

Director's Corner

Rising From Risk

A crisis exists in American education, a crisis of the teaching force. To cover replacements and growing needs over the next 10 years, the nation will need to hire over 2 million teachers. At-risk areas of poverty, limited English proficiency, and racial and cultural diversity face the greatest challenge in recruiting quality teachers—and this is crucial, because the shortfall is not only of quantity of teachers but of quality.

The 1996 report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) attributes the widespread failure of educational reform efforts to this issue: "Most schools and teachers cannot produce the kind of learning demanded by the new reforms—not because they do not want to, but because they do not know how, and the systems in which they work do not support them in doing so" (p. 5).

Why? The NCTAF report points to some issues that relate directly to teachers:

- unenforced standards for teachers
- flawed teacher preparation
- careless recruitment
- inadequate induction of beginning teachers
- lack of professional development
- lack of rewards for knowledge and skill

Those of us concerned with at-risk and diverse students can point to another shortfall. We do

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CREDE Program Showcase: Professional Development

Robert Rueda, University of Southern California

The changing nature of schools as institutions as well as schooling as a process has led to a reexamination of the roles that teaching and administrative professionals play in creating optimal learning environments for all students. This reexamination has become especially important given the increasing discrepancy between the economic, cultural, and linguistic characteristics of teachers and students in most urban school districts. Recent developments in understanding teaching and learning processes demand fundamentally different ways of thinking about classrooms and how they are organized as well as what professionals need to know to work effectively in those settings. Moreover, the knowledge base related to how administrative staff can create institutional supports which scaffold these innovative practices and settings is also changing. In terms of professional development, not only is the content different from what it has been in the past, but traditional ways of creating a more effective teaching force and more effective educational institutions are no longer viable. Most educators have come to realize that social constructivist

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Leading for Diversity: Professional Development for School Leaders

Rosemary Henze and Anne Katz, ARC Associates, Oakland, CA

In schools that are experiencing growing ethnic diversity, ethnic and/or racially based conflict is becoming a major concern. These conflicts vary from physical fighting and racist name calling to more subtle indicators of tensions, such as some students withdrawing from participation in school due to fear of intimidation based on race or ethnicity. School leaders in general have not been well prepared to address these challenges. Schools' responses to ethnic conflict vary from ignoring it or denying its existence, to offering "bandaid" solutions, to attempting to address the issue through a more integrated, systemic approach. It is this integrated, systemic approach that we are seeking to identify and describe in the study, "Leading for Diversity," which is funded partially through CREDE. This is a 5-year project, the first 3 years of which are devoted to creating 21 qualitative case studies describing exemplary or proactive approaches and practices that K-12 school leaders are using to address ethnic conflict and promote positive intergroup relations.

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pedagogy in classrooms and constructivist-oriented administrative practices are not well served by professional development models that rely on top-down, transmission-oriented activities and materials. In short, in order to create optimal learning environments and institutions, it is necessary to create optimal learning communities.

Gutierrez (1997), in describing some of the features of optimal learning communities, provides a useful way of examining some of the dimensions along which professional development has shifted (see Table I).

CREDE's research on professional development is clearly taking place in a changing context. There are many unanswered questions and issues about how to create and sustain meaningful communities of learners with administrators, teachers, students, and their families. CREDE's four Professional Development projects are:

- A National Study of Effective Teacher Education for Diverse Student Populations;
- Expanding Knowledge Base on Teacher Learning and Collaboration: A Focus on Inner-City Chinese-American LEP Students;
- Latino Paraeducators as Teachers: Building on Funds of Knowledge to Improve Instruction; and
- Leading for Diversity: Professional Development for School Leaders

These projects attack in different ways and in different contexts the issues related to professional development for administrators and teachers of culturally diverse students and English language learners. Although the projects are at different stages of implementation, taken together they represent a comprehensive view of professional development closely tied to practice as well as to current theories of

Table I. Traditional vs. Current Directions in Conceptualizing Professional Development

Traditional

- Reform- or standards-driven
- Emphasis on teaching
- Layered understandings (new knowledge is piled on to existing knowledge)
- Generic or universal practice
- Eclectic practice
- Unexamined assumptions
- Teacher-centered

Current

- Reform- or standards-informed
- Emphasis on learning
- Laminated understandings (new knowledge is reflectively integrated with old knowledge)
- Situated practice
- Reflective/strategic practice
- Examined assumptions
- Community-centered

learning and development. This issue of *Talking Leaves* features the "Leading for Diversity" project.

Reference

Gutierrez, K. (1997). Creating optimal learning communities for teachers of diverse learners. Presentation at the Optimal Learning Environment Administrators' Workshop, San Diego, CA, September, 1997.

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not have an ethos of *dedication to relentless teaching and success for every student*.

Even at the present time, more than 25% of newly hired "teachers" enter the profession without having fully met state standards. In high poverty schools, almost half have neither a major nor a minor in their primary teaching area. Nationally, 87% of the teaching force is white, though students of color comprise 30% of the student population.

This crisis indicts not only teachers, but all of us. Its solution will require radical and immediate action by every educational constituency: the universities who train teachers; the policy makers who choose short-term

cosmetic solutions; school leadership too timid to enforce standards; and researchers who mumble and quibble instead of offering clear guidance.

This issue of *Talking Leaves* features the Professional Development Program of CREDE. We are attempting to take stock of teacher preparation programs in the U.S. that offer training for students of diversity. We are attempting to discover the most effective means of in-service, career-long professional development. We are studying effective professional development for school leaders, bilingual teachers, and paraeducators. And our challenge as researchers is to make these findings available in useful form, so it can no longer be said that "teachers do not know how," nor that leaders do not know how to support teachers.

There is a crisis in teaching. Researchers have contributed to it also, and we at CREDE pledge a better future.

In the next issue, we will focus on a set of standards for effective teaching that will assure success for *all* students, together with a system of training, measurement, evaluation, and staff development to achieve that best teaching.

-Roland Tharp

Placing a Face on Every Child and Youth

Gil Garcia, U.S. Department of Education

Few people would challenge the assertion that the demographic profiles of American classrooms and schools have changed dramatically during the past 30 years. In response, federal legislation has addressed the needs of various student populations, most especially with the authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Title I of this legislation, for example, addressed the social and academic needs of students who were poor and eligible to receive reduced-price meals at school and who underachieved in school. Title VII addressed similar needs for children with *limited English speaking abilities (LESA)*, including the program services that school districts could provide under Title VII grants.

Subsequent re-authorizations of this landmark legislation further defined LESA students as limited English proficient (LEP). The changes acknowledged that limited speaking abilities in English were but one facet of the linguistic and cultural proficiencies and skills that students need if they are to succeed in classrooms taught mostly, if not entirely, in English.

The term that is enjoying widespread use today is *English language learners (ELLs)*, a phrase that recognizes the wealth of personal, familial, and community resources that these students bring onto the school campus. Learning English language arts, the research literature supports, is one of the many social and linguistic tasks ELLs must accomplish as part of becoming effective learners. Another of these critical tasks is to acquire the content skills needed to succeed on par with English proficient peers.

Educators also have coined other phrases to describe the broader population of students who underachieve in American classrooms. *Minority, language minority, linguistically and*

culturally diverse, and students placed at risk of educational failure, are four of the labels frequently used to distinguish among—and at times lump—at-risk students. Each connotes a different concept of who the students are, who or what might place them at risk or, in fact, does place them at risk. Still, these labels do not portray the array of dimensions of the students in question. They do not put a real face on these children and students and on the complex nature of the issues they represent.

The literature includes four factors to identify at-risk students. They are: poverty, limited English proficiency, race, and geographic location. These factors offer a limited basis for making substantive decisions about the real problems that children and youth face. An important first step is to recognize the full complement of factors that define students who are at risk of educational failure. [See box, page 7.]

The factors are useful to policy makers, educators, and others in identifying students who are at risk of educational failure at one or more periods in time. The list is a productive beginning, though there might be other important factors to consider. Individually they represent the different dimensions of, or proximity to, the child or youth. That is, some are personal, others are generally environmental, and still others are school specific. Collectively, they specify many of the real situations that define these students.

The nature of the factors needs to be understood, especially the impact on the student and his/her schooling, teaching, and learning. For example, some of the factors might be present at different stages in a child's personal or a student's school life; they might be present or absent during varied circumstantial schooling or social situations; and/or they might be "bundled"

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User Survey Results

Margaret Crandall, CREDE

The first issue of *Talking Leaves* (Winter, 1997) included a User Survey, in which we asked readers to describe their interests and needs. The survey contained four questions:

1. *Tell us about yourself and where you work.*
2. *How did you find out about the Center?*
3. *Please tell us how the Center newsletter can meet your needs. Which topics would you like to read about?*
4. *What regular features or columns would you like to see?*

We received 232 completed surveys. The results are summarized here.

In response to the first question, 38% of the respondents are teachers and 25% are professors. Twenty-four percent are school or district administrators, and 4% are state education officials. Overall, 55% of the respondents work at an elementary, middle, or high school, and 27% work at a college or university. In the "other" category, we received a variety of responses, including program coordinators, resource specialists, editors, adult educators, and former or retired teachers.

How did readers find out about CREDE? Thirty-three percent learned of the Center through professional organizations; 31% through newsletter announcements; and 21% through conferences. At least 6% first learned of the Center when they received their copy of *Talking Leaves*.

The topics readers are most interested in reading about are bilingual and ESL education (67%), research on methodology (65%), educating Hispanic or Latino students (65%), assessment and alternative assessment (64%), teaching in the classroom (63%), and professional development for teachers (62%). Other topics

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suggested for future newsletter articles are links between parents, schools, and communities (61%), research on pedagogy (60%), educating recent immigrant students (60%), and research on theory (50%). Some of the responses in the “other” category for this question included curriculum development; information on mixed race or multiracial students and migrant students; and leadership in a multicultural environment. Respondents were asked to identify all areas of interest.

For features and regular columns, 83% indicated interest in research into practice; 67% would like to see columns on multicultural/multilingual education; 60% want to hear about U.S. Department of Education initiatives and updates; and 57% want to know about upcoming events and conferences. Other suggestions included Native American education, inservice teacher training, parental involvement, and access to materials and services for ESL students.

We would like to thank readers who took the time to return the surveys. We will make every effort to include articles relating to your specific areas of interest. Please feel free to write *Talking Leaves* at the address below.

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The study is designed to address the following two research questions:

1. *How do school leaders or leadership teams address tensions and conflicts that may be related to race or ethnicity?*
2. *How do school leaders or leadership teams bring about unity rather than division among different ethnic groups on campus?*

The last 2 years of the project are designed to have an impact on practice: The case studies will be used to develop case methods materials for future school administrators, as well as in-service administrators and other constituents who may benefit (e.g., teacher leaders, parent leadership groups, community organizations). The case method approach involves the learner who must grapple with real dilemmas or situations and craft specific solutions or responses. In this way, future school leaders can become grounded in the reality of schools and have access to positive approaches for addressing interethnic conflict and building positive intergroup relations. These materials will be piloted in the administrator preparation program at San Francisco State University as well as other post-secondary training institutions.

During the first study year, which we have just completed, we focused on nine sites in the San Francisco Bay Area. Elementary, middle, and high school sites were selected through a nomination and screening process. In order to be selected, schools had to serve a mix of different ethnic groups and have a history of racial or ethnic tensions, yet the school leadership had to show some evidence of a proactive approach to addressing racial or ethnic conflict and building harmonious relations among groups. Leadership was defined as potentially coming from

a number of different sources, including parent, teacher, and student groups as well as principals and leadership teams.

In Spring 1997, we collected our first cycle of data, which consisted of interviews with a variety of people at each site (e.g., administrators, teachers, students, parents, and others); observations of key activities and events (e.g., classes, faculty meetings, leadership meetings, parent events, staff development events, lunchtime, passing time); and records and documents that pertain to the study questions. It is premature to report any findings because these data are still being analyzed at the time of this writing. However, we do know that the schools in this phase of the study are providing rich case materials on leadership in action and that these materials have great potential for informing the professional development of school leaders.

We are now preparing to expand our sites to a national level and are seeking nominations for schools that meet the above criteria. (See nomination form enclosed in this issue.) This fall we will select 12 additional schools nationwide, and site visits will begin in Spring 1998.

CREDE Research Team: Rosemary Henze, Anne Katz, Edmundo Norte, Sau-Lim Tsang, (ARC Associates); A.R. Contreras (San Francisco State University). For more information, call ARC Associates at 510-834-9455.

This newsletter is supported under the Educational Research and Development Center Program (Coop. Agreement No. R306A60001-96), administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. The findings and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of OERI.

“Leading For Diversity” Nomination Form for National Sites

Do you know of a principal or a leadership team that has done an exceptional job of building bridges among different ethnic or racial groups at a K-12 school site? If so, we would like to document their work. We are looking for schools *outside of the San Francisco Bay area* that have the following characteristics:

An ethnically diverse student population. There should be at least three different ethnic groups at the school, and each of these three largest groups should constitute a sizable proportion of the total student population.

Racial/ethnic conflict or tension has been reduced or is being addressed effectively. Has there been a recent reduction in ethnic or racial violence among students? Was racist name calling previously common at the school, but now no longer a major issue? Was tension among staff of different ethnicities a problem in the past, but now different groups generally get along?

A principal or leadership team that promotes harmony among different racial/ethnic groups. The leader or leadership team has reduced conflict. Programs or strategies are in place to address racial/ethnic conflicts or tensions.

Directions: Please provide as much information as you can for each item. You may nominate more than one person or team if you wish—just make a copy of this form for each nomination. Self-nominations are also accepted. If you prefer, you may fill out the form over the phone by calling Susan Sather at (510) 834-9455, ext. 215. Mail or fax completed forms (both sides) by Nov. 15 to Susan Sather, ARC Associates, 1212 Broadway, #400, Oakland, CA 94612, Fax: (510) 763-1490, e-mail: sesather@arcoakland.org. Thank you.

Principal or leadership team you are nominating:

Name(s) _____

Ethnicity(ies) of school leader(s) _____

School _____

(please remember that we are looking for sites outside of the San Francisco Bay area)

School Address _____

School Telephone _____

What grades are in the school? _____

1. Please identify at least three major ethnic groups and their approximate percentages of the total school population.

2. Describe some of the racial/ethnic conflict or tension the school has experienced in the past, noting which groups were involved in the conflicts.

3. What has the leader or leadership team done to reduce ethnic/racial conflict and build harmony among different ethnic groups on site? Describe programs or strategies that are in place to address the conflicts or tensions identified above.

Additional people who can provide information about the school:

Outside of the school:

Name _____ Telephone _____

Relationship to the school _____

Within the school:

Name _____ Telephone _____

Relationship to the school _____

How can we contact you?

Nominator's Name _____

Address _____

Telephone (work) _____ (home) _____ E-mail _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

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differently, depending on “what’s happening” to the child or student.

The features have significant implications for professional development. For example, the outcome of any debate on how to serve at-risk students effectively depends on the personal and schooling information gathered on and from these students and their parents. In short, their state of readiness to learn must be understood. Educators must also be concerned about the effective use of this information to design both specific and integrated programs of instruction. School reform plans need to be based on student profile information.

Finally educators—especially teachers—should make every effort to understand (and seek training to be able to understand) the presence and combination of the factors in each child or student and provide him/her with the complementary attention and services.


In future articles, I will address other topics from the federal perspective. Always, I appreciate your recommendations on topics that interest you.

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Factors Leading to Student “At-Riskness”

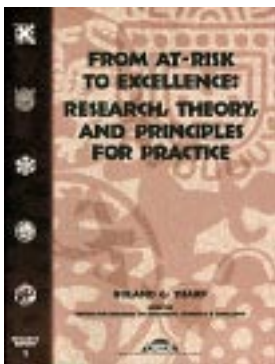
- ◆ Lives in a household with sustained or periodic poverty
- ◆ Lives in a high-poverty and high-crime neighborhood
- ◆ Is limited English proficient
- ◆ Is limited native language proficient
- ◆ Is a speaker of a non-mainstream dialect(s)
- ◆ Student or parents are recent immigrants
- ◆ Has learning and/or other disabilities
- ◆ Is a poor reader
- ◆ Is a poor test taker
- ◆ Was retained at least once
- ◆ Is overage for grade/school
- ◆ Has been expelled or suspended
- ◆ Has been in a low-achievement track for at least one school year
- ◆ Belongs to a gang
- ◆ Dropped out and returned to school
- ◆ Has other siblings who are drop-outs
- ◆ Has many other school-aged siblings
- ◆ Was diagnosed with a developmental delay before age 3
- ◆ Has an undiagnosed or unaddressed medical condition
- ◆ Mother received poor or no pre-natal care
- ◆ Had no or incomplete formal preschool/kindergarten
- ◆ Is pregnant
- ◆ Is an unmarried or married teen parent
- ◆ Is highly mobile within school district and across districts
- ◆ Is a migrant student
- ◆ Is responsible for household tasks that interfere with school
- ◆ Reports to a truant or parole officer
- ◆ Has a record of disciplinary actions in school
- ◆ Lives in a geographically isolated area
- ◆ Feels psychologically isolated or socially unattached to peers
- ◆ Comes from a single parent household
- ◆ Has full-time employed parents
- ◆ Has unemployed parents or guardian
- ◆ Has minimally schooled parents or guardian
- ◆ Lives in a drug-abuse household or uses drugs
- ◆ Lives in an other-abuse household or is abusive/aggressive
- ◆ Lives in a household with minimal or no health insurance/coverage
- ◆ Attends a school with high concentration of poor students
- ◆ Was minimally schooled prior to enrollment in current school or grade
- ◆ Was socially promoted at least once during elementary grades
- ◆ Has a negative relationship with teachers
- ◆ Has received educational services that are mostly limited in scope, quality, and time
- ◆ Lives in a household receiving welfare assistance
- ◆ Has not been routinely counseled by school counselor
- ◆ School and social services records are incomplete
- ◆ Portfolio of course work is incomplete
- ◆ Works 20 or more hours per week


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NEW FROM CREDE



From At-Risk to Excellence: Research, Theory, and Principles for Practice by Roland Tharp

This first publication from CREDE describes the Center's research agenda. By summarizing findings from previous investigations that examined effective educational programs for linguistically and culturally diverse learners, Tharp sets out principles for school reform. These include recommendations for conceptualizing curricula and instruction in the experience and skills of the learners' homes and communities, challenging students toward cognitive complexity, and developing language and literacy competence through all instructional activities.

The report also explains the sociocultural theory that undergirds CREDE's research agenda. A variety of projects examine different levels of interaction—personal, social, and community planes—where students, teachers, parents, and others may teach, learn, and interact. The report includes descriptions and contact information for each of CREDE's 30 projects in six programmatic strands: language learning and academic achievement; professional development; family, peers, school, and community; instruction in context; integrated school reform; and assessment. (\$4.00)

Two-Way Bilingual Programs in the United States: 1996-1997 Supplement. This Supplement contains profiles of 22 new two-way bilingual immersion programs, augmenting the *Directory of Two-Way Bilingual Programs in the United States, Revised 1995*. Each profile contains information about program size and the student population; location and contact persons; subjects taught in each language; and assessment tools used in the evaluation process. (\$8.00)

Secondary Newcomer Programs in the United States: 1996-97 Directory. This Directory contains profiles of 60 middle and high school newcomer programs for immigrant students who have low English proficiency and often limited educational experience in their native countries. Each profile contains information concerning program location, size, and length of enrollment; student demographics; features of instruction and assessment; program staffing; other services offered; and program contacts. (\$15.00)

To order, send a check, money order, or purchase order, payable to CAL/CREDE, 1118 22nd Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-1214. Include 10% for shipping and handling. For more information, call 202-429-9292 ext. 258. Note: We do not accept telephone, e-mail, or credit card orders.