

education *update*

Volume 47 • Number 7 • July 2005



Reach Out to Students to Bridge Gaps

The key to addressing gaps in achievement among students is to strive for equity, not equality—a point emphasized by many educators at ASCD's 2005 Annual Conference and Exhibit Show.

Imagine, for example, that a workshop facilitator asks all those who are wearing glasses to remove them in an attempt to distribute resources equally among all participants. Is this equitable? Clearly not, said Eleanor Renée Rodriguez, an education consultant who works to ensure that educators understand why seeking equality often fails to provide equal opportunity. "We need to treat our students equitably," asserted Rodriguez, who is coauthor of the book *What Is It About Me You Can't Teach?*

Students from different cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups need different types of support to promote their learning, presenters said at the session, Using Creative, Enriched Instruction to Advance African American Students' Achievement, sponsored by ASCD's African American Critical Issues Network.

Rodriguez's copresenters, educators from Maryland's Charles County

Public Schools, agreed and shared snapshots of their efforts to provide such equitable

opportunities for learning. John Cox, the district's assistant superintendent of instruction, noted that Charles County schools have a high minority population and many of these students come from families in poverty. Children from middle-class and poverty environments "are not coming to us equal, and we've got to address it openly," he asserted. "We have to acknowledge that these kids are behind" and provide resources based on need to help them move up. For instance, the district's summer academies provide extra learning time in reading and math. And if the students don't show up for the summer classes, Cox said he and other staff members drive to their homes and pick them up to emphasize the importance of attendance.

Understanding Blended Cultures

Boosting minority achievement is a focus area for Charles County schools, stated Rosie Kelley, an instructional specialist in the district's Office of Minority Achievement. As a result, the district requires all employees to take a course called Diversity and Blended Cultures, and Kelley is one of the



Rodriguez

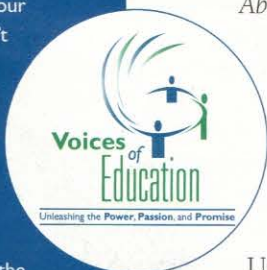
What's Inside . . .

- Supporting the whole child's learning.....4
- Finding flow.....5
- An IEP for teachers.....6

► Conference Report

ASCD provides this glimpse into the rich content presented at our 2005 Annual Conference and Exhibit Show to maximize the benefit to you—our members. If you didn't attend, we'd like to introduce you to some of the presentations shared, and if you did attend, we hope this gives you a chance to reflect on the "Voices of Education" heard in Orlando, Fla., April 2–4.

Session reports written by Terrey Hatcher Quindlen.



► continued on page 2

education update

Duplication Policy: If you are an ASCD member, you may make up to 100 copies of a single article from *Education Update*, provided that each copy includes a full citation of the source. If you wish to copy more than that, or if you are not an ASCD member, please submit your copying request to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Dr., Danvers, MA 01923. Phone: 1-978-750-8400. Fax: 1-978-646-8600.

For permission to reprint ASCD content in another publication, please complete the form on ASCD's Web site at www.ascd.org/pdf/permissions.pdf and fax to 1-703-575-5405. Please allow four to six weeks for a response.

Subscriptions to this publication are included in ASCD membership, but additional copies may be ordered (prepaid only) at the following rates:

1-9 copies..... \$3.00 each plus shipping & handling
10-49 copies..... \$2.70 each plus shipping & handling
50 or more copies..... \$2.55 each plus shipping & handling

To order, call the ASCD Service Center, 1-800-933-2723 or 1-703-578-9600. Please cite Stock #105114.

Terrey Hatcher Quindlen, Editor

Nancy Modrak, *Director, Publishing*
Gary Bloom, *Director, Design and Production Services*
Greer Beeken, *Graphic Designer*
Lisa Post, *Associate Editor*
Eric Coyle, *Production Specialist*

Photos by Mark Regan

ASCD Executive Staff

Gene R. Carter, *Executive Director*
Diane G. Berreth, *Deputy Executive Director*
Michelle Terry, *Deputy Executive Director*
Eric Bellamy, *Deputy Executive Director*
Judy Seltz, *Deputy Executive Director*

Education Update presents a variety of viewpoints. The views expressed herein are not necessarily official ASCD positions.

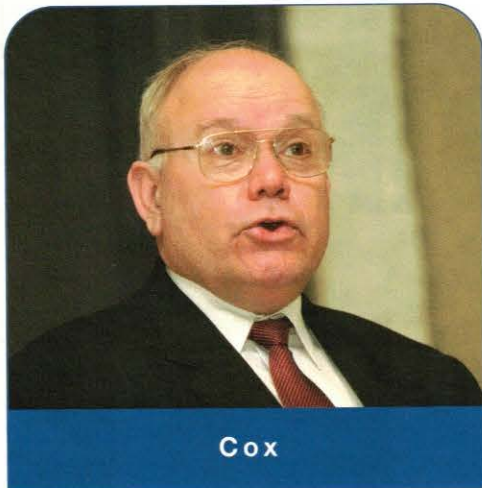


Education Update is the official newsletter of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1703 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, VA 22311-1714. Telephone: 1-800-933-ASCD (2723) or 1-703-578-9600, then press 2 (service hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, eastern time). E-mail: update@ascd.org
ASCD Web site: www.ascd.org

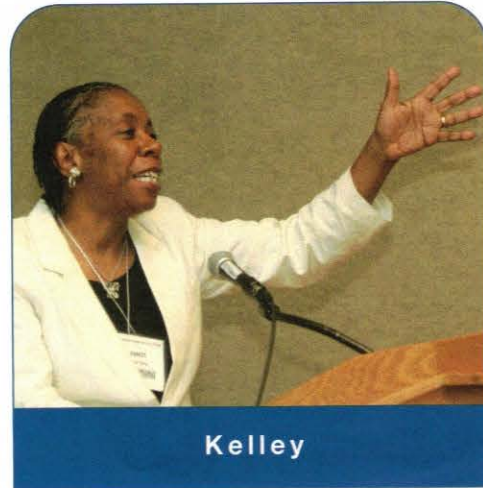
©2005 ASCD.

Education Update is published 12 times a year.

ISSN: 1091-2622



Cox



Kelley

Achievement Gap

► continued from page 1

instructors. In working with teachers, she encourages them to consider wait time, to help students use standard English, to use mind maps with students, and to employ appropriate technology tools. District officials also promote minority participation in enrichment and advancement classes.

The district also fosters parent involvement and specifically strives to empower African American males by providing workshops for fathers and their sons. "You'll be surprised to learn what that can do—father and son working together," noted Minnie Reynolds, director of the Office of Minority Achievement.

Taking a Multifaceted Approach

Enriching experiences are important for students, because "education is often the only way to end the cycle of poverty," noted Valerie Collins, an education consultant speaking at a panel session, *Improving Achievement for Students*

in Poverty: A Forum. Specifically, she said, educators should

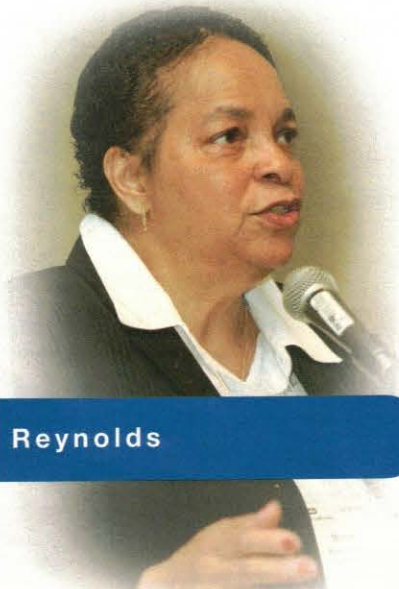
- Build relationships with students.
- Provide a curriculum that is challenging, rigorous, and standards-based.
- Hold those students to high standards.

Although teachers get frustrated with students who make no apparent effort to learn, "a student's attitude is no excuse," asserted Collins, coauthor of the ASCD book *Literacy Leadership for Grades 5-12*.

Other strategies that work well to improve achievement are community outreach, safe and healthy school environments, and parent involvement, noted another panelist, Tim Waters, chief executive officer of Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). "Schools need to pay specific attention to parents who are hard to reach," he said. Waters and other McREL staff are conducting a rigorous analysis of what is working well in high-performing, high-needs schools.

Caring Comes First

With high-needs students, teachers need to reach out and show they care, noted Belinda Williams, a researcher and author of the ASCD book *Closing the Achievement Gap: A Vision for Changing Beliefs and Practices*. "Children who experience poverty or are racially or culturally different experience isolation," Williams explained during the forum. And that isolation often continues as they are placed in tracks that limit not only what they learn but also the expectations of what they can achieve. Instead, Williams asserted, teachers should distinguish between a student's potential to learn and the learning a student brings to school and demonstrates on test scores.



Reynolds