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How a CLD Endorsement Helps Teachers Meet the Needs of Today's Students

Professor Deborah (Deb) Agar teaches several cultural and linguistic diversity classes at the [UNC Center for Urban Education \(CUE\)](#) and is an expert on the topic. In this article, she explains why it's vital for today's urban teachers to consider obtaining a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) endorsement.



CUE Professor Deborah Agar

Save the Date!

The UNC Center for Urban Education, Aurora Public Schools, and Scholars Unlimited present:

Dr. Yemi Stenbridge

April 22, 2023

8:30 to 11:00 AM

Registration details to follow.

Thinking about Becoming a Teacher?

We are enrolling new students for the fall 2023 semester.

Call Dr. Rosanne Fulton, Director, UNC Center for Urban Education, at 303-637-4334 or [email](#) for more information.

Watch our [short video](#) to learn more about the CUE teacher-preparation program.

[Watch Video](#)

Expert in the House

Agar has a long and distinguished record as an educator; she's another shining example of the high quality of the professors at the Center. Here are just a few highlights from her resume:

- Started her career working as a bilingual migrant aide, substitute teacher, and Headstart family service worker in California
- Earned a master's degree in elementary education with an emphasis in bilingual/ESL studies from the University of Colorado at Boulder
- Worked as a bilingual elementary school teacher in Mapleton Public Schools for 11 years
- Helped Regis University create the [graduate certificate program for culturally and linguistically diverse education](#)
- Currently works as a freelance medical and educational Spanish/English interpreter

The Classrooms, They Are A-Changin'

Though she doesn't teach in public schools these days, Agar is well aware of how different student demographics are today from even 10 years ago. "Students come to the U.S. from all over the world, often from regions that have been affected by war," Agar said. These students have diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and may have been affected by trauma. "It can be overwhelming to be a new teacher in that environment if you haven't been adequately prepared to address your students' very real and immediate needs," Agar said.

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse endorsement does just that—helps teachers understand how to meet the needs of the ever-more diverse public school students. Teacher candidates learn about different language structures, diverse cultural norms, and language development.

Teachers who earn the CLD endorsement focus on students' strengths and build on the knowledge students bring with them.

They also learn to focus on students' strengths and how to build on the knowledge students bring with them, rather than working from a deficit model. These strategies not only work well for CLD students, they ensure optimal comprehension by ALL students.

All Systems Go

At CUE, the CLD endorsement is included as part of the elementary education degree. Agar said this gives the teacher candidates a distinct advantage. "They graduate with a deeper understanding of the needs and perspectives of the diverse students they are likely to encounter in any urban center, especially in the Aurora and Denver metro areas," Agar said.

Teachers with a CLD endorsement begin their teaching careers with confidence and the ability to successfully meet the needs of all students.

Teachers with a CLD endorsement begin their teaching careers with confidence and the ability to successfully meet the needs of their students, whether those students are U.S. citizens born in Montbello, Colorado, or citizens of Myanmar who came to the U.S. by way of the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh.

"Teachers that can facilitate learning across languages and cultures help all students expand their understanding of our world and make them better world citizens," Agar said.

We thank Professor Agar for her service and the work she does to prepare teachers for our urban classrooms!



Teacher candidates Lathena Lofing (left) and Araceli Garcia will participate in the Educator Academy in the Amazon this summer.

Student Trip to the Amazon Planned for Summer 2023

Two CUE teacher candidates are heading to the Amazon rainforest in Peru this summer—the ninth annual trip of its kind. Lathena Lofing and Araceli Garcia will travel with the [Educator Academy in the Amazon](#), a program hosted by The Morpho Institute.

Lofing intends to gain a better understanding of the rainforest and how to better incorporate science content into the curriculum. "I plan to bring this experience back to the classroom by integrating topics such as rainforest ecology, natural history, and conservation issues," said Lofing. She's the first in her family to attend college and sees the Amazon trip as a way to set an example for her siblings and future generations. "I want to show them that they can accomplish anything they set their mind to," Lofing added.



Garcia is looking forward to exploring a new environment and learning more about plants and their anatomy. "I hope to learn how to inspire my students about science and the environment," she said.

"If I can do this, so can my students. Age does not limit you, race does not limit you, and you should not limit yourself," said Garcia. She mirrors Lofing's sentiment about possibilities: "When a person is curious and determined, they can accomplish anything."

CUE professor Kelly Keena will accompany our teacher candidates on the trip. She said, "This adventure will be transformative, personally and professionally, for Lathena and Araceli. The inquiry-rich experience will return immeasurable benefits for their future students. It's an honor to experience Peru with our CUE students."

To contribute to travel costs for the 2023 Amazon trip, visit the GoFundMe site for Lofing [here](#) and for Garcia [here](#).



CUE Professor Kelly Keena will accompany our teacher candidates to Peru.

Prioritizing Recruitment of Black Teachers

The UNC Center for Urban Education actively recruits future teachers from the local community, with a focus on increasing the number of teachers of color in our urban classrooms. This [NBC News article](#) explains why it is vitally important to prepare, recruit, and hire teachers whose demographics closely match those of their students.

In the article, Black Nathan, founder of the [Educate ME Foundation](#), said, "If you are being educated by a same-race teacher, academically, emotionally, you perform better in the classroom." Black students who have Black teachers are less likely to be overdisciplined and more likely to finish high school and consider college, the article states.

The article also addresses barriers that affect future Black teachers disproportionately: schools' lack of cultural inclusivity, the high cost of becoming credentialed, and implicit bias in the Praxis exams. The Educate ME Foundation and many other programs are working to help Black teacher candidates overcome those barriers.

Watch our [new video](#) to learn about BIPOC teacher candidate Brolon Moton's perspective on becoming a teacher.



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