

# Classroom Spice

Volume 3, Issue 1 Dr. Jeanne Mather, Editor

September 2000

## HISPANIC PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

As more and more Hispanic children are enrolled in our schools, more and more school administrators and teachers are asking for help in serving these students. Hispanics tend to be one of the "most educationally vulnerable" minority groups in the nation, with an estimated 40% of Hispanic children living in poverty. Hispanics often start out behind their peers even at kindergarten level, and by the age of 13 close to 44% are at least one year below grade level, culminating in up to a 40% high school dropout rate.

Much research has been done showing that parental involvement is an important factor in school success. While school administrators often see reserved, non-confrontational Hispanic parents as uncaring, this is seldom the case. In general they have a high regard for education and authority and are very caring parents who assume that schools know what is best for their children and don't want the parents interfering. So what can be done to involve Hispanic parents?

1. School personnel must be cautioned not make the parents feel coerced into coming to meetings, but genuinely welcomed and listened to.
2. Initial contact should be done with face-to-face communication. Notes in English and Spanish are good ideas, but the first

contact should be in person, preferably in their primary language.

3. Communication must be screened for judgmental statements and inferences. Parents should not be made to feel they are to blame for all that is wrong in schools.
4. Provisions for babysitting and transportation will enable many more parents to attend meetings.
5. Informal meetings, especially initial meetings, are more effective. Potluck dinners are usually well attended by Hispanics, especially if held in community centers or churches, although schools may also be utilized.
6. Show appreciation of the importance of the extended family by inviting them to meetings, programs, and conferences, and also utilizing them as translators, teachers' aides, or guest speakers.
7. Home visits show parents that you care about their children and their community.

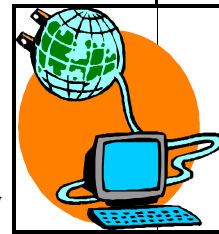
(Continued on page 3)

## USING THE INTERNET TO FIND MULTICULTURAL RESOURCES

Teachers are incredibly busy, so having easy access to information is a real asset. Websites can provide lots of background information, and/or exposure to possible research topics.

For example [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org) provides information on women throughout history. <http://coloquio.com/tamosos/alpha.html> provides names and fields of hundreds of famous Hispanics throughout history and even gives links for additional searching.

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC> provides information on movies dealing with race/ethnicity by group. <http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~amerstuw/mw> is a great source for information on the Multicultural American West including information on Native Peoples, African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Latinos, and women and the parts they played in the American West. A wonderful site. <http://www.diversitystore.com>, gives multicultural information including calendars, famous minority bios, resource material, and much more.



Of course, most teachers' favorite sites have lesson plans. Dr. Donn's is a site that just recently came to our notice. It is a **huge** site with an enormous number of lesson plans. The "Ancient History" site alone, [members.aol.com/\\_ht\\_a/donnandlee/index.html](http://members.aol.com/_ht_a/donnandlee/index.html), has interdisciplinary lesson plans, activities, school sites, tests, resource lists, history clip art, free stuff lists for primary through secondary dealing with all aspects of ancient history!

Whether you want material for a unit on the Aztecs, Mesopotamia, Greece, Roman, or Africa it is there. An example is a second-grade-appropriate set of lesson plans on history and geography of Ancient Greece. Another site helps you to incorporate the Olympics in your lessons. [http://www.edgate.com/summergames/inactive/lesson\\_plans/index.html](http://www.edgate.com/summergames/inactive/lesson_plans/index.html) provides 2nd-12th grade multicultural materials dealing with the Olympics.

The internet can make infusing multicultural elements into your curriculum much easier. Check it out.

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# Hispanic Trivia

## DID YOU KNOW:

### What is the significance of mustard blossoms on the roadside?

Spanish soldiers and friars scattered the seeds to mark a trail.

### What state and what city are named after Spanish colors?

The state of Colorado, (colorado means red, as does rojo), and Amarillo, Texas (amarillo means yellow).

### What does James Banks, well-know educator, have to say about multicultural education?

It is essential that all students learn to understand ethnic diversity, and to develop ethnic literacy and a pride in their own culture and a respect and appreciation for the uniqueness of others.

As the trivia quiz section of the newsletter seems to be particularly popular, here is a new one dealing exclusively with Hispanics. Students seem to enjoy testing their knowledge against their peers and teachers, and learning new things. Use this as a conversation starter, extra credit points for the student who gets the most right answers, a challenge between students/classes/teachers, or as a research motivator. Take a few minutes and see how well you do. Information for these questions came primarily from Education World [www.education-world.com//a\\_lesson023.shtml](http://www.education-world.com//a_lesson023.shtml); [www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/TM/WS\\_hispanic.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/TM/WS_hispanic.shtml); and [www.inconnect.com/~rvazquea/sabe.html](http://www.inconnect.com/~rvazquea/sabe.html) (Answers are provided on p. 4.)

### *Trivia Quiz*

1. Who discovered the Mississippi River?
2. Who led the fight for a better life for migrant farm workers, using fasting & non violent protest?
3. Who was a world-famous Hispanic musician who played cello?
4. Who was the Civil War Naval hero who led the battle to take New Orleans?
5. Who was the founder of the California missions?
6. Where was the first Thanksgiving celebrated?
7. What language other than English is predominately spoken in New Mexico?
8. What did the Spanish do that pleased Indian peoples of the Western Hemisphere?
9. Who commissioned the first zoo in North America?
10. Whose understanding of diseases and its treatment became the basis for modern medicine and pharmacology?
11. What were some of the New World's exports to the Old world?
12. What were some of the Old World's exports to the New World?
13. Name as many English words as you can which were adopted from the Spanish language.
14. Where did the symbol \$ come from?
15. Who was the city of Galveston, Texas named after?
16. Who was the first to use the air for the destruction of enemy sites?
17. What ethnic or racial group has the most distinguished record of military decoration record?
18. Who were Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders?
19. Who invented a calculus of probability establishing the lottery system?
20. Who invented color television?
21. Who helped free the united colonies from the British Crown?

## The Literature Connection

(Parental Involvement—cont'd from page 1)

8. Providing staff development to gain a better understanding of the Hispanic culture such as ish phrases, and other elements such as machismo, quinceanera (a girl's coming of age celebration), or direct eye contact meaning disrespect for authority.
9. Make sure parents understand why a meeting is called and how it will help their child.
10. Be sure parents believe that you truly want their help and that you know the best results come from a "team" effort.
11. Don't lump all Hispanics together. Recognize that Guatemalans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, may have similarities but also differences. Don't assume that all Hispanics speak Spanish as a first or even second language.
12. Assist your parents in understanding the scholarships, grant and college application deadlines early in the year.
13. Help find funds for their children to take the ACT test as sophomores and juniors so they can score higher as seniors.

Speaking first hand, I can tell you how much I wish my schools had taken these steps to help my mother feel welcome in school. It was obvious that the school could not see beyond the Spanish accent. Their remarks, tone, and body language said it all. They did not look beyond the accent to see the woman who told me I could be or do anything that I set my mind to. They did not see the woman who always asked if I had homework and made sure I did it. When I had to read to someone for nightly first grade homework she patiently listened to me read in a language in which she wasn't fluent. She hated having me write the notes she dictated to school about my absences, which she signed, knowing they would call anyway to verify. My mother told me that education was important. She is not the exception. She is the typical Hispanic mother, one who cares about her children. If only more school personnel would recognize that.

Books, books, books! There are so many excellent fictional and non-fictional books available for preschool through high school students. Which ones to feature in each issue is always a difficult decision. This month will include women's issues, integration, and Native American History. Some excellent non-fictional books which could be used from middle school through high school include Women Explorers in North and South America, Without Regard to Race, And Not Afraid to Dare, and Warriors Don't Cry.



The first is by Margo McLoone, published by Capstone (1997), with ISBN 1-56065-507-0. While this has a lower level readability (about fourth grade), the information is very interesting and will hold the interest of adults. It chronicles the lives and accomplishments of five women explorers: Nellie Cashman who explored from Arizona to the Northwest including to Alaska during the gold rush; Violet Cressy-Marcks, who journeyed around the world eight times; Ynes Mexia explored South and Central America collecting plants; Mary Blair-Niles who explored the world studying birds and giving notoriety to the penal colony Devil's Island; and Anne Peck who was a world renown mountain climber and writer. It is a fascinating book that students will enjoy.

Without Regard to Race: The Integration of the U.S. Military After World War II is authored by Hedda Garza, published by Franklin Watts (1995), ISBN 0-531-20196-1. This book utilizes text and historical photographs to forcefully bring awareness to the reader of the inequities suffered by African-Americans from 1940 through the 1990s. It includes a brief history of some of the military contributions of Black Americans even before they were fully integrated into the military.



And Not Afraid to Dare: The Stories of

Ten African-American Women by Tonya Bolden, is published by Scholastic (1998) ISBN 0-590-30021-0. This secondary book includes the fascinating lives of Ellen Craft, escaped slave; Mary Fields, pioneer; Charlotte Forten Grimke, teacher and writer; Ida B. Wells, journalist; Mary McLeod Bethune, educator; Clara Hale, humanitarian; Leontyne Price, opera singer; Toni Morrison, writer; Mae C. Jemison, astronaut; and Jackie Joyner-Kersey, athlete. While it goes into depth about the lives of these individuals it also includes a chapter with short biographies on other brave and daring women.

A must read for secondary students is Warriors Don't Cry by Melba Patillo Beals, published by Archway (1994), ISBN 0-671-89900-7. This autobiography tells of the Little Rock Nine's integration attempts in 1957. The dramatic story of a teenager's life and death experiences will grab you by the heart and give despair and hope. Beals, who was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, took over thirty-five years to be able to deal with and write about the feelings and memories of that time. This is one very powerful book.

Two great books dealing with Native American topics are Many Nations: An alphabet of Native America, (by Joseph Bruchac, published by BridgeWater in 1997, ISBN 0-8167-4460-2) and Songs of Our Ancestors: Poems about Native Americans, (by Mark Turcotte, published by Children's Press, 1995, ISBN 0-516-05154-7). The first is a primary book with Native American topics and illustrations for all the letters of the alphabet, e.g., R is for "Rappahannock nets moving with the tide," and U is for "Umpqua grandmothers beading moccasins with pride." The second is an elementary book of poem-songs designed to not only tell the stories of sixteen famous Native Americans, such as Sequoyah, Chief Joseph, Te Ata, Ishi, and Wilma Mankiller, but also important events in Native American history such as the Trail of Tears and Wounded Knee. It brings gladness and sadness to the reader.





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## Hispanic Trivia Answers

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hernando de Soto</li> <li>2. Cesar Chavez</li> <li>3. Pablo Casais</li> <li>4. David Glasgow Farragut</li> <li>5. Father Junipero Serra</li> <li>6. Near El Paso, Texas (El Paso del Norte) in 1598, about 50 years before the first Anglo Saxon Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth Rock, Don Juan de Onate and a group of explorers celebrated the first Thanksgiving.</li> <li>7. The Spanish language spoken in New Mexico is somewhat different from the Spanish spoken in Texas, but is similar to that spoken in Colorado. It is a mixture of Spanish, Portuguese, and Nahuatl.</li> <li>8. The Spanish were the first European colonizing power to issue laws specifically designed to “protect” the rights of subject Indian peoples</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Aztec Emperor Montezuma II in 1506.</li> <li>10. The Aztecs. Their pharmacists concocted such things as emetics, purges, skin ointments, deodorants, toothpaste, and breath fresheners.</li> <li>11. Tomatoes, potatoes, beans, corn, peppers, squash, chocolate, vanilla, tobacco, pumpkin, avocado, peanuts, pecans, pineapples, poinsettias, turkeys, wild rice, blueberries, and sunflowers, to name a few.</li> <li>12. Horse, cattle, pig, sheep, chicken, honeybee, wheat, Asian rice, barley, oats, soy, sugar cane, onion, lettuce, okra, peaches, watermelon, lilac, daffodil, dan-</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delion, to name a few.</li> <li>13. Adobe, cafeteria, canyon, chile, cigar, coyote, guerrilla, loco, marijuana, mesquite, plaza, patio, rodeo, savvy, tomato, vista, Yankee, armadillo, chocolate, tornado, to name a few.</li> <li>14. It was taken directly from the pillars of the Spanish imperial coat of arms. The “Spanish Dollar” was adopted as the basic monetary unit in the U.S. in 1775.</li> <li>15. Bernardo de Galvez, the Spanish governor of Louisiana, who commanded Spanish troops during and in support of the American Revolution.</li> <li>16. The Mexican Air Force under the command of Pancho Villa.</li> <li>17. Chicanos and Latinos</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have been decorated more and have a longer contributory military record than any other minority group.</li> <li>18. They began as the Otero Guards, the men who guarded Governor Otero from New Mexico.</li> <li>19. Agustin de Rotea, a Mexican, in 1773.</li> <li>20. Guillermo Camarena.</li> <li>21. The Spanish speaking world (governments of Mexico, Spain, and Cuba) helped finance the American Revolution as well as provided thousands of Spanish troops to help win the War of Independence.</li> <li>22. Salvador Dali, Francisco de Goya, and Pablo Picasso are all world-renown painters.</li> </ol> |
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