



# Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views

*Through others, we become ourselves.*

L. S. Vygotsky



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The "Golden Rule" Issue

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*Persistence Discussion #1*

## An Environment that Supports Learning

Last Monday I was walking with a student from one class to another. He had decided that the first class, an ESL class, was too easy for him. He began to say something to me, then stopped, as if he were talking out-of-turn. I asked, "What?" He said, "Director, I am sorry to tell you this, but I have been to this school three times before, and I only stayed a couple of weeks each time." Thinking, "ah, our students have a hard time staying in school with such demanding lives...work, family..." He then went on to describe the classes that he had been in; students talking loudly, making fun of other students, making vulgar remarks that only other students heard, interrupting others who were "trying to learn", he said.

It's an interesting problem for us in adult education. We don't want to be an intimidating place where we treat our students as children. We do want a relaxed and comfortable environment. We are not a college where academic rigor can become classroom *rigor mortis*. But one of the most frequent discussions at our student council meetings in recent years has been about noise, disrespect, and lack of purpose of other students. Students have suggested that teachers should not let students continually talk and interrupt, or say things that offend other students. It takes an awful lot to offend me; my own speech can get a little salty, and I never saw a little chaos I didn't like. But many of our students really need a calmer atmosphere where there is a degree of seriousness of purpose, and mutual respect among students. As we start this new year, I hope all teachers will review with all classes the **Student Code of Conduct**, especially about behaving in ways that supports other students, not behavior that interferes with other students' learning. The Code of Conduct is in the staff handbook in both English and Spanish. The art of teaching is knowing when to intervene and protect students, and when to stay out of the way.

### **Parking Problems at Porter; City Gives Adult Ed. Discount on Parking Permits**

For several years adult ed. students and staff have parked in the vacant lot across from Porter. We've come to think of this as "our" lot. Now that the long-delayed Library/Courthouse project is going to begin construction, we will lose this area for parking beginning Monday, August 29.

Parking in all the downtown area is going to be affected by this project, and several others (we hope including our own Langendorf Building). The city has kept us informed of the timeline and developments of the construction project. They are aware loss of parking will have an impact on our program. They are subsidizing half the cost of parking permits that will allow students to park in the structure on West Beach (across from the One Stop). This is one long block from Porter.

#### **Parking Permits for Sale in the Porter Office:**

The price will be \$5.00 for September, and \$15.00 for each quarter (three months) thereafter, beginning in Oct.



## WAAE Calendar - Fall, 2005

August 26 - Prob. 1 and Prob. 2 teachers meeting

August 29 - CASAS Testing Begins

August 30 - All CBET Teachers' Meeting, 4:00-5:30, Green Valley

August 31 - ESL Leadership Meeting, 4:00-5:30, Porter

Sept. 5 - Labor Day Holiday

Sept. 8 - Payroll Due Date

Sept. 13 - Student Councils at Porter, Noon and 9:00pm

Sept. 14 - Student Councils at GV, Noon and 8:30pm

Sept. 21 - School Council, GV, 4-6pm, Unaudited budget

October 1 - ESL Symposium, Cal State Monterey Bay

### The tasks for progressive adult educators, from Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope* (1997).

- "...to unveil opportunities for hope, regardless of the obstacles" (p. 9).
- to accept the political and directive nature of education.
- to express respect for differences in ideas and positions.
- to respect the students, never manipulating them.
- to be tolerant, open, forthright, and critical, teaching is not simply the "transmission of knowledge concerning the object or concerning the topic"(p. 81).
- to teach so that students can learn to learn "...the reason-for, the "why" of the object or the content."
- to challenge students with a regard to their certitudes so that they seek convincing arguments in defense of the *why*. to respect popular knowledge, cultural content...this is the point of "departure for the knowledge (that students) create of the world.
- to understand that the "perception of the why of the facts...lead us to *transcend the narrow horizons of the neighborhood or even the immediate geographical area*, to gain (the) *global* view of reality..."(pp.87)