
REACHING

THROUGH TEACHING

A NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING CLASSROOM PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE AMONG KENNESAW FACULTY

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Being sensitive to our special students

Carol Pope, Administrative Coordinator, Student Development Center (based on the work of Greg Greenwell)

The enactment in 1990 of the Americans with Disabilities Act brought to the attention of the American public the needs of individuals who have significant disabling conditions, and the rights of those individuals to have appropriate accommodations to fully participate in society.

As educators, it is important that we understand those rights, but the statutory limits defined by the ADA should be only a reminder that effective educational practices require consideration of every student's unique characteristics.

The first time that I, as a teacher, needed to understand the spirit of ADA came when a student with a disability registered in one of my classes. I realized immediately that some changes would probably have to be made in the presentation of lessons and possibly in testing. What I did not realize was the extent to which adjustments would be needed, nor did I consider the changes in my teaching style that this particular student might require.

The student is blind, and I was totally unprepared for the changes that were required on my part to fulfill the simplest presentation to this class. I quickly realized my inadequacies the first time I approached the whiteboard and proceeded to say, "Now students, look at this." Quite an embarrassing moment. But the student was pa-

tient and I was willing to learn, and we managed quite well together after the initial adjustment period.

Not all of us have had to make such dramatic adjustments to accommodate a student with disabilities, but the reality is that we as educators must give attention and thought to the need for dual presentations in order to meet the needs of an entire class. In effect, each disabled student becomes a distinct subset of the class and a separate plan for

Reaching Through Teaching asked the 1994-95 Teacher of the Year candidates why they teach. Their answers can be found throughout the pages of this issue.

this student will be required if we are to maximize the learning experience.

This individualized instruction is not spelled out in statutory requirements; it is a philosophy of teaching which flows naturally from a desire to see every student achieve to his or her fullest potential.

KSC in Oaxaca: Mexico in our classroom

June K. Laval, Associate Professor of Spanish and French

The class begins in the air plane. From then on, the student is constantly aware of a different culture and language. As we head out to visit this city of twenty million inhabitants, we are immersed in Mexican culture and civilization. It's time to use what was learned in Spanish classes back at Kennesaw State College. Each student who goes to Oaxaca has had at least the equivalent of one quarter of Spanish, so they know a little Spanish.

The KSC program in Oaxaca was initiated last summer by its three co-directors: Dr. Susan

Bakewell, Visual Arts, Dr. Alan LeBaron, History and Dr. June K. Laval, Foreign Languages. The program combines our three disciplines to provide study not only in the Spanish language, but also in Mexican history, art, literature and culture.

The site director teaches a 490 seminar for four weeks, and the co-directors come to Oaxaca at different times to teach for a week. This year we have twenty students enrolled in our program, and fourteen of them have received scholarships. KSC in Oaxaca is sponsored by the office of International