

DIVERSE VOICES March 2009 Newsletter

The mission of the Diversity Issues Committee is to assist CSHA members in increasing knowledge and awareness of issues related to cultural and linguistic diversity in speech language pathology & audiology



Thinking beyond

categories was a recurring theme for us this year. At different times, we visited a basic question - what is *diversity*? On at least one occasion, we concluded that diversity was a state of mind.

Our recently completed and upcoming projects are consistent with this spirit. We aimed to engage the larger CSHA community in dialogue and to invite you to explore what it means to promote diversity through our professional practice. Some of our recent committee activities include:

Statewide student outreach

This year, we have begun to focus on student outreach across California campuses. As the future of the profession, students can make significant contributions towards increasing awareness of diversity issues and promoting cultural competence. In order to better understand how to partner with students most productively, we have piloted a student survey on three campuses across Northern and Southern California. The

goal is to learn more about student experiences and needs around the issue of diversity. In the near future, we hope to offer programs serving students across the state.

Training and dissemination

In response to the positive feedback we received for our case-based seminar at the 2008 CSHA convention, we plan to prepare an online course focusing on diagnostic issues related to working with clients whose language(s) are not shared by their clinicians. We hope that distributing information in this medium will provide professionals with convenient access to practical supports.

Representing diversity interests in our state associations

We have been working closely with the CSHA board to offer our support for the completion of projects and discussions of issues related to diversity. We provided feedback for the association's statements on the CSHA Language Directory. We also help address general questions and concerns from the CSHA membership related to issues of diversity.

Diversity Issues Committee

Chair:
Nidhi Mahendra

Members:
Damian Huertas
Robert McKinney
Ying-Chiao Tsao
Betty Yu

Announcements

Welcome to the two newest members of the Diversity Issues Committee:
Dr. Damian Huertas of San Rafael City Schools and Dr. Ying-Chiao Tsao of CSU - Fullerton!

Two positions on the Diversity Committee will be available for the 2009-2011 term. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact the current committee chair at nidhi.mahendra@csueastbay.edu.

In 2008, the Diversity Committee:

- Presented a seminar at the 2008 CSHA convention: Diagnostic Encounters with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Clients: Case-Based Learning.
- Submitted an Issue Brief to CSHA on standards of practice related to internationally trained speech-language pathologists
- Continued to build a multilingual glossary of commonly used technical terms

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Reflections on Diversity: On Being a Male SLP

In this column, we explore first-person perspectives on life in our professional field.

Snips and Snails and Puppy Dog Tails

Damian Huertas, Ed.D.

Diversity, multiculturalism, and bilingualism are concepts that have all been tattooed onto my consciousness growing up in California. Diversity can refer to differences across a wide spectrum of sociopolitical features, however, it is often used narrowly, for example, to talk about differences in color. In the fields of speech-language pathology and education, the exploration of diversity generally includes language, culture, ethnicity, but I can't help but wonder whether gender might have been left out of the discussion.

Reflecting on the early years of my career, I would have to say that it has been both rewarding and challenging. I love working with children and helping them make leaps in their language skills. However, my experience as a male SLP has brought challenges as well.

I have been told by colleagues, teachers, and parents how refreshing it was for them to work with a male therapist. The majority of children I have worked with have been male. Some parents have said their children respond well to me because of my gender.

I, too, have noticed gender. I have found that boys I work with seem to enjoy more of the hands on activities. I have also observed that in IEP meetings, I am not confronted as much as my female coworkers. I seem to get assigned the more "difficult" cases.

At the same time, as a male in education, I am extremely cautious when working with children. I am mindful to maintain a degree of distance. Many of the younger students attempt to give me hugs. While it may be innocent, I have to be vigilant about how these physical gestures are seen. Our culture permits women to be affectionate towards their students. However, when it comes to men in schools, it is quite the opposite.

Even beyond the therapy setting, gender is an issue in our profession. I have been to several conferences where emery boards and mini make up bags were given away. While I do like to keep my hands looking nice, I have to wonder what message this sends.

In 10 years, I hope to see ongoing and open conversation and consideration about the impact of gender incongruence on the field of speech-language pathology. Diversity awareness and sensitivity does not lend itself to a "just add water" approach. In fact, diversity is always changing. Therefore, it would behoove the profession to have continuous and frequent discussions about the various aspects impacting the field, including gender dynamics. I see this as the vital step towards inclusion.

With this reflection, I hope to share the experience of one male therapist and to open up a dialogue that is often missing in the current explorations of diversity in our field.

Event

"Diversity and the Big Nine"

April 18, 2009

A conference on practical strategies & best practices for serving CLD clients

Jack Adams Hall
San Francisco State

Sponsored by
SFSU NSSLHA

The Story Behind the SFSU Conference on Diversity

Student Writers: Chikako Fuji, Amy Pirus, Elizabeth Renaud

Coming from a variety of backgrounds in terms of age, culture, gender, language, and life experiences, the students of the Communicative Disorders (CD) Program at San Francisco State University (SFSU) have been exploring how to expand their awareness and knowledge about diversity in the profession.

As emerging professionals who will interact with clients and collaborate with peers from diverse backgrounds, we aimed to answer the following questions: How could we prepare ourselves to best serve the Bay Area community? What skills do we need to provide least-biased services, to distinguish language differences from disorders, and to provide culturally

competent care? What are the best-practices, assessments tools, and intervention strategies we can apply as we move forward into careers in hospitals, public schools, and private practices? How do our individual attitudes and beliefs influence our interactions with clients and colleagues?

Searching for answers, we reached out to peers and instructors and asked about their personal and professional experiences. We conferred with SLPs in the community, with ASHA Student To Empowered Professional (STEP) mentors, and attended workshops/conventions in record numbers.

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Featured Online Resources

According to the 2000 Census, speakers of Asian languages are the fastest growing minority group in the U.S. We feature three websites that offer information about communication and communicative disorders for members of Asian-language communities and the professionals working with them

Hmong-English Bilingual Speakers

<http://www.tc.umn.edu/~kanx0004/index.htm>

This website offers linguistic and cultural information about Hmong speakers in the United States for speech-language pathologists, educators, and parents.

Chinese -English Bilingual Web Resources

<http://home.comcast.net/~bilingualslp>

Funded by ASHA's Office of Multicultural Affairs, this website offers articles in English and Chinese on a variety of topics about speech, language, & hearing development. It also has Mandarin articulation screening forms and phoneme charts

Corpora of Vietnamese Texts

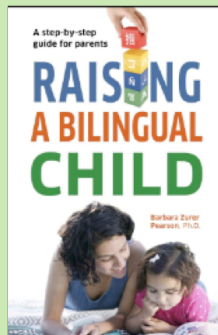
<http://vnspeechtherapy.com/vi/CVT/index.htm>

Information about speech and language development and disorders written in English and Vietnamese Lectures with slideshow and audio designed for Vietnamese-speaking parents of young children with moderate to severe communicative delays. This website is also home to the Corpora of Vietnamese Texts (CVT) research.

Hot off the Press: Reading Recommendation

Pearson, B. Z. (2008). Raising a bilingual child. New York: Living

This book is written for parents and delivers current, research-based information about bilingual language development in accessible, non-technical language. Although not marketed as such, it can also be helpful for professionals who want to talk



to parents, teachers, and other people in a child's life who might be interested in issues of bilingualism in early development. Those of you who found Colin Baker's (2000) *A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism* helpful will likely also appreciate this more recent volume.

Many more Resources at CSHA Diversity Issues Website!

Facts about ELLs in California

Serving the 65+ CLD client

Guidelines for working with interpreters/translators

Assessment practices with African-American students

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In an attempt to further our professional development, the SFSU chapter of NSSLHA will host "Diversity and the Big Nine" on April 18, 2009. The conference will address practical strategies and best practice procedures for working with diverse clients. It will be held at Jack Adams Hall on the SFSU campus, and is open to students, professionals and the community at large.

Scheduled speakers include: the CSHA Diversity Committee; Stanley Goldberg, Ph.D; Patricia

Lohman-Hawk, Ph.D; Celeste Roseberry-McKibbin, Ph.D; and Nancy Robinson, Ph.D and Patti Solomon-Rice, M.A.

CEUs for both CA Licensing Requirements, as well as ASHA Certification Maintenance Hours, will be offered. Students will also have the opportunity to share their work through poster presentations. Non-SFSU students are welcome to submit their research. Please contact nsslha@sfsu.com to request a brochure, to register, or to submit your work for peer-review.

Visit us online at <http://csa.org> Click on "Diversity Issues"