

From the Assistant Director

Family Involvement

I recently had the opportunity to use an excellent set of CD-ROM materials, *Family Empowerment*. Developed by one of CREDE's partners, the BUENO Center at the University of Colorado in Boulder, *Family Empowerment* provides the latest research and professional development training materials to help schools develop partnerships with families.

The BUENO Center model of family empowerment includes four components: 1) recognizing that families have changed; 2) recognizing the strengths of the community; 3) incorporating community involvement in school policies, and 4) implementing and sustaining family empowerment. While each of these components is necessary in developing school/family partnership initiatives, I want to focus on the second element because it is also an integral part of effective pedagogy for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

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Program Showcase: Family, Peers, School, and Community

Catherine Cooper, University of California, Santa Cruz

In industrialized countries, students travel through an "academic pipeline" (Geiser, 1996). At each successive stage of this pipeline—elementary school, secondary school, college—the percentage of ethnic minority and low income youth in the academic pipeline shrinks (Cooper & Denner, 1998; Geiser 1996). The projects in this CREDE program address the challenge of keeping the pipeline open by researching, facilitating, and sustaining family, school, peer and community involvement in the academic careers of diverse and at-risk students, and by assisting these students as they move between the multiple worlds (family, school, peer, community) that comprise their lives.

Previous research has often focused on students who lose their place in the pipeline; newer research, including the projects discussed in this issue of *Talking Leaves*, has begun to investigate what it takes for at-risk youth to succeed. CREDE researchers are exploring students' development and relationships with their families, peers, schools, and communities, and considering how each of these worlds helps students stay in the academic pipeline. The five projects in this

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A National Survey of School/Community-Based Organization Partnerships Serving Language Minority Students At-Risk

Carolyn Temple Adger, Center for Applied Linguistics

Partnerships between schools and community-based organizations (CBOs) hold promise for enriching the education of language minority students. They connect schools more directly to the communities they serve and help those students achieve academic success. CREDE researchers sought to identify the characteristics and activities of successful partnerships and establish guidelines for emerging ones seeking to enrich educational opportunities for language minority students. The researchers gathered survey data from 31 school/CBO partnerships that were nominated as successful programs and visited 17 of these sites. They collected information on the types of CBOs that partner with schools, the nature of the partnerships, the kinds of work they do, crucial factors for program success, and

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In order to teach students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds effectively, we must make instruction meaningful to them (CREDE's third standard of effective pedagogy). But making learning meaningful goes beyond a "Heroes and Holidays" approach, which can be offensive to multicultural, multi-lingual populations. Working with families also demands that we make our partnership activities meaningful. We can no longer hold on to a deficit conception about families that says: "We know what you need, and we have the solutions to 'fix' your family so that your child can succeed." How can we make student learning and family partnership activities meaningful?

Critical pedagogy provides a useful conceptual framework for teachers to reflect on how to make learning meaningful for students; it can also be useful as we work with families. One of the key concepts in critical pedagogy is "conscientization." Conscientization is a difficult concept to define. While it does mean an acute self-awareness of who we are, where we've come from, and how those things have influenced our lives, it is more. Conscientization also speaks to the issues of power: who has it, how it is used, and how it is sustained. Conscientization gives us the power and voice to question those educational practices that do not promote learning for all children, and those practices that exclude some families from participating in the education of their children. Conscientization, therefore, has deep implications for those of us who work with children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It demands that as we develop partnerships we also examine our perceptions of culture, what children bring to the classroom and what families bring to the partnership. Ultimately, conscientization leads to personal empowerment and advocacy for these children and families.

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We can no longer hold on to deficit conception about families that says: "We know what you need, and we have the solutions to 'fix' your family so that your child can succeed."

How can we assist both educators and families to become advocates, to be empowered within the school/family partnership? Here are a few suggestions.

- Help parents and family members learn about and understand the power structures that exist in schools, and how families may participate as valued members of the school community.
- Acquire knowledge of the home, family life, and community in which students live. Ask about the ways that children learn at home; let families be your best resource about culturally appropriate learning.

- Listen to families as they talk about their traditions, as they tell their stories, as they express their beliefs.

- Provide opportunities for parents and families to participate in classroom instructional activities. This is especially valuable when the teacher is not of the same language or culture group as his/her students. If programs in the native language are not available in the school, access as much community support as possible to support the home language in the classroom.

- Provide a liaison between the school and the families it serves.

- Help teachers to understand their role as political agents in the education process.

The process of conscientization—the "looking in" at the core of our beliefs, values, and the power we hold—is essential if we are to reach out to families and join our voices as advocates for the success of all children. 🌿

- Barry Rutherford

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Peer Group Influence and Academic Aspirations Across Cultural/Ethnic Groups of High School Students

Patricia Gandara, University of California, Davis

Peer groups can exert extraordinary influence over adolescents' personal goals and academic aspirations. They form a critical part of a school's environment, creating and maintaining a culture separate from students' home communities. We know that there are differences among ethnic groups in the ways and extent to which peers influence each other, and that peers may have less influence on longer-term goals than on day-to-day behaviors. However, these behaviors can have a powerful influence on students' future opportunities.

In this study, CREDE researchers are examining how high school students from different ethnic groups form their expectations about schooling and their post-secondary aspirations, with a focus on how peers and families help to shape these expectations and aspirations. In surveys, adolescents often express the belief that their parents and family are the chief architects of their aspirations, and they easily dismiss the influence of their social context and peer norms. However, when pressed in interviews, adolescents demonstrate that they are very aware of the effects of the media and of peer norms on many of their behaviors. To examine these issues, CREDE researchers are collecting survey data annually on approximately 375 students in the high school class of 2001

at two study sites (one urban, one rural). They are also conducting ongoing focus groups and interviews with a subgroup of study participants to elaborate on the survey responses. The students in this subgroup act as guides to the lives of students from different ethnic backgrounds.

Based on the data collected so far, several findings are emerging. First, most students associate with others of the same ethnicity. White students however are more inclined to say there are no problems with race relations on campus, while students of color are quick to point out that such problems exist. Second, racial comfort, cultural opportunities on campus, and academic tracking work to divide students into friendship groups largely defined by ethnicity. Students on the urban campus are more likely than those at the rural site to confront and admit to racial divisions, and to talk openly about problems of all kinds.

Third, high risk behaviors among students differ substantially by gender, ethnicity, and urban/rural environment. Girls overall are much less likely to feel peer pressure to engage in substance abuse and gangs than are boys. Ninth grade Latino males report more peer pressure to be involved with drugs and alcohol than any other ethnicity. In the sophomore year, Asian males report

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Developing Immigrant Parents' Computer Literacy in Partnership with Students' Learning

Richard Durán and Jane Durán, University of California, Santa Barbara

This project, a collaboration among parents, children, teachers, and CREDE researchers, seeks to increase Latino immigrant parents' and children's learning by helping parents operate computers and use them as tools for learning. The goal is for all participants to work together in developing and guiding computer learning activities that move from sharing experiences on computer use to promoting important forms of learning tied to children's schooling success. The central research question is, "How do immigrant parents' and children's computer learning activities create new socio-cultural resources that promote children's academic achievement?" The researchers anticipate the project will identify critical directions to assist in initiating immigrant family literacy programs that are associated with improving children's education outcomes.

In the first 2 years, the project served 24 parents whose children attended one of two elementary schools in a rural California community. Only one parent in the first cohort of 13 participants had prior hands-on experience with computers. As part of the project, parents participate in a 10-week interactive learning session designed by the researchers. During the 10 weeks, parents and children work together on computers to complete a final product, usually an essay or story focused on familial experiences and themes. In addition, participants at each site produce a desktop publication featuring their work. Publication has figured prominently in project design; the creation process has provided focus and direction for parent computer learning activities and related joint

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challenges to overcome in establishing and maintaining partnerships.

CBOs involved in school partnerships can be grouped in three broad categories: a) ethnic organizations serving as culture brokers for the school, the students, and their families; b) special purpose CBOs that operate school programs exclusively; and c) multipurpose organizations providing programs for schools along with other services. Within these categories, the partnerships tend to be structurally variable and fluid.

The functions of school/CBO partnerships vary according to students' age and grade. At the preschool through middle school level, partnerships often focus on parent and family involvement in the child's education and provide social services to ensure the child is prepared for and supported through school by the family and community. At the high school level, the focus shifts to the student. Partnerships provide tutoring, school-to-work internships, and programs that promote the development of leadership skills and higher education goals, and discourage behaviors that mitigate educational success (e.g., pregnancy and drugs). By supporting the development of attitudes and abilities that are integral to school success, partnerships support students' academic achievement.

Connections between school/CBO programs and school programs vary from all-inclusive to complementary. Some full service schools provide educational programs for students and families as well as comprehensive health and social services. Other auxiliary school/CBO programs complement the schools' traditional academic programs through such activities as individually designed tutoring sessions, workshops, and social events.

The researchers identified several elements essential to the success of school/CBO partnerships. First, these partnerships need access to resources over time, especially staff and funding. Strong, committed, competent individuals sharing the clients' language and culture backgrounds played key roles in all of the partnerships that were visited. Ongoing funding is also essential to program success, and securing it is the greatest challenge the partnerships face. Second, successful partnerships are flexible both in structure and in program, and are responsive to the user. They address the constituents' needs in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways, make programs accessible, and they build on constituents' abilities. Finally, effective partnerships focus on program efficacy, but they often rely on stories of success rather

than program evaluation to measure progress toward their goals.

For more information about this project, look for *Broadening the Base: School/Community Partnerships Serving Language Minority Students at Risk*, a forthcoming CREDE Educational Practice Report by Carolyn Temple Adger. 🌸

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learning activities with children. Communicating expressions of cultural knowledge and learning to a larger audience, such as families outside the project, educators, and the community at large, has become a goal of the project's parent-child learning activities. [A sample copy of desktop publications produced by parents and children may be obtained by sending a request via e-mail (duran@education.ucsb.edu).]

In the third year of the study, a total of 23 parents, along with 15 children ranging from grades 3-9, participated in computer-based literacy activities. Of the parents, about 40% had attended one or more of the 10-week series within the project. Pre- and post-assessments show significant gains in basic computer skills among parents. More importantly, ethnographic data illustrate how members are constructing a new learning community linking home and school through technology.

The findings emerging from the study show that parents with little or no previous computer literacy can acquire substantial literacy if given hands-on experience. However, it is clear that learning simple skills in operating computers and the Internet is not a panacea for improving parents' awareness of schools' expectations of students. In addition, increasing parents' familiarity with computers will not automatically improve children's academic achievement.

The research team has found that connecting parent acquisition of computer skills to children's schooling activities is not enough to guarantee improved academic achievement. It is important to reconceptualize learning itself as a joint productive activity involving a partnership among parents, children, and teachers. As more findings emerge, the project will yield conceptual tools and practical materials and strategies that can inform the development and evaluation of family school programs that employ technology as a means of joint parent-child learning. 🌸

Read past issues of Talking Leaves online: <http://www.cal.org/crede/>

Community-Based Organization/School Relationships in Urban Southeast Asian Communities

Adeline Becker, Francine Collignon, and Makna Men, Brown University
Serei Tan, Providence, RI School District

Many Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and Vietnamese students in Rhode Island schools are at risk of educational failure due to linguistic and cultural differences, poverty, and legacies of war in their families' homelands. CREDE researchers are addressing this problem by exploring how relationships between community-based organizations (CBOs) and schools can enhance the achievement of Southeast Asian students. The researchers are investigating the potential for collaborations among CBOs and schools to provide value-added services to each other and to targeted students and their families. When CBOs and schools work together, they foster understandings of effective educational practice across generations, languages, and cultures. By identifying features through which CBO/school programs support learners' abilities to engage fully in schooling, the researchers also examine how elements in the students' multiple worlds (home, school, and community) affect their achievement to high standards.

In order to focus on student achievement and the benefits available from CBO/school relationships, the researchers set out to identify the number of Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and Vietnamese students in Rhode Island public schools, the number of students placed in mainstream classrooms, special language programs, special education programs, and the graduation, drop-out, retention, and truancy rates. However, because the school districts and state education agency could provide only census data for the number of Asian/Pacific Islander students receiving language services, the researchers contacted over 20 social service organizations for assistance. The organizations did not have all the needed information either. As a result, the project began working with the Providence school district. Moreover, the researchers' inquiries served to heighten teacher, school, and district awareness of English language learners' needs;

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Different Cultures, Different Strokes, Similar Reasons

Gil Garcia, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education

Across cultures, adults seek to teach children positive behaviors and skills. In some cultures, adults teach positive behaviors and new skills through modeling to ensure that children learn what behaviors and actions are acceptable and appropriate, according to the situation. They aim to instill key observation and analytical skills in their charges. In other cultures, adults accomplish the same goals by engaging in long discussions with children. They explain and negotiate understanding with children and expect them to respond accordingly.

We need to recognize that these two kinds of cultures are not at odds with each other. The increasing diversity of America's landscape and the mix of cultural and linguistic groups continue to bring different people and their actions closer together. Although there are many behaviors that are unique to specific groups, the above scenarios share common elements: Adults assume leadership roles and ensure that purposive learning takes place, and the learning is designed to benefit the family unit and larger community.

There are several implications of these cultural approaches for preschool and other formal education set-

tings. Knowledge of how families organize and make sense of their world reveals much about the nature and strength of the links that naturally occur between adults and children, even those in the most severely impoverished situations. Such knowledge also reveals ways to influence school behavior. While the approaches used by different adults, parents, households, and groups to accomplish similar, if not identical ends might appear common on the surface, the groups might, for example, use different strategies to solve the same problem.

Findings emerging from CREDE's Program 3—about families, peers, schools, and community—offer useful information on this topic for educators. The findings should be used to guide teachers and others on ways to adapt instruction and to encourage parents to become or remain active participants in school and in their children's learning. These findings will help educators strengthen the links between teaching and learning. 🌿


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prompt requests from teachers and schools for professional development and technical assistance; and increase communication among several districts and CBOs.

Project work improved school/community communication by convening elected leaders of the Southeast Asian communities, staff of CBOs, educators, and researchers. The project convened groups who would not ordinarily meet together, bringing multiple perspectives to specific issues having an impact on the education of Southeast Asian students. The agenda grew from concerns that had been articulated in formal and informal interviews with individuals from the target populations. The issues included the need for parent/family information in order to understand children's education and their schools, the desire for the Southeast Asian communities' representation in the local school districts' decision-making processes, the underrepresentation of Southeast Asian educators in the schools, and the need for linguistic and cultural information about the Southeast Asian communities on the part of mainstream educators. Participants in the various forums—luncheons, formal and informal dialogues, focus groups—identified common concerns with respect to gaps in services for Southeast Asian student populations and a growing resolve to act on their behalf.

The CREDE project staff forged a collaboration with the Socio-Economic Development Center for Southeast Asians (SEDC), the coordinating agency for Southeast Asian services in the state. Researchers assisted with a summer learning academy for Southeast Asian middle school youth, sponsored by SEDC. They also documented the after-school follow-up sessions to the summer academy, held during the school year, and convened focus groups with Southeast Asian community leaders, families, and educators to determine their perspectives on education services and gaps in services.


In sum, the project is involved in ethnographic research through the case study of the largest CBO/school relationship, generating statistical data and stories from biographical interviews with the target population, while engaging Southeast Asian community members in providing professional development and technical assistance to educators and service providers. By conducting research and development on meeting the educational needs of Southeast Asian students at risk of educational failure, this study is both revealing and implementing ways to strengthen collaborations among CBOs, schools, and families. 

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similarly high pressure to use alcohol. Gang activity is an urban phenomenon that is not a major problem in the rural area. While students in the urban setting are at greater risk for engaging in some risky behaviors than students in the rural setting, rural students are at greater risk of being unaware of postsecondary opportunities. Many students in both settings fail to see the relationship between effort expended in schooling and future opportunities.

The fourth finding is that Latino males (in both rural and urban environments) and African American males (in the urban school) are the most likely to report that they have very good relations with their parents. However, they are also at the highest risk for school failure and involvement in risky behavior. Asian females, while among the highest achievers, are also the most likely to report strained relations with parents. Research claiming that adolescents who maintain good relationships with parents are less likely to have problems in school does not appear to be true for many of the students in this sample.

In this project, doing homework and devoting time to study are considered key indicators of students' engagement with school. The researchers are exploring how peers transmit both positive and negative messages about doing homework, how students read and manage these messages, and how parents support homework and study practices across cultural groups. The fifth finding indicates that although African American males in the study are the most likely of all males to indicate they intend to go to college, they engage in the least amount of homework. On the other hand, Asian females are the most likely of all female students to have high postsecondary aspirations, coupled with high dedication to study.

Although it is too early to draw conclusions based on these emergent findings, they do establish a baseline for following change over time. They also alert us to issues of importance for adolescents who are beginning high school, and they help us begin to better understand pressures student face to not do well in school. The pressures on low income and working class students from different ethnic/cultural groups to continue their studies or to exit from school prematurely are not well understood. To be successful in reforming school practices and helping families guide these young people toward productive futures, it is critical to understand these pressures. This study hopes to add to our knowledge of how ethnically diverse adolescents make critical decisions about their schooling and their futures, and in what ways families, peers, and communities help to shape these decisions. 

Navigating and Negotiating Home, School, and Peer Linkages in Adolescence

Margarita Azmitia and Catherine Cooper, University of California, Santa Cruz

In this project, researchers are studying how families, schools, peers, and community organizations in two small coastal cities in central California work together to help students as they move from childhood to adolescence and guide them towards their educational and vocational goals. One unusual feature of the study is that the researchers are examining both similarities and differences across ethnic, gender, and family income groups as well as variation within each group.

In one part of the project, the researchers followed 150 students of European and Mexican descent through 6th and 7th grades to investigate how they made the transition from elementary to middle school. Over 2 years, the researchers conducted home visits with students and their families, interviewed students at school about their friendship networks, examined students' grades and achievement test scores, and observed classes to find out how students seek help from families, teachers, and peers and how families, teachers, and peers can be resources in students' achievement and planning for the future.

Initial findings indicate that students who achieved to higher levels received more guidance—both academic and personal—from parents, siblings, and teachers. Parents in both ethnic groups held high goals for their children's schooling and careers; they wanted more information while their children were in elementary and middle school about classes required to complete high school and qualify for college, financial aid, and future careers. Parents felt high school could be too late to get this information. Latino families, mostly immigrants, had less information about how children could accomplish those goals, and some students, especially Latino students, were unsure of their teachers' expectations of them for their future.

Although teachers in the study generally distributed their time and attention equally among all students, researchers found differences by ethnicity in terms of which students initiated contact with teachers. When they struggled with their classwork, for example, European American students were more likely to seek help from teachers than students of Mexican descent.

In the second part of this project, the researchers are studying two community organizations—a community college outreach program and a program offering alternatives to youth violence. Together, they serve over 500 ethnically diverse youth. The researchers formed university-community partnerships with both organizations to determine what factors help youth stay in school and on

successful developmental pathways. For example, the outreach program offers tutoring, Saturday academies, parent workshops, and a summer institute focusing on college preparation, applications, financial aid, and leadership. The researchers set up databases to include students' demographic backgrounds, career dreams, resources and challenges, and school grades. The research team helps students, families, and programs monitor students' pathways through school. These tools help programs learn what events foster students' progress, gather feedback about program effectiveness over time, and attract continuing funding. Like the school-based sample, youth and parents in the outreach program held high goals, and viewed the community programs as key resources in supporting their goals.

For more information on this study, see the project website (<http://psych.ucsc.edu/family-school/>). 🌸

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research program explore these issues and are featured in this issue of *Talking Leaves*:

- A National Survey of School/Community-Based Organization Partnerships Serving Language Minority Students At-Risk
- Community-Based Organization/School Relationships in Urban Southeast Asian Communities
- Navigating and Negotiating Home, School, and Peer Linkages in Adolescence
- Developing Immigrant Parents' Computer Literacy in Partnership with Students' Learning
- Peer Group Influence and Academic Aspirations Across Cultural/Ethnic Groups of High School Students

Taken together, these projects investigate and describe how families, schools, peers, and community organizations can be assets to diverse students as they navigate their worlds and move toward their future goals.

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Hot Off the Press



The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol: A Tool for Teacher-Researcher Collaboration and Professional Development

D. Short & J. Echevarria

This report describes a research-based model of sheltered instruction, an approach where teachers use specific strategies to teach content curriculum (e.g., social studies, math) to English language learners while promoting their English language development. The report presents the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, which operationalizes the model and is used by teachers to plan lessons and researchers to measure implementation of the model. The collaborative role of teachers and researchers in developing this model is explained. (EPR 3, \$5.00)

Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Programs in the United States, 1998-1999 Supplement

M. Loeb

This supplement contains 31 new profiles from the 1998-1999 school year. Together, the 1995 Directory and the three supplements contain profiles of 261 programs in 23 states plus the District of Columbia: (\$8.00, 97 pp. Also available online: www.cal.org/cal/db/2way/)

Secondary Newcomer Programs in the United States: 1998-1999 Supplement

D. Short & B. Boyson

This supplement contains 24 new profiles of middle and high school newcomer programs. Together, the 1996-1997 Directory and the two supplements contain profiles of 110 newcomer programs in 26 states. (\$10.00, 103 pp.)

To order, send a check or purchase order to CAL/CREDE, attention C. Daniels, 4646 40th Street NW, Washington, DC 20016-1859. Include 10% for shipping. For more information, contact crede@cal.org or see www.cal.org/crede/pubs/.