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In Print

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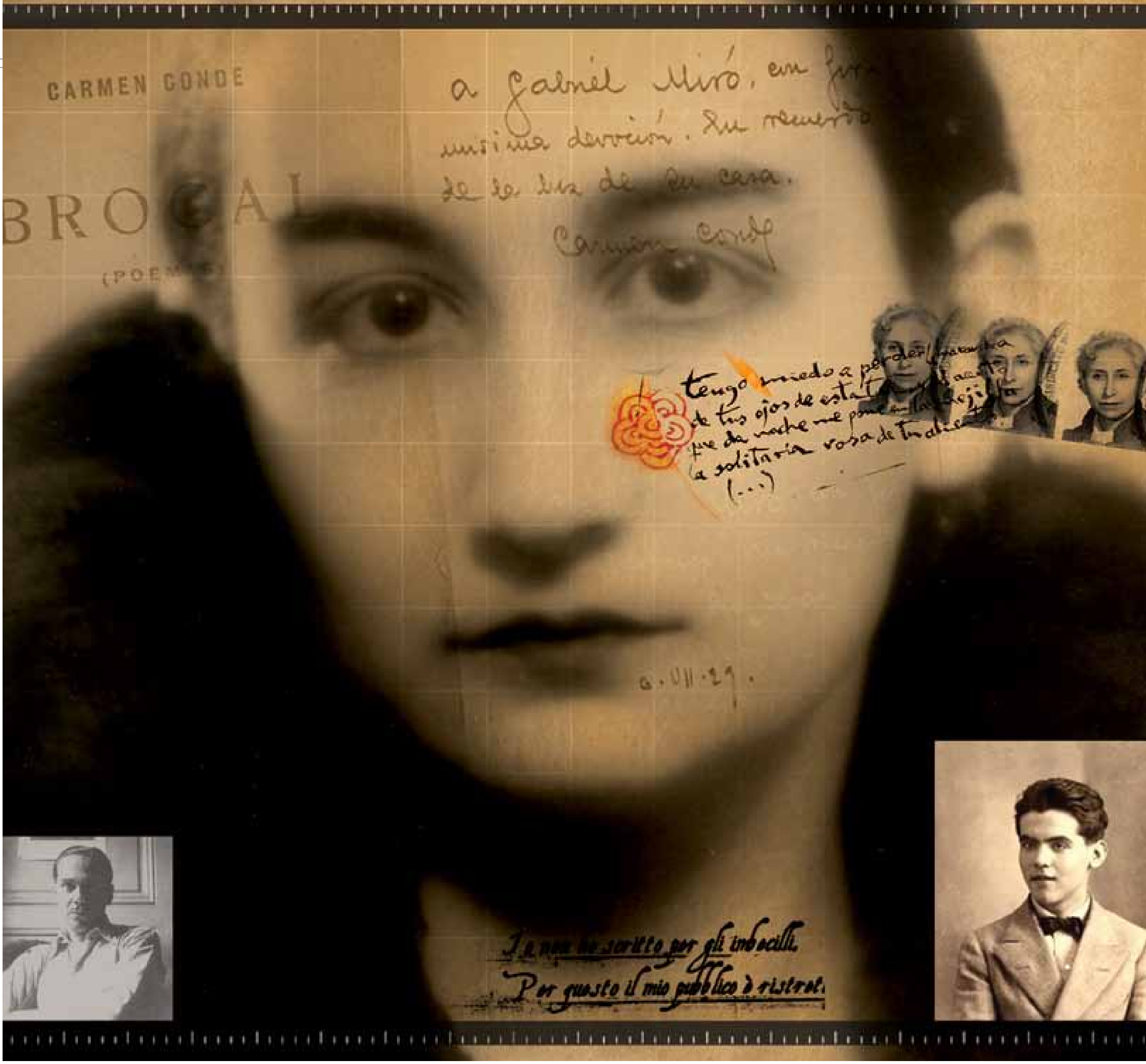


In Print

Faculty authors explore Spanish vanguard poetry, fatherhood, multi-modal learning, and more.

Photography by R. Marsh Starks

Bodies in Motion: Spanish Vanguard Poetry, Mass Culture, and Gender Dynamics
By Catherine Bellver
Bucknell University Press, 2010

While America was reveling in the Roaring '20s, Spain was similarly enjoying "Felices Veinte," a time of prosperity, exuberance, and social advancement for women.

It was an era full of trends more commonly associated with the 21st century than nearly 100 years ago: wild music, provocative dances, celebrity worship, sports mania, fascination with new technologies, and social change. The era also brought the advent of Spanish vanguard poetry, which blossomed after World War I.

The times and poetry combined to produce a rich cultural milieu that serves as the focus of Catherine Bellver's recent book, *Bodies in Motion: Spanish Vanguard Poetry, Mass Culture, and Gender Dynamics.*

Bellver examines the avant-garde poets of this era, often referred to as the "Generation of 1927," who employed recurring motifs that included dance, sports, and technological change in their experimental poetry.

But Bellver's work goes beyond the analysis of vanguard poetics. It also provides insight into the context in which the poetry was written – an exciting time in Spain when the literary set collided with the nightclub crowd, when athletes and entertainers achieved cult status, and when women emerged as an intellectual force.

"Some of the phenomena that we take for granted today had their origins in the socio-cultural developments of the '20s," says Bellver. "The seeds of today's trends were planted then."

She notes that in the poetry of both male and female vanguardists, dance, sports, and machines were emblematic of the liberation the era promised and the dynamism it exuded.

The poets she covers in her book include Rafael Alberti, Carmen Conde, Guillermo de Torre, Josefina de Torre, Gerardo Diego, Concha Méndez, Ernestina de Champourcin, Jorge Guillén, José María Hinojosa, Federico García Lorca, Lucía Sánchez Saornil, and Pedro Salinas.

Their works displayed a newfound sense of play, liberation, and energy, Bellver says. Perhaps jazz-inspired, vanguard poetry took on new rhythms. Influenced by other modern European writers and artists, the poets employed experimental word play and tried new visual forms.

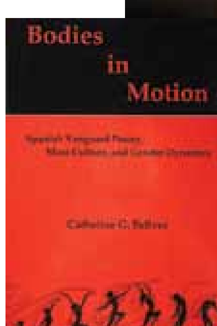
Bellver finds vivid examples in the poets' words that weave together the strands of music, dance, sports, and motion that together depict the era's energy.

For example, Concha Méndez describes swimmers' "beaming torsos/ jumping waves/in lyrical dances/and acrobatics."

Bellver also discusses the contrasts between male and female vanguard poetry, noting both genders chose some similar subjects and imagery but conveyed very different messages. On the subject of dance, for instance, the men's poetry was more experimental rhythmically and visually, but its voice was that of spectator rather than participant: Luis Mosquera wrote of men watching women "abandoned to the movement/ and under their tight, short dresses/ their hips seem to swell." Ernestina de Champourcin, on the other hand, wrote of being part of the dance herself, "Free of voice and gestures, I am far from everything./ I am I, on my shores."

To capture the essence of the poetry and the times, Bellver traveled to Spain and embarked on some literary detective work, much of it without the aid of online sources. She visited the poets' old gathering places at universities and former music halls. She combed libraries the old-fashioned way – rummaging


Foreign languages professor Catherine Bellver



through the stacks, seeking out unpublished materials, finding tantalizing scraps of notes and letters, then contacting the agents and heirs of the poets for permission to copy what she had found.

"Gathering all the rights and permissions myself was a daunting task," says Bellver.

Once she had amassed a vast amount of material, her careful assembly began; it took her nine years to complete the book. The footnotes alone, 24 pages of them, are a scholarly tour de force, revealing her mastery of the history, society, language, and art of the times.

Bellver began the book after being named a UNLV distinguished professor, the highest honor bestowed on a faculty member. The designation is awarded to only a select few – those who have demonstrated extraordinary qualities both as teachers and scholars while achieving national and international recognition. Instead of resting on her considerable laurels, Bellver ramped up her research, expanding and combining it with her feminist studies. The result was two books: *Absence and Presence: Spanish Women Poets of the Twenties and Thirties,* published in 2001, and more recently *Bodies in Motion.*

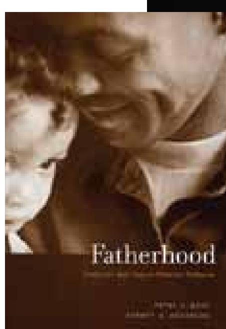
"The latter is the culmination of my academic interests," she says. "It's a natural evolution of my critical and textual background, my fascination with historical and cultural contexts, and my literary feminist studies. I then went back to the study of poetry, where I began my academic career. I feel like I've come full circle."

So, it seems, has society. Her book demonstrates how trends from an era long past portended today's mass media culture. In this way, *Bodies in Motion* offers a larger, more expansive view of poetry of the era, including perspective on history and social change.

Bellver is currently pursuing specific studies on several poets discussed in the book.

—Donna McAleer

Anthropology professor Peter Gray



Fatherhood: Evolution and Human Paternal Behavior

By Peter Gray and Kermyt Anderson
Harvard Press, 2010

Any father will tell you how profoundly his life changed after the birth of his child.

He will tell you of the awe of holding his child for the first time, the exhaustion of the infancy years, the stresses of providing for family, the pride in his child's accomplishments.

But what about other changes he experiences that are not so evident? And, more generally, what does it mean to be a father?

Biological anthropologist Peter Gray and his coauthor search for answers in *Fatherhood: Evolution and Human Paternal Behavior*, a study of the nature of fatherhood from many perspectives – the biological, evolutionary, anthropological, and sociological.

More specifically, UNLV's Gray and fellow anthropology professor Kermyt Anderson explore the physiology, behaviors, and social structures of human fatherhood as it has evolved across time and different cultures.

The publisher, Harvard University Press, captures the book's core premise with a succinct line: "Fatherhood actually alters a man's sexuality, rewires his brain, and changes his hormonal profile." Gray finds this notion fascinating and casts the role of father in a larger evolutionary context.

"One striking feature of human fatherhood is that men in all cultures are expected to be involved with their children to varying degrees," Gray says. "This is not a unique occurrence in the animal world, but it does set us apart. Among all species of mammals, only in about 5 percent of these species do males provide parental care."

Since our closest primate relatives, the great apes, have no paternal investment in their offspring, why are

humans different? Is paternal involvement one of humanity's defining characteristics?

The book attempts to answer such questions with knowledge about humans from their most primitive days, comparing human fatherhood behavior patterns to those of other animal species and surveying detailed anthropological studies of cultures and tribes. The book also examines the effects of fatherhood on health and societies.

The authors also include chapters on cross-cultural diversity, marriage patterns, fertility, paternity, paternal involvement (or the lack thereof), stepfatherhood, and the physical changes men undergo when they become fathers.

Both of the authors drew on fairly recent experiences with the transition to fatherhood to find inspiration for the book.

"Working on this book was a joy," Gray says, noting that they compiled the book in a little over a year. "As the fathers of young children and with similar backgrounds in evolutionary anthropology, Kermyt and I share a passion for studying fatherhood. We also have similar writing styles, so the book came together rather seamlessly."

Their sense of purpose was also heightened because they felt they were filling a significant gap in their field.

"The vast amount of scholarship on parenting focuses on maternal behavior," says Gray. "The role of fathers is much less explored."

The result is a rich and patient assemblage of scholarship that draws no easy conclusions about fatherhood but shows its diversity. *Fatherhood* has been well reviewed and received, generating discussion in the *Boston Globe, Psychology Today,* the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, MSNBC's *Cosmic Log,* and a host of scholarly journals and local publications. The book, first published in 2010, recently came out in paperback.

Gray continues his study of this area, still fascinated by the biological, social, and evolutionary aspects of fatherhood. He is currently part of a team surveying a large sample of Jamaican fathers about their paternal attitudes.

—Donna McAleer

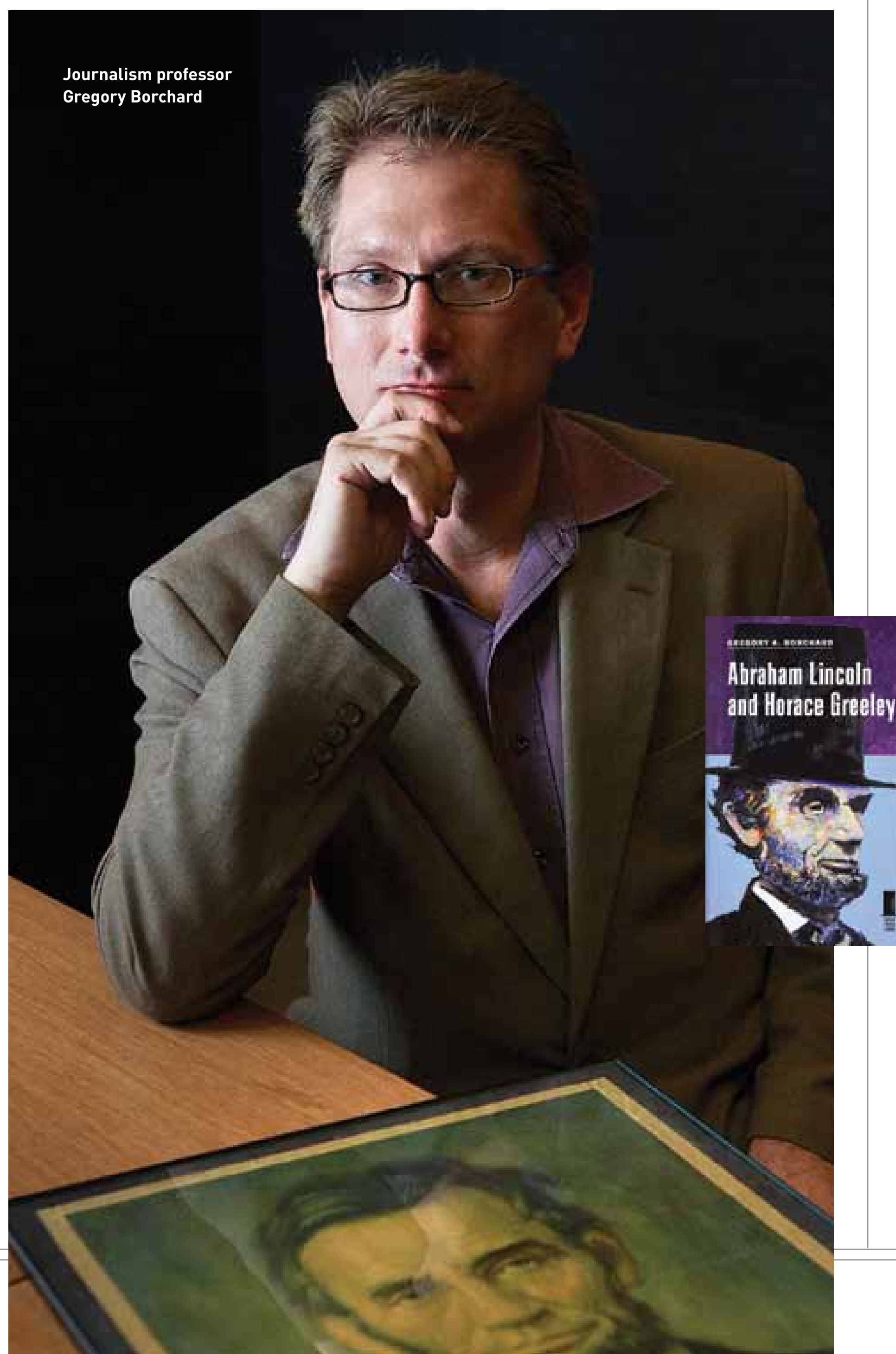
Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley
By Gregory Borchard
Southern Illinois University Press, 2011

UNLV journalism professor Gregory Borchard always planned to write a book about newspaper editor Horace Greeley. But when he learned that Greeley's great-great-great grandson was enrolled in his history of journalism class, the project took on new importance.

"It was a surprising twist of fate," Borchard says.

It was also an incredible stroke of luck, as the journalism historian was given access to the Greeley family album, which complemented his own meticulously researched collection of newspaper articles, personal letters, and biographies of Greeley. These materials also helped form a more complete picture of Greeley's interaction with another important 19th century figure: Abraham Lincoln. It is this interaction that interests Borchard.

He notes that although a variety of works have been written about Greeley and Lincoln as individuals, "few, if any,



Journalism professor Gregory Borchard

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have attempted to interpret the life of each on equal footing, with both contributing to a shared legacy."

His book, *Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley*, answers this need with a careful examination of the writings and behaviors of the two men in the years leading up to and encompassing the Civil War.

Borchard begins the book by identifying key beliefs that influenced both men at the start of their careers. Greeley and Lincoln were members of the Whig party and avid supporters of the philosophies of Henry Clay. Both also shared "a belief in a government based upon the will of the people and their natural rights," and both men abhorred and sought to end the practice of slavery in America, Borchard writes. Also, neither Greeley nor Lincoln had the benefit of a formal education, but each possessed the intellect and drive needed to rise above humble beginnings.

Greeley's rise led him to the *New York Tribune*, where he served as editor for nearly 30 years; shortly before he died, he was a candidate for president.

Lincoln famously worked as an attorney and served in the Illinois legislature and the U.S. House of Representatives before becoming president.

Greeley and Lincoln's shared lifelong admiration of statesman Henry Clay united the two men in a way a common commitment to politics could not. In the months preceding Clay's bid for the presidency in 1844, Lincoln spoke eloquently and often on Clay's behalf. Greeley campaigned extensively and risked the *Tribune*'s credibility by claiming "the Whigs would carry New York by 20,000 votes."

When Clay lost to James K. Polk, the event marked what Borchard calls "a critical turning point in the careers of both men – for Lincoln as a Illinois legislator and Greeley as a popular New York publisher – leading both of them to congressional office and revealing to the nation both who they were and what the subsequent trajectories of their lives would be."

Lincoln became a rising star in what Borchard describes as the era when the Whig Party collapsed and the Republican Party was born. At the same time, Greeley's readership and reputation as an editorial writer grew.

"Greeley's contemporaries appreciated his ability to write thoughtful articles and reach an admiring audience that included erudite city dwellers, farmers, and homesteaders," Borchard notes.

In 1848, both men occupied seats in Congress, Lincoln as an elected representative from Illinois and Greeley filling a vacated House seat for three months. In 1860, Abraham Lincoln became the 16th President of the United States, a position that Greeley helped him secure.

In the tumultuous months immediately following Lincoln's election – when abolitionists pressured Lincoln to end slavery and South Carolina led the movement to leave the Union – Greeley regularly excoriated the president through his newspaper, exhorting him to suppress the rebellion and avoid war.

After the first shots were fired on April 12, 1861, however, Greeley changed directions and his paper published a series of columns urging Lincoln into war, asking him to "stand firm in preserving the union and defeat secessionists with military force."

In 1862, Lincoln prepared the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation and presented it to advisors, some of whom wanted it released immediately. Soon after, Greeley wrote an editorial in the *Tribune* titled "The Prayer of Twenty Million" that called for Lincoln to wage war against the South in the name of ending slavery.

In response to Greeley's piece, the President published a letter in the *National Intelligencer* that argued he would preserve the union as his paramount mission. "If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it," Lincoln wrote, "and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that."

Lincoln issued a preliminary emancipation proclamation in September 1862, to which Greeley responded that the president's "conversion to the abolitionist cause" was the result of his paper's extensive coverage of the issue. Although clearly some measure of hubris was involved, Borchard points out that Greeley's role in "popularizing the idea that the Civil War should become a fight to free all people" is often overlooked.

By the time Lincoln was reelected in 1864, Sherman's campaign in Georgia and the Carolinas was moving the war to its end. Following Lincoln's assassination in April 1865, Greeley reacted with words of "respect and emotion." He described Lincoln as "a man, not a superman" – an assessment, Borchard writes, that "students of history almost 150 years later can trust in many ways more than the president's most worshipful contemporaries."

Although a number of accounts have suggested that Greeley and Lincoln were "anything but friends," they were, according to Borchard, "political and intellectual allies."

"As contemporaries, as intellectuals, and as self-made men, Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley worked to preserve the union and end slavery," Borchard says. "In doing so, the two men also provided for future generations astonishing examples of citizens – not superheroes or demigods – with individual legacies every bit as large as their sum."

—Laurie Fruth

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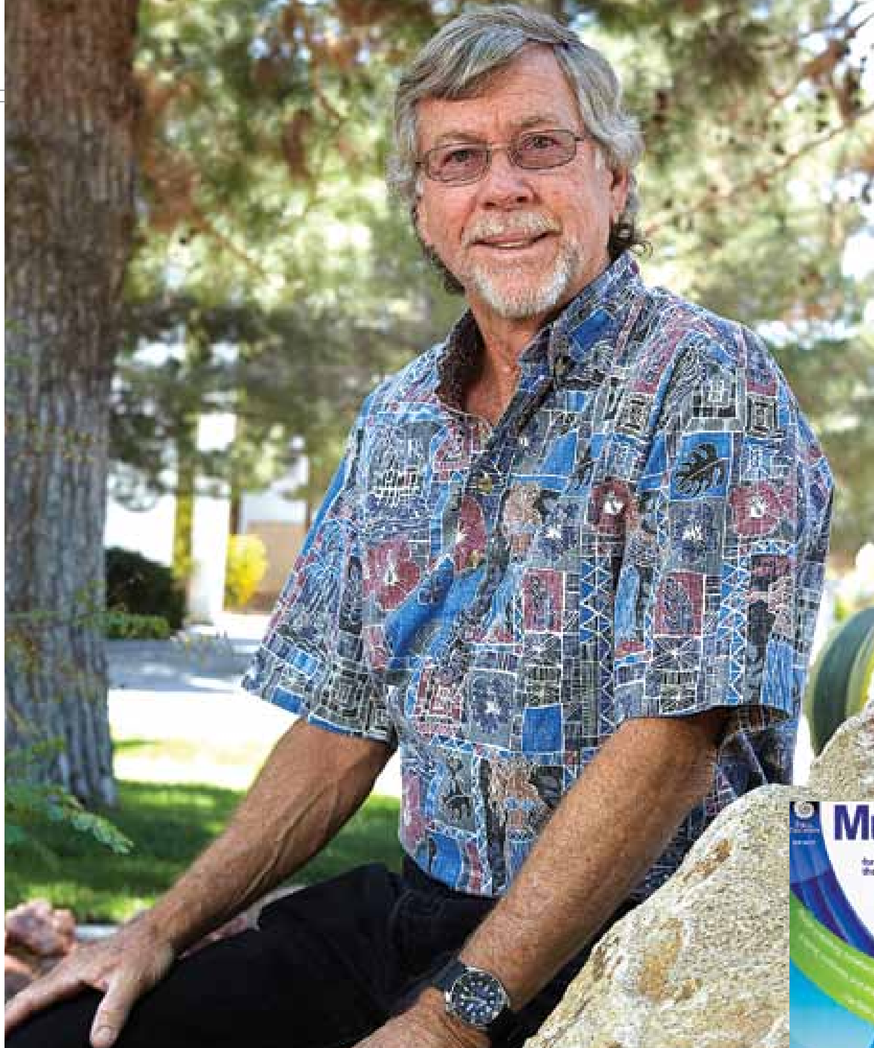
Multimodal Learning for the 21st Century Adolescent

By Tom Bean
Shell Education, 2010

Most teachers wish they could provide their students with a rich array of technology resources in the classroom, but not all are lucky enough to do so.

To UNLV education professor Tom Bean, it's disheartening that some classrooms suffer from limited funding for and access to technology. Gone are the days, he says, of believing that nontraditional technologies and teaching methods are not necessary.

"If we are going to get our students to think critically about the barrage of information that they encounter on the



Education professor Tom Bean

Internet, then we have to incorporate multiple modes of presentation in our lessons," he argues.

In his book, *Multimodal Learning for the 21st Century Adolescent*, Bean explores how teachers can capitalize on the many technologies students now have at their fingertips.

"Technology can be seen as a double-edged sword," says Bean, a nationally recognized expert on content area teacher creativity, literacy, and problem solving. "On the one hand, the Internet and the myriad of devices available – from iPads to smartphones to interactive whiteboards to ebooks – afford access to whole new worlds of information. On the other hand, the very richness of these resources can seem overwhelming."

Just what does multimodal learning include? Beyond the traditional printed text, whether it's in a book or on a screen, multimodal learning features various art forms such as music combined with visual imagery and spatial cues that carry meaning of their own.

"In addition, with Web 2.0's interactive elements, such as Wikipedia and Facebook, the possibilities for student creativity and production have never been better," he says.

Bean, who was nominated by the Association of the Educational Publishers for a Distinguished Achievement Award for this book, hails this time period as the golden age for multimodal approaches. Having teachers and students interacting with and making decisions about design, visual imagery, music, film clips, navigation, and content allows both groups to be creative.

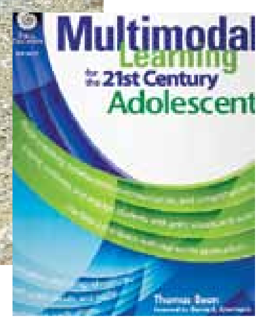
Another positive about the multimodal approach is its ability to recapture disenfranchised students – those not adept at learning through traditional means – and get them engaged once again.

"Our curriculum decisions will start to shift toward an emphasis on problem-solving abilities and away from recalling facts for high stakes assessments," says Bean, who has co-authored 15 books, more than 20 book chapters, and 88 articles. He also formerly served as the editor of the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*.

Bean notes that the context for learning is changing, and teachers must be adaptable to help students reach their potential.

"Great teaching takes place through apprenticeships, coaching, and mentoring in problem-based contexts where inquiry is paramount," he says.

Shell Education, which specializes in professional development materials for educators, approached Bean to write the book. His editor, Hillary Wolf, appreciates its friendly tone and useful-right-now approach.



"This book addresses the very specific skills kids are going to need as they look for jobs in the 21st century: collaboration, communication, visual literacy, access to technology, and group projects," Wolf says. "This is different from how most of us learned."

Various studies Bean cites in his book reinforce this reality. A *Time* magazine report, "The Way We'll Work," describes a future when 85 percent of newly created jobs will involve problem solving and critical thinking. Teams of people will be working together across geographical and cultural borders in the global knowledge economy; thus, students need to develop their discernment, creativity, and ability to solve problems.

As sole author of *Multimodal Learning for the 21st Century Adolescent*, Bean enjoyed the creative freedom he was given to write the book.

"It was a labor of love and very fulfilling to have my own classroom experiences, content area research, and the insights of teachers and graduate students I have worked with come together in one place."

—Donna McAleer