. The crowd was vociferous with their racial slurs and digging comments. Opponents

ridiculed Robinson as well as the Dodger players.

Around mid-season, Robinson was having a particularly bad day. He had fumbled grounders, overthrown first base, and had an equally disastrous day at the plate. The crowd was celebrative in their boos. Then something special happened. In front of this critical crowd, Pee Wee Reese walked over from his shortstop position, put his arm around Jackie Robinson, and indicated his acceptance of the major league's first black baseball player.

Robinson later reflected, "That gesture saved my career. Pee Wee made me feel as if I belonged."

Consider the number of newcomers who happen upon our lives every week. They too are awaiting for the displayed acceptance from the crowd. But more important, they need to feel as if they

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belong in our world and are considered an important contributor. We have a significant impact on the lives of others by simply letting them know we accept them.

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## **SPECIAL EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

by Keith Hyatt

As the nation continues to become more diverse, school personnel will encounter new challenges to the traditional methods of educating out children. For example, a five-year trend showing an increase in the number of preschool and kindergarten children with disabilities being educated in inclusive community settings was documented by Wolery et al., (1992). As these children achieve success in inclusive settings, it may be reasonable to assume that they will continue their education in inclusive general education programs, possibly changing the fabric of our school systems. In an interesting survey of parents and teachers of typically developing children enrolled in inclusive programs across Washington state, Peck, Carlson, and Helmstetter (1992) found that parents of nondisabled children and the general education teachers felt that typically developing children had benefited from being educated with children with disabilities.

While some may view diversity and the accompanying challenges with little enthusiasm, others welcome the challenges and view diversity as an opportunity to enrich our understanding of the world and its people. They

regard diversity as avenue for providing quality educational programming to children while teaching students to appreciate and respect human differences. The field of special education has clearly shown that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to educating our children has not and will not effectively meet the needs of children with disabilities. Federal law mandates that children with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment and that they be removed from the general education environment only when their needs cannot be met with the use of supplementary aids and services. Frequently these supplementary aids and services are provided by paraprofessionals or teacher assistants who may work in the general education setting.

The level of training provided to teacher assistants can vary considerably. Some may have completed a two-year associate degree program while others may have little training or experience working with children with

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disabilities. Teachers are frequently called upon to provide training to their assistants. However, in the hectic rush of a busy school day, it can be easy to overlook opportunities for training, decide what type of training to provide, and even find the time to conduct the necessary training. Following is a list of some areas in which teacher assistants may benefit from training.

1. Jargon - People generally feel more a part of the team when they understand the terminology used. An understanding of special education jargon such as IEP, IFSP, MDT, ESY, OT, and PT may improve services to children by clarifying our communication.

2. People First Language - The practice of referring to people by disability can evoke stereotypes that are detrimental to ensuring that people with disabilities are part of the school community. For example, referring to children as the "resource kids" or "the mentally challenged" does not identify any educational programming needs of the students. Rather it sets them apart from the other

"regular" students. Building a sense of community and acceptance requires that we call students by their first names thereby focusing on the child instead of the disability. It also requires that all staff interact with children with disabilities.

3. Confidentiality - Everyone wants to talk about exciting things that happen during the course of the day. However, without training people may not understand the importance of confidentiality. Gossiping and talking negatively about children is certainly unprofessional and can be a violation of privacy rights.

4. Positive Behavioral Supports - This term seems to be a buzz word these days, but it is an important facet of behavior management. Instead of managing behavior through coercive methods, professionals need to identify and understand the purpose of behaviors in order to help children deal effectively with their environments. Behavior does not exist in a vacuum and a thorough analysis of behavior requires assessment of the environment, the instructional materials and methods, interpersonal interactions, reinforcement history, communicative intent of the behavior and identification of strategies to support the student and help him or her achieve success.

5. Communication Skills - Without proper training people can easily find themselves in power struggles with students. These are no-win interactions and may be the catalyst for inappropriate behavior that could have been avoided had adults provided positive behavioral support. Additionally, adults can help children understand the communicative behaviors of children with disabilities thereby facilitating social interactions.

6. General Education Curriculum - With the legislative emphasis on ensuring children with disabilities access to the general education curriculum, teacher assistants should be provided direction in the academic standards expected of students. Along with understanding the overall curricular goals, teacher assistants should be guided in strategies for using materials that have been adapted to allow students with disabilities access to the materials.

7. Fading Assistance - Adults who

provide intensive assistance to children must be trained to fade that assistance and allow the child to interact as independently as possible. To avoid a child becoming overly dependent on a teacher assistant, the teacher should also work directly with the child and the assistant should work with other children throughout the classroom.

8. Specialized Techniques - Teacher assistants may also require training in specialized techniques required for a student to achieve his or her IEP goals and objectives. Some examples may include feeding, positioning, and helping with technology. Training in some areas may be transdisciplinary, meaning that a physical therapist may provide training to the assistant and other staff in the proper techniques for positioning a child.

The training areas discussed above are fairly generic and not intended to be a listing of

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the only areas in which teacher assistants may require training. Certainly some of the training will be child specific as well as environmental specific. The purpose of the listing was to provide ideas on the types of training that may be required of teacher assistants as well as to highlight the fact that our children, especially those with significant disabilities, who require specialized instruction should receive that assistance from staff who are adequately trained. Special education teachers in conjunction with general education teachers have a wealth of knowledge to share with teacher assistants that could improve the quality of educational services provided to all students who enter our schools.

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## REALITY BITES

by Kyle Higgins

The truth must not only be the truth; it must be told.

Malcolm X

Poverty is the worst form of violence.

Mahatma Gandhi

### The Data

- Poverty is rising in the United States.
- In fact, it has risen for the last three years.
- Last year the number of people living in poverty was the highest since 1964. Approximately 15% of *all* Americans live in poverty (22% of *all* children in the United States)---this translates to 37.5 million Americans living in poverty.
- One out of four of *all* U.S. citizens will receive some form of welfare benefit for a least a short period in their lifetime.
- Of the people living in poverty, 40% are children. Children who live in poverty are likely to be two or more years behind their peers when they enroll in school. The chance that they will drop out of school is five times higher than their peers. We know that the likelihood of childhood illness, childhood accidents, and childhood death rise as the level of poverty increases.
- The National Center for Children in Poverty (1998) found that 25% of all preschool children in the United States live in poverty. In our major cities, one out of three children live in poverty. In some communities, 80% of the children live in poverty.
- For a family of four, the federal poverty level income is \$16,036.00---but nearly half of the children who live in poverty are from families whose income is less that \$8,000.00 a year.
- Sixty percent of the children born in 1987 will live in broken homes.
- Of the children who grow up in single

parent homes, over 30% will experience poverty during their childhood.

- Fifteen million American children live without fathers in their home. Half of them receive no child support from their fathers.
- Three-fifths of the children with absent fathers are Anglo.
- In 1992, the total cost of welfare and food stamps was \$47 billion a year---it would have cost an additional \$37 billion a year to raise the incomes of families receiving support to the federal poverty level (remember, \$16,036.00). In contrast, the federal government spends approximately \$494 billion a year on defense and the military (Zepezauer & Naiman, 1996).
- The real value of welfare payments has declined by 43% since 1970.

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- Federal welfare expenditures have never exceeded **one percent of the federal budget.**
- In 1990, the federal government spent \$11,350.00 per year for every American over the age of 65. For the same year, the federal government spent \$1,020.00 for every child under the age of 18. Why---children don't vote.
- In 1992, the United States placed 22nd in infant mortality in the world---the highest rate among Western nations. We have an infant mortality rate of 9.8 per 1,000 births.
- The United States is the only highly industrialized democracy in the world---except for South Africa---that does not have universal health coverage. Thirty-seven million Americans have no health coverage.

### The Myths and The Realities

Mythology=selective truths

MYTH #1: "Qualifying for Welfare is a Piece of Cake."

REALITY: No welfare recipient gets enough. Because of excessive red tape, many eligible people get nothing at all. Establishing eligibility for welfare, no matter how desperate

one's situation, takes 30 days. It is estimated that one million people have their welfare terminated each year in spite of the fact that they are still in need and are still entitled to receive benefits.

**REALITY:** Tens of thousands of eligible recipients lose their benefits every month due to clerical errors, computer malfunctions, or misunderstandings with the bureaucracy. For these families, it takes 30 days to be reinstated---30 days with no check and no food stamps. It does not matter how precarious the situation for the family ---the rule is 30 days. Many families are pushed out into the streets for these 30 days.

**MYTH #2:** "Women on welfare keep having babies to get more money."

**REALITY:** There are no economic "rewards" for having additional babies on welfare. In fact, women on welfare have fewer babies than the population at large. The average per capita amount of a welfare grant **decreases** as the number of persons in a household increases. Having more babies, in essence, makes a family poorer. A family of four receiving welfare benefits receives approximately \$512.24 a month---\$6,146.88 a year (please remember that the national poverty level is \$16,036.00).

**REALITY:** The most common family unit receiving welfare is a mother and one child. In fact, 73% of all households receiving benefits have two or fewer children.

**REALITY:** The birthrate for women receiving welfare benefits has declined.

**MYTH #3:** "Teenagers having babies is the problem."

**REALITY:** Teenage mothers represent approximately 3.8% of the total welfare caseload. This is down from a high of 8.3% in 1975.

**REALITY:** However, the birthrate among teenage girls, which peaked in 1958 and then declined for 20 years, is rising again. The average age of the father of babies born to teenage girls is twenty-five.

**MYTH #4:** "Welfare is like a genetic disease---generation after generation."

**REALITY:** Most children who grow

up on welfare do not become welfare recipients as adults. In fact, children from families who receive welfare benefits are no more likely to receive welfare as adults than children from families who never received welfare.

**REALITY:** The most frequent precipitator of welfare receipt is a change in family circumstances---divorce, separation, desertion, or the birth of a child. Seventy-five percent of all first-time recipients are the result of the creation of a single parent household.

**REALITY:** The majority of first-time applicants for welfare are previously married women who become head of households because of divorce, separation, or desertion.

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**MYTH #5:** "Welfare causes dependency."

**REALITY:** Only 8% of all welfare recipients are on welfare for eight years or more for their entire support.

**REALITY:** More than two-thirds of all welfare recipients are off welfare in three years or less.

**MYTH #6:** "Welfare recipients cheat."

**REALITY:** Most major welfare fraud is conducted by welfare and food stamp **workers**, not the recipients of benefits. Workers who steal from the system through sophisticated schemes constitute the bulk of "welfare fraud."

**REALITY:** Initial complaints of "fraud" are most often found to be accounting errors made by the welfare bureaucracy.

**REALITY:** Allegations of fraud against recipients of welfare, investigated by the Department of Health and Human Services, recently revealed that fewer than **2.6%** of the allegations warranted further investigation.

**REALITY:** In contrast, the Internal Revenue Service estimates that **20% to 25%** of all Americans under report their yearly income at tax time. More of us cheat on our income tax than families receiving welfare cheat the welfare

system.

On August 22, 1996, President Clinton signed into law the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act"--- known by most of us as the welfare reform act. This new law ended sixty-one years of economic entitlement for the poorest of the poor in the United States. It eliminated the federal guarantee of welfare cash to low-income families with dependent children that had been in place since it was signed into law in 1935 by President Franklin Roosevelt.

Families who desperately need the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program have found themselves set adrift with few, if any, places to turn for support. Their pleas to senators and congressmen have fallen on deaf ears. These senators and congressmen---most who have never met a person who lives in poverty---most who relied on political think tanks or pollsters to tell them how to vote on the issue---have no idea what recipients of welfare really do with their government checks. They repeat their stereotypical myths of people who receive welfare benefits in front of television cameras at every opportunity and pat themselves and their brethren on the back for being such "progressive reformers."

The pleas of families living in poverty also go unheard by the vast majority of Americans---most who have never met a person who lives in poverty---most who rely on the media and politicians to tell them how to feel about the issue---and, most who have no idea what recipients of welfare really do with their government checks. We have been well conditioned by the politicians into believing those stereotypical myths concerning people living in poverty.

Families living in poverty and those who receive welfare benefits live out of the sight and hearing of mainstream America---it is time we listened to them and the reality of their existence. It is time we stop believing the myths---the selective truths of politicians and the media. The lives and futures of children are at stake.

There will be justice in Athens only when the uninjured parties are as indignant as the injured parties.

Ancient Greeks

#### Recommended Reading

Freedman, J. (1993). *From cradle to grace: The human face of poverty in America*. New York: Atheneum.

Funiciello, T. (1993). *Tyranny of kindness: Dismantling the welfare system to end poverty in America*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.

Kotlowitz, A. (1998). *The other side of the river: A story of two towns, a death, and America's dilemma*. New York: Doubleday.

(REALITY BITES continued on Page 20, Column 1)

(REALITY BITES continued from Page 19, Column 2)

Kozol, J. (1995.) *Amazing Grace: The lives of children and the conscience of a nation*. New York: Crown.

Kozol, J. (1988). *Rachel and her children: Homeless families in America*. New York: Fawcett/Columbine.

Mills, N. (1997). *The triumph of meanness: America's war against its better self*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Zepezauer, M., & Naiman, A. (1996). *Take the rich off welfare*. Tucson, AZ: Odonian Press.

Zucchino, D. (1997). *Myth of the welfare queen: Portrait of women on the line*. New York: Scribner.

#### **SUGGESTED MULTICULTURAL INFUSION ACTIVITIES**

by Nancy P. Gallavan and Porter Lee Troutman, Jr.

Teachers frequently ask their students various types of geographic questions. Questions may be relevant to the academic content, i.e., "Where did the people in this story live, and why did they live there?" Some questions probe the learning process, i.e., "Where did you find the answer to that question?" and "Where might you find more

information related to this topic?" Or questions may be pertinent to students' personal lives outside of school, i.e., "Where is your team's baseball game this afternoon?" and "Where did your family travel during last summer's vacation; why did you go there?"

All geographic questions and conversations yield ideal opportunities for teachers to convey powerful multicultural perspectives integrated within the context of their curricular content, daily teaching practices, and student interactions. Many teachers are not aware of the meaningful learning experiences that they can create for their students by empowering their geographic questions with multicultural perspectives. Nor are they aware of the powerful role modeling that they share and reinforce among their young learners (of all ages).

Geographic education encompasses five major themes:

- a. location--identification of where people or things are located;
- b. place--physical and human characteristics associated with specific locations including cognitive and emotional connections;
- c. human/environmental interactions--people's relationships with Earth;
- d. movement--forms of transportation, communication, and travel; and
- e. region--defined areas of Earth based on various, specific criteria formulated for a variety of purposes.

Each one of these five major themes of geography provides informative methods for identifying, questioning, and organizing the human experience in space over time. The five themes allow us to discover more about ourselves and others as we examine our individual viewpoints and further shape our various and evolving multicultural perspectives. Exploring geography with an open awareness for valuing cultural diversity can positively impact our understanding and appreciation of the various people and places where we live, visit, read about, and imagine. It is vital that teachers carefully consider the types of geography questions they are asking of their students and the attitudes associated with various student responses as most geographic questions communicate powerful multicultural perspectives and beliefs towards others.

For example, when teachers ask questions related to location, students may tell where an event occurs or where they live or hang out most of the time. Often, the teacher and/or other students listening to the conversation derive certain ideas about the respondent based upon their own preconceived values, assumptions, or beliefs. The response may link the respondent to a particular location such as in a specific country, within the inner city, in a suburb, or in a rural environment. Listeners may perceive that specific locations

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(INFUSION ACTIVITIES continued from Page 20, Column 2)

reflect who we are (or who we aren't) and convey what is more or less desired within our society from little or no descriptive information relative to the individual. Identifying location rarely tells the entire story about a person.

The same is true for the other four major themes of geography. Questions identifying place may describe a setting communicating a degree of acceptance or success within our society. This also applies to the human/environment interactions. For example, some locations are adjacent to places considered to be a more desirable community and/or natural land features. Likewise, students may detect a particular perception associated with the theme of movement as teachers relate their attitudes toward various forms of transportation and communication. Terminology such as first class, preferred member, etc., relate multiple perspectives within our forms of travel and communication. Similarly, the theme of region may communicate a perception of preference or acceptance--a hierarchy of status associated with particular regions.

Here are five essential suggestions for teachers to integrate into their classroom practices collected from practicing teachers enrolled in multicultural education courses in our College of Education at UNLV.

1. All teachers, regardless of their academic areas of expertise or teaching assignments, need to become acquainted with the five themes of geography and ways to

integrate geographic content into their curriculum.

2. Teachers need to empower their geographic content with positive multicultural perspectives to create personalized and meaningful learning experiences for all students to learn more about themselves and others.

3. Teachers need to be aware that empowering geographic context with positive multicultural perspectives communicates strong messages to their students.

4. Teachers need to engage all students in frequent discussions by asking each student all types of geographic questions through delving, following up equitably, and

positively reinforcing each student's response to all kinds of questions.

5. Teachers need to integrate geography and their skills for empowering geographic context with positive multicultural perspectives frequently and consistently into all of their teaching practices and student interactions.

The five themes of geography offer teachers valuable information for extending and integrating their lessons regardless of their content areas. Asking key geographic questions enriches the learning and incorporating multicultural perspectives across the curriculum. Teachers play a vital role as they model strong messages in asking all types of questions respecting and valuing all students' responses. These strategies will increase student knowledge and their awareness about themselves and one another--the keys to successful multicultural education.

## **CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS . . .**

### **1999 NAME CONFERENCE, SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA**

Several members of the UNLV College of Education attended and presented at the annual NAME Conference held in San Diego this fall. Dr. Porter Lee Troutman, Jr., a founder of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), participated in a panel discussion sharing research he has collected

about "Collaborative Partnerships with 'Inadequate Schools' in Nevada" along with Drs. William Pankratus, María Ramírez, and Nancy P. Gallavan from UNLV and Nora Alder from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Drs. María G. Ramírez and Mark J. Dominguez, an Elementary School Assistant Principal with the Clark County School District, presented a session titled "Transforming Science Instruction to Accommodate Culturally Diverse Students." Dr. Ramírez and Elva Mellor of the Chula Vista (CA) Elementary

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School District, shared insights related to "Critical Pedagogy: Strategies for Change and Social Action" and "Reaching Out: Bridging Culturally Diverse Parents into the Educational Process."

Drs. Porter Lee Troutman, Jr., and Patti Bruise-Chance shared their research findings from "Using Simulations as a Tool for Preparing School Administrators for Diverse Settings." "Diversity and Collaborative Learning: Exposing the Hidden Treasure" was the title of an interactive session led by Drs. Aimee Govett, Jean Henry, and LeAnn Putney. And another interactive session sharing a series of effective simulations was held by Dr. Nancy Gallavan and Susan Bonar, Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) with Project MCE (Multicultural Education) with the Clark County School District.

Additionally, UNLV was well-represented with several students attending this year's annual NAME Conference. We hope more will join us next year in San Antonio!

### **1999 TED CONFERENCE, PALM SPRINGS CALIFORNIA**

*Balancing Unity and Diversity: Professional Preparation for Changing Educational Environments* was the theme of the 1999 Teacher Education Division (TED) Conference held in early November in Palm Springs, CA. The College of Education was

once again well represented at the Annual TED Conference. Drs. Kyle Higgins and Randall Boone in collaboration with Dr. Rhonda S. Black from the University of Hawaii at Manoa conducted a preconference workshop entitled "Technology and Instruction into the Year 2000: Important Issues for Teacher Preparation in Special Education."

In addition, Dr. Higgins, along with Drs. Edward Kelly and Thomas Pierce presented a session related to "Special Education Cohort : A One-Year University and School District Collaborative Partnership." Dr. Pierce also presented a session with Dr. Nancy Sileo related to "Ethical Issues in Teacher Education and Special Education."

Dr. William Healey conducted an interactive conversation session entitled "Testing Education Beliefs in the Principles of IDEA: Implications for Teacher and Administrator Preparation." Dr. Nasim Dil led a session entitled "The Process of Collaboration: Guidelines for Small Special Education Program Caucus Activities." In addition, Leah Herner, a doctoral student in special education conducted a session related to "Educator Study Groups: An Effective Way to Conduct Professional Development."

Dr. Nasim Dil is Chairperson of the 2000 TED Conference which will be held in Las Vegas in early November. We look forward to seeing you next year!

## **THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION CULTURAL DIVERSITY SURVEY ---INITIAL RESULTS**

The College of Education Diversity Committee recently conducted a survey to learn more about COE faculty involvement and on-going efforts with public and private schools and community based organizations. The results of the survey will assist the Diversity Committee in planning a series of faculty development activities or "cultural excursions".

Early results from the survey indicate COE faculty are immersed in numerous on-going activities and projects with CCSD, private school, and numerous community based programs. To date, approximately 25 COE faculty have submitted their responses.

The following are summary highlights from the survey .

### **I. Describe your outreach efforts with public and private schools.**

Various COE Faculty are members of the board of:

New Horizon Academy  
Social Studies Council of Nevada  
Geographic Alliance of Nevada  
Southern Nevada Writer's Project

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(SURVEY RESULTS continued from Page 22, Column 2)

Various COE Faculty are:

coordinator Urban Teaching Partnership (UTP)  
co-coordinator UTP  
staff development coordinator UTP

Various COE Faculty conduct fieldwork with:

Cambiero E.S.  
Diskin E.S.  
Decker E.S.  
Crestwood E.S.  
Bracken E. S.  
Ute V Perkins E.S.  
John S. Park E.S.  
Halle Hewitson E. S.  
Wengert E.S.  
Paradise P.D.S.  
Greenspun, M.S.  
Lied M.S.  
Gene Ward J.H.S.  
Park H.S.  
Orr H.S.  
Las Vegas H.S.  
Desert Pine H.S.  
Durango H.S.  
El Dorado H.S.  
Valley H.S.  
Cyber Corps Program, CCSD  
Los Angeles Polytechnical School,  
Kohale H.S., HI

Various COE Faculty are involved with service activities related to:

CCSD/UNLV collaborative committees  
Paradise P.D.S. cohort team  
distance education projects in TESL

**II. Describe your outreach efforts with community based organizations.**

Various COE Faculty are members of the board of:

Positively KIDS - pediatric hospice

Various COE Faculty conduct fieldwork with:

Child's Welfare  
Nevada Bureau of Services to the Blind  
Opportunity Village  
Andre Agassi foundation  
Hispanic Association for Bilingual  
Literacy & Education  
Alliance of Social Justice  
Even Start Projects for the State of  
Nevada  
Project LEAF  
Nevada Census Count Committee  
Henderson International Peace Park  
Nevada House Council - Education  
Committee  
Ronald McDonald house  
HELP - Women's Prison  
Clark County Library District Literacy  
Program  
Nevada Chapter of National Association  
for Multicultural Education  
Moapa Bend of Piauxes  
migrant workers

**III. Describe the school and community placements of your students.**

Various COE faculty place students with:

CCSD - multiple placements district  
wide  
Special Children's Clinic  
First STEP  
private child development centers

**IV. Describe the populations your students are serving.**

The students enrolled in COE classes work with diverse populations including:

birth through adult (0-21)  
various ethnicities  
various SES  
varying ability levels  
highly transient groups  
homeless

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Column 1)

(SURVEY RESULTS continued from Page  
23, Column 2)

**IV. Describe how you infuse diversity into your classes.**

"In my research methods courses, I emphasize the importance of considering individual differences in interpretation of responses to questionnaires and/or treatment interventions (e.g., responses have to be interpreted in context). In undergraduate ed psych and testing courses, the former typically includes a unit on individual differences (ethnicity, language, special needs) and in the latter there is a continuing emphasis on necessity of interpreting responses in the cultural context of the person being evaluated."

"We discuss diverse interaction patterns, the pros and cons of ability grouping and accelerated instruction for at-risk youth."

"Use examples and stories from my work in diverse school contexts in every class I teach. Require reading related to diversity in school, ask students to share their experiences in diverse contexts. Discuss issues students are struggling with as they work in diverse contexts."

"Special education content emphasizes diversity throughout. It is the nature of our discipline. I infuse diversity through a variety of teaching strategies (e.g., multimedia presentations,

demonstration lessons, group work, co teaching, independent work assignment, role-plays, case studies, etc.).”

“Through reading assignments and lessons the students teach at Paradise Professional Development School.”

“I cover diversity through a number of topics/issues. I use discussion, readings, videos, in class assignments, students have to include diverse learners, guest lecture on learning styles, etc.”

“Discussion and presentation of multicultural algorithms/solution strategies for math problems.”

“I teach Multicultural Perspectives in Special Education. It is easy to take what I do with that class and infuse the information on a regular basis in my other classes - issues, information, ways to get involved, and ways to infuse diversity issues into classroom instruction. I also recommend books for my students to read to inform their teaching (and activities, e.g. peace table, hate free zone). I also suggest methods for teachers to change their schools - not just their classrooms.”

“We discuss issues of gender, of SES, of sexual orientation. In appropriate courses we talk about dialects - both geographical and racial. We try to encourage thoughtful conversation. The exams I give always include “real life” experiences, which involve thinking about multicultural issues.”

as “Diversity is integral to all my classes we explore who we are as teachers, young learners, and society - local to global, a multitude of topics, issues, and strategies occur in both SS and MCE

classes with emphases upon a topic engaging learning experience for all voices and perspectives to be heard and shared. I also emphasize social action outcomes and community awareness and activism.”

(SURVEY RESULTS continued on Page 25, Column 1)

(SURVEY RESULTS continued from Page 24, Column 2)

“Multicultural YA literature - I adapt a YA novel each semester and include cultural history in my graduate content areas literacy course. For example, last Spring ‘99 we read Gary Soto’s *Buried Onion’s*. This fall we’re reading Mario Laes’ *Ne R*. I draw on my experience growing up in Hawaii. Once text has a story multicultural emphasis.”

“In the one class I teach this semester, we constantly challenge (through discussion and the texts) the concept of democracy as it is manifested in school - who loses, who wins? The concept of majority rule categorically denies minority student participation.”

“I try to make sure that assignments enable students to read about and interact with students from diverse backgrounds and adapt lessons to meet individual needs. Videos show children and teachers of color and from various cultures. Diversity issues are discussed through articles and cases in graduate classes. I need to do more.”

“Interactive activities, generative themes, critical dialogue, and current issues.”

“Although there are excellent opportunities for this in my areas - I have yet to adequately infuse diversity issues. I am planning to incorporate

some activities related to multi-bilingual education and disabilities.”

“Readings are carefully selected, I deal with stereotypes, and provide guided instruction.”

“Not an issue as diversity comes up in relation to all aspects of what I try to cover in my masters and doctoral level courses.”

“Have special class periods about “gender and science education” as well as “multicultural issues in science education”. Besides this, diversity is always a topic when talking about special science teaching methods or certain science activities.”

right  
“I really do not consciously do that no other than as the course dictates such as the use of different (blank) in writing, and discussion when the need arises.”

Thank you to everyone who completed a survey. Your efforts are appreciated. If you have not had time to complete a survey, but wish to do so it's not too late. Please see Porter Troutman for a copy of the survey.

## **LATINO RESOURCES ONLINE**

**Chicano/Latino Net:**  
<http://cinet.ucr.edu>

**Tomas Rivera Policy Institute:**  
<http://www.trpi.org>

**Inter-University Program for Latino Research:**  
<http://cinet.ucr.edu/iup.html>

**The Azteca Web Page:**  
<http://www.azteca.net/aztec>

**Andanzas al web Latino:**  
<http://lib.nmsu.edu/subject/bord/latino/html>

**Julian Samora Research Institute:**

<http://www.jsri.msu.edu.whatis/>

**Latino/a Research & Policy Center:**  
<http://ita.cudenver.edu/lrpc>

**Policy.com:**  
<http://www.policy.com/icp/about.html>

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(LATINO RESOURCES continued from Page 25, Column 2)

**University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States:**  
<http://www.ucr.edu/ucmexus/mexushom.html>

**Public Policy Insitute of California:**  
<http://www.ppic.org>

**California Policy Research Center:**  
<http://www.ucop.edu/cprc>

**UC Committee on Latino Research:**  
<http://www.ucop.edu/research/ucclr.html>

**California Research Bureau:**  
<http://www.library.ca.gov>

**Rand Center for Research on Immigration Policy:**  
<http://www.rand.org/centers/iet/crip.pubs.html>

## **HIV AND AIDS: AN UPDATE**

December 1st was World AIDS Day. This year for the first time China participated in the HIV awareness and prevention efforts. Recently released statics indicate the number of people reported to be living with HIV in China is approximately 100,000. This number is low compared to other countries with similar population parameters (e.g., India has estimated that 10 million people are living with HIV).

What is significant about the number released by China is that five years ago, the Chinese government indicated there were less

than 25 cases of HIV in all of China. Also of significance is the government supported HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention campaign recently started in Beijing.

## AIDS RELATED DEATHS ON THE DECLINE

The annual number of deaths in America from AIDS has declined since 1995 as a result of anti-viral drug combinations, but the number of people living with AIDS is increasing, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The trends from 1993 to 1998:

### Deaths:

1993:	44,991
1994:	49,442
1995:	49,895
1996:	37,221
1997:	21,445
1998:	17,171

### People living with AIDS:

1993:	174,633
1994:	197,984
1995:	217,506
1996:	241,221
1997:	269,777
1998:	297,137

## HIV MAY RESIST VACCINES

A short time after it invades the body, the virus that causes AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus [HIV]) creates a reservoir of silent infection that cannot be stamped out by current anti-viral drugs and may resist vaccines, according to a new study. The study sheds light on how quickly HIV is able to establish a chronic, drug resistant infection.

Earlier studies have shown that HIV establishes a reservoir of silent infection. The new research shows that this disease pool is created almost immediately after the virus is transmitted. According to researchers at the University of Minnesota, "the chronically infected cells are important because they allow the virus to persist below the radar screen of the

immune system, particularly at the time of transmission." The study shows that a short time after the transmission of HIV there is an infection established in what are known as resting T-cells. These are white blood cells that are not actively participating in the body's immune response to the virus and are resistant to anti-viral drugs.

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This finding is contrary to belief that HIV first infects other targets and then spreads to active T-cells. Instead, the virus moves in about equal proportions to both the resting and the active T-cells. HIV in resting T-cells is much more difficult to target for both the immune system and for anti-viral drugs.

Of significance, is that the new evidence is "bad news for vaccines" because it makes it more difficult to inoculate the body against HIV. The virus in the resting T-cells creates a powerful defense against anti-viral drugs because these drugs attach the virus only when it is actively reproducing. The findings further suggest that the current drugs will never completely eradicate the virus. However, researchers now feel they have a better understanding of the virus which will allow them to---hopefully---find a cure or vaccine for the virus in the next century.

Adapted from the New York Times article *HIV disease may resist vaccines: Virus hides in inactive cells*. (November 12, 1999).