



# NAAPAE Newsletter

National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education

March 1989

## APA Research in Progress

*Given the misguided tendency to view Asian and Pacific Americans (APAs) as a homogeneous population with a singular set of needs, the status of individual Asian groups is often misrepresented and their needs masked. An ongoing research study conducted by the California State Department of Education and the Asian Pacific Task Force to State Superintendent Honig may help address individual differences among these groups with respect to student achievement.*

The project investigates the reading and writing achievement patterns of eighth grade APA students on the California Achievement Program (CAP), and seeks to determine whether differences in reading and writing achievement can be attributed at least to some degree to differences in demographic characteristics, home-school environment and language use, and competency in both English and non-English languages.

The study focuses on six California public school districts that have a high number of APA students: Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and San José.

Information was gathered in 1988 from more than 8,800 APA students on specific student characteristics. A supplemental questionnaire was administered to all eighth grade APA students in California as part of the California Assessment Program in order to provide the public, the Legislature, and school districts with information for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of educational programs.

CAP is using a special technique called matrix sampling, in which each student takes only a small portion of a very long test, thereby reducing testing time and providing information on a wider range of skills than is possible with standard testing

procedures. Statistical calculations make it possible to provide reports for each group of students as if all students had actually responded to every item on the long test.

The data will be analyzed for each Asian and Pacific American group by factors such as: place of birth (i.e. American or foreign-born), generation (immigrant, first generation, etc.), and number of years in the U.S. Other variables in the study include gender, socio-economic status, language fluency, home environment, participation in specially-funded programs, and overall student achievement.

The baseline data obtained from this study on the specific Asian and Pacific population classified by ethnicity will be particularly valuable to school districts, which will be able to identify skill areas most troublesome to specific APA groups. The data will help them develop instructional strategies to address these students' reading and writing needs without making generalizations for the entire APA population.

Various reports on this subject will be released as they are completed.

For more information, please contact Dr. Eva C. Fong, California State Department of Education, External Affairs, 721 Capitol Mall, Room 521, Sacramento, CA 95814.

## Nominations Accepted for NAAPAE Awards

NAAPAE would like to encourage everyone to submit nominations for its annual Scholar and National Service awards, to be presented at the NAAPAE Conference in Rockville, Maryland, on April 28-29, 1989. The awards consist of a plaque and letter of recognition.

Nominations along with supporting documents for either of these awards must be sent to NAAPAE by April 11, 1989 (postmarked). Neither the nominees nor the recommenders have to be NAAPAE members.

The National Service Award is presented annually to an individual who has made significant and timely contributions to educational issues facing Asian and Pacific Americans — whether through teaching, community service, professional practice or other activities. Nominations must include a description of the importance of the person's contribution, a resume, and three letters of recommendation.

The National Scholar Award is intended to recognize outstanding research papers on issues relevant to APA education. The following documents must be submitted: three copies of the manuscript (no longer than 30 double spaced pages each), the nominee's resume, a self-addressed stamped postcard, and a 3x5 index card with your name, affiliation, address, work and home phone number, title of paper, highest degree received and date awarded. Please note that the paper's title page should include the author's name, affiliation, and address. Please submit nominations to Dr. Don Nakanishi, NAAPAE Awards Committee, 4501 N. Berkshire Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90032.

### Lowell Adopts New Bilingual Education Model

A class-action suit filed by Hispanic and Indochinese parents in Lowell, Massachusetts, has resulted in the local public school system's adoption of a two-way bilingual education program, whereby immigrant and English-speaking students will learn each other's languages.

The parents charged that their children were receiving inferior education because of their being unconstitutionally segregated.

In addition to desegregating the students, the bilingual education program implemented in Lowell calls for an increase in counseling and support services for language minority children. The program will also include improved cultural and language pro-

grams, a new multilingual/multicultural school, and a demonstration magnet school that will teach Khmer, Spanish, and English languages and cultures.

Lowell has the second largest Cambodian refugee community in the country after Long Beach, California, with 25 percent of its population being Cambodian, Laotian, or Vietnamese.

### Court Okays Limited Use of Bilingual Education

A federal court in Berkeley, California has ruled that native language instruction and the use of bilingual education certified teachers are not absolutely necessary for providing sound educational programs to limited English proficient (LEP) students.

Attorney Celia Ruiz, who represents

the school district, said that the ruling in *Theresa P. vs. Berkeley Unified School District* sets an important national precedent since all prior decisions in cases similar to this one have been based on the assumption that native language instruction is the most effective approach for teaching LEP students.

The students' attorney, Peter Roos, countered that the suit's intent was not to prove the usefulness of bilingual education in general, but rather to challenge the adequacy of Berkeley's programs.

The majority of Berkeley's 571 LEP students are taught in integrated classrooms by teachers trained in ESL and sheltered English approaches. Tutors with some bilingual skills are provided for LEP students who need additional support.

The plaintiffs had charged that these efforts were not sufficient. The district, on the other hand, cited statistics showing that no differences in achievement were found between students taught in classrooms with bilingual credentialed teachers and those in regular classes.

Mr. Roos said that while federal civil rights laws do not mandate a right to bilingual education, bilingual education nevertheless provides school districts with the best legal shield in matters involving the education of LEP students.

### Bilingual Ed Eligibility Expanded in New York

Student eligibility criteria for bilingual education services in New York State have recently been broadened to admit students who score up to the 40th percentile in standardized English reading tests.

Scheduled to go into effect in September, this revised policy will allow for extra tutoring and guidance for "formerly LEP" students who have entered mainstream English programs. Maintenance bilingual education will also be established under the new eligibility policy.

### APA Educational Concerns in Print

Asian and Pacific American education has continued to receive coverage in national professional journals in recent months. The March 1989 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*, for example, features two articles on APA education (*Hawaii's School System is One of a Kind*, and *Pacific Rim Partnerships: Alaska's Bold Initiative*), and the fall issue of *Review of Educational Research* covered *Concepts of Ability and Effort in Japan and the United States*.

In the first article, Jan Zulich describes Hawaii's educational philosophy — "what's good for one is good for all" — which has resulted in rural schools enjoying benefits similar to suburban ones. In *Pacific Rim Partnerships*, William Parrett and Annie Calkins write about a program that helps Alaskan students better understand their Asian neighbors, fosters appreciation of Asian languages, and helps improve students' communica-

tion skills.

Finally, Susan Holloway brings together a very interesting body of research on the different ways that the concepts of effort and ability are perceived by U.S. and Japanese educators. The Japanese, for example, consider effort in the whole context of social competence, physical development, musical skills, and academic knowledge, all of which are given prominent weight in the curriculum. In the U.S., by comparison, effort is valued only in terms of academic performance.

The publication of articles such as these is helping give APA educational concerns national prominence. Moreover, these articles are balanced and in many instances deeply perspective, without giving way to glossy surface coverage. Surprisingly, most of them have been authored by non-APA writers — an encouraging sign.

### Research Group on APA Education

*The Research on the Education of Asian and Pacific Americans*, a special interest group of the American Educational Research Association would like to invite everyone to join, a group organized to provide structure for interdisciplinary communication among professionals interested in issues related to the education of Asian and Pacific Americans.

To join or for more information, please mail your \$5 annual membership fee (\$3 for students) before mid-June 1989 to : Dr. Tane Akamatsu, 342 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824.

### Philadelphia to Improve Services for Asian Students

The Philadelphia public school system will spend \$1.1 million to improve services for its Asian American students. This action is required by a consent decree agreed to last spring to resolve litigation brought on behalf of Asian students.

The plan calls for a revision of the testing and instructional programs offered to these students, for improved communication with their non-English-speaking parents, and for the hiring of additional staff members fluent in Asian languages.

### SAT Math Test Can Predict Asian Success

The College Entrance Board has found that math scores on the SAT and high school achievement tests are far better predictors of college success for Asian American students than are verbal scores.

The authors of the study, Stanley Sue and Jennifer Abe of UCLA, have concluded that the increased predictive

validity of math scores was consistent for all academic majors, regardless of whether or not English was the students' best language.

The researchers compared 400 Asian American students with 1,000 White students enrolled at the eight University of California campuses in the fall of 1984, and found that changes in admission criteria that give English verbal scores more weight do a disfavor to Asian Americans, since the change reduced the tests' predictive value for these students' future academic performance.

### Controversy over OBEMLA Awards

Under current policy, the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) will award funds to many non-native language programs that have received lower ratings than native ones from expert reviewers.

Present funding guidelines allow OBEMLA to award up to 25 percent of its \$110 million grant program to "special alternative" programs. Funding decisions, however, are supposed to be based on program quality, not on instructional approach.

Alicia Coro, the agency's Acting Director, said that 75 of the 151 programs to be funded will initially be

awarded to the transitional bilingual education programs, and 76 to alternative programs. OBEMLA, however, has received 274 transitional applications, compared to 159 alternative ones.

In addition, documents indicate that transitional applications tend to receive higher review scores than do alternative ones. To date, 79 of the transitional applications have been rated higher than the alternative programs slated for funding.

If the awards were granted according to ranking, twice as many transitional programs would be funded than is currently the case.

Coro noted that alternative programs generally cost less and can serve more LEP children with the same amount of money as transitional ones.

### Advanced Placement Tests

Of the nearly 52,000 minority students who took at least one of the College Board's Advanced Placement tests in May of 1988, more than half were Asian Americans.

According to Board officials, California, New York, and Florida led the nation in the number of qualifying grades earned by Blacks and Hispanics last year. No data was provided for Asian and Pacific Americans.

### NAAPAE Executive Council Elections

The ballots for the election of the 1989-1991 NAAPAE Executive Council officers are in, and we are pleased to announce that the following people have been elected:

- President: Hai Tran
- Vice President: Amefil Agbayani
- Secretary: Sally Chou
- Treasurer: Janet Lu

We congratulate them on their election, and look forward to working together as a team.

---

---

## Announcements

---

---

### Journalism Scholarships

The Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA) will award scholarships of up to \$2,000 for outstanding students pursuing careers in print, broadcast and photo-journalism. The competition is open to undergraduate, graduate, as well as high school students entering colleges or universities.

For more information, contact AAJA in San Francisco at (415) 346-2051.

### Video Perspective on English Only Movement

An 11-volume video tape series entitled *Language Rights and Public Policy: A Perspective on the English Only Movement* is now available for sale to the public.

The video documents the April 1988 Stanford University conference on the official language movement, and covers topics such as the movement's legal and constitutional implications, language policy in other nations, political developments, public attitude, interna-

tional and trade implications, and strategies for organizing a response to the English Only movement.

The conference was organized by California United, a coalition of civil rights and community organizations concerned about language policy.

Video tapes can be purchased at single volume prices or at a discount price for the entire set (\$275 plus shipping and handling).

For more information, please contact Carl Miller at Ram Industries, (415) 474-1926.

### Refugee Films Available

Two award-winning documentaries entitled *Blue Collar and Buddha* and *Between Two Worlds: The Hmong Shaman in America* are available on video-tape for rental (\$40) or purchase (\$200). Both films dramatically capture the experiences of today's Asian refugees in the U.S., and are used internationally as teaching and research tools.

For more information call Siegel Productions at (312) 528-5663.

The NAAPAE Newsletter is published four times a year — in March, June, September, and December — by the *National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education (NAAPAE)*, and is being sent to NAAPAE members. Unless otherwise stated, the views expressed or implied in this publication should not be interpreted as official positions of the Association.

NAAPAE  
310 Eighth Street  
Suite 220  
Oakland, CA 94607  
(415) 834-9455

FAX: (415) 763-1490

#### Newsletter Staff:

*Editor:*

John Lum

*Copy Editor:*

Monica Friedlander

---

National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education



310 Eighth Street, Suite 220  
Oakland, California 94607

FIRST CLASS MAIL