

**Message from ICIE's President**

**Message from ICIE's Executive Director**

**Editorial**

**Education and Training in a Multicultural Environment**

Steven L. Cobb, Thomas S. Barker, V. Ann Sturiduvant, University of North Texas

**Dear Incoming Student: Advice About Success From Persisting Students in Courses Designed to Challenge More Than Accommodate Common Problems in Higher Education**

Paula K. Clarke, Columbia College

**Multiple Intelligences Theory, Creativity and learning for Understanding: A prototype for Higher Education**

Rene Diaz-Lefebvre, Glendale Community College

**Examining Task Variables in Virtual Group Problem Solving**

Stephen Dundis and Suzanne Benson, Northeastern Illinois University

**Learning to Work Together: A Model to Create Effective School Leadership Teams**

Diane Ehrlich and Lynne Reynolds, Northeastern Illinois University

**Integration of Multidisciplinary Knowledge in Case Based Teaching of Global Marketing: The Reflecting Team Approach**

A. Reza Hoshmand, Daniel Webster College

**Alternative pathways to Teacher Education: Building Successful Rural Multicultural Partnership Programs**

Catherine Medina, Patricia Peterson, Steve Showalter, Northern Arizona University  
Robert Gilmore, U.S. Department of Education

**To Book Or Not To Book: A Research Design for Information Technology**

Maureen Paparella and Eugene S. Simko, Monmouth University

**Lifelong Language Learning: Some Instructional Implications of Diverse Enrollments in Advanced Foreign Language Courses**

Danièle Rodamar, American University

**Quantum Education: Learn Without Learning**

Victor Selman, American University and Jerry Selman, ERA Inc.

**A Partnership to Develop Special Education, Rehabilitation and Professional Awareness in Georgia: Educational Outcomes After Two Years**

Steven J. Szydlowski and Tim Hobbs, University of Scranton;  
Otar Geramava, Tbilisi State Medical University

**I Hope You Dance: Promote Success in Literacy Through Active Instruction**

Victoria B. Zwald and A. Drew Zwald, Georgia Southern University

# **Education and Training in a Multicultural Environment**

**Thomas S. Barker, Ph.D. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University**  
**Steven L. Cobb, Ph.D. University of North Texas**  
**V. Ann Sturdivant, Ph.D. Independent Researcher**

## **Introduction**

As the world moves toward a global economy new challenges arise for educators and trainers to become more aware of the cultures and customs of different countries. The literature deals extensively with education and training (including vocational training.) Another, but almost separate discipline has emerged addressing cross-cultural interactions between different cultures. Seldom have the concepts been merged. This article merges the two in a training context using Bandura's Social Learning Theory as the basis for training workers when a firm moves a portion of its operations to a foreign country.

## **Dear Incoming Student: Advice About Success From Persisting Students In Courses Designed To Challenge More Than Accommodate Common Problems In Higher Education**

**Paula K. Clarke**  
**Columbia College**  
**Sonora, CA, USA**

## **Introduction**

In our collective 40+ years of teaching in higher education my colleague and I have developed a teaching philosophy designed to challenge more than accommodate a myriad of well-known concerns in higher education.<sup>1</sup> One of the classroom assessments that we make is an open-ended inquiry called, The Dear Incoming Student Letter. During the last week of the term students are asked to write (anonymously) a letter that begins: Dear Incoming Student, If you want to be successful (defining `success' in their own way) in this course, this is my advice to you...This presentation, taken from the preparation for a book about our now lengthy experience, focuses on significant features and implications of these letters.<sup>\*\*</sup> Specifically, in their own words, persisting students validate much of what is known or implied by existing research. Acquiring an education rather than simply pursuing a degree is for most a major developmental

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<sup>\*\*</sup> The `Dear Incoming Student' letters are available for anyone on our campus to consult. Referred to in our syllabi they are useful for students to consult when they are enrolled in our courses and they are also useful to students anticipating taking our courses.

crisis. Assessing success in this endeavor is not, however, a straightforward matter. Contrary to what seems to be a prevailing belief in some educational circles, our courses do not cater to a conventionally defined elite group. Nevertheless, when appraised less conventionally, in terms of the characteristics for navigating the uncertainties of the present and the future, it is difficult to label them otherwise. Viewing this `appraisal confusion' as a signal of both the promise and the problems of `redesigning higher education' in the current historical context, we explore perspectives having special relevance for the task before us.

## Multiple Intelligences Theory, Creativity, and Learning for Understanding: A Prototype for Higher Education

**Dr. Rene Diaz-Lefebvre**  
**Glendale Community College**  
**Glendale, AZ**

### **Introduction**

What began as an *experimental* Multiple Intelligences/Learning for understanding (MI/LfU) pilot study (Díaz-Lefebvre 1997) in the Glendale Community College psychology department (1994-96), has evolved into an effective, interdisciplinary approach to learning, teaching, and creative assessment. MI theory, created by Howard Gardner, asserts that when it comes to being smart, *differences* count. The theory takes human differences seriously, elevating the dignity and giftedness of each individual. With the publication of his now classic, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983) Gardner argues that intelligence is not some static reality fixed at birth and measured well by standardized testing. Instead, intelligence is a dynamic, ever-growing reality that can be expanded in one's life through eight or more intelligences. Awareness among educators about MI theory has grown steadily over the years, especially in elementary and secondary schools. Educators have applied MI concepts to a wide range of settings from early childhood programs (Merrefield 1997) to centers for homeless adults (Taylor-King 1997).

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## Examining Task Variables in Virtual Group Problem-Solving

**Stephen Dundis, Ph.D., J.D.**  
**Suzanne Benson, Ph.D.**  
**Northeastern Illinois University**  
**Chicago, IL**

### **Introduction**

Parallel movements in educational and corporate environments have heightened the importance of group interaction and problem-solving skills for adult learners. The emphasis on constructivist or learner-centered approaches within the educational realm stresses active problem-solving through collaboration, or the mutual construction of understanding (Liaw & Huang, 2000; Bruner, 1971). Within the corporate world, work teams have replaced much of the traditional business hierarchy and employees are expected to employ heightened thinking skills within the group context, making decisions effectively and efficiently. Reflecting this focus, university students rate problem-solving and group facilitation skills as some of the most valuable skills with which they can leave college. The advent of virtual work teams imposes additional group skill requirements. Workers must be able to form dispersed but nonetheless cohesive teams that facilitate optimum communication and problem resolution; and globalization has heightened the attendant challenges of web-based collaboration while at the same time accelerating the very need for these web-based teams.

How individuals and groups relate to the task they must accomplish while integrating new technologies that have become indispensable is imperative for educators, managers, and researchers to understand. Task is an important and complex variable whose character (structure, information processing demands, interdependence of its elements, etc.) can not only change with each new situation, but also during each stage of the group decision-making process. Authors have stated that there has been “surprisingly little systematic study” on how task variables influence group dynamics (Hirokawa, 1990, p.192; McGrath, 1984). There is additional pressure to isolate task conditions that are most effective in virtual settings where the character of interactions can be altered in terms of mode of communication, spontaneity, social presence, etc. (DeSanctis & Monge, 1998).

While there has been some attempt at categorizing types of task (McGrath, 1984; Jonassen, 2001) we have reviewed the literature within a number of different disciplines such as communication studies, education, and business to provide what we believe is a more comprehensive typology. We argue that a typology is a fundamental component of better understanding task variables, their interaction with other variables such as group and individual member characteristics, and the more subtle variances between face-to-face (F2F) and virtual (or other technology-enhanced) group decision-making. We present a synopsis of our typology along with initial thoughts for practitioners when considering the membership of groups, the communication modality to be used, and their facilitational role in the team’s operations. So far, the limited research that has been conducted concerning the effects of task on group effectiveness has produced

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inconsistent results so we may only indicate more general considerations. However, in the hopes of adding to the additional empirical data that is needed we conclude this paper by presenting the results of research we are presently conducting that isolates specific task elements and records their effect on group problem-solving performance and member perceptions.

## **Learning to Work Together: A Model to Create Effective School Leadership Teams**

**Diane Ehrlich, Ph.D.  
Lynne Reynolds, Ph.D.  
Northeastern Illinois University  
Chicago, IL**

### **Background**

Unique to the mission of Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) are two distinctive features: diversity and community partnerships. Because of its location in the Chicago metropolitan area, the university serves a population that is diverse in age, culture, language, and race. This diversity, a major asset, means that the academic programs utilize a variety of perspectives to enrich the teaching and learning experience and to prepare students for the multiculturalism that characterizes our society. The university's location also provides students and faculty with many opportunities to integrate field-based learning, research, and service with classroom instruction. Many of the community partnerships involve the Chicago Teacher's Center (CTC), an outreach arm of NEIU's main campus site.

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# **Integration of Multidisciplinary Knowledge in Case Based Teaching of global marketing: The Reflecting Team Approach**

**A. Reza Hoshmand, Ph.D.  
Professor of Economics/Finance and  
Chair of Business and Management  
Daniel Webster College  
Nashua, New Hampshire, USA**

## **Introduction**

The global market challenges business managers and management educators to extend the boundaries of both theory and practice. Managers in multinational organizations may tend to base decisions about expanding markets to another country or region of the world on largely economic factors, when they should be considering the socio-cultural and political environment with greater rigor. At the same time, studies have revealed that the educational emphasis on elegant models of management has come at the expense of useful insights in dealing with the realities of practice. A better balance between the theoretical science of business management and the art of practical management decision making is needed. In teaching a course such as global marketing one is faced with both the analysis and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data. The convention for evaluating quantitative data is consistent with the positivist approach in the natural sciences. However, while the criteria are useful in case study research conducted according to the natural science model of social science, the positivist criteria suggested are inappropriate for interpretive research (Klein and Myers, 1999).

Being contextually oriented (Anderson, 1991), the reflecting team case model in teaching allows a multidisciplinary understanding that makes possible a multidimensional analysis of the global market as well as ensuing management issues. The reflecting team method also enables one to include historical, social and political information that can yield insights on a given environment, enabling one to grasp the complexity that is not immediately apparent in a given situation.

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## **Alternative Pathways to Teacher Education: Building Successful Rural Multicultural Partnership Programs**

**Catherine Medina, Ph.D., Northern Arizona University  
Patricia Peterson, Ph.D., Northern Arizona University  
Steve Showalter, M.Ed., Northern Arizona University  
Robert Gilmore, Ph.D., United States Department of  
Education-Office of Special Education Programs  
Flagstaff, AZ**

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to provide examples of special education teacher training programs that are rural multicultural field-based university/school partnerships. These programs address the needs of rural culturally diverse Mexican-American and Native American school-aged students with disabilities through (a) developing a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree program in Multicultural Special Education/Elementary Education; (b) preparing special educators to work with Mexican-American and Native American children with disabilities and their parents; (c) training Mexican-American and Native American paraprofessionals and general education teachers from high poverty, rural areas to be certified special education teachers; (d) providing teacher preparation where the trainees live and work in remote, high poverty, multicultural settings; and, (e) focusing on collaborative methods of delivering special education services to K-12 students with disabilities. An overview of the multicultural partnership programs will be provided. Challenges facing teacher/paraprofessional educators in rural, remote areas will also be described.

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# To Book Or Not To Book: A Research Design For Information Technology

**Maureen Paparella, MBA**  
**Director of Information Technology**  
**Eugene S. Simko, Ph. D.**  
**Associate Professor of Management**  
**Monmouth University**  
**West Long Branch, NJ**

## Introduction

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century is unfolding, it is becoming clear that the traditional role of the textbook as an innovative tool in teaching both basic and advanced information technology skills to students is rapidly changing. This not only has important implications for classroom pedagogy for Western students, but also for international students, as both the economies and infrastructures of their countries emerge. We suggest the testing of several hypotheses in an empirical experimental design employing parametric statistics (potential  $n = 120$ ) that involve several sections of undergraduate students. Students will be pre-tested for basic skills as they start a basic course in Information Technology (IT). The control groups will be taught the course in the traditional manner, that is, with computerized applications supported by learning resources in their completion of required tasks and projects, as well as for preparation of exams. We predict, based upon our experience as well as upon extrapolation of suggestions in the literature, that the non-textbook experimental groups will outperform the control groups along several variables such as course performance, willingness to take advanced IT study, and other variables to be incorporated into the design. We have administered in October of 2002 an attitudinal survey of 84 students to initially gauge overall preferences for textbooks over “e-texts”. The results are summarized in Figure 1. As can be seen, many questions reveal dichotomous responses. For example, Question 3, asking the student if they thought Information Technology could be taught without the use of a traditional textbook, 40.4 % disagreed, 42.67 agreed, and 16.7 were undecided. A close look at the results in Figure 1 reveal that, based upon our small sample, there are many uncertainties regarding book usage in IT classes. Question 1, which asks the students if they thought that instructors made effective use of textbooks in class, reveals that 42.95% agreed whereas 30.7 % disagreed. Question 6, asking the students if they have been satisfied with their college textbooks, reveals that 39.2% have and 33.25% have not. On the one hand, the students crave the “newness” and maneuverability of a computer-based text, but they do not want to cut the umbilical cord of the known, safe harbor of the hardbound textbook. It is for these reasons primarily that we choose to investigate empirically attitudes and experiences through a research design for the spring of 2003. In addition, as shown in Table 1, analysis of the “undecided” response indicates a significant amount of uncertainty over e-text preference and use, due primarily to its lack of proliferation as a tried and true course technology. For this reason, we will administer to the experimental e-text classes

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a pre-test and post-test attitudinal survey to discover any statistically significant changes. Furthermore, the Information Technology course platform affords the best possible course in which to conduct the experiment, since *the computer is present regardless of whether a traditional textbook is used or not*. This will allow excellent experimental control over the classes since the hardware and the labs will be the same across groups.

## **Lifelong Learning: Some Implications Of Diverse Course Enrollments for Advanced Foreign Language Learning**

**Danièle Rodamar**  
**American University**  
**Washington, D.C.**

### **Introduction**

The purposes and uses of foreign language learning are as diverse as the students who study them. This diversity is particularly marked in advanced foreign language courses and is expected to grow as a result of demographics, globalization, and technology. “Traditional college age students” are a minority of the students in higher education. Increasingly middle-age and senior citizens, including those in alumni or mid-career professional programs, take advanced language courses to enhance or sustain language and intercultural skills to increase the quality of life. Their skills often have immediate application in their research, business, or personal lives. There are a growing number of international students on many campuses, and some take advanced language courses to meet distribution or other requirements. Increasingly classes include “distance learners” who use technology to participate in the class from anywhere.

The resulting diversity of student proficiencies, backgrounds, interests and priorities make traditional instructional strategies highly inefficient for both the teacher and students. The result is low achievement, and high attrition (ACTFL). This is problematic not only for students but also for language programs and campuses because advanced language courses are designed to be a “magnet”, providing incentives for beginning students to excel, to participate in advanced classes, and to complete the program with language and cultural skills needed for research, business and personal life. This paper sketches a design for the instruction of classes with highly diverse students. While grounded in research and personal experience, it is exploratory and intended to serve as a basis for work on instructional design.

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## Quantum Education: Learn without Learning

Victor Selman, KSB  
American University  
Washington, DC  
Jerry Selman  
ERA, Inc.  
West Palm Beach, FL

*"I can safely say that nobody understands Quantum Mechanics—"* Richard P. Feynman  
(Nobel Laureate in Physics, 1965, for contributions to QM.)

### ABSTRACT

Quantum Education is the "natural" way to learn. Like Quantum Logic or Quantum Physics or Quantum Games, quantum thinking is an insightful multiple approach explaining connections between our classical world—where objects have definite identities—and our quantum world—where they take on multiple realities simultaneously. Instead of yo-yoing from one state of reality to another—as shaman are reported to do—quantum-mechanic theory allows things to be in two different places at the same time---weird as that idea may be. Quantum thinking changes all paradigms. Physicists argue that the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was known for the development of machines, the 20<sup>th</sup> Century for the Information technologies, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century would be characterized by quantum technologies. The Montessori Model represents the closest example of such Quantum Education, where the environment is prepared with didactic materials for the children to absorb at their own pace. Where the children learn without learning, without learning how to learn---by doing. Teachers learn to move from a position of superiority to one of leadership and facilitating. Quantum Education has recently been defined by the Canadian Quantum 2000 Group as the need for a "quantum" shift in what students are expected to actually learn in the quantified Alberta public schools starting Y2000.

This paper attempts to explore quantum relationships in complex humanitas systems; in particular, to characterize, both qualitatively and quantitatively, states of entanglement in educational systems, and to champion the quantum approach to education where everybody wins --- learning without conscious learning. Using such quantum-mechanical concepts as interdependent "entanglement," "super-position" and "frustration," this paper will attempt to investigate the total connectivity of the cycle of Quantum Learning---including timeline for learning, data retention, duration of recall and the para-mount areas of cross-applicability. Adam didn't say to Eve---"I must leave early for my class on Nutrition 101---What time will your Love 101 Workshop be over this evening?" They absorbed in totality everything life threatening and pleasurable about Paradise as they lived, day by day, clearly remembering what was necessary for their survival, breathing in simultaneously with their innate curiosity a mixed "entangled" bag of useful and useless scientific and artistic phenomena, observations, and perceptions.

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## **A Partnership to Develop Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Professional Awareness in Georgia: Educational Outcomes after Three Years**

**Steven J. Szydlowski**

**Tim Hobbs**

**University of Scranton**

**Scranton, PA, USA**

**Otar Gerzmava**

**Tbilisi State Medical University**

**Tbilisi, Georgia**

### **ABSTRACT**

Initiated in August of 2000, the University of Scranton (Scranton, Pennsylvania), Tbilisi State Medical University, Tbilisi State Pedagogical University, the National Health Management Center of Georgia, and the Rehabilitation Center for Children of Georgia (the Partnership) established the "Georgian/American Partnership for Special Education and Rehabilitation." The project is funded through the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and focuses on transformation in the fields of rehabilitation and education for children with disabilities. The Partnership is designed to foster academic curriculum development for special education teachers, promote the development of rehabilitation and special education as independent professions, and foster parent advocacy. The challenges for educational reform in the development of special and inclusive education in Georgia as a Newly Independent State in the Caucasus Region are not limited to educational barriers, but also economic, social, and political volatility associated with system change from a socialized structure to privatization and decentralization. With these challenges (identified by Georgian professionals and the international community) the Partnership is modeled to address four measurable goals: curriculum development regarding training of special educators and rehabilitation professionals; development of independent professions of special education and rehabilitation; advocacy, civic activity, and faculty-citizen-parent relationships; and establish linkages and international connectiveness of teachers, teacher preparers, professionals, and parents. The presentation will focus on the Partnership structure, process and achieved goals after the completion of two years of activities. The project outcomes could be expected to be of interest to international special educators, general educators, rehabilitation, and medical professionals. The information will be particularly important for providing current information regarding status and development of these professions in newly independent and post-Soviet states.

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Victoria B. Zwald  
A. Drew Zwald  
Georgia Southern University  
Statesboro, GA

## Introduction

When a child does not learn, it is premature to blame the child, because more often than not the failure lies with the educator. When we educate better and when we can educate in a more personal way, then children will learn better (Gardner, 1994). Training educators to meet the needs of an extremely diverse student population is a challenging job that demands selecting methods of instruction to motivate students to learn in their strength areas. Learning must be a dynamic process where students have choices about how they learn.

Gone are the days when students sit in seating configurations that are in straight lines and the path to instruction is a wholesale one size fits all approach to learning. The 1950=s television show, *Leave It to Beaver* depicted two brothers who symbolized the dichotomy of present and future classrooms. Wally was the older brother who made straight A's , earned a mantelpiece full of athletic trophies, dated girls from the right families and exhibited conduct of behavior that was a model to be revered. On the other hand Beaver struggled academically, failed miserably at athletic endeavors, tangled daily with conflicted girls and demonstrated inappropriate classroom behavior. Beaver represents the epitome of the at-risk student. The educational environment must become a place where all the Beavers feel comfortable to excel. Classrooms must reflect an active, healthy instructional style that students can embrace and with which they can find success. This paradigm shift is of paramount importance as educators strive diligently to promote students with sufficient literacy skills who will grow up to become independent, responsible citizens.

Motivation to read is often a component that is dramatically absent from reading programs and perpetuates the dilemma of at-risk readers. Frustration levels are peaking and yet educators continue to teach reading with such a narrow focus that many students are falling through the net. Howard Gardner's (1983) multiple intelligence theory provides a framework for promoting reading success through eight areas. When students can experience reading instruction in an environment where the intelligences (bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, musical, and naturalistic) are woven into the curriculum, reading achievement has the potential to soar. Traditional approaches to reading instruction have designated many students at-risk. Innovative practices will provide tools to enhance reading achievement and label more students *Aat-success*. @