

### **1. What is your Profession?**

I am a professor of counseling psychology at Lehigh University with a specialty in the study of person environment interactions in work and community settings (in particular the built environment of neighborhoods) in relationship to health and well being of inhabitants.

### **2. Describe a “typical” day as a Counseling Psychologist?**

About 20% of my time is spent in teaching graduate level classes, another 20-30% in research and grant activities, about 20% percent working with students and advisees, 15 % in committee meetings and administrative work, and another 15 % reading journals and books to keep up with my field.

### **3. Do you speak any other languages besides the one you work with?**

I do speak and read Spanish fairly well. I presently have a major research grant funded by National Institutes of Mental Health and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences that is conducted entirely in Spanish. Thus, all of our data are collected in Spanish and the staff are all bilingual. I can generally learn enough to get by in the various countries I visit---Polish was a stretch though.

### **4. What do you think helped the most in mastering the foreign/second language?**

No question in my mind here. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish, our teacher linked us all with Pen Pals from Argentina. We wrote in Spanish and they wrote back in English. I felt connected to Argentina and to Spanish. I completed two years of Junior High Spanish, four years of High School Spanish, and two years of College Spanish. My Spanish Lit. classes were especially powerful for me---reading poems by Pablo Neruda in Spanish and reading Don Quixote in Spanish was also fun. I visited Colombia later as a lecturer and gave my lecture in Spanish. Conversation was always the hardest for me because it made me anxious to have to speak when I knew it would not be very articulate. But being forced to speak was immensely helpful to mastery. It was not until I really began speaking Spanish and reading literature that I began to think in Spanish at times. The realization that I could express some things in Spanish more naturally than in English was startling to me, but really enhanced my sense of mastery in Spanish. I never joined the Peace Corps, which is my one regret---this is where my generation got the most exposure to third world cultures.

### **5. What opportunities have knowing another language?**

There were so many I hardly know where to start. My interest in language jump-started my study of culture and how people interact with their environments. Most of my professional career and opportunities have thus been affected by my second language. Our NIMH grant would never have succeeded without my Spanish. In addition, I do volunteer work in the Hispanic Community here and now travel is a large part of my professional life because Lehigh has moved, like so many other liberal arts institutions, into the area of international education. The opportunities stimulated by culture and language have been varied and stimulating. Most of the serious issues of our time require cross-cultural/cross-lingual cooperation, including environmental concerns, conflict involving underdeveloped nations and terrorism, and the global economy. My main concern is that more Americans are not traveling or learning languages and cultures in the areas that are truly critical. I am concerned that most study abroad programs for example, send students to England, France, and Australia because those areas are perceived as safe, and hospitable to Westerners. Sadly other areas in which I have traveled are so critical, but very poorly understood---the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa. I hope one of my next visits will be with the study abroad program in Ghana that one of my colleagues Dr. Tina Richardson is building.

### **6. If you had time to learn another language, what would it be?**

I think Arabic---or possibly Cantonese for obvious reasons in both cases. Native American languages have a certain mystique and romance that would be interesting to me.

**7. Do you think it is essential to learn not just a language but also the culture/s of the region/s where it is spoken?**

Essential, no – desirable, clearly. These can be somewhat independent sets of learnings. One could understand a culture without mastering the language, or master the language without full appreciation for the culture. Combining language and culture seems to me to be a stronger amalgam---and then, of course, you are a linguist in the best sense of the word.

**8. How do you think your life would have turned out if you had never learned another language?**

I guess I would be a Republican then, wouldn't I.

**9. In your opinion are there more career opportunities for people who speak two or more languages?**

I think that there will be more and more opportunities for individuals with multilingual capabilities, but they may not be readily identifiable occupations with straightforward entry and advancement---e.g. accountant---auditor---partner in an accounting firm, etc. Clearly we have been moving toward a service economy, and increasingly that service economy is global in nature. Thus, I have a hard time imagining that languages will be a luxury in the future. They will be a necessity for the world of work.

**10. What do you think you would be doing if you were not a psychologist?**

I have a lot of related interests, but two or three stand out for me. It is important to me to know that the work I do has some benefit for humanity beyond the level of one on one therapeutic or clinical work, and thus, public health is an area that I would have considered had I not become a counseling psychologist. Physical Anthropology was always a possibility for me---I have a thing for minerals and rocks, fossils and natural history. Combining this interest with my writing interest has always seemed like a possible alternative to psychology.