

HUNTER COLLEGE M/SI BETAC QUARTERLY

NYS MANHATTAN/ STATEN ISLAND BETAC

HUNTER WELCOMES NEW RESOURCE SPECIALIST

Dr. Mirian Acosta-Sing has recently joined the M/SI BETAC staff as a Resource Specialist. She brings more than thirty years of experience in public education to her new position. From 1986 to 2004, Dr. Acosta-Sing was the Principal of the Mott Hall School in Harlem, a Blue Ribbon elementary/middle school for Math, Science & Technology. Working for the Department of Education, she served as a bilingual teacher and a director of bilingual education. She also worked, in collaboration with City College, as a director of Teacher Corps, a national training program.

Upon her retirement as a school principal, Dr. Acosta-Sing worked as a Leadership Coach, mentoring and coaching new school principals for several years with New Leaders for New Schools. As an adjunct professor for over twenty years, she taught graduate courses in educational supervision and bilingual education at City College, Bank Street, Lehman College and Fordham University.

She also studied and conducted research in India, Nepal and Brazil on Fulbright scholarships and has presented at national conferences including the National Staff Development Council, National Association for Gifted Children, NABE and Microsoft Laptop Conferences.

Dr. Acosta-Sing holds a doctorate from Teachers College, Columbia University, in curriculum and educational leadership. It gives me great pleasure to welcome Dr. Mirian Acosta-Sing to our Manhattan/Staten Island BETAC at Hunter College.

Dr. Yvonne De Gaetano
Principal Investigator

WELCOME TO THE START OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

During the summer months the M/SI BETAC staff reflected on last year's accomplishments, its professional development offerings, and the feedback from many of you who responded to our survey. As a result, we designed new professional development initiatives that are in keeping with our mission: *to provide our educational community with professional development that focuses on effective teaching and learning practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive to the educational needs of ELLs.*

The following are some of our new initiatives:

- New Teacher's Institute
- Study Group for New Principals/APs of Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI)
- SINI School Site Support and Technical Assistance
- Saturday Early Childhood Academy for Teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs)
- ELLs Academy: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Supports

We have also expanded our professional development programs. We will now offer a Content Area Series (math, science, social studies), a Literacy Series and a Technology Series. For complete descriptions, please turn to page 10 or visit our website: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/msibetac>.

We wish you a productive and successful school year.

Dr. Bernice Moro, Director

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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: WHERE ARE WE?

YVONNE DE GAETANO

Our world today seems “smaller” because of accessible travel, instant media coverage, and advanced technology. We are, therefore, more in contact with those who are different from ourselves in ethnicity, religion, race, social class, and political thought, as well as in so many other ways. While these very differences make life more interesting, they also cause discomfort and often fear. In this new and “smaller” world, how can we begin being more open to human differences of all kinds? How do we get more fairness in our lives and in the lives of others? How can we learn to live peacefully and productively, embracing rather than rejecting all of our differences? When and how do we begin?

I think that we need to begin when children are very young—in the home, in schools, in child care centers, parks, playgrounds, camps, museums, in sum, in the institutions that educate our young in our society. Because I am a teacher educator I think that focusing on multicultural and social justice education early in the lives of children and throughout their schooling provides a strong foundation for the development of behaviors and attitudes that lead to a more just, peaceable, and equitable environment.

A focus on multiculturalism and social justice in early childhood settings today, however, is almost non-existent. In early childhood classrooms multicultural education has been eroding quietly, and I think that the three main reasons for the decline are as follows: (1) a strong negative reaction towards the large numbers of non-European immigrants entering the nation. For many, the fact that some of these immigrants have entered the United States as undocumented persons has made matters worse; (2) a general lack of knowledge and consensus about what multicultural education is (Villegas & Lucas, 2002); or how to implement it in classrooms (Grant & Tate, 1995); and (3) a focus now on testing, as a result of NCLB, that has pushed teachers and administrators to “teach to the test.” Children are constantly drilled and given practice on how to take “the test.”

The focus on standardized testing has affected not only elementary, middle, and high schools, but it has also had an effect on how early childhood programs function. There is less and less of a concentration on developmentally appropriate practices and on the culture, knowledge, and experiences that young children bring to school. This focus now on pre-school children to develop skills in literacy and numeracy earlier is an effort to prepare children for kindergarten where they are expected to begin reading and doing math, ready or not. It is important to state here that knowledge and skills are critical components of education that is multicultural and promotes social justice. In no way do I want to give the impression that early learning and the development of skills are in opposition to an education that focuses on fairness.

A dynamic focus of multicultural and social justice education is that there must be equity in the learning process for all children. Therefore, children’s individual and age readiness for certain skills and learning, as well as their cultural and linguistic differences, have to be taken into consideration for learning to occur. This is essentially what is meant by developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp and Copple, 1997).

Currently, however, there seems to be less conversation, less play, less exploration, and more paper and pencil tasks in early childhood education. Deborah Myers (2009) states that: *“The latest research indicates that, on a typical day, children in all-day kindergartens spend 4-6 times as much in literacy and math ‘instruction’ and taking or preparing for tests (about 2-3 hours per day) as they do in free play or ‘choice time’ (30 minutes or less).”* This is distressing information; yet, too many teachers are worried that their children will not be ready for the next level of schooling, so they act in ways that are antithetical to how they have been taught to teach and how they know what is best to teach.

In classrooms that are multicultural and promote social justice, focusing on issues of fairness are not viewed as “taking time away from the real learning” nor deviating from the “normal curriculum” because the issues addressed are integral to what children must learn to be members of fair and equitable communities. They are not “add ons” to the curriculum. Teachers who endorse and implement multicultural and social justice education in early childhood classrooms enhance, enrich, and broaden children’s learning by putting emphasis on anti-bias (non prejudiced) learning in their classrooms. In fact, among the components most vital to teaching in early childhood are the issues and topics addressed in classrooms that are multicultural and promote social justice. These issues are essential to our society and, therefore, to schooling where children learn the fundamentals of living in a democracy.

Consequently, early on, young children need to be exposed to positive ways of responding to differences and to an anti-racist stance in their lives before racism takes hold in their thinking and before they have to “unlearn racism and other problematic stances” (Cochran-Smith, 2004,13). Recently, however, too many early childhood teachers are being pushed into preparing children in academics earlier and earlier, and they are hard pressed to meet the demands made on them.

Although I have lamented the lack of multicultural and social justice education in early childhood classrooms today, the reality is that there are still some brave and talented teachers who, despite the focus on testing in schools, are teaching through multicultural perspectives and with a social justice stance. My experience as an early childhood teacher and teacher educator has taught me that many early childhood teachers are patient, caring and creative.

Good early childhood teachers honor children’s experiences, languages, and cultures. These teachers are attentive to what children say and do, and they respond actively and plan appropriately so that children can become anti-racist and action-oriented individuals. They also make sure that

families and communities in which the children live are acknowledged and included in the teaching process.

Respect, caring, and community building are cornerstones of multicultural and social justice classrooms
—Ooka Pang

Attention is paid to the relationships established between children, and between adults and children, in a multicultural setting or classroom. Differences are acknowledged, named, and discussed (Fennimore, 2000). Biases and stereotypes are

examined and addressed. The classrooms are places where children feel safe, supported, and connected with one another (Sapon-Shevin, 1999), and teachers in such classrooms hold all children to high standards and give them every opportunity to learn.

Multicultural and social justice education is not a simple concept for adults to understand and address, and in educational settings there is not only one way to implement it. Parents, administrators and teachers who care about these issues, however, must focus on equity and fairness in the lives of young children.

Education that is multicultural and that promotes social justice is transformative, focuses on academic excellence and guides children to become champions of social justice.

— De Gaetano

Dr. Yvonne De Gaetano, Principal Investigator of the M/SI BETAC, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Hunter College.

An expanded version of this paper will be published as a chapter in a forthcoming book, Fennimore, B, and Goodwin, L. (Eds.) Social justice for young children: Facing critical challenges to early learning and development (in 2010 by Springer). It will be part of an international series, "Educating the young child."

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

DONIA FAHIM

Sara, a preschool teacher in Brooklyn, has planned a series of outdoor activities to coincide with the classroom theme for the next two weeks, the beach. It's a sunny morning, some children are playing with water and others are playing in the sand tray. Sara is commenting on the children's play and sometimes the children repeat back to her what she has said. Luis picks up the boat and places it in the water, "Splash," says Sara. "Pash," echoes Luis looking at Sara and smiling. Luis is one of the six English language learners in Sara's preschool classroom, whose predominant home language is not English. Anyone observing Luis and his peers can see from their smiles and laughter that they are happily playing together; they are attending to the activities and communicating with relative ease. Yet, their combined English vocabulary is less than 25 words.

English language learners now represent more than 10% of all students enrolled in public prekindergarten through Grade 12 classes in the United States (Ballantyne, Sanderman and McLaughlin, 2008). In New York City this number is even higher; therefore, we need to ensure that our teachers are prepared and supported. When the children join the classroom, most will already have a language base, but now they

must learn another language. As adults we often forget the level of skill required to master a second language. Fortunately, the younger a child is, the easier it is for the child to acquire a second language.

Research has shown that when considerations were given to how the length of the school day influenced achievement in ELLs and non-ELLs, children's attendance patterns were found to influence achievement (Hall-Kenyon, Bingham and Korth, 2009). Specifically, regarding language development, ELL children were found to benefit more from full-day kindergarten than did their English-speaking peers. Also, they found that all children (ELL and non-ELL) enrolled in full-day kindergarten made greater language gains when they missed fewer than 10 school days.

Our first step is to establish the home languages spoken as well as the parents' level of English proficiency. Collaborating with parents throughout the school year is an essential part of the child's success. If necessary, an interpreter can assist in obtaining this information. When meeting the parents it is also important to learn how to pronounce the child's name accurately; this will make a difference to the child.

Our next step needs to begin with the parents understanding the advantage of enrolling their child into full-day kindergarten programs and having the child attend regularly. This can only happen by building a positive rapport with the parents.

It is imperative to never belittle or disapprove of the home language; at the same time, we must help the children feel confident and comfortable to try new words and phrases in English. The most effective way to teach children when they are young is to help

them learn through fun games and play. If we observe typically developing monolingual children we will see that they learn language and cognitive skills through play and everyday activities. When working with young ELLs we also need to keep in mind that they will still be developing their first language in parallel with English. They are, therefore, expected to produce normal expressive developmental errors and they will still be developing their understanding of concepts and grammar.

Just like learning any other new skill or behavior, it is important to motivate and encourage children's use of English. By using entertaining games, activities and stories we can nurture their linguistic curiosity. Children are more likely to be curious when presented with music, games and total physical response activities, and, as a result, are more likely to learn and retain knowledge. Typically, developing ELLs will be able to understand non-verbal gestures; however, their understanding of spoken language will still be developing. It is important, when possible, to reduce frustration from lack of comprehension. This can be done by showing the child visual choices, for example, holding up a carton of juice and milk and saying, "Would you like milk or juice?" An additional strategy is to use iconic gestures and pointing, for example, when it's time to go home, to a clock or watch and saying "It's time to go home."

Expressive language skills should be encouraged in a non-threatening way. Once the child is motivated and feels successful, he/she will want to join in. The children should be given the option to participate in activities that incorporate play, physical movements or use of a gesture so that they do not always have to provide a verbal response. When singing action songs by initially maintaining the same sequence and using imitative prompts, the child can easily join in and

retain the words of the song. For example, if you are singing a song about marching, while the children march, if you use the phrase "march, march, march," the children will learn this label for the action. Repetition and familiarity are important in early childhood as children like and learn from the sameness. Singing the same good morning song can also help an ELL child learn to greet his or her peers. Action songs are a useful way to help children learn new vocabulary, including concepts and action words. When children provide a verbal response, their words should be repeated back and expanded. This will help them to learn associated vocabulary. Going back to Luis in Sara's class—when he said "pash" (splash), Sara then could have said "Yes, the boat splashed in the water".

Stories are another teaching tool since they provide visual support. Either objects or colourful and vivid pictures can be used. Choosing an appropriate book is important. Books with clear pictures and simple, repetitive vocabulary are ideal, such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle or *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell. It is a good idea to spend three or more consecutive days reading the same story. After a while, the children will begin to use the words and short phrases. Additionally, parents can provide a story they read in their home language and this can be read to the children in class in English.

Children develop and learn language from simple exposure if it is part of a fun game or activity. Preschool children have short attention spans; therefore, short activities lasting 10-15 minutes are ideal. To support their vocabulary development, while the children are playing, comment on their actions using simple phrases and also use sentence completion phrases, such as "ready, steady,...go."

In addition, multimedia tools and games which include familiar children's characters in programs such as *Barney*, *Dora* and *Sesame Street* are now readily available in languages other than English and may be familiar to the children from home. There are many free resources available on the internet which can be used both at home and at school; for example, the ceebeebies website includes stories, games and songs with clear pictures and print (see website address below).

It is better to teach a few words at a time and to build on the children's success. Using the vocabulary words in different situations should be encouraged to teach generalizations. Thematic planning works well in the preschool classroom and is a good way to repeat, review, assess and revise vocabulary without the children feeling bored with the same activities. A theme such as the circus could include vocabulary for action words (march, clap and jump), adjectives (big, small, red, yellow, blue), nouns (clown, nose, elephant, lion, balloons), and many of the same words can be used with the theme of the Zoo. Additionally, stories, songs, fine and gross motor activities can be included around the same theme.

Conclusion

Creative games, stories and music are the best way to teach language to preschool English language learners. They can learn the names of colors when using finger paints to color a picture; they can learn vocabulary words for food during snack or when making cookies or pizza; and they can learn about different cultures during pretend play and dress up. The more a child enjoys an activity, the easier it is for the child to learn and retain the new information. It takes time to learn language so we can't expect preschool ELLs to use their new words right away, but if they are engaged and having fun they are learning.

They will begin to understand the words you are teaching and soon after they will use them. By the end of the year when they are chattering away in English, you will look at their little faces and recall the time when they spoke only a few words in English.

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2. Ballantyne, K.G., Sanderman, A.R. and McLaughlin, N. (2008). *Dual language learners in the early years: Getting ready to succeed in school*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition.

Available at:

<http://www.ncele.gwu.edu/resabout/ecell/earlyyears.pdf>

Websites

1. Sesame Street:
<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/aroundtheworld>
2. Dora the explorer:
<http://www.nickjr.com>
3. Barney songs and games:
<http://www.barney.com>
4. Stories and activities:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/fun/>

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TESTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

ARE HIGH STAKES TESTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR FUTURE DROPOUTS?

There is a growing concern that early childhood education is being bombarded with the false claims of improved student outcomes associated with the high-stakes testing culture prevalent in today's schools. High-stakes tests are now being proposed for early childhood at a time when, ironically, the high stakes SAT tests are being dropped as an admission requirement by many of the best colleges.

Early-childhood experts know that in the early grades a child's social and emotional development is just as important as learning the ABCs. The literature on young children is replete with the harmful effects of early testing. The shy child, the reflective child, and the late bloomer may not be ready to perform or share what she/he knows. Labeling and tracking young children can lead to fear of failure and, inadvertently, plant the seeds for dropouts in the future.

Peg Tyre, author and general editor, *Newsweek*, in her article, "The New First Grade: Too Much Too Soon?" claims that "First grade is like literacy boot camp; kids as young as 6 are tested, and tested again... Then there's homework, workbooks and tutoring." Reading lessons start in kindergarten; and in first grade, instead of story time, the work ethic is to spend hours doing math work sheets and sounding out words. "Some children are getting their first taste of failure before they learn to tie their shoes. Being left back a grade was once relatively rare; it makes kids feel singled out and, in some cases, humiliated."

Recess, music, art and social studies are replaced by writing exercises and spelling quizzes. After school, there's homework, and for some, educational videos,

more workbooks and tutoring. Scientists and kindergarten teachers have been saying all along that all young children are wired to learn from birth, and an enriched environment, one with plenty of books, stories, rhyming and conversation, can help kids from all kinds of backgrounds achieve more.

Some parents, although aware of the pressure, are also creating it. "Many parents and teachers believe—mistakenly—that the earlier the kids read independently, write legibly and do arithmetic, the more success they'll have through school. But the pressure to improve scores makes it hard for teachers to stay sensitive to important qualities in children that tests can't measure—diligence, creativity and potential—or to nurture kids who develop more slowly."

A new emphasis on testing and test preparation—brought on by politicians, not early education experts—is hurting the youngest students.

— Patti Hartigan

Tovah B. Klein, director of the Barnard Center for Toddler Development, contends that in primary grades tests should be informal, oral, or visual; also, simple checklists can be kept by teachers on mastered skills. Standardized tests, she asserts, are inappropriate because developmental differences

can cause wide gaps not easily picked up by these tests. And "**children should not be categorized as failures by grade one.**" Equally important, tests have real consequences. For example, "once you have a number behind a kid, it becomes high stakes because teachers make judgments on kids... It ranks kids" ... *What these tests say to the teachers is "This is what matters—that kids know this single decontextualized piece of information."*

In a recent article, "Pressure-cooker Kindergarten" in *The Boston Globe* (August 2009), Patti Hartigan alleges that "A new emphasis on testing and test preparation—brought on by politicians, not early education experts—is hurting the youngest students."

Psychologist and early childhood expert David Elkind, author of *The Hurried Child* and *The Power of Play*, agrees. When children are required to do academics too early, he says, they get the message that they are failures. *“We are sending too many children to school to learn that they are dumb,”* says Elkind. *“They are not dumb. They are just not there developmentally.”*

Hartigan highlights how earlier this year, the non-profit advocacy group Alliance for Childhood issued a report titled “Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why Children Need to Play in Schools,” drawing from nine new studies of public school classrooms around the country. Kindergartners in the studies spent four to six times as much of the school day being drilled in literacy and math as they did playing. Recess, according to the report, has been truncated or has disappeared entirely in some schools, a double whammy since children are stressed out by the demands and also deprived of their major stress reliever. The report cites study after study showing increasing stress, aggression, and other behavior problems, and even breakdowns.

Although many children thrive in an academic environment, many children that age are not ready for that kind of work. One teacher in the article, Roz Brezenoff, who taught kindergarten in Boston public schools for 36 years, and is now retired, said: *“I have heard stories of kids having what they call psychotic breakdowns in kindergarten, kids who are distressed because they are ‘kindergarten failures’ since they can’t read and they can’t write.”*

Around this time neuroscientists were discovering a period of rapid brain development between birth and age 5. These advances helped launch the “brainy baby” business, a flood of products that promised to turn tiny tots into budding geniuses. Nancy Carlsson-Page, a professor of education at Lesley University in Cambridge, says that “parents are

misled by *Baby Einstein*,” the brand that sells books, DVDs, and flashcard games aimed at helping very young children get ahead. (See our article on *Baby Einstein*, pages 9-10.) “They are misled by a marketing culture and a school culture that tells them achievement in early childhood is children sitting at tables doing work sheets.” Then came the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, which links federal funding for schools to performance on standardized tests beginning in third grade. Now “we have to put them in testing boot camp well before third grade.”

According to the article, grass-roots efforts can only go so far. *Early childhood experts have been publishing books, releasing reports, and testifying before Congress, with little change in public policy. “It’s not the educators, it’s the politicians,” says Russell of the Boston Schools. “The schools don’t make the decisions. The politicians are making the decisions to meet political needs.”*

Meanwhile more and more children are “failing” kindergarten, according to the Alliance for Childhood report, and missing out on the kind of early schooling that does help develop 5-year-old minds. Winifred Hagan, former kindergarten teacher and a vice president at the Cayl Institute in Cambridge, a nonprofit for the study of early childhood education, worries that vulnerable kids are being sent down a path to failure inside a system created to meet purely political goals.

Kids are spending hours of their day sitting with pencils and tracing dotted lines. And we call that education? . . . We are kidding ourselves!

—Winifred Hagan

Gloria Zuazua is a Resource Specialist at the Manhattan/Staten Island BETAC at Hunter College.

PROTECTING CHILDREN AGAINST FALSE ADVERTISING CLAIMS

CAMPAIGN FOR A COMMERCIAL-FREE CHILDHOOD (CCFC)

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC) is a non-profit national coalition of health care professionals, educators, advocacy groups, and concerned parents. The coalition is headquartered at the Judge Baker Children’s Center and affiliated with Harvard Medical School and Boston Children’s Hospital. CCFC is committed to countering the harmful effects of marketing to children through action, advocacy, education and research, as well as collaboration among organizations and individuals who care about children.

CCFC has been at the forefront of a growing movement to protect children from commercial exploitation. In 2006, the CCFC brought a complaint and request for investigation before the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to bring an action against the *Baby Einstein* and *Brainy Baby* companies for engaging in deceptive acts and practices in violation of Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act.

Despite the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) — “***no screen time***” for children under age two, including television or videos, the companies have aggressively marketed videos for children under two, making over one billion dollars from the sales of these videos. The companies have capitalized on parents’ desires to give their very young children a leg up on learning and development by deceptively and falsely marketing their videos as educational and beneficial for infant development. For example, *Baby Einstein* claims that with its *Baby da Vinci* video, “your child will learn to

identify her different body parts, and also discover her five senses...in Spanish, English and French!” *Brainy Baby* claims that “the educational content of *Brainy Baby* can help give your child a learning advantage!” *Baby Einstein* and *Brainy Baby* imply that scientific studies and research support their claims because they refer to collaboration with experts and use scientific terms, and they claim that they use input from doctors and educators. Several references are made to child development terms that imply scientific backing, including “cognitive skills” and “brain development.” These claims are likely to lead consumers into thinking that *Baby Einstein* and *Brainy Baby* have actual competent and credible scientific studies to support their claims. ***In fact, representatives from both companies have publicly admitted that they do not rely on any scientific research in developing their videos.***

Summary of CCFC Complaints

- The *Baby Einstein* and *Brainy Baby*’s claims are deceptive and false because no research or evidence exists to support their claims that their videos are educational or beneficial for very young children. In fact, preliminary research suggests that television is a poor tool for educating very young children and that television viewing by children under three negatively affects cognitive development. Television viewing has been linked to sleep irregularity in babies and obesity in preschoolers.
- Experts are concerned that television may be harmful for infants and toddlers because it displaces brain stimulating activities with proven developmental benefits, such as interaction with parents and siblings and creative play.

- The claims of *Baby Einstein*, *Brainy Baby* and other infant-video producers influence consumer purchasing decisions and decisions about their infant's media usage. These choices directly impact the health and safety of thousands of very young children and put them at risk for significant harm. Consumers buy these videos because they specifically think that "regular" TV is bad and these infant videos are "good."

Dr. T. Berry Brazelton is Clinical Professor of Pediatrics Emeritus at Harvard Medical School and Professor of Psychiatry and Human Development at Brown University. He is one of the nation's leading pediatricians and author of 38 books and 200 scientific papers and chapters on pediatrics and child development. Dr. Brazelton

has endorsed the AAP's recommendation of "no screen time for children under two years of age."

Dr. Ellen Wartella, a researcher at the Children's Research Initiative: Children Digital Media Center, thinks that "*toy and video companies prey on the belief of parents that the toys have important effects and have fostered notions that simply watching certain videos or listening to tapes can enhance infant IQ and reading ability.*"

CCFC's Conclusion and Request for Relief

CCFC asserts that consumers need to know that *Baby Einstein*, *Brainy Baby*, and other infant video maker's claims of educational and developmental benefits are

unfounded. Furthermore, **parents need to know that by showing infants and toddlers these videos, they are not only experimenting on their children, but they may be harming them.**

Consequently, the CCFC requested the Commission to:

1. Bring an action to obtain preliminary and permanent injunctive against *Baby Einstein* and *Brainy Baby* for deceptive acts and practices in marketing and selling their videos.
2. Initiate action to permanently prohibit them and other companies that produce videos for children under 2 from making claims about the educational developmental benefits of their videos.

"I absolutely support the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation that children under two be kept away from screen media. It's too harmful for them physically as well as psychologically."

—Dr. Brazelton

3. Require makers of videos promoted for infants and toddlers to clearly and conspicuously disclose the AAP's recommendation against no screen time for children under age two, regardless of content, on their websites, packaging, and other forms of advertising.

To find out more about CCFC, please visit their website:

<http://www.commercialexploitation.org/>

Literacy Websites for Preschoolers



<http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/pksites.htm>

- [Enchanted Learning](#) is a favorite for thematic units, preschool activities, crafts, rebus rhymes, and much more.
- [Kid Grid Safe Sites](#) has much more than just literacy activities, but it's worth exploring to mark your favorites if you've got the time.
- [Learning Planet.com](#) provides free activities for preschoolers as well as a subscription service to access many more activities. Current free activities include the alphabet, numbers, memory, sequencing and clocks.
- [Literacy Center.net](#), sponsored by the Early Childhood Education Network, has interactive early literacy activities for young children in English, Spanish, Dutch and French.
- [Mr. Roger's Neighborhood](#) has pictures, picture videos, and a place to build a neighborhood.
- [Preschool Coloring Book](#) provides coloring pages, no-line coloring and journal pages on all sorts of subjects to facilitate practice of early literacy skills.
- [Sesame Workshop](#) includes games, stories, art, music, and mail activities for kids and a section for parents/teachers too. Don't miss this one. Sesame Street Music Station is a real treat.
- [Thomas the Tank](#) games and information about the authors
- [Tot's TV](#) from PBS accompanies the PBS television program.
- [Billy Bear's Playground](#) has lots of opportunities for exploring, creating, reading and writing. Good stuff for teachers here too.

Electronic Storybooks for Preschoolers

[Lil' Fingers Storybooks](#) features a number of online storybooks, some of which are read-alouds.

[Children's Storybooks Online](#) features a wide selection of illustrated storybooks for children of all ages.

[Mightybook.com](#) features read-aloud picture books, sing-along songs, video song books, poetry, story-writing and illustrating contests and learning games designed for children ages 2-12.

Creating a Welcoming Environment for ELLs



Colorín Colorado

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>

M/SI BETAC: NEW INITIATIVES

2009-2010

The NYS Manhattan Staten Island BETAC is committed to building the capacity of teachers, school leaders, and other personnel through a wide range of professional development offerings. We have designed several new initiatives that are in keeping with our mission to provide our educational community with professional development that focuses on effective teaching and learning practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive to the educational needs of our English language learners (ELLs). The following represents an overview of these new professional development initiatives for the current school year.

New Teachers' Institute

A *New Teachers' Institute* has been established for new teachers of ELLs. Understanding the many challenges that new teachers encounter during their first years of service and responding directly to what principals say teachers need in the area of assessment, the *New Teachers' Institute* is designed to provide a coherent series of PD workshops on practical assessment approaches to support the achievement of ELLs. Workshop topics will include NYSESLAT training; how to analyze a variety of assessment data to understand student progress and adjust instruction; and how to differentiate instruction to accommodate varying student levels. The overall goal is to support beginning teachers in building a solid foundation base on the key role of assessment in driving classroom instruction.

Study Group for New Principals/APs of SINI Schools

Created specifically for new principals and assistant principals of SINI Schools (schools in need of improvement) is the launching of a *Study Group*. Recognizing the key role of school principals in providing equitable and quality education for ELLs, the *Study Group* will afford new school leaders an opportunity to engage in collegial study to explore and discuss selected chapters in Mike Schomaker's book, *Results Now*. Two key themes, effective supervisory and professional development practices for teachers of ELLs, will be reviewed in order for the participants to develop a shared understanding of these crucial school topics and begin to examine more closely their own school practices in these areas.

The *Study Group* will meet once a month for four sessions beginning in October 2009. An expected outcome of the study groups is for the new school leaders to avail themselves of the opportunity to receive school-site support from the study group's facilitator based on participants' needs and interests related to the areas of teacher supervision and professional development.

SINI School Site Support and Technical Assistance

Guided by the importance of providing school specific PD and offered as a complement to the *Study Group*,

participating new administrators in the *Study Group* can request technical assistance and/or professional development services throughout the school year. The support provided by BETAC staff will be school specific and customized to the needs of the school leader, and can include school observation visits, planning sessions with school leaders, walk throughs, and other tailored support that is specifically related to the ELL population. An important goal of this initiative is to provide schools with practical tools to engage in self study to look more closely at the quality of programs and services provided to English language learners. With this in mind, BETAC staff members will also offer individualized technical assistance to interested new principals of SINI schools on how to implement the PET (Program Evaluation Toolkit) which is a comprehensive self-assessment tool to examine their instructional programs for ELLs.

ELLs Academy: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Supports

In response to the myriad academic and social challenges that many English language learners encounter in our school system (Long Term ELLs, Students with Interrupted Formal Education, and Students with Disabilities), the *ELLs Academy* will provide participants with a variety of targeted learning opportunities such as conferences and workshops. The *ELLs Academy*, through presentations from national and local experts, will provide the opportunity for participants to:

- Understand the basic structure of culturally and linguistically responsive supports such as Response to Intervention (RTI) for ELLs;
- Analyze research that supports literacy instruction for learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse;
- Understand and reflect on the general education structures that can support the needs of ELLs through culturally and linguistically responsive practices;
- Recognize the challenges faced at the national as well as the local level as it relates to the drop-out rate among ELLs, and explore possible solutions.

Saturday ELLs Early Childhood Academy

The *ELLs Early Childhood Academy* will focus on emergent literacy and language development in English and the native language for general and special education early childhood English language learners. The program will connect research experts with master bilingual early childhood classroom teachers who will model effective instructional practices for ELLs to provide a strong foundation for later academic achievement. In the process, the Academy will cultivate a professional community of learners to discuss, share, and develop appropriate classroom practices based on current research. The participants will also discuss and share appropriate ongoing authentic assessment strategies to redesign their lessons to improve instructional practices.

M/SI UPCOMING EVENTS

DATES	TOPIC	LOCATION
Oct. 7, 2009	English Language Learners as Authors: Making a Connection Between Reading and Writing Keynote Speakers: Alma Flor Ada and Isabel Campoy	Fordham
Oct. 8, 2009	Help Immigrant Students Pursue Post-Secondary Options Counselors' Forum (Collaboration with Spanish BETAC)	Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
Oct. 15, 2009	Teaching of Language Arts to ELLs: Learning Standards for ESL- Series I	Hunter
Oct. 20, 2009	PR/HYLI: Orientation for Administrators and Counselors	Hunter
Oct. 21, 2009	Teacher Institute: The Challenge of Learning Academic English. (Collaboration with all BETACS) Keynote: Robert Marzano	Fordham
Oct. 22, 2009	Study Group for New Principals and APs from SINI Schools: Effective Supervision of Classroom Teachers Working with ELLs: Series I	Hunter
Oct. 26, 2009	Strategies for Teaching Social Studies to ELLs in Middle Schools: Series I	Hunter
Oct. 28, 2009	Teaching of Language Arts to ELLs: Learning Standards for ESL- Series III	Hunter
Nov. 10, 2009	Using Technology to Improve the Reading and Writing Skills of ELLs: Series II.1	Hunter
Nov. 10, 2009	Forum on ELL Drop-Out Prevention: Best Practices: Part I (Collaboration with All BETACs)	Hunter
Nov. 12, 2009	Making Middle School Math Meaningful for ELLs: Series I	Hunter

M/SI UPCOMING EVENTS

DATES	TOPIC	LOCATION
Nov. 17, 2009	Using Technology to Improve the Reading and Writing Skills of ELLs: Series II.2	Hunter
Nov. 19, 2009	Using Technology to Improve Emergent Literacy in ELLs	Hunter
Nov. 19, 2009	Strategies for Teaching Social Studies to ELLs in Middle Schools: Series II	Hunter
Nov. 19, 2009	Study Group for New Principals and APs from SINI Schools: Effective Supervision of Classroom Teachers Working with ELLs: Series II	Hunter
Nov. 21, 2009	Saturday Academy for Early Childhood ELLs: Series I	Hunter
Nov. 23, 2009	New Teacher Institute: Authentic Assessment: Using Ongoing Assessment to Determine ELLs' Academic Needs	Hunter
Dec. 1, 2009	Using Technology to Improve the Reading and Writing Skills of ELLs: Series II.4	Hunter
Dec. 3, 2009	Strategies to Implement a Dual Language Program	Hunter
Dec. 8, 2009	Using Technology to Improve the Reading and Writing Skills of ELLs: Series II.5	Hunter
Dec. 17, 2009	Assessment Strategies and Data Analysis to Improve Instructional Outcomes of ELLs	Hunter
Dec. 17, 2009	Study Group for New Principals and APs from SINI Schools: Effective Supervision of Classroom Teachers Working with ELLs: Series III	Hunter

HUNTER COLLEGE RESOURCES

HUNTER COLLEGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES COPE and SPELL

Saturday English Language Classes

COPE (Community Outreach Program in English) classes are for any adult.

- There are 12 classes each semester on Saturdays from 12:00 to 2:30 PM.
- **The cost is \$40 for the semester.**
- Students can return for as many semesters as necessary to learn English.

SPELL (Saturday Program in English Language Literacy) classes are only for parents of children in high school or younger children living in New York.

- Classes are on Saturdays from 9 AM to 3 PM.
- **The classes are free but documentation for one child is required.**
- Information about documentation is on the applications.
- The **Spring semester** begins in late January or early February.
- **Applications** for the Spring semester will be available **in December**.
- The **Fall semester** begins in late August or early September.
- **Applications** for the Fall semester will be available **in June**.
- They will be on the door of Room 1031 in the West Building.
- We cannot mail applications.
- They must be completely filled out and include a self-addressed stamped envelope.
- Registration is by mail.
- All the information you need is on the applications.
- Registered students take a test the week before classes begin to determine their level.
- Both programs have classes for all levels.

There are no classes during the week.

COPE and SPELL OFFICE: (212) 772-4620

HUNTER COLLEGE CLASES DE INGLES COPE y SPELL

Clases de Inglés Los Sábados

COPE (Community Outreach Program in English) Las clases de COPE son para cualquier adulto.

- Hay 12 clases cada semestre los sábados desde las 12:00 PM hasta las 2:30 PM.
- **El costo es \$40 por el semestre.**

SPELL (Saturday Program in English Language Literacy) Las clases de SPELL son solamente para padres de niños en la escuela superior o de niños mas jóvenes que viven en Nueva York.

- Las clases son los sábados desde las 9 AM hasta las 3 PM.
- **Las clases son gratis pero documentación por un hijo es requerida.**
- Información sobre la documentación está en las solicitudes.
- El **semestre de la primavera** comienza tarde en enero o temprano en febrero.
- **Solicitudes** para el semestre de la primavera estarán disponibles **en diciembre**.
- El **semestre del otoño** comienza tarde en agosto o temprano en septiembre.
- **Solicitudes** para el semestre del otoño estarán disponibles **en junio**.
- Estarán en la puerta de la sala 1031 en el edificio oeste.
- No podemos mandar solicitudes por correo.
- Hay que llenar las solicitudes completamente e incluir un sobre con su propia dirección y estampilla.
- La matriculación es por correo.
- Toda la información que se necesita está en las solicitudes.
- Los estudiantes matriculados tomarán un examen la semana antes de comenzar las clases para determinar su nivel.
- Ambos programas tienen clases para todos los niveles.

No hay clases durante la semana.

OFICINA de COPE y SPELL: (212) 772-4620



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Manhattan/Staten Island
Regional BETAC
Resource Center

The NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign
Language Studies and The NYC Network of NYS BETACs
Present:

THE TEACHER INSTITUTE

“The Challenge of Learning Academic English:
Research-based Instruction
for
Language and Literacy Development”

ROBERT MARZANO
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

- Date:** Wednesday, October 21, 2009
Time: 8:30am - 3:30pm
Location: Fordham University– Rose Hill Campus
441 East Fordham Road
Bronx, New York 10458
(Bldg & Room # will be provided upon registration)
Audience: Teachers, supervisors and educators of English language
Learners; including content area teachers.
Registration: Send an e-mail with “Teacher Institute” in the
subject line to Dayana.quinones@liu.edu. Please
include your full name, school, title/position, and phone
number.
- Please register by October 12, 2009. You will receive confirmation upon registration.
 - Registration is a “MUST” and is on a first come, first served basis.

- Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.
- Professional Development Certificates will be issued.
- **This Institute is free of charge.**
- First 300 participants will receive a copy of “Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement.”