

Lopez
continued . . .

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Q: Is there currently a demand for teachers?

A: Yes, and I think there will be an even greater demand for teachers in the next decade. For example, there is presently a trend to increase teaching credential requirements and make them more stringent. Consequently, the numbers of individuals qualifying to become teachers will decrease. California's large urban areas, like Los Angeles, are already experiencing great difficulty in identifying qualified substitute and permanent teachers. Also, there are strong indications that there will be massive retirements in California at all levels of education. So there are numerous opportunities for people entering the field.

Q: What other trends are affecting today's education?

A: Administrators and politicians throughout the nation are increasing their commitment to revitalizing our schools. They are requesting more monies for education and are initiating a trend towards greater financial support for public education. The technology

movement is also influencing education's direction. I think that schools will be called upon to play a major role in preparing individuals to meet the needs and demands of our evolving technology-oriented society.

Q: How would you describe your teacher-education students?

A: They are responsive. They have a real desire to learn, to be creative, and to share ideas. They realize their role in society is significant. They are willing to take on the responsibility of transmitting the values and wisdom from past generations to our future leaders. I've had the pleasure of working with a variety of students—including some that have previously been attorneys, contractors, nurses, etc., and have decided that for them, education would be a more rewarding profession. It's great to work in an environment where people are motivated and willing to investigate new ways of doing things.

Q: Do most teachers deal with bilingual children in the classroom?

A: It's very likely that if you are teaching anywhere in the southwest, you will have contact with bilingual children. They may be Hispanic or for example in Fresno, they may be from the expanding Hmong population. Right now I'm involved in a research project dealing specifically with special

education teachers who are working with bilingual, Hispanic children. Many of the teachers I interviewed expressed that they aren't prepared to deal with parents of bilingual children, or to develop appropriate curricular activities and teaching methodology. The research indicates that many special education teachers are frustrated and in need of more information and in-service training to prepare them for meeting the particular needs of bilingual children.

Q: You were involved in a research project dealing with education for migrant gifted youngsters. What did you discover?

A: There is a dire need in our education system to improve the way migrant gifted children are identified. We need to provide these children with curriculum that is tailored to their unique abilities and cultural background. We have found that the traditional methods of identifying gifted children were inappropriate because the assessment techniques were culturally biased and did not relate to the migrant child's experience. We know that gifted children require specialized programs in order for them to reach their potential, and these children have not been provided for appropriately.

Q: What do you mean by "gifted?"

A: Gifted children have certain characteristics. They are persistent, very creative, they are risk takers, and they exhibit high verbal abilities and leadership qualities. To design an effective educational program for migrant gifted children, you would need to consider their unique abilities, their migratory experiences, their language and family experiences. That information could be used to encourage these children to reach their fullest potential.