

of America (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1977). Discussing the relationship of agriculture to energy, technology, and culture, Berry establishes the interconnections of land use, affluence, and alienation, showing the correlations between land exploitation and human exploitation, even in male-female relationships.

THE REFUGEE STUDENT -- BLESSING OR BOTHER?

by Nancy Ward

Southeast Asia, Russia, Iran, Korea -- the refugees keep coming. Maybe there are only one or two in your district, or perhaps there are too many and the names are too "funny" for any individual identity to be recognized. What is your reaction when you are assigned a non-English speaking student in your class? If you are asked first, is your response negative? A reluctant "Yes?" If it is less than an enthusiastic "Yessirree!", you are missing out on an opportunity.

Foreign students threaten your free time, the effectiveness of your standard curriculum, the use of the dependable notes you made last year, and in the midst of all this, they may well make a shambles of your grouping techniques. I propose that they also bring in some healthy fresh air of reality and relevance -- it's exciting to work with people for whom English is a survival skill rather than a required subject that has little to do with "real" life. The secret is to sharpen your communication skills so that the new English-speaker is included a maximum amount of

the time. More of your American English-speaking students will be involved in the class, too. Effective communication includes using a vocabulary that the entire class understands, purposely introducing new words and defining them as you speak, writing page numbers on the board along with simple directions to ensure that the assignment is precise and clear. Facing the class, speaking clearly, being open to questions, encouraging clarity of organization and content are common-sense techniques for any teacher. These and other skills are sharpened when you are aware that one or more of your students requires these techniques to participate successfully in the class.

Our most basic, and some would argue, most effective, form of communication is body language. When some portion of the students depends heavily on body language, the teacher has an opportunity to practice and develop positive, encouraging, discipline--effective, physical communication.

The reality of the current world situation that foreign students bring with them is an excellent opportunity to enrich your curriculum. Our students, American and foreign, must be educated to be world citizens. Our world is too small, communication is too rapid, the economics of various countries are too interrelated for responsible teachers to encourage narrow provincialism. Basic ideas of written communication, literature as an expression of culture, the universality of common human experiences, grammar as a basic structure are all enhanced by a comparative study of English and another language.

If you are fortunate enough to have a foreign student in your class, take some time to get to know that student. Don't

let the lack of a common language interfere with communication--you'd be surprised at how much information and good feeling can flow back and forth in the midst of many smiles and nods. Your perspective will be broadened, too. When a wealthy Jewish person was persecuted in Iran, my Iranian student, who had never heard of Catholicism or Protestantism, told me about it with tears in her eyes. When the Mayor of Guatemala City was shot, I felt concern for my two Guatemalan students who might have to go back to that kind of danger. When someone mentioned Holland, I remembered conversations with two charming little Dutch girls. And when someone makes a slighting remark about Asian refugees, I think of several Cambodians who have lost family, country, homes, and, since 1975, education -- who are coming into high school classes with only two or three years of formal education behind them and with years of physical and emotional deprivation, who are studying algebra and English and even science -- and who are making it.

Grasp an opportunity to toss out old, rigid ideas of how your presentation must be given. Bend your curriculum to include fresh new insights. Encourage peer tutoring, small group discussion, illustrations to explain plots, and comparative language study to broaden your students' awareness of the basic structure of language. Most of all, expand your own awareness of the plurality of cultures that enriches "good old U.S.A." and blesses us with diversity and complexity.

"We have a new foreign student. Is placement in your class all right?"

"Yessirree! With pleasure!"

SELECTED TOPICS

Those interested in the preparation of teachers of English and the language arts in elementary and secondary schools can choose eleven sessions to attend from among the more than 150 sessions offered. Over 50 of those sessions deal with preservice or inservice teacher preparation. Among the subjects to be discussed are those listed below.

Thursday

Research in Language
Professional Education for English/Language Arts Teachers
Preservice English Education
English Education and the Future
Making the English Teacher Computer-Literate
Improving Composition in the Secondary School: A Practical Workshop
Research in Literature
Inservice Training for Writing Teachers
Bringing Together Reading and Writing
Abstraction: Basis for Planning Learning Activities in the Language Arts
Exploring Vocabulary Development

Friday

Training Future Teachers of Writing
The Moral Majority
Writing as Learning
The Spelling Problem
Teacher Response to Student Writing
Multicultural Education and the Language Arts Program
Teaching ESL K-12: What, Why, How
Sociolinguistics and Reading
Computer-Assisted Language Instruction
Creative Writing and Literature

Spring
Convention

Saturday

Teaching Styles and Human Relations Skills
Assessing and Remediating Communication Skills of Prospective Teachers
Perspectives on Student Writing
Implementing Listening and Study Skills Programs
Reading and Writing Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress
Evaluation of Inservice Training for Writing Teachers
Writing and the Community
The Topical Approach to Teaching Literature
Speaking and Writing Apprehension
Language Arts Methods Course
Questions and the Teaching of Literature
Language and Learning Summer Institute
Composition and Film
Teaching Thematically
Research in Writing