Multicultural & Diversity Newsletter

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UNLV College of Education Multicultural & Diversity Newsletter

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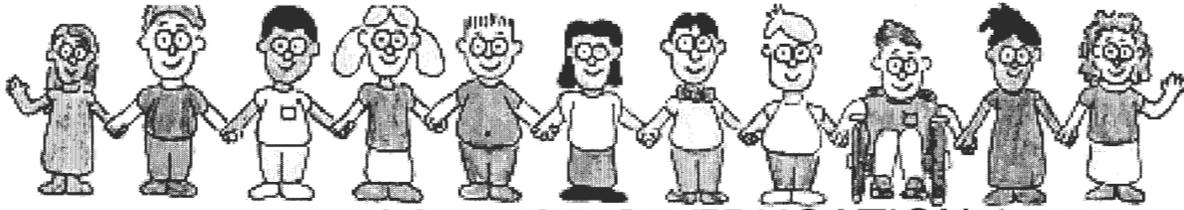
UNLV COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Multicultural & Diversity Newsletter

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***This newsletter is published twice a semester. The articles that appear in the newsletter are based on author interest and consist of both scholarly works and opinion pieces. For further information regarding

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We are what we repeatedly do.

Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.

Aristotle

INVITED GUEST COLUMN

TRAVEL AS EDUCATION
FULBRIGHT-HAYS OPPORTUNITIES
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
by Randy Boone

It was my first year here at UNLV. The associate dean of the college, Elaine Jarchow, was talking about a trip to Thailand or Singapore or something of the sort and of course I was intrigued. Having previously lived and worked in Southeast Asia for several years more than a decade before, I was interested in any opportunity to return. As this project began to solidify, and I became involved in writing the grant application for the funding which would support the trip, I sometimes felt as if I were trying to run a scam. Sort of like when I was a kid, with my two brothers, providing a logical explanation to our mother for why something that we really wanted to do was actually something that was good for us; although we were hardly convinced of that fact ourselves. Perhaps that practice, in those early, formative years, played a role in our being funded for an educational trip to Singapore and Malaysia that year, 1991.

That summer, nine faculty from the College of Education spent a month in Singapore and Malaysia working closely with faculty and the administration of the principal institution of teacher education in Singapore. It was during this month that I realized, as director of the project, that this trip was not -- definitely not -- going to be a vacation. But the experience also surprised me in another way; in how the trip affected the participants, both individually and as a group. It was one of those head-changing experiences that I had forgotten about. One of those times that during travel in foreign places you come out changed. It was exciting to feel it in myself again and to see it happen to others. This was education at its best; a new set of factual realities combined with a related change in affect. And some good food. Participants on this project, who remain still here at UNLV, are Neal Strudler, Porter Troutman, Maria Ramirez, Joe Crank, Kyle Higgins, Sherri Strawser, and me.

Ten Years Later

Reading the Federal Register (online at http:// ocfo.ed.gov/fedreg.htm) has been a habit of mine from the beginning of my career in higher education. Well, perhaps reading isn't exactly correct. It was more like skimming and browsing for interesting tidbits; much like looking through a catalog. And there it was, every fall, the notice for the Fulbright-Hays projects for foreign travel, taunting me. This was the federal program that had funded the trip to Singapore. I had several false starts before I really got serious about writing for another grant competition. It took 3 or 4 years to really put it all together, but finally all the primary factors aligned and a new proposal was sent to Washington D.C. There it underwent a peer-review process under the auspices of the Office of Post-secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education and was selected as one of 30 recipients for the year 2000. So off we were to Korea.

With the experience of the previous project under my belt, I had nothing but high hopes for this trip. Additionally, I already knew the people with whom we would be working in Korea. Our sponsors, Drs. Byoung In-Lee and Eunhee Paik both had previous ties to UNLV. Dr. Lee had received his doctorate here in special education and Dr. Paik had spent a sabbatical year in the Department of Special Education as well. Also, one of the participants in the project was a native-born Korean who could help with language and cultural situations that would surely emerge. This was going to be a piece of cake!

Korea

In July of last year, 12 participants in the Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad to Korea boarded planes for Seoul, a city of more than 10 million people. We would be there together for a month. There were eight faculty from the COE and 4 employees from the Clark County School District.

The basic themes of this project were a multicultural perspective on special education and the impact of technology on intercultural communications. Our experiences in regard to both topics brought significant food for thought and subject for discussion for the group. While many of our formal seminars and workshops were oriented toward special education; much of what we learned about technology came from our own less formal investigations and

observations. The quest for a cyber cafe to send and receive emails from home was an on-going activity that led to many interesting revelations. Seoul, Korea, has one of the most modern communication infrastructures in the world we came to find out. Upon noticing many people on the subway reading email from their cellular phones, one person in the group voiced what many of us were undoubtedly thinking: "But we (the U.S.) are supposed to have the best." This was a good example of the kind of revealing facts encountered in foreign travel that contribute to the "head change" I mentioned earlier.

It is impossible for all but the best of travel writers to provide a sense of being someplace different. Maugham, Conrad, and more contemporary, Naipaul, Theroux, Hansen, and Chatwin are excellent writers, and interested travelers. I'm only an interested traveler. So, rather than relay anecdotes of how well we were treated and how interesting was the country, I'll give you the names of those who went, and you can ask them to tell a story about the trip. Those from the COE who survived the trip were me, Tom Pierce, Nancy Sileo, Kendall Hartley, Kyle Higgins, Eunsook Hong, and Sterling Saddler. Our CCSD colleagues were Jhone Ebert, Tom Stanley, Monica Brown, and Keith Hyatt.

Fulbright-Hays Foreign Travel

There are four different grant competitions under the umbrella of the Fulbright-Hays Foreign Travel Programs. Current information about these programs can be found at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/HEP/iegps/ on the WWW.

1. Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program. This program provides grants to colleges and universities to fund individual doctoral students to conduct research in other countries in modern foreign languages and area studies for periods of 6 to 12 months. Proposals focusing on Western Europe are not eligible.

2. Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad Program. This program provides grants to institutions of higher education to fund faculty to maintain and improve their area studies and language skills by conducting research abroad for periods of 3 to 12 months.

Proposals focusing on Western Europe are not eligible.

3. Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program. This program provides grants to support overseas projects in training, research, and curriculum development in modern foreign languages and area studies by teachers, students, and faculty engaged in a common endeavor. Projects may include short-term seminars, curriculum development, group research or study, or advanced intensive language programs. Projects must focus on the humanities, social sciences and languages, and must focus on one or more of the following areas: Africa, East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the Western Hemisphere (Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean), East Central Europe and Eurasia, and the Near East. Applications that propose projects focused on Canada or Western Europe will not be funded.

4. Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program. This program provides short-term study/travel seminars abroad for U.S. educators in the social sciences and humanities for the purpose of improving their understanding and knowledge of the people and culture of another country(ies). There are approximately seven to ten seminars with fourteen to sixteen participants in each seminar annually. Seminars are four to six weeks in duration. All seminars are held in countries outside of Western Europe.

Both the Singapore and Korea projects were funded under the Group Projects Abroad Program, number 3 above, and the topics of focus were regarded as "area studies." While it is evident that language study is a priority of this funding program, the areas of humanities, social studies, and area studies gives wide latitude in the topics for proposals. Before writing the proposal, I called the program officer for this competition and asked if my topic was appropriate for the competition. With an affirmative reply, I went forward.

Conclusion

I realize that foreign travel to this degree is simply not for everyone. I also understand that one can experience significant change through other avenues or pursuits. But for me, nothing helps me better understand and cope with the difficulties of my world, than to reflect back on things that I've seen and people I've

met while traveling abroad. The medicine man in Borneo who sacrificed the chicken and rubbed its blood on my feet before I was allowed to enter his village. The Sherpa who made chocolate "Christmas" pudding and decorated a tree with Buddhist prayer flags one December day in the Himalayas. The woman who mistook me for a Parisian (it must have been the beret) and became quite angry when I couldn't give her directions. The El Molo woman who allowed me to photograph her standing beside the waters of Lake Turkana in Kenya. The young Samoan man who guided me to the top of the mountain to visit the grave of the Tusitala, Robert Louis Stevenson, and who refused payment for the effort until I insisted that it was to be given to his mother. My Indonesian friend to whom I endeavored to explain the germ theory, that is, little animals that we can't see get inside us and make us sick; he was not convinced. The Balinese hotelier who apologized profusely for giving our friend a room that had a ghost in it. All these experiences from travel have changed me in a good way. I call on these friends and acquaintances quite often when the personal and professional politics of daily life weigh down heavily. It is good to have friends.

FEATURED GUEST COLUMN

HISPANIC PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
By Cecilia Maldonado and Sterling Saddler

Historical Perspective

Contrary to U.S. Bureau of the Census figures where Hispanics are predicted to become the largest minority group by the year 2005, Szulc (1999) states that "Hispanics already constitute the largest single ethnic and cultural minority in the United States" (p. 6). According to Szulc, the Census Bureau figures do not include the nearly 4 million people living in Puerto Rico; nor have they included the more than 4 million Hispanics already living here illegally (Szulc, 1999, p. 6). If this is true, then

Hispanics are the largest minority. However, "Hispanics are underrepresented at all levels of higher education; in spite of being the fastest growing minority in the nation" (Galván, 1993, p. 1). The disproportionate number of Hispanics represented in institutions of higher education will pose a serious problem in the not too distant future. Hardi states in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, that "colleges must do more than just reach out and enroll Hispanic Americans because a better educated Latino population would lift the economic well-being of all Americans" (2000, p. A36). In addition, former congressman Esteban Torres warns "Hispanics are the poorest minority in the United States and that unless they are offered educational and job opportunities at a level comparable to other Americans, the United States will face a social catastrophe by mid century" (Szulc, 1999, p. 6).

Educational attainment has traditionally been regarded as a key to economic prosperity. It has been well established that there is a strong relationship among low income, low educational attainment, and low economic productivity. A substantial proportion of Hispanic families face serious economic challenges. According to the National Council of La Raza's Index of Hispanic Economic Indicators (July 1997):

Hispanics have the lowest levels of educational attainment of all Americans. In 1995, Latinos were the only group to experience a 5.1% drop in median income; household income among Hispanics is currently only about two-thirds that of White household income. Hispanics are now the poorest of all major racial/ethnic populations in the U.S, and the largest share of the increase in Hispanic poverty since 1992 has been among married-couple families. ....Hispanic workers, in general, tend to be in low-wage, low-growth jobs and are underrepresented in professional and managerial positions in all sectors of the economy. As a whole, Hispanics are ...less likely than either Whites or African Americans to be homeowners. Finally, while the typically low socioeconomic status of Latino immigrants affects the overall profile of Hispanics, it does not fully account for

these striking disparities, since the majority of Hispanics are not immigrants (p. 1).

It is projected that Latinos will constitute a large and growing proportion of the country's population, workforce, and economy in the new century. These demographic trends demonstrate that the future economic prosperity of the United States is increasingly dependent on maximizing the contributions of Hispanic workers and promoting the well-being of their families and children (NCLR, 1997). The impacts of leaving the current situation as it is, will have multi-faceted implications not only for the Hispanic population, but for all non-Hispanics as well (Arbona, 1995; Szulc, 1999).

Education of Hispanics

Currently, a large percentage of jobs in the United States require cognitive, rather than manual skills, and many of those jobs are expected to require at least some postsecondary education (Quality Education for Minorities Project, January 1990). The technical innovations in most workplaces require workers to have higher skills, that is, much more reading, writing, and mathematics skills than ever before (Romo & Falbo, 1996). However, the shortage of workers with high levels of communication, mathematics, computer, and other technological skills already poses a problem for employers and will worsen if the Hispanic population continues to be deprived of a quality education. The educational attainment of Hispanics has long been an area of concern, not only for those who advocate for Latino rights, but for those who understand the implications of keeping this population undereducated. It is a well-known fact that Hispanics have the lowest high school completion rates compared to any other group in the U.S. In 1995, 53.4% of Latinos graduated from high school, compared to 83% of Whites and 73.8% of African Americans (NCLR, 1997). College completion rates are even lower. Almost one in four (24%) whites has a college degree, compared to fewer than one in ten (9.3%) Latinos and about one in eight (13.2%) African Americans (NCLR, 1997).

Substantial proportions of Hispanics live in poverty. A consequence of this, of course, is the number of Latino children attending schools that are "resource poor." Hispanic children from an early age are at a disadvantage (President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans [PACEEHA], 1996). "In general, Hispanic children are under-represented in quality preschool programs. . . Hispanic three-and four-year-old enrollment in preschool remained flat (about 15 percent), while white preschool enrollment steadily grew from 18 to 35 percent" (PACEEHA, 1996, p. 33). By age 4, they tend to have less well-developed school-related skills than do white children.

As early as elementary and up through high school, the gap in academic performance of Latino children as compared to their white counterparts is apparent. Latino children consistently lag behind children who are white (NCES, 1995). Many are more likely to be held over or experience delayed schooling - both of which are predictors of school dropout rates. Hispanics not only have a higher dropout rate – they also tend to drop out of school earlier. In fact, 40% of 16- to 24-year old Hispanic dropouts left school with less than a 9th grade education, compared with 13% of white dropouts and 11% of Black dropouts (PACEEHA, 1996).

Overall, Latinos are often tracked into general courses that satisfy only the basic high school requirements, and do not provide access to four-year colleges or to rigorous technical schools (PACEEHA, 1996). Courses offered in these low educational levels do not qualify Hispanics for good entry-level jobs in high-technology industries nor do they teach the necessary skills needed to work in high-performance workplaces. These skills, identified by The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) in 1991, defined the skills necessary for being employed in these high-performance workplaces. Included are skills known as, "Foundation Skills" and "Workplace Competencies."

"Foundation Skills" include strong foundations in English and mathematics skills, problem solving skills, as well as personal qualities, such as sociability. The commission recommended five "Workplace Competencies". They are as follows:

- Knowing how to allocate time, money, materials, space, and staff.

• Knowing how to work in teams, teach others, negotiate, and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
• Knowing how to use information, especially in relation to computer processing.
• Understand social, organizational, and technological systems so that they know how to monitor and correct the performance of themselves and others.
• Knowing how to select and use tools, apply technology to specific tasks, and maintain equipment (pp. 3-5).

Hispanic participation in pre-college programs that include courses such as geometry, algebra II, biology, and chemistry as part of the curriculum is considerably low. Taking such courses is often a determinant of college entry (PACEEHA, 1996). According to the PACEEHA (1996):

Many pre-college programs focus on motivating and preparing high school aged minority students to attend two - and four - year institutions. Such programs prepare students for professional careers by providing them with proper academic advising for high school course selection, and by exposing them to career choices. These programs…would provide more Latino youth with the experience of academic success, which of course nurtures their aspirations to pursue a post-secondary education (p. 37).

Although the education of Hispanics may seem grim, progress has been made during the 1990s. According to Wilds and Wilson (1998):

• The proportion of Hispanics ages 25 to 29 with at least four years of high school increased from 57.1% in 1995 to 61.1% in 1996, with both men and women posting gains.
• From 1990 to 1996, Hispanics achieved gains approximately 6 percentage points in college participation rates.
• From 1991 to 1996, Hispanic enrollment in higher education increased by 33%.

• Overall graduation rates have increased 4% since 1991 for Hispanics.
• Hispanics recorded gains in all four degree categories in 1995, ranging from a low of 3.1% of first-professional degrees earned to a high of 12.3% of associate degrees earned (pp. 1-3).

Postsecondary Education

The Hispanic presence and graduation rate in today's institutions of higher education has improved but is in no way keeping pace with the Hispanic American presence in the United States. The percentage of Hispanics that actually receive degrees is very small and has remained relatively flat since the 1980s. Figure 2 shows data on degrees conferred for higher education in 1992-1993.
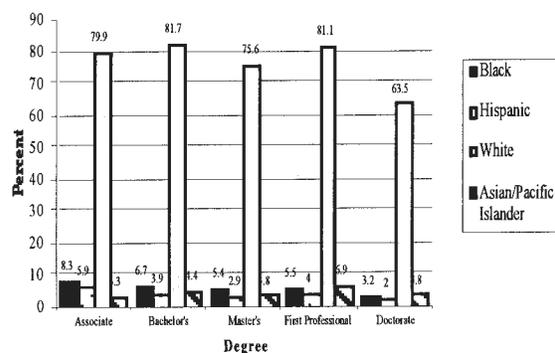
Figure 2. Percent of degrees conferred by institutions of higher education by student racial and ethnic groups, 1992-1993. Source: President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (1996, September). *Our nation on the fault line: Hispanic American education,* p. 37.

It is apparent that college attendance and graduation rates are directly affected by the low educational attainment of the Hispanic

population as a whole; the high percentage of Hispanic drop-outs illustrates this.

Community colleges play an important role in the education of Hispanics. For approximately 60% of the Hispanic population in the United States, the community college is the portal to higher education (Rendon & Nora, 1994). In addition, Padron (1994) states that

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"community colleges will play a major role in determining the prospects for educational fulfillment and social and economic mobility for a very large and rapidly growing sector of the American population; a fact that places added responsibility on community colleges to serve this population" (p. 87). Research has described this phenomenon both positively and negatively. It is viewed positively in that, if it were not for the community college, many Hispanics – as well as other minority groups – would not have an opportunity to participate in any higher educational activities (Padron, 1994). Additionally, community colleges are able to provide certain student services that facilitate retention that four-year institutions may not provide. Services such as remedial education, academic preparation, and counseling are critical for the minority student (Padron, 1994; Rendon & Nora, 1994).

Unfortunately, negative attitudes prevail in the literature. The most frequent reasons for this attitude include 1.) many of the students who begin their college education in the community college have high attrition rates 2.) the probability of transferring to a four-year university to obtain the baccalaureate degree is lower (if the intention is to get a four-year degree) (Rendon & Nora, 1994). In fact, community colleges are viewed as detriments to the transfer function (Arbona, 1990). There is no research on the participation rate and/or success of Hispanics in programs specifically geared towards attaining the associate's degree or occupational certificate. Yet, according to Gray and Herr (1995), ". . . the largest and fastest growing ranks of technical workers are not college-trained professionals; they are blue-collar technicians educated at the pre-baccalaureate post-secondary level, in high school vocational education programs, or in formal training programs in the workplace" (p. 30). Examples of nonprofessional, high-skill/high-wage occupations that are classified as technical are dental hygienists, precision manufacturing technicians, electromechanical repair technicians, paralegals, and professional chefs (Gray & Herr, 1998).

Hispanic Participation in the Workforce

Of all the demographic information about Hispanics regarding their economic status discussed in the literature, the most positive is their connection to the workforce. Hispanics, especially Hispanic men, have consistently had the highest workforce participation rate compared to any other group since the 1980s. Latinos will continue to play a pivotal role in the labor market because of the growth in their population (projected to increase 23.3% by 2005 to reach a level of 36.1 million) and the high proportion of that population consisting of persons less than 18 years of age. In fact, more than one-third (35.1%) of Hispanics were estimated to be under age 18 in 1997, compared to one-quarter (24.8%) of Whites and just under one-third (31.7%) of Blacks (Perez, 1998, p. 3).

Although Hispanics have high participation rates in the labor force, the occupations in which they work tend to be jobs in which they earn low wages, provide low economic mobility, and are less stable and more hazardous (National Association of Hispanic Publications, 1995, p. 17). This is true for both males and females. In addition, many of those jobs do not provide health benefits, which is a major reason for increased poverty levels for Hispanics. According to 1996 U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics data, the majority of male Hispanic workers are concentrated in precision production, craft, and repair occupations (19.4%), or as operators, fabricators, or laborer (27.7%) (cited in NCLR, 1997, p. 4). Gray and Herr (1995) list these specific fields as ones that will have the largest projected job openings between 1990 and 2005 (p. 75). In addition, these very occupations are the ones in which credentials are awarded at the associate's level and below.

Summary

The Hispanic population is the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States. Census information indicates that Hispanics will constitute about 13% of the total population by 2010 (National Association of Hispanic Publications, 1995, p. 3). With increasing populations, the number of Hispanics in the labor force will ultimately continue to rise as well. This segment of the population will increasingly be important to the continued competitiveness of the United States in the

global economy. The continued shift from a goods-producing economy to one that is service oriented, has increased the level of workplace competencies necessary to be economically stable.

Population demographics show that Hispanics tend to work in blue-collar occupations (National Association of Hispanic Publications, 1995). Occupations, according to Gray & Herr (1995), that "have the best potential for a positive return and is critical for the future economic competitiveness of the United States" (p. 6). Although Hispanics work in these segments, they are employed in the low-skill, low-wage jobs that perpetuate poverty, lack of mobility, poor education, and low educational attainment within all levels of the educational system, from preschool through college. Having such poor educational outcomes hinders this population from obtaining jobs that will sustain them economically. Unfortunately, it is a cyclical problem.

The good news is that those Hispanics that graduate from high school tend to go on to receive some type of post-secondary education. Community colleges play an especially crucial educational role for Hispanics. It has become the primary means in which they can access higher education. The bad news, however, is that most tend to pursue transfer over technical occupations and many eventually drop out without either degree. Past history of tracking into vocational courses discourage many Hispanics from pursuing technical and occupational fields. Likewise, the lack of knowledge as to the types of occupations that will comprise the largest segment of the labor market is a problem. Herr & Niles (1994) state that, "...decision making, the development of self-identity, and life choices do not occur in a vacuum. They occur within political, economic, and social conditions that influence the achievement images and belief systems on which individuals base their actions" (p. 182). Furthermore, "factors such as poverty, poor education, and racism often combine to affect negatively the individual's self concept, ambition, motivation, and self-efficacy, thereby diminishing the perceived utility of engaging in long-range future planning (p. 182). If these economic and educational issues are not addressed in the near future, the problems that plague this group will have severe ramifications for United States' productivity

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CHOO CHOO PANTS
By María G. Ramírez

Reading comprehension is often affected by the English language learner's ability to mentally pronounce or give oral relevance to the written English word, entailing more than understanding how to say a word or recognizing it when it is used by others. It includes understanding the meaning of the word as it is used in various contexts and knowing a word can have more than one *sense*, "the literal meaning of an expression, independent of situational context" (Parker & Riley, 2000, p. 321). But, words can also be said to have denotative and connotative meaning. *Denotation* "may be regarded as the central meaning or core meaning of a lexical item" (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992, p. 101), while *connotation* pertains to the "associations attached to a word, apart from its core sense" (Parker & Riley, 2000, p. 313). Connotative meaning reveals people's emotions or attitudes toward a word or phrase (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992). For example, the words *train* and *choo-choo* have the same denotative meaning but different connotations. Choo-choo may evoke feelings associated with childhood, play, innocence, etc., while train may be equated with adult-related activities connected with work, computing, traffic, and so on. While train and choo-choo have the same denotative meaning, train has numerous other senses that choo-choo does not.

Young children acquiring English have a limited understanding of the sense of words and often can not distinguish between denotative and connotative meanings. The restricted understanding can result in an amusing use of language as a toddler struggles to express his thoughts. For instance, a young mother, inexperienced in interacting with her first-born, might be baffled by the toddler's insistence on wearing his choo-choo pants. Thinking to herself that the toddler had no pants with a train print or depicting a train motif, she might be just as confused by his request as he is annoyed by her inability to give him what he wants. The toddler's use of language is emergent and her inexperience in deciphering emergent language creates a situation rife with miscommunication and misunderstanding. By attending to the use of language within the context, the young mother is able to figure out what the toddler is saying, as he pulls off his diaper and insists on wearing his choo-choo pants. She realizes he is wanting to wear his training pants, not a diaper.

The toddler's use of language reveals an interesting but restricted understanding of language, not inconsistent with the level of understanding and use for this age group. He hears his mother refer to the pants as training pants, but the lexical category that training occupies in the phrase is difficult for him to understand. He does, on the other hand, understand and know the word train and equates the words train and choo-choo, revealing his understanding of the words' denotative meaning. Train may not be a part of his

expressive vocabulary (Bowen, Madsen, Hilferty, 1985) but his use of the phrase choo-choo pants indicates train is part of his *receptive vocabulary*, and therefore he is able to pair the terms, train and choo-choo, transforming the phrase training pants to choo-choo pants. He conveniently dismisses the lexical word [training] he does not recognize or know and reconciles his lack of understanding by concentrating on the lexical form he is familiar with. His ability to focus on what he knows permits him to ignore the differences between the categories of words. Train, according to a classification system developed by Nelson (as cited in Schiamberg, 1988), is a *general nominal*, whereas training, as used in the phrase training pants, is a *modifier*. Nelson found 51 percent of an infant's first fifty words are general nominals, while modifiers comprise only 9 percent. As the toddler's schemata for the meaning of words expand, he will learn the separate and distinct meanings of train and training, categorizing each as free lexical morphemes but comprising different types, one a noun and the other an adjective.

The toddler's lexical misuse provides insights into the problems common to novice speakers of the English language. The toddler's use of choo-choo is characteristic for his age group, known as *reduplication*, "a process by which a morpheme or syllable is repeated" (Parker & Riley, 2000, p. 320). The CV syllable structure of choo-choo, where C = consonant and V= vowel, is typical of the one or two syllable words used by toddlers (Parker & Riley, 2000; Schiamberg, 1988) and acquired before *consonant clusters*. The *ch* in choo-choo is a two letter grapheme representing a single consonant phoneme (Groff, 1977), also referred to as a *digraph* (Heilman, 1964), while the *oo* is pronounced as a long vowel sound and represents one vowel phoneme (Heilman, 1964), thence the CV syllable structure of choo, repeated to produce the reduplication of choo-choo. The *tr* in train is a *consonant cluster,* a sequence of two or three consonants blending into one sound but "still retaining elements of the individual consonants," also called *consonant blends* (Dawson & Bamman, 1963, p. 168). Toddlers typically reduce *tr* consonant clusters to a *t* through a phonological process known as *simplification* (Parker & Riley, 2000).

The simplification of the consonant cluster to a single consonant phoneme is due to the toddler's inability to produce the blended sounds.

The language problems identified and described for the toddler reflect developmental stages and processes typical for young children acquiring English as their first language. "Speakers acquiring English as an L2 [second language] appear to go through these same stages and employ these same processes" (Parker & Riley, 2000, p. 214). At the same time, those learning English as a second or foreign language encounter a different array of problems related to either oral or written communication, while at other times, the speech and print problems interface. Recognizing and understanding the language use of young children acquiring English, as well as deciphering the language use of English as a second language learners, requires understanding the stages of language development, recognizing the linguistic processes learners employ, and remaining alert to the multiple meanings of words.

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VYGOTSKY'S ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING
By Steve McCafferty

In functionally defining the zone of proximal development (zpd) in relation to teaching and learning, Vygotsky (1978: 87) suggests that "... what is in the zone of proximal development today will be the actual developmental level tomorrow—that is, what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow". Within education there has been a tendency to treat this concept as a mechanism that can be enlisted by teachers to measure an individual's deficits in relation to the subject matter at hand. This ignores the central idea that the zpd is a function of co-construction; the identities of learners and their interactants makes a critical difference. Furthermore, the contexts of interaction - the setting, artifacts, and use of symbolic tools - must be included when considering cognitive development within Activity Theory (Wertsch 1998), the framework most suited to considering the zpd within sociocultural theory.

Also, as suggested by Newman and Holtzman (1993), there has been an undue emphasis on the spatial metaphor in considering the zpd, that is, speaking of what is "in" the zone. Newman and Holtzman argue that the zpd is not so much a "place" as an "activity", and moreover, a revolutionary activity that can lead to both learning and transformation for all involved. Thus, Newman and Holtzman characterize the zpd as a "tool and result" as opposed to a "tool for result". It is both process and product at the same time in much the way that the poet e. e. cummings changed the conventions of printed English (capitalization for example) in writing his poems. That is, he transformed the language in the process of using it. Nor of course were such innovations arbitrary, they were done to change the *sense* (psychological association) of what was represented through the use of script.

Learning a new language-culture in a country where the L2 (second language) is dominant, i.e., in naturalistic contexts, is itself a transformational process that, as described by Vygotsky for children, moves from an interpersonal to an intrapersonal plane of development. In the case of adult L2 learners this entails an individual's apprenticeship to new ways of doing and being. In considering the enculturation of children, Vygotsky (1978: 42) argued that "...in appropriating the resources of the culture through participation in social action and interaction, the individual both transforms those resources and is transformed in the process". There are many examples of immigrant populations who have changed many of their own ways but at the same time transformed aspects of the surrounding culture. However, the extent of transformation at the level of the individual has much to do with intentionality and internalizing aspects of the second culture selectively. This perspective gains further support if we take a view of the zpd that emphasizes its role in creating meaning, something that is cognitively at the heart of apprenticing to any new realm of understanding and becoming. Again, this is why the zpd cannot be viewed as simply a pedagogical technique, a "tool for result". As a "tool and result", Newman and Holtzman (1993) argue that the zpd changes the functional structure of consciousness, and that how such changes reorganize overall development was one of Vygotsky's principal concerns.

Therefore, the zpd is central to the process of reconceptualization for second language learners living in a new country. This is something that all of us who interact with newcomers need to keep in mind, and of course, especially their teachers.

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THE POWER OF RESPONSE TO MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE
By Cyndi Giorgis

The sharing of multicultural and multiethnic literature in college, secondary, and

elementary classrooms has become more common over the past few years. What still seems to be lacking is the realization and expectation that readers can respond beyond the level of "what is the book about" to a deeper, more meaningful response of "what does the book mean." Readers are often not given the support and opportunity to make personal connections to the literature and therefore, never fully experience the power of story or of response.

According to Louise Rosenblatt (1978), "We peel off layer after layer of concerns brought to bear [in encounters with the text]—social, biographical, historical, linguistic, textual—and at the center we find the inescapable transactional events between readers and texts" (p. 175). In essence, her transactional theory posits that when readers encounter a piece of literature, they adopt either an aesthetic or efferent (critical) stance to the text in accordance with the purpose of the reading. In classrooms, the efferent, or reading for information, stance is the one that is focused upon the most while the aesthetic, or the reflective personal response, is largely ignored.

With most discussions about a piece of literature, the readers begin by retelling the story, saying what parts they liked or didn't like, generating and answering comprehension type of questions, and sometimes concluding with their own connection to the story. When lengthier discussions occur, or when readers have the time to reflect upon the story and have the opportunity to share their thoughts and connections with others, a deeper level of meaning occurs. All readers have the ability to interpret the text and illustrations of a story. What is often needed is the modeling as well as support in order to do so.

During the past six years, I have conducted extensive research with Gloria Kauffman, the classroom teacher, who teaches in an intermediate multi-age classroom in Tucson, Arizona. This is a literature-rich classroom where children learn how to read by engaging in the reading process. There are no tests given about the story they have just read nor are the students asked to respond to a book in superficial ways through meaningless projects and activities such as a diorama or newspaper advertisement. Rather, they are encouraged to keep a literature log of the books that they have read. Within this log, they respond to the stories through strategies such as sketch to stretch that push them in their thinking. Sketch to stretch is a strategy that assists children in understanding the meanings that can be communicated through a system other than language. Through drawing, children can transform or extend meanings expressed through language, construct new meanings, or discover insights that language alone cannot afford. Because sketch to stretch encourages individual responses, it also helps readers to understand and value variations in interpretations.

One of my favorite sketch to stretch responses occurred several years ago when Gloria taught in a school in south Tucson. This elementary school is located in a low socio-economic area and has a very diverse population. Children often discussed issues of prejudice and racism because it was a part of their daily lives. These issues are often difficult to read and discuss, but fortunately there are several powerful books that promote discussion in constructive ways. In *White Socks Only* by Evelyn Coleman, Grandma tells of a time when segregation still existed in Mississippi. When she was a young girl, Grandma decided to see if she could fry eggs on the scorching cement. After discovering that her experiment worked, she wandered over to a nearby fountain to take a drink. Attached to the drinking fountain was a sign that read "Whites Only." So the girl took off her shiny black patent-leather shoes and took a drink of water while standing in her clean white socks. An angry white man grabbed the girl, threw her to the ground, and began yelling at her to read the sign. Coleman was inspired by her memories of places where she could not go and the things she could not do because of her skin color. Tyrone Geter's oil paintings take readers through this ordeal by sharing the warmth and love of a community inspired by the innocence of a child's actions that subsequently led to change.

After hearing the story, the students in Gloria's classroom discussed the many issues they connected with and their own perceptions of current society. Melissa, age 10 at the time, worked for several days on her sketch to stretch drawing to illustrate her interpretation of the

story and of the class discussion. As you can see, Melissa went beyond what the story was about and made a deeper, personal connection.

Two years ago, Gloria moved to a new school that had a comparable student population to the school she had left. Her first year, she taught third grade. Again, the sharing of literature was common in her classroom. One book, *Cool Melons—Turn to Frogs! The Life and Poems of Issa* by Matthew Gollub provided an international perspective and introduced the students to the master poet Issa. Issa was born in 1763 and grew up on a small farm in Japan. His entire life was enriched with writing poetry in times of joy and sorrow. The combination of Issa's life story and poetry evoke a mixture of emotions in the reader. While Issa's haiku provides a calming influence and shed insight into his love and nature, his personal life story is filled with rejection and loneliness due to conflicts with this stepmother. Kasuko G. Stone's inspiration for using watercolors and calligraphy to illustrate the book came from visiting Issa's home and spending time viewing his personal belongings.

Third grader, Talana, enjoyed reading Issa's poetry and began making her own personal connections. Talana's sketch to stretch illustrates the deeper level of meaning that she generated after reading and discussing the books.

Talana was also influenced by the poetry that she discovered in *Cool Melons—Turn to Frogs!* She began to respond to a number of books through poetry. One book that she found a personal connection to was *Jip* by Katherine Paterson. In this story, set during 1855, Jip learns his identity after years of living on the town's poor farm. One of the highlights of the books is Jip's friendship with the lunatic, Put, who comes to stay in a cage that Jip has built. At the time, Talana was experiencing her own sense of loneliness and rejection as she struggled with her mother leaving the home and moving to Phoenix. This left Talana to live with her father and brother and generated her connections to the story through poetry.

Relating to the lunatic
Not being locked up in a cage, but in people
Relating because I am stuck between divorce
Trapped in a cage made of people
Parents telling me what to do

Trapped
Am I the lunatic?

Literature can play a powerful role in the lives of readers. What is necessary for powerful responses to occur is for educators to select high quality literature and provide the modeling and the support to discover "what the book means" to the reader. By doing so, readers will make personal connections while gaining a respect and love for the books that they read.

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WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN PARENTAL LOVE TURNS INTO A PRESSURE?
By Yaoying Xu

Family is the smallest unit of society that connects family members physically and emotionally. Parents and children are basic members in most families. It is always said that parents love their children naturally and unconditionally. This is true in almost every culture, although in different ways. Studies indicate that Chinese people are more family oriented and parents devote more to their children's education and academic achievements than those in western countries (Huntsinger & Jose, 1997; Huntsinger, Krieg, & Jose, 1998). The more parents love their children, the higher expectation they will have for the children. In order to reach their expectation, parents are willing to sacrifice everything of their own.

Encouraged and motivated by the love of parents and responsibility for the family, many children do succeed and make the achievements that parents expect. When this happens, both parents and children are satisfied and family becomes more cohered. Many successful examples have supported this strength of love and responsibility. When educators are comparing Chinese and western parental roles in their children's school success, the finding does favor Chinese parents in terms of emotional, physical, and financial support (Siu & Feldman, 1996). But what will happen to those who don't and can't meet the expectation of their parents? What will happen when parental love is such a heavy pressure that children can no longer take it?

The following is a true story about a father and a son in China. Ming was born to a poor family in a small mountainous village in southwestern part of China in 1980. His parents were hard working farmers. Since Ming was a little child, his father, Ping, had sent him to school, which he thought was the only hope for his son to get out of the mountains and lead a better life. Ming was a very obedient and considerate child. He understood that he was the hope of his father and the family. He knew his father expected him to go to university in the future, so he never dared to neglect his studies. He was one of the top students every year from first grade until he graduated from middle school. Then with excellent entrance scores, he was accepted by a high quality high school in the county.

The quality high school costs higher tuition. Every time he took the creased money wet with his father's sweat, he could feel the love, expectation, and responsibility beyond it. Every time when he saw his father walked for 30 miles on foot and brought him food and allowance, his heart was trembling. When Ming was in the first year of high school, Ping got sick with asthma and other diseases because of too much physical work all the year around. However, he still found an extra job and told Ming he had started to prepare for Ming's college tuition. These words were rocks in Ming's heart. On one hand, he was deeply moved by this great love and it inspired him to overcome obstacles on his way to success; on the other hand, he felt greatly depressed by the pressure having to be successful. He knew he could not afford to fail in the fiercely competitive entrance examination for universities. Every year in China about half of

high school graduates had no chance to receive higher education because of the strict entrance examination. So Ming knew that he had no choice but to pass the exam for universities, the only way to pay back his father's hard work and deep love.

Since the first semester of Ming's high school, Ping devoted everything he had to support Ming's studies. Although without much money, as a father Ping cared and loved his son with all his heart. No matter how busy he was at farm work, Ping always walked to the school whenever Ming had an exam. After finishing each course, he would take Ming to the best restaurant in town and order two dishes for Ming as a reward; for himself he just ate a rice cake prepared by his wife at home. In 1998 it was the year for Ming to graduate from high school and take entrance exam for universities. Ming should have no problem to pass the line if he did it well as usual, according to his teacher's analysis.

July 1998 was coming near. High school students and their parents call July *Dark July* because July 7 to 9 every year is the time for high school graduates to take the entrance exam for universities. Taking tests of all the courses in three consecutive days is a big challenge for every student, but worrying about the possible consequences adds much more to all test takers, no matter how confident they usually are.

While by school bus Ming and his classmates arrived at the test center in the city from their school, on foot Ping left from home the day before the exam and after 36 hours' walking in mountains, he got to the city, seeming even more excited and anxious than Ming. During the three days of exam, Ming was sitting in the classroom taking the tests; Ping was standing outside waiting in the burning sun. Finally the results came out: Ming's score was 10 points higher than the entrance line, but he was not accepted by any university because he didn't appropriately select the school and his major in the application form. Both father and the son were greatly disappointed, especially the father.

After the first moment of disappointment, Ping decided to let Ming repeat another year in the high school and prepare for the next year's exam. Unfortunately, Ming failed again the second year; his score was 30 points lower than the entrance line. This was a big stroke to the father. By this point, however, Ming was not that sad as his father. He wanted to give up going to universities and find a job to support the family. But again, his father insisted that he should repeat one more year in the high school. *Dark July* came again in 2000. In order to provide better meal for Ming, Ping came to the city four days earlier before the exam and worked as a porter at the harbor. With heavy box on his shoulder Ping fell on the ground and injured his left foot.

Completing the last course in the afternoon of July 9, Ming compared the key with what he did and he knew he would fail again this time. When he walked out of the classroom and looked into his father's expecting eyes, he knew he could not disappoint his father any more. This time he chose to lie to his father.

He told his father his was confident about the score. Hearing the *good* news, Ping was very excited and he took Ming to a restaurant and ordered a full table of food for Ming; as usual for himself he just ate a homemade rice cake, not even touching any of the food, saying that he was not hungry at all. Holding back his tears, Ming pretended to be happy. He wanted to cry. He wanted to admit the failure, but he couldn't. He knew his father had been standing outside the classroom for three days, suffering from asthma and the injured foot without eating anything except rice cake and water. Suddenly Ming felt collapsed by the pressure of this deep fatherly love.

Within the next month Ping started preparing money and necessities for Ming's college life. The official score report arrived and confirmed Ming's another failure. Ming had to continue the lie once he had started. He went to a computer store and made an acceptance letter from a university. He made the tuition and other expenses extremely higher than ordinary schools, with the hope that it could scare his father away from sending him to the university. Even if his father could borrow enough money, he decided to leave the farm and find a job in a city by telling his parents he went to university. Worried about the high tuition, Ping walked from door to door in the village to borrow money. No matter how hard Ming tried to

convince Ping to let him work instead of going to university, Ping was very persistent. He said he would send Ming to university even by selling the house and land.

Several days passed, Ping only collected one tenth of the total cost. He felt so exhausted, mentally and physically. Witnessing all his father's effort, Ming told himself he would never disappoint his father again. He would work hard and save money to take care of his parents. Unfortunately, he could never have such a chance. His father, after knocking every door and collecting every coin, finding out he was still too far away from the required amount, had killed himself with the hope to get the life insurance money as the college fee for Ming. In his farewell letter to Ming, Ping wrote: " My dear son: I am not a capable father to provide you good life, but I have collected enough money for your tuition with my life insurance that the insurance company will pay after I die. I'll smile in heaven when I see you become a university student. My son, you must succeed and be an noble person."

The story did not end at this point. When the insurance company found out Ping died by committing suicide rather than by accident, they said Ming was not supposed to get the insurance money except Ping's own deposit.

Ming's lie cost his father's life. Ping's university dream for his son turned out to be an irredeemable regret. This is a heartbroken story and the saddest part is that this kind of tragedy is not an extreme exception in China. Cases of student suicides and murders have been occurring around every *Dark July* (Zhou, 2000). With the economy becoming more and more advanced and competition more and more fierce, parents in China start to invest for their child's education when he/she is 3 or 4 years old. Even a kindergartner knows that if he/she does not study, he/she has no future. Educators start to worry about the young generation. Children in China today live in conflicts. In one side, parents love them, even spoilt them in every day life; in the other side, they are very strict, even harsh with their children's education. Many parents can't accept any failure from their children's schoolwork. They are teaching their children that going to universities is the only chance for a decent life in the future.

Children with different family background may have parents who love them in different ways and who have different expectations, but one thing is in common in many Chinese families: children live under great pressure. I remember when I was at high school I experienced similar pressure as Ming did, even though I was more fortunate than he. I was at a quality high school and all students were required to live in dormitories on campus. My parents went to school almost every week to see me and bring me everything I needed. During vocation when I was at home, they never let me do any housework. They always told me the only thing I should do was my own schoolwork. Every night my mother would cook special meal for me if I stayed up late. During the three days of my *Dark July*, my father, an air force officer, left his worked for three days and waited for me outside while I was doing my tests in the classroom. At that time I really wish how wonderful it could be if my parents did not love me at all! I thought I could be much happier without all those pressures brought by love and expectations.

It seems unfair if we blame love for the tragedy or unhappiness that happens in our life. Nevertheless, Parental love is a permanent charm that passes beyond human beings. There is nothing wrong to love their children, and this love is a life time emotional connection between children and their parents; there is nothing wrong to have expectations for their children because in many cases high expectation is a positive motivation for achievements. But what if love becomes a heavy pressure that children can hardly take it?

In Chinese there is a famous saying "Every parent expects his/her child to be a dragon (a successful person)." I don't think we have a saying about what children want from their parents. If I were asked as a child, I would say, "All children want their parents to be loving *and* understanding." When parents say they love their children so much and they can sacrifice everything for the children, have they ever taken a moment to think about what their children want and feel?

Parents' lack of understanding of their children is one of the major reasons for the great pressure that many children have to take, in addition to pressures from school and society.

Ming's father would not die if he could have listened to Ming, talked to him about other options, and tried to understand how Ming had felt all the time. Ming would not lie if he knew he could talk to his father and shared his pressures."

If love warms children's heart, understanding strengthens their mind. Parents' love and understanding will make the child a happy and confident person, which should be the highest expectation of parents.

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GET A LIFE!
BY Jean Henry

If the anticipated publication date of this newsletter holds to schedule, we have just returned from spring break. How many of us actually took a true break? We will soon be facing the summer recess. How many of us are actually planning a true recess? (At this point, I feel compelled to ask you to reflect back to elementary school recess. Now THAT's what it's all about ... unless, of course you got beat up by the school bully on a daily basis, then I suggest you forget.) If you did not or do not take a true break when the university calendar presents the opportunity, what rationalization do you use to justify your choice?

The purpose of this article is to motivate you to reconsider how you consider recreation. In fact, I am going to challenge you to begin to say the word and think of it in, perhaps, a slightly different way. Think of it as "re-creation." According to Webster, to re-create is "to create anew," and recreation is "refreshment of one's mind or body through some activity that amuses or stimulates." I would encourage us all to combine the two concepts and to design and participate in activities that refresh our mind and body so that we are created anew after each recreation experience. What a productive way to spend time away from the campus!

This interpretation does not preclude attention to work or professional development. In fact, it would seem to compel us to put re-creation as a priority in both our personal and professional lives. It does not require a great stretch of the imagination to find ways to do both concurrently. I am sure there are days when each of us feel we could stand to be "created anew." Many of us, particularly pre-tenured faculty, conduct ourselves as though it is only through productivity at work that we can claim success; thus, personal involvements are shuffled down the "to do" list in favor of work deadlines. Perhaps it is possible to do one without excluding the other.

There are many ways that we can re-create and renew ourselves, and each of us must discover the personal paths that offer meaning and reward.

A choice that would provide both professional and personal benefits is to seek activities that promote multicultural appreciation. Such activities are wonderful when done with families and friends, but certainly they will enrich us professionally, as well. Culture can be loosely defined as all things within a person's sphere of influence that help to shape and define who they are. A specific culture is usually perceived to have an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior.

There are a variety of ways in which cultures demonstrate their common values and practices. Many excellent avenues exist through which we may learn about different cultures to

model to our children and various significant others in our lives the importance of appreciation of all ways of viewing and living life.

Culture may be explored through such avenues as:

Food
Celebrations
Arts (music, dance, theater)
Law and politics
History
Language
Health
Religion

So, what can you do? The list is endless, but following are a few simple suggestions. Grab your family and friends and ... hike to a canyon where you can view petroglyphs, then learn about the people who may have written them; go to a local heritage festival; volunteer for a community service project in a community representing a culture different from your own; take a trip to a nearby small town to experience rural culture, go to an ethnic restaurant; take a folk dance class; interview your family elders and document your own cultural history – record those stories that might otherwise be lost when they are no longer here to tell the stories; seek out and participate in ethnic holiday celebrations; go to a senior center or nursing home and talk with a resident from a different culture and/or part of the country about their childhood; contact the UNLV Home Away From home program and offer your mentorship to an international student, ... Go ahead, use your imagination!

If you are among those who think that the only path to professional advancement is through your work, I humbly ask you to read the following story and think again. The story was sent to me by a colleague. I have taken artistic license and modified it to fit the academic setting. The underlying message hasn't changed.

A WORK/LIFE PARABLE

Once upon a time, a provost was touring the halls of his university, wondering how he would ever ramp up his human capital to make the most of his new production capacity. Just then, he looked down and saw an old brass lamp lying in a pile of dirt. He went to wipe off the dirt, and poof! A genie appeared. "I'll grant you two wishes," said the genie. Although his first instinct was to lobby for three wishes like he'd always read about, he realized that this story can't go that long, and settled for two.

Preoccupied with the productive capacity of his workforce, he made his request:
"Genie, I want all my faculty and staff to be completely focused on their work. I want them to have absolutely no distractions due to their lives outside of work so they will
never be absent due to family circumstances and can be fully productive every minute
that they are on the job." "Your wish is granted," said the genie. You have one
more wish. "I think I'll hold on that one for a day or so," said the man.

He walked back through the university, and was astounded by what he saw. He estimated that research projects were up 20%. The normal chit-chat was gone, and the only discussions he observed were around white boards filled with ideas about how to write more grants and produce more research. Everyone had the look of seriousness about them. None of that time-wasting laughter. As for himself, even he could feel an increased sense of focus on his work.

That night he sped home to tell his wife and kids the wonderful news. "Surely, this will mean a big promotion," he thought. "I've got what I wanted. I'll leave the
other wish to my family." As he pulled into his driveway, he noticed his home was
unusually dark and lifeless. When the garage door opened, he noticed that the bikes,
balls and scooters were all gone ... even all his new power tools used to remodel the
porch last summer were gone. Inside the house he found only silence. No wife. No
children. He realized he'd gotten his wish ... he'd gotten rid of all distractions to work.

Realizing what it took to make his wish come true, he pulled the lamp from his
briefcase, gave it a rub and used his final wish with a simple request, "Cancel wish
number one."

The moral of the story is this: work and life mix ... deal with it. And actually, we
do deal with it-on an individual basis, every day. Whether coping with our own

challenges or aiding a colleague with theirs, our humanity sometimes gets in the

way of our productivity. The question for us within organizations is not so much whether life's joys and sorrows will interrupt work flow, but how to offer support in a way that is efficient and effective, enabling people to optimize their productive contributions. The challenge is, in effect, to institutionalize our response to human needs.

As we avail ourselves of the many types of re-creation that can expand our view of the world, we expand our humanity. Multicultural experiences refresh and revitalize us. They foster in each of us empathy, compassion, understanding, excitement about our world, and, yes, humanity.

Make re-creation activities a planned part of your life, particularly those that expand your view of the world as a rich and vital multicultural tapestry. They are an investment in your present and future quality of life. An investment that is every bit as important, if not more so, than the financial investments most of us so carefully plan and implement. By maintaining appropriate balance between our professional and personal lives, we are more likely to maintain passion for our work. Without healthy, vital, enthusiastic faculty, students will not have an optimum learning experience. If we lose teachers and administrators - our most talented, dedicated professionals - to other professions that appear to provide more satisfaction and greater rewards, what will be the state of our school health education "union" in the 21st century?

GO FORTH AND RE-CREATE!!!

TO A DEMOCRACY THAT IS YET UNBORN*
By Kyle Higgins

If there is one thing in the United States that every citizen considers him/herself to be an expert on, it is public education. Everyone knows exactly how public schools should be run, how subjects should be taught, and how educators should be trained to teach. These same folk know exactly what should be done to rectify their perceived ills of public education.

This expertise, most probably, is based on the fact that the majority of citizens are products of the public school system in the United States. Perhaps, the one thing that the majority of U.S. citizens have in common is that most attended a public school at some point in time. Thus, an individual's beliefs concerning public education are based on their individual reality of public education. Their individual reality is usually comprised of their own immediate experience and, most often, does not consider that the individual reality of others may differ greatly.

Students in this public education system, have the opportunity to participate in one of the most extraordinary social experiments of all time. To think that the concept of public education, first articulated by Thomas Jefferson for three years of free public schooling for citizens who were *white*, has grown to be a concept that encompasses a free public education for ALL children and youth represents a strong faith in the capacity of people as well as a dedication to the belief in the link between mass education and a free society. Public education embodies the very democratic ideals that citizens of the United States hold so very dear.

However, at no time in our history has public education received so much criticism. The national discussion in the media, among politicians, and in the kitchens across America has turned despairing and loaded with "apocalyptic vignettes" (Rose, 1995, p. 1). The public is barraged by reports of violent classrooms, incompetent teachers, students who do not know history, and low standardized test scores. We hear almost daily that the students in our public schools do not measure up, either to students back in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s (pick your decade) or to students in other countries. And, we are told by the pundits that this problem will result in a decline in the cultural values of the United States as well as the inability of our country to continue to be a leader in the world economy.

The media and politicians depict schools as mediocre places populated by vacuous students and poorly prepared teachers. We are told that public schools are violent and chaotic places. In fact, President George W. Bush, in his No Child Left Behind (2001) proposal, portrays schools as places where: (1) little

learning occurs, (2) parents are not informed, (3) students struggle to learn to read and calculate, (4) violence is a common occurrence, (5) there is no teacher or school accountability, and (6) students lounge in bilingual education. It is difficult for the public to imagine anything good in public education when they constantly hear these negatives.

Even when researchers challenge the simplicity of these negative representations and dispute the observations of broad-based decline in student achievement (e.g., the Rand Corporation, 1994; Sandia National Laboratories, 1991), their statements and research rarely are discussed in the media, by politicians, or by the public. We, as a nation, are beguiled by this rhetoric of decline (Maran, 2000; Rose, 1995).

Because public education is one of our nation's most significant and ambitious democratic projects, this negative rhetoric is dangerous. It blinds us to the complexities of public education and moves us away from considering the diverse lives that exist in our public classrooms. This rhetoric makes the public cynical, it frightens parents, and it makes politicians call for extreme responses: (a) increased layers of testing and control, (b) denial of resources, (c) punitive measures if schools don't "measure up", and (d) vouchers (Bush, 2001). Cuban and Tyack (1997) refer to these responses as "from the top down or the outside in" (p. 139). These measures are conceived and advanced by people far removed from where reform is targeted, where reform eventually impacts---the lives of teachers and students. Many believe that this type of reform goes against the democratic principles that guide public education in the United States (Cuban & Tyack, 1997; Maran, 2000; Rose, 1995).

This negative rhetoric does not take into consideration that public education is a microcosm of the United States and, as such, is multidimensional, complex, and full of human intricacies. It is a microcosm that has been impacted by national and local history, political and humanitarian movements, educational research, national and local beliefs, national and local decisions, and people---negatively and positively. This harsh criticism of public education is one-dimensional and does not appreciate that public education is bountiful,

crowded, messy, contradictory, exuberant, tragic, frustrating, and remarkable (Maran, 2000; Rathbone, 1998; Rose, 1995). Some examples of this negative rhetoric:

On bilingual education: "Asians and Hispanics are overrunning our communities and we have an out-of-control birthrate among the linguistic minorities." (William Bennett, 1992, former Secretary of Education during the Reagan Administration).

Concerning San Antonio Public Schools and the Texas Supreme Court decision that found the school funding system in the state of Texas to be unconstitutional in that Texas spent school funds in a disparate manner between wealthy and poor districts (e.g., funding ranged from $2,112 per student in the poor districts to $19,333 per student in wealthy districts): "Money is not the answer, there is a wide body of research that indicates more money does not provide a better education. The problem is parenting---Hispanic parents simply do not care enough about their child's education." (Lauro Cavazos, 1989, Secretary of Education during the Bush I Administration).

Concerning Federal funding for public education: "More spending for education is not the answer, a society that worships money is a society in peril." (George H. Bush, 1989, in a White House Press release).

Concerning lowering class size: "Lowering class size is a costly waste of money---it is not a prudent investment strategy." (Chester Finn,1988, Assistant U.S. Secretary of Education during the Bush I Administration).

Concerning students who are considered at risk for dropping out of school: "Schools should avoid reforms directed at students who are at risk. These efforts are ill-conceived because working with these students will endanger the excellence movement in public schools. The Nation's educational agenda should focus on raising standards that will increase the value of a diploma. School-based strategies for retaining potential dropouts are

unlikely to achieve the intended effects because these students come from the *underclass* of our society. At-risk is a manifestation linked to *social pathologies* and *inherited characteristics*, being at risk is much like going on welfare or committing a crime. Schools cannot help these students." (Chester Finn, 1987, Assistant U.S. Secretary of Education during the Bush I Administration).

The way those in power view public education is not necessarily the reality of public education. Thus, an expanded vocabulary is needed to discuss public education. One that moves beyond the negatives and punitive measures, one that considers the complexities in which many or our schools are nestled, one that addresses both the joys and sorrows of our public schools, and one that understands the social and political injustices suffered by many public schools and the children who reside within their care. This vocabulary must address the individual reality of each school and community. This vocabulary must be based on what philosopher Maxine Greene calls a "consciousness of possibility" (1988, p. 28)--- the ability to imagine a better state of things in a positive manner. Noddings (1986) suggests that this revolve around an "ethics of care" (p. 499). We need to move beyond the stereotypes and sweeping condemnations and begin to envision possibilities based upon the respect of individual realities as well as the inclusion of all individual realities in any solutions put forth.

In the public schools of the United States democracy has the opportunity to be born and nurtured. Our public school classrooms are the *one* collective space in which America is being created (Rose, 1995). Daily---in a variety of circumstances, in conditions complex and simple, in a variety of languages---teachers, and the systems in which they work, prescribe to the next generation what their fortunes will be. There is no easy answer to the complexities of public education in the United States,---each school is different from the next school, the stories that students carry with them to school differ from child to child, the neighborhoods surrounding the schools differ in opportunities or lack of opportunities, and funding for education differs from state to state. Anyone attempting to address the complexities of public education must be willing to take a long drive with public education---and long drives encourage us to take long views, not short snap shots or quick fix solutions.

If democracy is to be a reality for all the citizens of the United States, we cannot leave pubic education to the capricious whims of the political climate. We are a society that defines itself as being free and open. Because of this definition, each one of us is obligated to support the possibilities that exist within our country and work to sustain public education for the broad sweep of our citizens. Rather than getting caught up in the rhetoric of negativity that so permeates the voices of politicians and the media, ponder the words of Septima Clark, a teacher for most of her life, who encourages us to "think of the lives that can be developed into Americans who will redeem the soul of America" (1990, p. 121) and speak out against the negativity that denigrates the democratic principles of public education.

*Walt Whitman, 1920, quoted in Berkson, p. 8

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

Sonia Nieto, University of Massachusetts Amherst, has published extensive research describing and supporting the infusion of effective multicultural education across the preK-12 curriculum as well as throughout higher education. In all schools and classrooms, teachers and administrators serve as highly influential role models and messengers as they identify standards and select the topics and issues used for developing their specified curricular objectives. Educators must design a variety of developmentally appropriate teaching strategies that engage their learners actively in meaningful and authentic learning experiences. The topics and issues that educators select, the chosen materials and resources, the types of teaching strategies, and the various pictures and displays communicate what is important and valued in that community and throughout society.

Educators' words and interactions also convey powerful messages to their students and colleagues on both interpersonal and intrapersonal levels of communication. Interactions occur both formally and informally in and out of classrooms. This vast array of knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to both academic and social beliefs shape and mold their learners for life. Too often, educators are not even aware of the language they use, the behaviors they display, nor the significant impact their role-modeling and messages leaves upon learners. It is essential for all educators to be cognizant of their thoughts, words, and behaviors in each sociocultural context.

Education is for all students, and all students need to learn about themselves and all other students from the past and present to prepare for the future. This simple sentence captures the essence of valuing cultural diversity. Nieto has identified seven basic characteristics for valuing cultural diversity that should be evident in all schools and classrooms supporting educators' powerful roles as models, messengers, and mentors. The seven characteristics of valuing cultural diversity include:

- antiracist education;
- basic education for all students;
- important learning for all students;
- culturally responsible and responsive information and experiences that are pervasive across the curriculum and instruction;
- social justice;
- critical pedagogy; and
- the process of continual and supported cultural growth and development among all students, teachers, and administrators.

First and foremost, every school and classroom must ensure antiracist education. Antiracist education requires all educators to consider their assumptions, values, and beliefs about people and learning in that environment and for life. Educators need to be cognizant of their thoughts, language, and behaviors. Far too many educators use language or exhibit behaviors that are prejudicial and non-inclusive; remarks and actions may communicate racism, sexism, classism, and many other forms of bias stereotyping. Educators should listen to their own words, have themselves videotaped for personal and professional reflection and growth, or ask trusted colleagues to observe their interactions and provide honest feedback.

All students are entitled to a basic education. Events are occurring in preK- higher education classes that are not allowing students to learn and benefit from this place called school. Educators need to ensure that all students are receiving all services, that materials and resources are distributed equitably, that all students are being educated for life. Multicultural education is an essential part of the entire curriculum; it is not a course taught for 30 minutes on Thursday morning. Educators must infuse culturally responsible and responsive

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"Colors of my Butterfly"