



San José State
UNIVERSITY

MULTICULTURAL FORUM

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY COMMITTEE • COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND THE ARTS • SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

Spring 2004, Volume 15 No. 1

FROM THE EDITOR

I count as one of the privileges of teaching and learning on a diverse campus the pleasure of encountering people who have a little something valuable to share with me about their cultures. One such encounter occurred in 2002 when, teaching a class in which American Indian writing was one of the focuses, Lisa Price, a student whom I had known for a while from before, revealed to me that she is a member of the Karuk Indians, and that the people of her tribe had recently held a ceremony on their ancestral grounds, celebrating their official recognition by the authorities and their reunion after many decades of dispersion. "Great," I thought, and "That is certainly very nice," I think I said to her. *But then who are the Karuk Indians?* I could not presume to know enough to be able to say anything intelligent, but cleverly I suggested to Lisa that, along the same lines as the Native American narratives we were reading, "Maybe you could write a story about yourself?" That story, titled "Listen," is now printed in this issue of the *Multicultural Forum*. And although since that encounter I have also read up a little on the Karuk, I have yet to find another piece of Karuk writing that is more edifying and more enjoyable than Lisa's, for both literary and experiential reasons.

Pleasures aside, diversity does have its discontents. For example, people speaking with an accent, as Professor Kumaravadivelu tells us, are potential clients for "therapy" conducted at an "accent modification clinic." Accent, next to skin color, disability, religion, national origin, and so forth, can lead to discrimination if we take it as an abnormality and deficiency, when in fact it is rooted in biological and neuropsycholinguistic processes during language acquisition. An understanding of such processes should help to neutralize some of the discontents towards diversity. But don't hold your breath as yet: as the case study in this issue illustrates, upholding academic standards on a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual campus with so much "diversity" (read *unevenness, heterogeneity, mixed baggage*) is often an uphill battle; it is an exercise in frustration as it degenerates from rigor to regret. It is a sinking feeling we are familiar with, but Professor Peter Lowenberg offers to take up the challenge of upholding academic rigor with the advice that "taking feasible small steps" might help professors help students reach their targeted learning goals. It is not a miracle cure, I suppose, but unless we try it we might never get there.

-- Balance Chow

ACCENT WITHOUT ATTITUDE

B. Kumaravadivelu, Professor

Department of Linguistics
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"Governor Clinton, you attended Oxford University in England and Yale Law School in the Ivy League, two of the finest institutions of learning in the world. So, how come you still talk like a hillbilly?"

The then Governor of Arkansas Bill Clinton was asked that question by a news reporter in Chicago during his 1992 presidential campaign. The reporter was referring to the fact that Clinton hails from the South and speaks with a "Southern" accent. Underlying the reporter's question was the assumption that education—particularly education associated with universities of international repute—should be of help in getting rid of one's "undesirable" native accent.

ACCENT THERAPY?

I was reminded of that episode recently when I received a flier from the SJSU Center for Communicative Disorders. The flier said that the Center "is proud to announce" an "Accent Modification Clinic." It invites "SJSU faculty, Staff and Students who would like to modify their accent or who are having difficulty being understood" to participate in 50-minute therapy sessions conducted twice weekly for approximately three months. Coming, as it does, from the Center for Communicative Disorders, armed with "therapy" sessions, I wondered whether accent is being treated as a communicative disorder. I speak with an Indian, or more precisely Tamil, accent because my mother tongue is Tamil. I never thought of my native accent as a communicative disorder any more than I thought of my skin color as a physical disorder. My accent, like my skin color, is a part of who I am. A part of my identity. Therefore, to seek to modify my accent is to seek to modify my identity!

WHAT IS AN ACCENT?

An accent simply refers to one's way of speaking, the way one sounds when speaking, the way one uses phonological features such as stress, rhythm, tone and intonation. Contrary to popular belief, it is not just foreigners or immigrants who speak with an accent. Everybody speaks with an accent. Non-accent is non-existent. For instance, those who speak English as their mother tongue speak it with an accent that can be traced to the geographic region and/or the social class they belong to. Thus, there are people who speak English with an American accent, an Australian accent, or a British accent. In fact, there are variations within these broad categories. That is, there are people who speak American English with a Boston accent, a New York accent, a Southern accent or an African-American accent. Similarly, non-native speakers of English speak it with an accent that can be traced to their first language. That is how we know people who speak English with an Indian accent, German accent, Hispanic accent, etc.

NEUROPLASTICITY AND LATERALIZATION

According to psycholinguists, what kind of an accent one acquires is determined by the sound system of the language one is exposed to during one's childhood. They maintain that there is a "critical period" for language acquisition. It corresponds roughly to the first decade of one's life. During this period, the language learning circuitry of the human brain is very flexible. This flexibility of the brain is called "neuroplasticity." Approximately around the age of ten, the brain begins to lose its neuroplasticity. As Pinker (1995:293) observes, "acquisition of a normal language is guaranteed for children up to the age of six, is steadily compromised from then until shortly after puberty, and is rare thereafter. Maturation changes in the brain, such as the decline in metabolic rate and number of neurons during the early school-age years, and the bottoming out of the number of synapses and metabolic rate around puberty, are plausible causes." The loss of neuroplasticity is confounded by lateralization, a maturational process in which the complex cognitive activity of language development is lateralized to the left hemisphere of the brain. This process too has a serious impact on language acquisition.

The natural biological processes of the loss of neuroplasticity and the onset of lateralization appear to occur almost at the same time—around puberty. Interestingly, it is during this time that the innate ability to acquire language(s) declines considerably. As Scovel (1988:61) points out, "the emergence of foreign accents arises at the same time that lateralization of cognitive, linguistic, and perceptual functions appears to be completed in the human brain, the same time that neuroplasticity appears to terminate." This explains why children are considered biologically predisposed to be better language learners than adults.

One can learn to speak a second language without any trace of first language system if and only if one learns it during one's childhood. Those who learn a second language after that will retain traces of their first language system in their second language use. This is particularly true of phonological acquisition, because, as Scovel (1988:101) asserts, "phonological production is the only aspect of language performance that has a neuromuscular basis." He declares emphatically that "no adult can learn a language after puberty without some trace of a foreign accent" (p. 178). It is, of course, possible for adult learners of a second language to reach a high level of competence in morphological (word forms), lexical (vocabulary) and syntactic (grammar) production but not in phonological production for the simple reason that, unlike other language skills, phonological production involves neuromuscular pitch movement. As Jenkins (2000:108) points out, neuromuscular pitch movement "is the earliest speech feature experienced in all first languages, probably from as early as 26 weeks *in utero*."

INTELLIGIBILITY AND ACCENT

There is a common tendency to conflate intelligibility and accent. While the two are related, they are not the same. Intelligibility is about being understood by an individual or a group of individuals at a given time in a given communicative context. The context in which a conversation takes place plays an extremely important role in intelligibility. Undoubtedly, we all should learn to speak a language in such a way that we are intelligible to others. But intelligibility is assured with correct pronunciation and clear articulation. Those who pronounce correctly and articulate clearly still speak with an

accent. Who can say Bill Clinton's speech is not intelligible although he talks "like a hillbilly?" Who can say Henry Kissinger's speech is not intelligible although he speaks with a thick German accent?

STANDARD ENGLISH AND STANDARD ACCENT

Yet another distinction that is normally not maintained in common discourse is the distinction between Standard English and standard accent. As Jenkins (2000:203) observes, "Standard English can be spoken with any regional accent." She further points out that neither RP (Received Pronunciation which is supposed to be the "Standard" English in Britain) nor GA (General American which is supposed to be the "Standard" in the USA) "represents a monochrome accent" (p. 203). After detailed phonological analyses of different varieties of English, Jenkins concludes that "accent variation is the rule and conformity the exception" (p. 206).

ACCENT AND DISCRIMINATION

In spite of widespread accent variation, discrimination based on accent "can be found everywhere in our daily lives" (Lippi-Green, 1997:73). Lippi-Green has documented how, in the USA, people with foreign accents have even been denied employment. Pointing out that accent acts in part as a marker of race, she maintains that not all foreign accents evoke negative reactions. According to her research, African-American and Asian-American accents are ridiculed while British or French accents are respected. Recognizing, quite rightly, that celebration of diversity does not facilitate a monophonic community in which everybody sounds exactly the way everybody else does, the SJSU Academic Senate passed a policy resolution (S01-13) in the year 2001 recommending that diversity be viewed broadly to include accent as well.

ACCENT "REDUCTION" IN 30 DAYS

Without realizing that accent has biological foundations, individuals and institutions go to a great length to "reduce accent". There are commercial agencies that put out

newspaper ads promising accent reduction in 30 days—just as there are TV ads that tell people how to get rid of their unwanted cellulite! A newspaper recently reported that some anxious parents in South Korea are flocking to plastic surgery clinics to have a surgical procedure called *frenectomy* done to their children's tongue in order to get it longer and more flexible. They believe that such a procedure will make the tongue easily touch the roof of the mouth so that their children can speak English "without a Korean accent" (Demick, 2002).

Regardless of sustained effort and systematic training (or even surgical procedures), it is not easy to change one's accent picked up during one's childhood. People with extraordinary histrionic talent can learn to change their accent temporarily, as movie stars and stand-up comedians do, but even they can fool only some of the people some of the time. While there are several ways in which one should try to make oneself understood, reducing one's native accent is certainly not one of them. Besides, as Daniels (1995, cited in Jenkins, 2000) suggests, in retaining "the sounds, the rhythms and the intonation of our mother tongue," we avoid cutting "the umbilical cord which ties us to our mother."

Source materials:

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LISTEN

Lisa Price

To My Dear Grandson,

I am writing to you so that when you hear her, you will recognize her and not be afraid. I am writing to tell you the story of a magical night. It is the true story of the night the Karuk People held the Earth Renewal Ceremony on their sacred land. The land is the Karuk village of Kitiman and is considered to be the spiritual center of the universe. Over 100 years ago the land was taken from the Karuk and only recently was it returned to them. The story I tell you is the story of the past, a story of the blood that flows through your veins. Although the color of your skin has paled, your blood surges red with the same responsibility that was given our people many years ago. It is a story of the present, the awakening of a sleeping culture. And it is the story of the future as we each make the choice about how to live in the world.

My child, you were there on that magical night, cradled in your mother's womb. It was then that she touched you. I have watched as you lie in the tall grass, running it through your fingers and feeling each blade reaching out to you. You gaze up at the sky with curiosity and wonder and I know that she speaks to you. So I tell you now the story of how it all began so long ago.

If you listen, you can hear her whisper. If you listen, you can hear her call. Long ago, before there was man, Great Spirits roamed the Earth. These Great Spirits created the Earth and they loved and cared for her.

She was strong, beautiful, and a loving mother to all of her creatures. When the time came for the Great Spirits to leave their beloved Mother, they created a guardian to care for her in their place. Man was created and entrusted with her care. Generation after generation the way of the Great Spirits was passed down. Man, Mother and all her creatures thrived as the traditions and ceremonies kept them in balance.

As time went on, Mother began to notice a change. It was a small change at first, but more and more she noticed her guardians had begun to fight amongst themselves and her creatures were dying. This saddened her and she was frightened. She tried calling to her guardians. First, she called to the little-ones, but they did not know her. Then she called to the workers, but if they heard her, they did not listen. Finally she called to the elders. The elders heard her. Of course they would hear her, after all, they remembered her. The Elders tried to warn the others through their stories about



"Karok Woman" (Photogravure by Edward S. Curtis, 1923)

the Great Spirits and the Mother, but the others did not listen, after all, those were just old stories.

The elder, Wildcat, told stories. She was always telling stories. She used to tell her stories to her daughter, Talking Colors, and though Talking Colors loved the stories, she, like many of the others, moved away to the city where the Mother was seldom heard. But Wildcat kept on trying. One day young Shan, a little-one from the tribe, listened as Wildcat told of the time when she had heard the Mother laugh.

It was long ago and the smaller creatures, Squirrel, Skunk, Raccoon, and the others, were busy gathering the nuts and berries that would be their food during the cold days ahead. They scampered back and forth with their tiny little feet across her bare skin, Ohhh how it tickled! She began to laugh. She laughed and laughed. She laughed so hard that she began to shudder and as she shook the leaves and nuts and fruits from all the trees began to fall until soon there were great piles all around. Well, this made it very easy for the creatures to gather all the food they needed for the winter. The creatures caught on very quickly and from then on, every year just before the winter came, they looked forward to making her laugh, and she looked forward to laughing.

Shan loved that story, and thinking about it he looked out his window beyond his driveway, past the cars and up at the baron hillside. Seeing few trees and even less creatures he wondered if they could still make her laugh. This worried him, so that night as he settled into bed he asked his father, "Daddy, how come I never heard her laugh?" His father frowned and lowered his head. "Daddy, have you ever heard her?" he persisted. But his father just looked away. "Those are just old stories," he said and he tucked Shan in for the

night. But when he left his son's room that night he felt ashamed, for in fact, he thought he had heard her. The more he thought about it, the more certain he was that it was her, only it was not her laughter that he had heard, it was her cry. It made him weep and he wept for her. He thought of the apathy of his people and he knew that they had let her down. They had let her mountains and waters be ravaged by greed. They had fought over her and divided her. Possessing her had become more important than the guardianship in which they had been entrusted. As the days passed he could not drive his car across her constricted skin without hearing her pained moan. With every logging truck that passed he could hear her screams as he envisioned her torn flesh from which the tall trees had come. When he could no longer ignore her call, he called upon the Elders.

The meeting with the Elders and the Tribal Council was unanimous. Her cries had touched them all and they knew what must be done. Though it had not been done on their soil in over 100 years, they gathered their people and, led by the elders, began learning the sacred ways of the Great Spirits. Shan paid close attention. The White Deerskin Ceremony was the most sacred of ceremonies and in order to dance he would have to understand: This was the ceremony of the Earth's renewal where all the wrongs are set right and the commitment to live as one is renewed. Even at the age of five Shan understood its grave importance.

It was on a warm fall day that those who had heard her call came together on the bluffs overlooking her waters. The ceremonial fire was lit. The smoke rose and flowed through the air, it circled around them and through them, reaching further and deeper until gently it touched her. She was slowly awakened. The singer began, "Aye O Sheena, Aye O, Hey O, Aye O." The dancers chanted and moving in unison called her to them. The chanting intensified and without warning two warriors leaped forward. With trance-like concentration they moved toward each other, challenging each other face to face, "Ouh ouh ouh," they cried as around and around each other they went, untangling the chain of life that had become twisted and knarled. They danced and shouted with fierce emotion until finally their burdens had been lifted.

The two warriors moved rhythmically back in step with the others and as they did, two more leapt out. Again and again, brothers with brothers, fathers with sons, friends with foe, the warriors challenged each other working through the wrongs of many years, just as their ancestors had done for thousands of years before them. And as they did, she watched and listened. She could hear the private pledges made to honor her. She heard Shan vow to protect her creatures and the promise made by Shan's father that he would not again turn

his back on her cry. Wildcat would keep telling her stories and her daughter, Talking Colors would use her colors and paint a reminder so brilliant that they could not forget her. On and on she listened to the hearts of her guardians as they silently, for the first time in many years, became UNITED.

Mother was very pleased and watching contently when suddenly, barely visible over the top of the ceremonial fire, the littlest head popped out. Shan, balancing on one little wobbly leg, hopped forward. First on one leg and then on the other. His cry was little more than a peep, "Ouh Ouh ouh." And then another little-one came forward, and another and another. As she watched her future out there shouting with all their hearts, Mother was so overcome with joy, that she summoned the Sun and the Moon to the sky at the same time. Mixing night and day they both looked down and nodded their approval. She then called her creatures out from hiding. Everyone watched in wonder as the Great Bear came down from the mountainside and played in her waters before them. Eagle and Hawk appeared, soaring above their heads as if to join in the union. All around them the treetops gently rustled as she quietly expressed her gratitude. And as she did, Shan pulled his father close and whispered, "listen."

That is how the story goes, my child. Since that night there have been many signs of gratitude. The river became swollen with more salmon than there had been in many years. There have been more sightings of bear and hawk and eagle, like the ones summoned on that night. Your great grandmother, Talking Colors, painted an official flag for the Karuk Nation that was taken to Washington D.C., hung in the Smithsonian Institute and carried in the Olympics. The people began to unite and take a more active role in the management of the land and the care of the Mother. But the story does not end here. The Mother is not yet out of danger. She needs our help, so she calls upon us to learn the ways of the Great Spirits. I know that she will call to you one day, and when she does, I hope that you will be still, open your heart and listen.

With Love,
Your Grandmother

About the author: Lisa Price was recently enrolled in the Intern Credential program at SJSU and planned to teach elementary school. Introducing herself when compelled to, she wrote: "I hope to be able to share my passion about the earth with my students by exposing them to its natural beauty. Born and raised in California, I grew up in the Bay Area and spent many summers with my grandparents along the Klamath River. I am married, have two daughters and two grandchildren—one boy, one girl" (the same youngsters, as the editor quickly learned, originated a few inquiries as to when grandma's story concerning them would ever see print).

UPHOLDING ACADEMIC STANDARDS: FROM RIGOR TO REGRET

A CASE STUDY

Dr. Stanley J. Underdal

Department of Humanities

It was the start of Fall Semester and the new, young teacher was excited about her first college teaching job. An outstanding student in high school and a scholarship student at two prestigious universities, she had just completed her doctoral dissertation on the poetry of William Carlos Williams and was awarded the Ph.D. with great distinction. Now she was eagerly looking forward to sharing her love of literature and the process of creative writing with four sections of freshman college students.

She had spent an entire summer preparing for these first classes and her syllabus was bursting with wonderful readings from all the writers of the 19th and 20th centuries that had excited her as a developing scholar. When she showed her original reading list to a more experienced colleague at the university, she was disappointed to hear him say that perhaps that was a bit more than could be expected of Freshman students (after all, she had devoured literature as if she were a starving literary castaway rescued from a distant land with no library; why wouldn't her students be just as eager to dive in?). So, she trimmed the reading list to a single novel for each of the fifteen weeks of the semester, with an additional four or five short stories and twenty or thirty relatively short poems for good measure.

The young teacher was particularly pleased with the number and quality of writing assignments she was assigning based on the readings and on the lectures that she had so carefully crafted: a five-page paper for each class meeting, plus four major research papers well spaced throughout the semester. Of course, she also had three essay midterm exams planned in addition to the final examination in which she expected students to reflect on all the material covered during that semester.

Imagine her dismay over the reaction of the students when she passed out the syllabi on the first day of class and explained her expectations. She wasn't quite prepared for what seemed to be groans from several students, but just chalked those up to normal freshman reactions to any kind of assignment. Things, however, were worse on the second

meeting, for it seemed that a third of each class was missing (indeed, they had quickly dropped the course after class on the very first day). But she was thrilled to begin the substantive part of the class with the remaining students.

When more than half of each section failed to turn in their first five-page paper at the next class meeting, and also seemed not to have completed reading the novel assigned for that day, she began to wonder what was wrong. That night, as she corrected the few papers that had been submitted, she was appalled at the innumerable misspellings, improper sentence constructions, lack of logical paragraph development, and poor grammar that plagued virtually every one. She had not anticipated such poor writing. Performances like that never would have been acceptable in the graduate classes that she had taken. The young teacher spent all night marking and correcting every error, major and minor, on each paper (and used up three red pens in the process); it seemed, as she reviewed the papers later, that there was more red on them than the original blue ink or computer printer black used by the students.

When she returned the papers at the next class meeting, she painstakingly reviewed all of the major errors that she had noted (filling the white boards of the classroom several times over), fully expecting that the next day's writing assignment would be free of all those distracting problems. But such was not to be. During the course of the semester her classes continued to diminish in size, and several times she overheard students after class complaining about her exceedingly high expectations. Not insensitive to the harsh realities of the situation, she began to modify, indeed practically abandon, her original syllabus. The reading list shrank and the five-page paper per class meeting became one per week; she even reduced the number of essay midterm exams. But she was still disturbed by the continued poor writing. She knew that the remaining students were bright, for they discussed the readings with surprising insight. But their writing still was filled with misspellings, they used colloquial expressions and phrases that she could not even understand, and irritating grammatical errors were everywhere.

In desperation she asked several colleagues why her students were such poor writers; were they unusual—the only poor writers in the university? Gradually she began to understand. Many of her students came from different cultural backgrounds (and different countries) and their comfort with college-level standard English was not yet developed. Some came from writing traditions far different from what the young teacher had learned. Often they wrote as they spoke, and that seldom matched “good”

English writing styles. Some were transfers from community colleges where they had taken and passed English 1A/B courses, but obviously had not learned what she assumed should have been taught there. A few colleagues, clearly having faced the same problems, blamed the students' lack of preparation on poor teaching in high school; particularly they identified the paucity of high school writing assignments as a chief culprit. However, they also understood that the large class size and number of sections that most high school English teachers had to handle were overwhelming. With so many students, how could those teachers possibly have time to grade the numerous writing assignments that college teachers thought should be assigned?

Now the young college teacher had to make some decisions. Should she just accept the quality of writing her students produced and concentrate on the "substance" of each assignment? Was it enough to know that they could identify the "thesis" of each reading and indicate, however imperfectly, the key elements that supported that thesis? Should she forget the five-page papers and just have them write one-paragraph or one-page summaries of the material? Should she drop the extended essay midterm and final exams and substitute short-answer questions that could be answered in two or three sentences? Or should she insist that college students must match what she considered to be standard, but rigorous, requirements? These are the questions that she asked of her colleagues. What should be their advice?

REACHING TARGET GOALS OF LEARNING, LEARNING STEP BY STEP

A RESPONSE TO THE CASE STUDY

Peter Lowenberg, Professor

Department of Linguistics
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This new teacher's original syllabus of reading and writing assignments would be excessive for most academic contexts. However, even if she didn't make such high demands on her students, she would be experiencing problems and frustrations that have been encountered by almost everyone teaching at universities similar to San Jose State. For this teacher, in particular, these problems may be more severe due to their contrast with her own stellar achievements throughout her education, which may have occurred

in institutions with students who were far less multiethnic, multilingual, and culturally diverse than those whom she is currently teaching.

A useful piece of advice that her more experienced colleagues could give her would be to reassess her students' proficiencies, abilities, and motivations from a slightly different perspective, one in which she focuses on their strengths as well as their shortcomings. Regardless of what the students did or did not learn in high school, it would be a serious mistake to confuse their limited proficiency in Standard English and genres of academic writing for deficiencies in their cognitive abilities.

Many of her students may be the first members of their families ever to attend a university. The university culture and environment may be completely unfamiliar to them. As a result, they may lack the intellectual self-confidence shared by the young teacher and most of her peers in graduate school. In addition, many of her students must balance their studies with part- or full-time work and with extensive family obligations. Yet despite these challenges, these students have achieved admission to the university, which is a strong indication of their intelligence and motivation. The teacher's task is to mobilize these strengths, which are not immediately apparent from traditional perspectives.

Rather than how many five-page papers or extended essay exams should be assigned, the teacher could focus on how to "jump start" the students from their current levels of real-world knowledge, motivation, and intellectual self-confidence. There is certainly no need to "dummy down" the syllabus, but there is a need to undertake instruction from a realistic assessment of the students' current proficiencies and interests. In so doing, the teacher might benefit from a basic concept of second language teaching: the distinction between "target goals" and "learning goals." The target goal of the course may be to instill "a love of (19th and 20th century) literature and the process of creative writing." However, the canons of this literature may revolve around experiences and modes of expression that are completely alien to the students. The types of writing in which students are to respond to this literature are in genres to which they have had little exposure. It may be that several intermediate "learning goals" should be attempted en route to the ultimate target goal.

Initially, readings outside of these canons might resonate more strongly with the students. Many such readings can be found in recently published anthologies, but even these are from successfully published authors and may not be

“real” for the students. The possible range of text types could be expanded to include articles from popular magazines dealing with entertainment, sports, fashion, or automobiles, which, though not “great” literature, can be screened for adherence to the norms of Standard English. The number and lengths of these texts could initially be limited, allowing ample time for in-class group discussions based on controversial issues that arise from the readings. In their groups, students could be given collaborative writing tasks addressing these issues and demanding a contribution from every member. Again, this sequential development of the reading program is designed only to meet learning goals. As students become more proficient and confident, they can be assigned readings from the canon and be expected to analyze and respond to them according to the target goals of the teacher. But this will take time.

With regard to writing, for most of these students, Standard English may not be the vernacular; in fact, many of them graduate from high school virtually unscathed by its norms. However, this limited proficiency in Standard English in no way indicates a linguistic deficiency. Forty years of sociolinguistic research, pioneered by the work of William Labov at the University of Pennsylvania, has demonstrated convincingly that while these students may not be proficient in “good” English, their own non-standard dialects and even bilingual code-mixed varieties of English are rule-governed and have grammars that are just as systematic as the grammar of Standard English, along with a rich tradition of oral genres. From these dialects come many of the “colloquial expressions and phrases that (the teacher) could not even understand, and irritating grammatical errors everywhere.” Obviously, the students need to consciously learn the Standard English dialect that the young teacher may have unconsciously acquired from childhood in the home, and the academic genres that she learned through her own education, perhaps even before entering college. However, making the students’ papers “bloody” by correcting every error can easily weaken the motivation and confidence that will be essential to their academic success. Instead, for each assignment, the teacher can focus on particular types of grammatical errors (e.g., verb forms in one assignment, subordinate clauses in another), gradually building up the students’ repertoire of language forms and text types. As with the above approach to the readings, the “target goal” of this incremental writing program will be proficiency in Standard English and competence in a number of academic genres. But again, it will take time.

In addition, the teacher needs to learn that she cannot accomplish these goals single-handedly. She will need

advice, even mentoring, from her more experienced colleagues. She can also be advised to draw on additional resources available on her campus, such as the peer guidance offered by the Center for Faculty Development and Support and the tutorial programs at the Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) at San Jose State.

In sum, the young teacher need not, indeed should not, dilute the target reading and writing goals she has for her students. However, she and they might benefit from approaching these goals in more feasible small steps. Students’ progress may be slow and may frequently be accompanied by frustrating “backslides” to earlier errors. But progress will occur. Above all, the young teacher must be reminded, as must all of us from time to time, that education is basically an interaction among human beings. Like all interactions, it is best accomplished through the mutual expression of dignity and respect, which, if consistently observed, may ultimately be the students’ and the teacher’s strongest asset in the classroom.

*To contribute articles for consideration, please submit materials to the Editor of the **Multicultural Forum** at M/S 0088.*

An electronic version of the *Multicultural Forum* is available on the College of Humanities and the Arts website within the 'Ed Equity' link, located at www2.sjsu.edu/depts/hum_arts/index.htm.

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