Back to Schooling for Students and Families

The start of this school year will look like none we can remember! A safe bet would be that the entire academic year is going to look like none we remember, too. As students and families return to formal schooling, if not physically to schools, we have opportunities to thrive as well as challenges to our well-being.

As we each approach schooling for our children and our families, we would do well to see this as a marathon, not a sprint; to enjoy the simple pleasures; to mark the gains and losses both; and to hone our conflict management and coping skills.

Simple Pleasures:

These are our latest finds for relatively quick, easy, often healthy, things you can do during COVID-19 restrictions.

Though we’re missing being out at concert series and music festivals this summer, the music itself is still there! Take advantage of this opportunity to try some new festivals by planning your own outdoor concert experience at home while streaming some of these:

- Los Alamos Summer Concert Series -- [https://losalamossummerconcertseries.com/](https://losalamossummerconcertseries.com/).
- St. John’s College Music on the Hill -- [https://www.sjc.edu/santa-fe/events/music-on-the-hill](https://www.sjc.edu/santa-fe/events/music-on-the-hill).

• Taos School of Music Chamber Music Festival -- https://taosschoolofmusic.com/festival-live-stream/.

• An Albuquerque Public Schools school band concert -- https://www.kob.com/albuquerque-news/school-bands-perform-online-concert/5685339/.

• Songs from the Santa Fe Opera -- https://www.santafeopera.org/rusalka.

It’s a Marathon not a Sprint: We’re on a long road to new things. Pace yourself!

Do you need childcare or meals for your children? New Mexico has resources at https://www.newmexico.gov/early-childhood/children-and-families/.

Self-care for yourself and your children during remote learning is going to be important. Here are lots of resources for you: https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/sel-resources-for-educators-school-communities-and-parents-related-to-covid-19.

Self-directed learning, the ability to monitor and guide one’s own learning, is an important life skill for all of us. It is much more essential for learners of every age during remote learning where the traditional supports, cues, reminders, and teaching about these skills are heavily reduced. Unfortunately, even college students aren’t necessarily good at these skills. Here are some links to help you and your children understand and develop self-directed learning skills:


• A long list of free resources students can use in self-directed learning -- https://www.asiaone.com/lifestyle/free-online-resources-help-kids-self-directed-learning-home.

Encouraging self-directed learning in young children --
https://www.learningwithtlc.org/blog/selfdirectedlearning.

Here’s a video about incorporating self-directed learning skills (for elementary students) --

20 steps toward more self-directed learning (for teens and adults) --

7 habits of self-directed learning (for teens and adults) --

15 ways of the self-directed learner (for teens and adults) --

13 ways to develop self-directed learning skills (for teens and adults) --

10 self-directed learning questions (for teens and adults) --

Self-directed learning guide for college students --

Time-management tips for college students, but they’d work for many of us!! --

How do you keep kids, particularly young children, motivated and engaged in remote learning?
Those are really simple questions with really complex answers. But we need concrete answers on a daily basis. First, remember the basics of good sleep, good nutrition, exercise, downtime and play. Second, remember that these times are tough on each of us, including children, and that focus and concentration seem to be struggles during COVID-19 for many people. Third, tend to your own and your children’s mental and emotional health. With those reminders, here, then are some more detailed ideas:

Build positive conditions for learning --

Quick tips for supporting your children from UNESCO --
● Quick tips addressing student motivation from UNESCO --  

● Sanity-in-Place offers detailed advice to parents of children ages 3-5 --  

● A searchable database and ideas for supporting children at home --  

● 12 ways to support your children’s motivation --  


● How to stay motivated and engaged with college courses online --  
  https://www.purdueglobal.edu/blog/online-learning/online-learning-self-motivation/.

Everyday life is filled with uncertainty. This is a part of the human condition made even more visible as we grapple with the challenges of living through a pandemic. Christine Carter offers some powerful strategies we can use to cope with the many uncertainties that define the present moment. Her ideas draw upon several lines of psychological research on the foundations of wellbeing, e.g., acceptance, self-care, attention management, self-regulation, finding meaning:
  https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/seven_ways_to_cope_with_uncertainty

Lessons from early childhood centers that remained open:

Self-directed learning skills will help your child during this time and beyond --  
 https://hechingerreport.org/self-directed-learning-skills-are-key-to-making-remote-instruction-work/?fbclid=IwAR1FuLdOQi8pOUPHBKFhi2RGbFj8DyQsyTm0g-maT0szDGOLzqwrfYYPnI8s

Does your child have an Individualized Education Plan? Here are some ideas about how to work with it and your school’s staff during COVID19:


Want or need to be out and about? Understand which activities are riskier than others via this handy infographic:  https://twitter.com/SaskiaPopescu/status/1279133758965248000. And here
are tips for a road trip:

Why do some people wear masks and others don’t?

Is it time for you to refresh your understanding of COVID-19? Here are some places to get straightforward explanations of the pandemic:

- https://explaincovid.org/about/

Gains and Losses:

All of these changes!
Some are true losses big and small.
Some, though, are gains.

Play is essential for healthy growth and development through the lifespan. Psychologists and developmentalists have long noted that children learn through play. Doyle and Salberg, founders of the Global Recess Alliance and authors of a recent book on the benefits of play for children, recommend that when students return to school (whenever that occurs), schools begin with a transition period focused on play. They make an interesting case and cite some credible sources to support their call:

Psychologist Naomi Fisher offers practical advice for parents as they grapple with the challenge of helping their children learn at home. Parents should not try to duplicate school at home, but should capitalize on the many benefits of home schooling. When children learn at home, parents can and should give priority to “social and cultural learning” and tap into children’s interests to foster their intrinsic motivation to learn. Fisher notes that “resistance” can be an expression of anxiety and she offers tips for how parents can help children cope. Children learn best through supportive relationships with adults and peers. Fisher suggests concrete ways parents can help their children learn and grow through connection with others.

Play and learn with Everyday J.U.N.K.! The Family Development Program at the University of New Mexico has developed a “special cookbook of fun, learning activities for families”. Explore the Joy of Uncovering New Knowledge with your kids.
https://fdp.unm.edu/everyday-junk-recipes.html.
An IFCE Observation:

Kelley Holladay (Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, a Licensed Counselor in New Mexico, and a mother navigating back to schooling) writes about the tensions we’re living right now.

“Living in the tension” as we navigate gains and losses has recently become a new mindset. To be quite honest, when I first undertook writing about gains and losses for navigating back to schooling among children and families, I had a moment of pause. What input can I offer that will help so many impacted to navigate these trying times?

As a parent, and full-time mother, I realized it became time to personally examine gains and losses. Recently, I stopped my car on the side of the road to rescue two lost dogs, and I met the driver behind me who offered to help me safely get the dogs to my car. As they held one of the dogs, they shared that they were grieving the very recent loss of their child. It was in this moment that we exchanged numbers, each gained a new friend, and offered each other a little bit of hope.

After some reflection, the existential idea of positive disintegration (Dąbrowski) came to mind, as does this idea of “living in the tension” or the “and.” Essentially, we are all collectively experiencing anxiety, fear, and concerns of health and child development as we make decisions around back to schooling. These decisions cannot be avoided, will take thoughtful reflection, and will leave us without a perfect resolution (resulting in tension). Concurrently, through self-reflection and conscious assessment of our values and the qualities we want to hold while sitting in this tension, we may come out of this even stronger than before (see Positive Psychology).

As we navigate the new school year, I realized I have gained some more input in my daughter’s reading material, and lost some confidence in what her next year (and mine) will look like. I have gained some brief day trips (White Sands National Park), and memories with my daughter, and lost some work related productivity. But, without some self-reflection about mindfulness, some pretty impressive memories that were in the making may have also been lost, and that time is irreplaceable. So with that, I ask what have you lost and gained as we navigate our new school year. How are you living in this “and” or “sitting in the tension?”

- Thich Nhat Hanh poson The Practice of Mindfulness article is here.
- Dealing with Uncertainty During the Coronavirus Pandemic article is here.
- Post-Traumatic Growth: Finding Meaning and Creativity in Adversity is [here](#).
- Living in the Tension, an article is [here](#).

## Coping Skills:

We need to recommit to what works and to learn new ways.

The Kids Activities Blog has a section of ideas for kids who are Stuck at Home:
[https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/category/stuck-at-home/](https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/category/stuck-at-home/).

Our kids can still connect! Here are a few websites with ideas for virtual playdates to promote socio-emotional learning:

- [https://www.womansday.com/relationships/family-friends/g32087652/virtual-play-date-ideas/](https://www.womansday.com/relationships/family-friends/g32087652/virtual-play-date-ideas/)

Here are some ways to promote children’s resilience at this time:

Practice more kindness and express gratitude:

### An IFCE Observation:

Jay Parkes (Professor of Educational Psychology) has been thinking about how much more powerful the word AND is than the word OR.

As we make our daily decisions as individuals, as family members, as employees and as a society, we could benefit from the power of AND right now. Social media, other media, and political commentators seem enamored of OR.

- My decision whether to wear a mask is driven either by my beliefs about my rights and freedoms OR by my understanding of science.
- Either my 77 year old mother stays home at all times OR she endangers her health through lots of social interactions.
Either I return to work OR I provide good childcare for my children.

Either we open schools OR we keep teachers and students safe.

OR works really well in headlines and in social media posts of a relatively few words, and it oversimplifies the complexities and nuances in the decisions we must make. OR separates issues and polarizes them. OR pushes the issues to their extremes. OR is exclusionary of other issues.

The reality is that each of the decisions we must make will be made best by weighing and balancing all issues, not dismissing any that are relevant. OR signals elimination of an issue; AND balances the issues.

How much different -- and more real and accurate -- do these restatements seem?

- My decision whether to wear a mask is driven by my beliefs about my rights and freedoms AND by my understanding of science.
- My mother should stay home as much as possible AND she needs social interaction, etc.
- I should return to work AND my children need good childcare.
- We should open schools AND we should keep teachers and students safe.

AND will lead to solutions that represent the realities, the beliefs and values, of the different issues we need to juggle. AND allows us to prioritize concerns, not dismiss them.

The next time you hear an actual or implied OR, see how your thinking changes if you change it to AND.

**Conflict Resolution:**

All of our relationships take extra attention right now. Conflict, unfortunately, happens easily.

**An IFCE Observation:**

Ashley Martin-Cuellar (Visiting Lecturer in Family and Child Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapist) writes here about navigating change to mitigate stress and conflict.
Change can be challenging for all of us. Change impacts our security and shifts how we see the world—positively and negatively. Collectively, our lives have changed. This change has brought about new transitions and new challenges to navigate. While it is impossible to account for every change in the fall, we can think about and prepare for the changes coming to decrease stress and conflict.

With the changes to the fall school schedule here in New Mexico, the transition of going back to school will look differently and could potentially be very stressful for children and families. Buying school supplies will look different. Getting new school clothes will look different. Preparing for class instruction will look different. You can insert anything you expect for the fall here: “________ will look different.” Overall, “going to school” will look very different this year.

As a therapist supporting parents and families during this time, I have noticed talking about and preparing for the fall has been helpful in decreasing negative anticipation about the upcoming and unknown changes. We are tasked with the transitions throughout the day that teachers have so thoughtfully navigated. These transitions are a process that we must think through for ourselves, our children, and our families to decrease the stress and potential conflict that comes with it. Amid the grief and difficulty of the new normal, we need to look for ways to guide and support children through daily activities and tasks that will present themselves as a series of transitions.

Take some time to sit and think about, or even write about, what changes will impact your children and your family the most this fall. We need to think about what our children are missing out on (playing with friends, recess, fun!), what we are missing out on, and how these changes are impacting our emotions and thus, our stress levels. We also need to acknowledge the emotions and feelings that come up when we think about the fall school semester and allow ourselves to feel whatever is coming up.

Allow yourself time to think and to feel, and to talk to your children about what they are thinking and feeling. From this space, consider ideas with your children and family about what might minimize the stress and conflict in your home. As we transition into fall think about ways to create routines in anticipation for the changes that have become our new normal. These routines and the structure they create may become calm and predictable.

Transition strategies for kids:

- Give kids advance warning about an activity, chore, or task.
- Share with kids about how long an activity or task will take.
- Make a visual schedule to follow each day, with adjustments for the weekend.
- Have a timer to help kids keep track of their time.
● For younger kids have transition songs “clean-up, clean-up…”

● Have a transition ritual to start the at home school day, and a transition ritual to end the at home school day (example: keep all schoolwork in a backpack or box or something. Take the schoolwork/computer out at the start of school and put everything back in the backpack/box at the end of their school day).

● With any transition ritual or structure, make sure it is consistent!


Transition strategies for adults:

Take some time to think about your routine before and after work before working from home. What about that ritual can continue into your home/work routine? One article about this transition for adults: How to Transition Between Work Time and Personal Time [https://hbr.org/2020/04/how-to-transition-between-work-time-and-personal-time](https://hbr.org/2020/04/how-to-transition-between-work-time-and-personal-time)

In this a challenging time, may we all find ways to bring structure and routine to our homes to help us transition into Fall.

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**The New Mexico 19:**

Here are 19 schooling-related links which you might find useful heading into the new academic year:

1. Consider becoming an Emergency Childcare Provider in New Mexico for your family, friends and neighbors. Details are at [https://www.newmexikids.org/coronavirus/hs0.php](https://www.newmexikids.org/coronavirus/hs0.php).

2. Here’s a state-wide list of school-based meal sites for children: [https://www.newmexico.gov/education/meal-sites-for-children/](https://www.newmexico.gov/education/meal-sites-for-children/).

3. Here’s a state-wide list of school and non-school based meal sites [https://nmost.org/fighting-hunger-through-ost](https://nmost.org/fighting-hunger-through-ost).

4. Here’s a list of New Mexico food banks from the New Mexico Association of Food Banks [http://www.nmfoodbanks.org/](http://www.nmfoodbanks.org/).

5. The New Mexico Public Education Department has a COVID19 resource page -- [https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/](https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/).
6. Keep up on the latest regarding school-based sports through the New Mexico Activities Association COVID19 updates --

7. Indian Health Services Tele-Behavioral Health Center of Excellence. Regular in-face and online professional and family development workshops:
   http://www.ihs.gov/listserv/topics/signup/?list_id=609

8. The New Mexico Out-of-School Time Network has many resources about childcare, food, and other child-related needs at this time: https://nmost.org/covid-19-resources/.

9. UNM’s Center for Development and Disability has many resources for families, particularly those affected by autism: http://cdd.unm.edu/.

10. Dr. Almut Zieher, an IFCE Alumna, recommends the RULER approach (https://www.rulerapproach.org/navigating-emotional-times/). She writes, “Just as is the case in my home state of New Mexico, educators and parents across the country are finding ways to cope with the unique challenges of the pandemic and the resultant exacerbated inequalities. My colleagues at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the creators of the RULER approach have curated excellent School Resources for Navigating Emotional Times. The resources include a series of webinars where experts from our team share wisdom and tips. I hope you will find these resources helpful in this trying time.”

11. Good facts and reminders about kids and COVID19:

12. New Mexico Kids resources for parents and families --

13. Tackling pandemic childcare issues --

14. Negotiating going back to work with your boss --

15. New Mexico PBS is offering videos of Science Girl Melissa Ober doing cool science experiments at https://www.newmexicopbs.org/what-we-do/education/science-girls-lab/.

16. Here are 200 things you can do inside during stay-at-home:
    https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/health-wellness/2020/03/16/coronavirus-quarantine-100-things-do-while-trapped-inside/5054632002/ and

17. This is a suite of resources for families of young children:
18. The Centers for Disease Control has checklists for parents and families:  

19. Easing Back-to-School anxiety for kids:  

Why We Need Multicultural Education: The Importance of a Multicultural Consciousness.

Maria Elena C. Salazar (Lecturer III in Family and Child Studies and Early Childhood Educator)

Saludos, everyone. This writing uses my own identity politics1 to address bigotry in our United States of America society. My cultural identities, for instance being from the “Heroin Capital of the World”, illustrate my experiences in the U.S.A., and why I have evolved into a Critical Multicultural Educator (CME). Further, I use my own identities so as not to call anybody else out, and to exemplify how within each of us many lived experiences (some contradictory) exist. Below I outline this by dissecting my Latin@ identity. Within this one, you will see also resides a mother, an educator, a New Mexican, a U.S. native, an environmentalist, and more. As we enter another month of online teaching and learning (and parenting), let us take some time to reflect on our own identities, and how we see our worlds, significantly in this time of much social change, uncertainty and unrest. MES

Being a Latin@

Latinos are “diversity at its finest,” explained comedian George Lopez (2020) after spouting off a list of types of Latinos, such as a “Chino Latino.” Our “spicy” (pun intended) origins can be confusing. I like to use the U.S. census definition, a Latino “as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race” (United States Census Bureau, 2020). There you go. We are from every ethnic and cultural group, and are a worldwide presence. In the U.S. Southwest alone, we include Californios, Arizonans, Nuevo Mejicanos, and Tejanos, all cousins, further subgrouped by proximity to Mexico, local terrain, indigenous populations, etc. Regardless, we face common bigotries in contemporary U.S. society. Often obvious is physical appearance. For ME, international travel has prompted people to ask, “What are you,” guesses including French, Spanish, Greek,

1 Cultural identities, including race, class, gender, religion, primary language, sexual orientation, more.
Portuguese, Mexican, Italian, and even Canadian. Latinos out there, insert your own experiences based on your physical appearance here.

Other rhetoric about U.S. Latin@s posit us as endless immigrants intent on destroying the American Dream in many devious ways, like stealing jobs. Wrongfully called an ethnic group and criticized as illegal, lazy and poor at that. My maternal family often attended my grandpa’s military service reunions across the country. At a reunion in Hawaii, my grandparents were asked to move to the foreign table. My dad worked outside Washington D.C. for the Department of Justice (DOJ) during my eighth and ninth grades. Among a student population literally from all over the world, we New Mexicans were the enigmas. An American Latino? No! Latinos whose first language isn’t Spanish? Never!, they said. “Bring your green cards when you come in,” the school secretary said. “Spic,” my Anglo peer called me, after I rejected his romantic intentions. A 1990’s Latino teen in Montgomery County, Maryland, hearing the shout, “Go back to where you came from!” My mom, sisters and I looked around for the victims of this individual’s verbal assault, only to realize it was us. Luckily a youth of harassment from cousins (e.g., dancing around me singing, “bones and bones and bones” as I was a very frail child) and knowing my family’s heritages built in me resiliency and the strength to educate. My New Mexico public school Bilingual Education, albeit faulting in many ways, also helped me to be patient with my Maryland peers, and even enjoy my years there. I realize many of my fellow Latinos have not had the advantages I have had. Thus necessitates those of us with platforms and resources to support social change (Kansas, reopen Alonzo Brooks!).

**Being a New Mexican**

Look at these questions from the 2019-2020 New Mexico Parent Involvement Survey-Special Education. #27, well, Dr. Salazar’s child fits three. Also, can someone tell NMPED Latino is not a race? We New Mexicans are an auspicious group (noted above), enigmatic to others and perhaps even to ourselves. We question, are we Mexican, American, Chicano, Latino, New Mexican, Nuevo Mex/jicano, Hispano, Mano, or Spanish? The answer is yes. Our roots are deep in the Americas and in the world theater. Identifying as Spanish has come under criticism in recent decades, citations including the diminishing New Mexican (and Southern Colorado) Spanish dialect, the parentages with indigenous populations, and that much of the U.S. was part of Mexico until the mid-nineteenth century. Italian Americans are allowed to call themselves Italian, Irish Americans call themselves Irish, etc. So I say let those of us native to the Southwest and our wider U.S. diaspora call themselves Spanish. I say to every New Mexican self-identify as you wish.

From a linguistic standpoint, I cringe when I hear the word “Spanglish.” The term is inherently diminutive, often used to denigrate Chicano Spanish dialects. It incorrectly gets used to refer to code-switching or translanguaging, which is switching languages in-text, e.g., “Hay, me duele

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2 The insult of having served your country and then asked not to sit with your fellow service men is increased by our proud Northern New Mexican culture that cites many centuries in what is today U.S. soil.

3 Refusing to perceive Latinos beyond language and national origin is as preposterous as the time a decade ago when I argued, in English, with a Verizon customer service representative who insisted she could not help me because she did not speak Spanish.

4 Nativism in a country founded by immigrants boggles my mind, by the way.

5 Used here to solely refer to Latinos born and raised in New Mexico, notably with many generations in the geographic region.
my head.” Spanglish is a hybrid, like all languages, a consequence of the ever-evolving human experience. Remember this: Language is identity. The year I spent in Miami I bore witness to a Florida International University (FIU) professor demeaning Creole to its speaker, calling it not a language at all but a bastardization of French. I then hesitated to speak Spanish in that Latin@ Capitol of the World. I am not as fluid as others, but I now see my Spanish as a blessing.

U.S. Southern identity is called into question. Bipolar sides: Cultural history (and yes, even bigotry) on the one hand, refusing to have daily reminders of their oppression on the other. A descendent of Conquistadores, I can relate to both sides. How many of us know the Tejano version of the Alamo? Where were Cochise and Geronimo from? In New Mexico, we have heard of Billy the Kid, but how many of us (outside Taos) know who Padre Martinez was? Don Juan de Oñate established the first European Capital in the U.S. here in Española (San Gabriel, just north of Ohkay Owinge Pueblo), but find that in your child’s colonial U.S. curriculum. The atrocities of my ancestors conflict with a desire to honor my heritage. The CME in ME says many stories need to be told, from many perspectives. We should learn about the victories and fallacies of our ancestors. The professional of education and other human sciences in Dr. Salazar says we should simmer on perspective. (Images: Salazar, 2019)

Being from “Spaña”

Being from a rural community full of Native Americans, Latinos, Sikhs, and increasingly Filipinos, riddled with poverty, substance abuse and jefes politicos, gifts me more insight into bigotry. “Why do people in Española use those small steering wheels in their cars? So they can drive with handcuffs on!” This and other jokes I endured as a freshman in the university’s student dining hall, and even today, as I meet cousins’ new friends. Let’s not ignore the physical and symbolic violence we are subject to. As high school athletes disembarking at schools across the state, or in neighboring Los Alamos, where they have taped off a small, security-guarded section of their gym for “Española fans.” Envidia⁶, I say. Our low socioeconomic status community has lost its scholars and athletes to Santa Fe, Pojoaque, and even Los Alamos, yet continues to dominate state basketball. I hold no grudges toward my fellow New Mexicans. Española residents like my father can to remain in our community via neighboring, more affluent towns. My paternal grandfather worked on “the hill” before Oppenheimer took his

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⁶ Envy.
now-infamous jog, proximity to ski resorts is unparalleled, and the drives between our towns are picturesque.

Under all the rage towards Española we continue to be proud; proud of our lowriders and motorcycles, our mountain views, our Eight Northern Pueblos, our churches, our waters, and OUR CHILDREN. Fault me for living in a highly marginalized area, among highly minoritized populations. Sometimes it is just less stressful to not be the minority in the room, to be around people who embrace my children as their hitos. I do not deny the struggles of living in a community perhaps dedicated to our “Hispano ethos of eternal suffering”, but I choose to see the glass half-full. I see we stick together, as those students at U.S. Southwest colleges, catching rides home and sitting together in student union buildings. As we endure the pandemic. Look us in our eyes (a cultural trait). Do not be afraid of us. See we are just like you, in some way or another.

(Española Schools 2020 Graduation Parade, Española Valley High School and McCurdy Charter School. Española, New Mexico.)

Being a Registered Voter

Politics surround us in 2020. Historically, New Mexico is liberal and open to new ideas, but also strongly bonded to our indigenous heritages. For example, we were not accepted into the union until the 20th century, affected by our refusal to adopt monolingualism. A blue state in a sea of red. Scenes of my youth include “Vote Straight Democrat” roadside signs. Barack Obama spoke in the Española Plaza his initial presidential election, and state politicians grace Northern New Mexico community events. (I thought Michelle Lujan Grisham was doomed after her Howard Dean-esque yell at the Northern New Mexico Community College Ozomatli concert, lol). Little known fact: I come from an immediate household of Republicans, not an easy task in this part of the world. Other scenes from my childhood include Pete Domenici, Gary Johnson, and Gary Carruthers. I saw ugliness based solely on political party lines. I know from inside scenes

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7 Shortened version of “mi hijitos”, “my children.”
8 Idea that our Catholicism and history, such as colonizing America’s indigenous peoples, cause us to fill a constant sense of guilt, manifested in self suffering.
of both U.S. majority party lines that there are pros and cons to both. These social experiences steer me clear of political luncheons and other visible party support. I am bipartisan, and, I think, in this time of conflict others are examining their own rigidity. Today I take inspiration from Generation Zers. Our youngest voters are leading dialogues in many multicultural veins. Their recognition of global issues and tech savvy make them a formidable and interesting group to watch.

Final Thoughts

Many identities exist within each person (cada mente es un mundo entero9). I am a woman, it may be obvious. Other identities feed into that identity, and so dividend eternity. I am a teacher, in the U.S. almost synonymous with being a woman (men are concentrated in administrative roles). I do pray for our educators today and always. Being a mother means much to me. I am not perfect, and many, many children in my many worlds will tell you that. Every day I wake up and try. We are living in troubled times in our natural worlds. Plastic, in one word. Climate change and climate change denial. So the glum Dr. Salazar, the Environmentalist, thinks. Referencing Gen Zers again, watch Zac Efron’s (2020) “Down to Earth” to get out of your own gloomy funk.

So what is the importance of multicultural education? It is teaching students the histories of their communities. It is recognizing the many stories. One question in Multicultural Education is, “What if all the kids [in the class] are White?” More important to teach it then. Maybe you see no point in looking at groups’ subgroups and historical struggles therein. Maybe look at it another way. Instead of seeing through bipolar lenses, use the spectrum to find universal similarities and struggles. If we can find more common ground in conscientious times such as these, we can reach social solutions sooner and with less casualties.

This issue is dedicated to my niece Elena and my nephew Nikolas Whitaker, biracial, Gen Zers. Semper Fi, Nikolas! Love, Auntie Nena

References


9 In every mind is an entire world.


The Bookshelf -- References and Other Resources
Things the WASH NM Team has read or seen that you might want to examine more closely

On June 10, The New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee released a study of learning loss in New Mexico due to last Spring's remote learning. It also looks forward to issues to be addressed as this new school year begins.


Coming up Next:
Back-to-Schooling for Teachers and School Staff on August 19

About WASH NM:
The faculty and students of the Department of Individual, Family and Community Education in the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of New Mexico would like to offer to all New Mexicans thoughts, ideas, and resources from ourselves and our areas of study and work -- counseling, educational psychology, family & child studies, and nutrition -- to enlighten, soften, and aid the COVID-19-related transitions. We intend to make this offering bi-weekly, each with a theme relevant to our times.

We are exiting the initial phase of the Coronavirus effects on our lives, and we are realizing that we face not a pause in our realities to which we will soon spring back but a new reality entirely. We held our breath, put our collective and individual heads down, and gutted it out so far. Now, we face the marathon, not a sprint, of placing ourselves, our children and families, our work selves -- everything -- into this new normal. In these changes, we owe ourselves and those around us opportunities to note and to grieve the losses, big and small, and we also owe it to ourselves and others opportunities to see and seize and solidify the gains. Some of these changes have been good! We’ve (re)discovered simple pleasures like baking, walks, family meals, reading, laughing together. Some of the changes have been among the hardest we’ve faced. We’re in need of new and better coping skills, and, with tensions running high, we need new and better conflict resolution strategies, too. Even simple interactions aren’t simple these days! With informed reflection and action throughout this time, we can all improve our Wellbeing at School and at Home in New Mexico.
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How to Pick Up the WASH NM:
All issues of WASH NM are available in pdf format at:
http://coehs.unm.edu/departments-programs/ifce/wash-nm.html

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About the
Department of Individual, Family and Community Education:
The department houses four diverse, but interconnected, programs that prepare students to address the myriad issues faced by the State of New Mexico. Our faculty members are leaders in their disciplines of Counselor Education, Educational Psychology, Family and Child Studies, and Nutrition; although each of these programs reflect different professional fields and identities, we all have shared values of human development, diversity, and excellence in scholarship and teaching. We offer various Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctoral Degrees and a number of programs have achieved national accreditations in their fields, a true marker of success and innovation.
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