

## INTERPRETATION AND INCLUSION

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The purpose of this column is to address the need for improving our interpretation diversity and developing a broader approach to WHAT we interpret and to WHOM we interpret. This includes changing both our techniques and our subject matter to reflect a more diverse and encompassing education and interpretation program.

### Ø COLUMN NOTES

This is the fifth article in an occasional column on the In Touch bulletin board. Replies can be sent to me as can any articles for later dissemination. I am serving as an editor and will issue materials on an occasional basis. Comments, essays, notes, and news, are welcome. You can address to me by cc:mail under my name on the directory. Please indicate if your item is intended for future printing in this column.

### Ø REALITY CHECK

What do the following have in common?

Lee  
Nguyen  
Garcia  
Rodriguez  
Martinez  
Wong

Answer: They are the most common surnames among home buyers in the Los Angeles area - as reported in "World Press," April 1994.

(From Glen Kaye at NP-SWRO)

### Ø FEATURE ARTICLE

This program was developed by MaryEllen Snyder, Park Ranger, Women's Rights NHP.

#### Tree of Life Activity

##### Introduction

The Tree of Life activity helps participants become more aware of their own cultural identity.

##### Goal

After developing a tree of life, participants may also become aware of their own biases which may create barriers in communicating with others from culturally diverse backgrounds.

##### Instructions

Step One: On a large sheet of newsprint begin to draw your "tree." As a guide use roots to represent people, places and events from before you were born. The trunk of the tree represents your life from birth until the time you left the home of your parents, and the branches and leaves represent aspects of your life since you have been "on your own." In developing your "tree" include aspects of your life that are not usually included in a family tree. You may want to use colors, words or symbols to represent your ethnic heritage, religious beliefs, socio-economic class, and gender. (10 minutes)

Step Two: Look at your completed "tree" and identify your personal cultural strengths, i.e. spiritual beliefs, family traditions, ethical standards etc. Also look for information you have included that may have led you to develop fears or biases about someone else's cultural heritage. (10 minutes)

Step Three: Join a small group of six other class members and share one of your fears/biases/strengths (whatever you feel comfortable doing) from your trees." (15 minutes)

Step Four: One person from the group will introduce group members and share one of each persons strengths to the class, and anything else group members learned from the activity. (Each group has approx. 10 minutes for presentations to the class)

Step Five: If you wish, plant your "tree" in the classroom (hang on the wall), so that other member of the training sessions can learn more about you.

### Summary

This activity not only helps participants identify their own cultural identity, when the "trees" are shared and displayed "as a forest," cultural diversity can be celebrated. If time allows the comparison can be made with the biodiversity one finds in an actual forest and how all living things are interdependent. (multicultural/ environmental education)

Editor's Note: MaryEllen Snyder received an Albright Grant to attending a week of training this July through the "Equity Institute" on Diversity Awareness. Once she completes this training she will be a certified instructor.

In addition, she has developed and presented a six-hour workshop which focuses on personal biases and how to bridge cultural barriers when doing interpretive programs.