

Issue  
**Four**

December 2013

State Offices will be closed  
December 25, 2013 and  
January 1, 2014

## Understanding the Brain and Behavior

Dr. Meredith White-McMahon  
Senior Trainer & Consultant, NeuroRelational Associates

Anyone who works with young people knows that it can have some very challenging moments. Trying to figure out why kids behave the way they do and what is going on in their heads can be time consuming and more than a little frustrating. Until very recently, science couldn't tell us much about why they behaved the way they did or how to deal with it. We used observations and educated guesses and hoped for the best. Now, neuroscience and various disciplines within the field of psychology can help us better see how the brain influences behavior and help us improve our understanding of the learning process.

Despite living in a society that seems to cherish individuality, our young people are social and learn and grow best in the company of others. From the moment that we are born, everyone and everything in our environment influences us. Our brains create our selves in the context of these relationships and encounters. We are our experiences, and they shape who we are and who we will become.

How our brains develop in the context of our relationships impacts how well we form attachments, how well we learn, and how we are affected by, and cope with, factors like success, challenge, isolation, mental illness, stress, and trauma. However, becoming the result of our relationships and experiences can be a double-edged sword.

Read more at Reclaiming Youth: [http://www.reclaiming.com/content/node/363/?utm\\_source=emailcampaign21&utm\\_medium=phpList&utm\\_content=HTMLemail&utm\\_campaign=November](http://www.reclaiming.com/content/node/363/?utm_source=emailcampaign21&utm_medium=phpList&utm_content=HTMLemail&utm_campaign=November)

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#### What's on the NDE homepage

Commissioner Search Update  
2013 Milken Educator Award

<http://www.education.ne.gov/>

## Why Good Teachers Embrace Culture

*National Journal*

**46% to 150% more likely to graduate from high school**

A University of Arizona [study](#) found that Latino students who took the Tucson Unified School District's Mexican-American studies courses were 46 to 150% more likely to graduate from high school than those who did not. This study shows that even though culturally responsive pedagogy is backed by a

range of academic studies, it is often left out of current debates on what makes teachers effective (in fact, the Tucson program was shut down in 2011). Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, professor emeritus of urban education at Atlanta's Emory University says culturally responsive teaching doesn't

mean lowering standards; for example, respecting students' dialects might make it easier to engage students in learning Standard English.

Read the paper: <http://www.nationaljournal.com/next-america/education/why-good-teachers-embrace-culture-20131111>

## NIEA Partners with Education Week to highlight Native Americans

NIEA partnered with Education Week to highlight the state of Native education across the United States. Their special publication, released this week, includes opinion pieces from tribal and education stakeholders, such as Chickasaw Nation Lieutenant Governor Jefferson Keel, as well as personal stories that highlight our Native students. NIEA is excited to see such positive stories on Native students and while there is still much work to be done to close the academic achievement gap between Native and non-Native students, this publication is a great opportunity to focus attention to Native communities' most important asset - our children.

Below are direct links to each of the commentaries key education stakeholders provided for the publication:

[Upending an Education Crisis in Indian Country](#)

[Title VII: A Path to Education Equity](#)

[Common Core From a Tribal Perspective](#)

[A Crucial Investment in Indian Higher Ed](#)

And please read the [Education Week Publication](#) and let NIEA know your stories or suggestions for improving the state of Native education. Contact: [niea@niea.org](mailto:niea@niea.org).

### About This Special Section

"Kill the Indian in him, and save the man." Those words in a speech by Robert Henry Pratt in 1892 are a stark reminder of how the United States government once viewed American Indians. In 1879, Pratt opened the first off-reservation government boarding school where Native American children were sent, often forcibly, to be "civilized."



Low rates of high school graduation, among other grim educational outcomes, weigh on Indian Country today. In spite of their deep concerns, many Native leaders see a direction for how to improve student achievement and academic prosperity, including through the preservation of tribal cultures and languages.

*Education Week* Commentary editors partnered with the National Indian Education Association to invite Native leaders to discuss such issues. Artist Brent Greenwood (Chickasaw/Ponca) contributed original illustrations.

Read the other Commentaries and browse a related reporting project on Native American education: [Education in Indian Country: Obstacles and Opportunities](#)



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## MONTHLY QUOTE

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"I think the issue of poverty is something we've been quiet about too much." -- Harlem Children's Zone founder **Geoffrey Canada**, at a Rural Education Summit.

**CHIEF STANDING BEAR TRAIL**



THE WORLD-HERALD

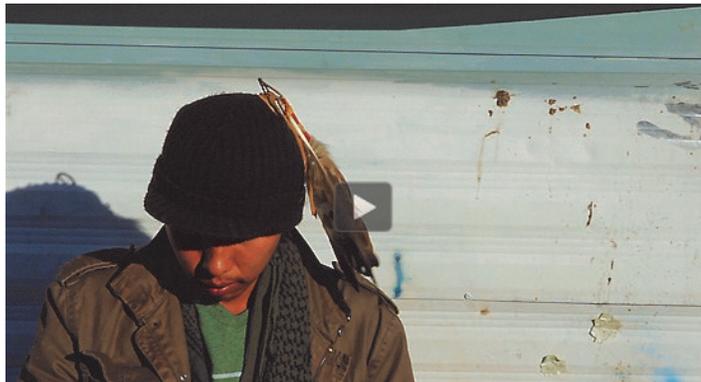
**Tribe hopes new trail will shine light on story of Ponca and Chief Standing Bear**

David Hendee, World-herald, December 3, 2013

<http://www.omaha.com/article/20131203/NEWS/131209746/1685#tribe-hopes-new-trail-will-shine-light-on-story-of-ponca-and-chief-standing-bear>

An article with reading and studying. Very informative on Chief Standing Bear' detour through Omaha. This resulted in the "U.S. government uproot of the peaceful Ponca Tribe."

David Hendee captured the trail, his journey and includes more information about the Ponca Tribe. This article is worth archiving in your Native American and/or Nebraska history files.



**Education in Indian Country  
Running in Place**

Full article: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/projects/2013/native-american-education/running-in-place.html?cmp=ENL-EU-TOPBOX>

*Like many native American students, Legend Tell Tobacco, a 10-year old on South Dakota's Pine Ridge reservation, must outrun the odds against his education success.*

Legend just turned 10 and is in the 4th grade, and yet, he must constantly confront obstacles that could cause him to stumble into one of the grim statistical

categories for which Pine Ridge—like much of the nation's Indian Country—is well known:

***High school dropout.  
Unemployed.  
Dead before 50.***

Legend grins widely when announcing that he reads the same "chapter books" as 7th and 8th graders. He likes math, too, especially multiplication.

**"Most of all," he says, "I love to run."**

## Investing in Young Children

*A Fact Sheet on Early Care and Education Participation, Access and Quality*

Children in Poverty have released a fact sheet on early care and education in this country that indicates significant underinvestment at the state and federal levels. This is apparent with the three largest federal programs: the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Head Start. Funding for CCDBG

The Center for Law and Social Policy and the National Center for



has not kept pace with inflation or need, with 150,000 losing access to childcare subsidies since 2006, and an additional 30,000 losing subsidies due to sequestration. Funding for Head Start has increased by \$1.2 billion from 2006 to 2012, but demand has exceeded growth, with only 42 percent of eligible children served by Head Start preschool and a mere four percent eligible served by Early Head Start. States are also

falling short of recommended quality benchmarks. Currently, only four states (CT, ND, OR, VT) meet benchmarks for both class size and adult-child ratios, while 33 meet neither. A complex mix of federal and state investments and policies shapes low-income access to quality early care and education. Currently, these are too weak to benefit large numbers of young children experiencing economic hardship and other circumstances posing serious risks to their healthy development and success in school and life. **More** <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/Investing-in-Young-Children.pdf>

Getting parent engagement right takes dedicated and continued effort, writes L.A. teacher Angie Trae-Greenberg in The Hechinger Report. Parents, teachers, and students alike are frequently frustrated by roadblocks to engagement such as scheduling conflicts, language barriers, lack of technology, and a by-the-numbers approach that doesn't account for individual circumstances. Trae-Greenberg recommends five strategies that any school can use to improve parent participation. One is harnessing parent expertise about the community, proactively asking parents for their community connections and hosting events to which students and parents invite community members. Another is creating a range of volunteering opportunities at varying time slots and commitment levels, offering flexible ways to engage. Schools should also train parents on technology tools that already

exist: have an orientation on a school's website that shows parents what information they can access where, and make sure the website is dynamic and up-to-date, offering information



parents actually want. Another step is to empower parents by encouraging them to assume leadership positions and training

them to lead parent-breakout sessions during monthly meetings. Finally, parental involvement should be fun. By motivating parents and students to attend activities together, meaningful and holistic relationships between teachers and families are built. Events should encourage participation and engage everyone simultaneously. **More** [http://hechingerreport.org/content/true-grit-in-la-five-ways-teachers-parents-schools-come-together\\_13941/](http://hechingerreport.org/content/true-grit-in-la-five-ways-teachers-parents-schools-come-together_13941/)

## Cultivating Parent Engagement

*Participation, Access and Quality*



**Discount Ends December 13, 2013**

Set dates for May 28-29, 2014 for Hastings

Get the discount now. <https://nmla.shutterfly.com/>



Use these resources to introduce your students to the imaginative thinkers, code-savvy scientists, and everyday people impacting the world through **computer science**. Some are downloadable. Titles are interactive.

#### [The Art of Creative Coding](#)

**Grades 9-12 | Video | Technology & Art**

Show your students how artists are using the language of computer code to express themselves creatively.

#### [Blueprint for the Brain](#)

**Grades 9-12 | Video | Technology & Medicine**

Discover how scientists are using computer simulations to explore the shape of nerve cells in the brain.

#### [FoldIt: A Protein Puzzle Game](#)

**Grades 6-12 | Video | Science & Gaming**

See how ordinary people are advancing scientific research by playing a computer game about protein folding.

#### [Can a Computer Read Your Mind?](#)

**Grades 6-12 | Video | Analysis of Data**

Learn about a mind-reading experiment conducted by psychologists and computer scientists at Carnegie Mellon University.

#### [Computer Scientist](#)

**Grades 6-12 | Video | Impact of Technology**

Find out how this computer scientist comes up with his innovative ideas and see how he has used them to rise to the top of his field.

### **Professional Development**

PBS TeacherLine's winter term begins on **January 13!** Choose from over 20 online courses and remember to **enroll** early to reserve your space.

#### **Featured Courses:**

##### **Leveraging Smart & Social Digital Media in the Classroom**

Grades K-12 | 30 Hours | TECH575 | [Enroll Now](#)

##### **Seeing Math™: Proportional Reasoning**

Grades 6-12 | 30 Hours | MATH430 | [Enroll Now](#)

PBS TeacherLine offers 3, 15, 30, and 45-hour online, professional development courses in science, reading, STEM, social studies, math, and instructional strategies/technology. For course details and additional information, visit us today at [www.pbs.org/teacherline](http://www.pbs.org/teacherline)

#### [PBS Is Looking for America's Most Innovative Educators](#)

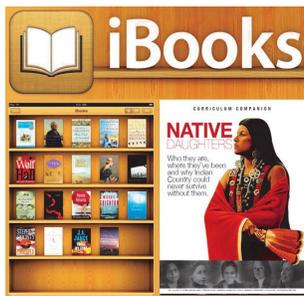
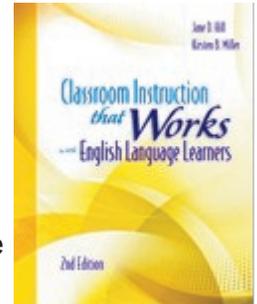
Become a 2014 PBS LearningMedia Digital Innovator and receive 1-year of professional development - plus a trip to D.C.! Learn more tomorrow by visiting [www.pbslearningmedia.org](http://www.pbslearningmedia.org).

#### [Student "Zeitgeist" Contest](#)

PBS NewsHour Extra is calling on students to share their unique perspective of 2013 in an online video contest. Zeitgeist entries are due by December 14, 2013. [Learn more here!](#)

## Classroom Instruction That Works for English Language Learners (2nd ed.)

This all-new edition of *Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners* by **Jane Hill** and **Kirsten Miller** strengthens your instructional planning and helps you know when to use McREL's research-based instructional strategies with ELL students in every grade level. New tools and steps help you align your instruction to the Common Core and the Next Generation Science Standards, and a new template helps you select key vocabulary and grammar to help students engage in productive academic discussions. This comprehensive instructional guide includes teaching tips with each strategy to make it easier to work with all students, no matter what their stage of language proficiency. Available now through [ASCD](#).



Interactive videos, handouts and weblinks. All updated with new resources. iBook and interact active PDF both available.

iBook [www.education.ne.gov/nebooks/ebooks/nativedaughters.ibooks](http://www.education.ne.gov/nebooks/ebooks/nativedaughters.ibooks)

PDF [www.education.ne.gov/mce](http://www.education.ne.gov/mce)

### LEGO: Children's Fund Grants

The LEGO Children's Fund will provide grants for collaborative programs, either in part or in total, to organizations that focus on early childhood education and development; technology and communication projects that advance learning opportunities; or sport or athletic programs that concentrate on underserved youth. Maximum award: \$5,000. Eligibility: 501(c)(3) organizations. Deadline: January 15, 2014.

### C-SPAN StudentCam

C-SPAN's StudentCam is an annual national video documentary competition that encourages students to think seriously about issues that affect our communities and our nation. Students are asked to create a short (5-8 minute) video documentary on a topic related to the competition theme "A Message to the U.S. Congress." Documentary should address the question, "What's the most important issue Congress should consider in 2012?" Maximum award: \$5,000, plus \$1,000 in digital equipment for school. Eligibility: individuals or teams of two to three students grades 6-8 or grades 9- 12; Deadline: January 20, 2014.

### United States-Japan Foundation: Elgin Heinz Outstanding Teacher Award

The United States-Japan Foundation Elgin Heinz Outstanding Teacher Award recognizes exceptional teachers who further mutual understanding between Americans and Japanese. The award is presented annually to two pre-college teachers in two categories, humanities and Japanese language. Maximum award: \$7,500 (\$2,500 monetary award, \$5,000 in project funds). Eligibility: current full-time K-12 classroom teachers of any relevant subject in the United States who have been teaching for at least five years. Deadline: February 5, 2014.



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 **SUBMISSIONS DUE**  
January 29, 2014

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 **FILMS MUST BE**  
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