

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL PLURALISM

Spring Quarter 2003

May 2003

7 HOURS OF TIME SPENT Written by

Pick a cultural group and make a list of all of the stereotypes or images that come to mind about that group- positive or negative. Don't filter out the words you are embarrassed about. Don't be P.C. Then share parts of this brainstormed list with a group of near-strangers who may or may not come from the group you are targeting.

Does this seem like an activity that you would be comfortable doing? Or one that you believe would be a worthwhile tool to reduce prejudice? Some believe that you must first acknowledge your own biases before you can make changes in your relationships with others. Then the next move is making changes within your community in relation to reducing prejudice.

The National Coalition Building Institute uses an activity such as this in a seven-hour workshop titled "Building Community and Reducing Prejudice". I attended this workshop on April 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> at WWU, and was pleasantly surprised with the impact it had on me. Participants were encouraged to, and did, share their own accounts of being the recipients of prejudice. Everyone there could fit into a group that has encountered prejudice of some sort. Examples of groups that spoke out were women in traditionally male careers, Asian-American Women, Latina/o men and women, Christians, and various other groups were represented that you may not think experience prejudice, such as "Men". All of these groups were given the opportunity to share with the rest of us "What we never want to hear again (about our group)" and "What we want you to know".

Imagine this scenario. Someone says, "Stand up if you are (or feel a part of) this group: Student, African-American, White, Female, Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim, Male, Heterosexual, Homosexual, Mixed-race, a child from a one-parent family,"... and the list goes on. You'll find yourself standing with people while those sitting applaud in appreciation of a group that they are not a member of. When you walk into a room of strangers, you may, at first glance, see people who appear to have nothing in common with you. When you see them standing alongside you when a group is called, which is not a result of any physical manifestation of race or body type, a bonding occurs that you are not able to be formed by looking at their exterior self. By calling attention to different groups, you can call attention to our similarities, and celebrate our differences.

So often we, especially as "socially-conscious" future-educators, hear the term "Celebrate Diversity". Do you truly know how to do this and still build a sense of community with students and other adults? NCBI has a set of principles it uses to guide their training for in leadership and diversity.

- To learn more about the National Coalition Building Institute, visit their website: <http://www.ncbi.org/>

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NCBI Principles

- Guilt is the glue that holds prejudice in place
- Every issue counts
- Stories change attitudes
- Skill-training leads to empowerment
- Ending oppression also means ending leadership oppression
- Healing leads to action

## Involvement in Service-Learning as a Pre-Service Teacher

Written by Erica Coleman

Western Washington University has a number of service-learning opportunities that pre-service teachers can greatly benefit from. The Center for Service-Learning on Western's campus offers many different programs for students. Through service-learning pre-service teachers can participate in a pedagogy that combines academic learning with community-based learning. These opportunities offer education students authentic experiences to supplement their education program. Following are some of the programs that seek volunteers:

- q H.A.S.T.A. is a mentoring/tutoring program designed to provide adequate support for heightened academic achievement of Chicano/Latino youth in Whatcom County.
- q N.A.M.P. (Native American Mentoring Program) places university students with local Native American elementary, middle and high school students to help in mentoring and tutoring.
- q Learning Environment Action Discovery: Links Western Washington University, Whatcom County Schools, environmental organizations and government agencies to encourage community based environmental restoration, education and service-learning for the benefit of our community.
- q Project Connect is a service-learning project in an 8th grade core class. Western students have the unique opportunity to join these young people—and to learn about teaching and young adolescents while they establish contacts in your community! Middle school students have identified issues of interest, are researching them, and are preparing to provide community service. They will

work with the elderly, the young, and at social service agencies or environmental sites.



- q The LINK Pro-



CEP Spring 2003 Staff

Top Row From Left-  
Erica Coleman, Rassamee  
Bryan, Brandon Jones

Bottom Row From Left-  
Martha Soto, Carmen Risken,  
Barb Kaune

## Resource Review

*We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*

By Gary R. Howard of the REACH Center for Multicultural Education in Seattle

Written by Rassamee Bryan

"I don't understand all this talk about differences. Each of my little kindergarten students comes to me with the same stuff. It doesn't matter if they're Black, Hispanic, or White, they each have a brain, a body, and a family...I treat them all alike." This statement from a White elementary teacher at a workshop in Austin, Texas echoes many sentiments that I have heard from White preservice teachers in Woodring. All too often, students come in to the Center for Educational Pluralism to talk to staff members about how much multicultural education they get in Woodring and how the Diversity in Education Requirement (packet or IDP plan) seems redundant. If you have felt this way at one time or another I urge you to read Gary Howard's *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*. Mr. Howard, who is White, has had 25 years of experience as a multicultural educator. In his book he addresses how White teachers can effectively teach a multicultural classroom and curriculum. He also discusses the need for multiculturalism to be taught even in monocultural schools, such as a predominantly White or Latino school. Howard also examines the luxury of ignorance and the fact that diversity is not a choice. This is an excellent resource for anyone who is concerned about teaching multiculturalism in the schools without being anti-White. If you still aren't interested consider the rest of the teacher in Austin's statement. "By the end of the year, the Blacks and Hispanics fall behind, and the White kids do better. They all start with the same equipment. What happens?" If we treat all students alike, why do the white students seem to do better? The key is that students come into our classrooms with various experiences, skills, and backgrounds. Although we must give each of our students an equal opportunity for a quality education, that does not mean treating them all the same. Gary Howard addresses how to provide this type of education in this book.

## CEP Spring Quarter Hours



Monday 9-6

Tuesday 8-5

Wednesday 9-6

Thursday 8-2

Voices Panel Discussion:

"Service Learning- A Tool To Increase Community Involvement"

Monday

May 19<sup>th</sup>

6:30-9:30



## PROJECT CONNECT

Written by Martha Soto

This quarter I have been participating in a Service Learning opportunity called Project Connect. Project Connect incorporates learning and experience for both Western students and students from Skuskan and Fairhaven middle schools. In eighth grade core classes the students spend months ahead preparing for their six-week community project during school hours. Leaders like me come in at the final stages to make the transportation and facilitation happen at the many sites.

When I first saw my placement: the leader of a group of four eighth grade boys from Skuskan, I was nervous and worried that I didn't have experience hanging out with boys. Though awkward and quiet the first week, every Friday we have been going to work at Whatcom Falls Park to learn about the environment, work on keeping non-native plants out of the way, and indirectly touch on a host of social issues that cannot be learned in a classroom. My students are a diverse group, both economically and racially. It has been a challenge at times to keep everyone engaged in our work, but after three weeks, they have begun to open up to me. Our once quiet car rides and work times are now filled with chatter. I get to hear about sports, jokes, and of course girls! I never thought I would be able to relate to these kids so well—and we're only halfway through the project. Project Connect has been an amazing way to get involved where it matters.

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## Becoming a Teacher: My experience

Written by Ouyen Tran

"You're studying to be a teacher?" "Why?" I have heard this phrase too often following the question of what I am going to school for. Why do they respond as if I have done something wrong by telling them that I am studying to become a teacher? I cannot generalize for all Asians because I can only speak on my behalf and my own experiences. Since I am half Vietnamese and half Cambodian (Khmer), my experiences come from those of the Vietnamese and Khmer community.

I honestly had never thought about becoming a teacher after graduating from high school. I had always thought about going into a profession that would make a lot of money. All of that changed my sophomore year in college. There was a part-time job opportunity to be a teacher's assistant and I took it. In the classrooms, I fell in love with the children. They captured my heart and it became impossible for me to imagine doing anything else as a career after that.

I was fortunate to have support from my mother. Although she knew that the teaching profession would not help me to gain a high amount of income nor would it give me the opportunity to climb the corporate ladder in society, she supported my decision in doing where my heart led me. My relatives and family friends, on the other hand, did not make it easy for me. It almost got annoying to talk to them about what I wanted to be. Why was it necessary for me to explain myself? I realize that it really isn't, and I don't try anymore.

Unfortunately, I know of two other people that came to Western with intentions of becoming a teacher, but didn't. One was a young Khmer male. His brother is a teacher and he had a passion to be an educator as well. As time passed, he began to realize all the disadvantages of becoming a teacher. On top of that, it was not a profession encouraged within his community. He switched and is now studying to be an Engineer instead.

Another friend of mine, a pretty young Vietnamese female who also had intentions of graduating from Woodring did not finish what she had set out to do. We became friends because we had in common that we wanted to become teachers. After two years of taking related courses for Woodring, she dropped out and followed the direction her family had been encouraging her to go. They said, "Why would you



## CEP New Resources

Every quarter the Center for Educational Pluralism orders new resources, in the form of books, periodical subscriptions and videos. Our goal is to expand our resource library to fit your needs. We are always open to purchasing suggestions, and most likely if you request, we will buy it! Stop in any time to check out our wares and suggest any resources.

### Children's/Young Adult Books: \_\_\_\_\_

### Author

Goin' Someplace Special	Patricia McKissack
In The Days of the Vaqueros: America's First True Cowboys	Russell Freedman
One World, Many Religions	Mary Pope Osborne
Faithful Elephants: A True Story of Animals, People and War	Yukio Tsuchiya
The Woman Who Outshone The Sun	Alejandro Cruz-Martinez
The Sissy Duckling	Harvey Fierstein
Carmine's Story: A Book about a Boy Living with AIDS	Arlene Schulman
Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio	Tony Johnston
Oliver Button is a Sissy	Tomie dePaola
Kids At Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor	Russell Freedman



### Other Books:

Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farm workers Movement	Susan Ferriss
A Framework for Understanding Poverty	Ruby K. Payne
Two Teenagers in 20: Writings by Gay and Lesbian Youth	Ann Heron
In Your Face: Stories From the Lives of Queer Youth	Mary L. Gray
Gay Parents/Straight Schools: Building Trust and Communication	Virginia Casper
Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood	Paddy Ladd
We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools	Gary R. Howard
Pedagogy of the Oppressed	Paulo Freire
Multicultural Gifted Education	Donna Y. Ford
Hate Hurts: How Children Learn and Unlearn Prejudice	Caryl Stern-LaRosa
Culturally Responsive Teaching: Lesson Planning for Elementary and Middle Grades	Jacqueline Jordan Irvine
The Business of Fancy Dancing: Stories and Poems	Sherman Alexie



**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
WOODRING COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

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Voices Panel Discussion:

"Service Learning- A Tool To Increase Community  
Involvement"

Monday

May 19th

6:30-9:30

Wilson Library Presentation Room

\*Free Refreshments\*

WE ARE ON THE WEB!

<http://www.wce.wu.edu/cep>



Center for

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I can say that the immediate family as well as outsiders have a great deal of an effect on how one would make their decisions in life. My mom is an educator as well so she understands that it is important for me to follow my heart. She also understands how much I love children and how rewarded I feel when I work with them. She hears my stories of my experiences and is able to relate to them one way or another. Most of all, she understands my passion and is able to accept it without a doubt. It is so great to hear her support me when someone tries to downplay my answer when they ask me, "What are you studying in school?"

The younger generation seems to admire my choice of profession. Very seldom do they ask me why. Most of the time, they are just surprised that I would want to be a teacher. However, it is the older generation of the Vietnamese and Khmer community, which gives the negative responses followed by "what?" "Why?" I wish it could be different, but I think it will take a whole generation to change that mentality.

In conclusion, I can say that I am content with my decision. I have chosen to go into a profession that I love. I am doing what I feel is best for myself now and in the future. When I have a family of my own, I feel that being a teacher will help me to balance my career and family life. I would like to be there for my family as much as possible, and as a teacher, I can be home when my children are home from