

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Bill Schlotter

UCSB-Sponsored Teachers Workshop to Discuss Movement to Put All Students on the Same Track

There was a time in American education when it was believed that students achieved best when they were placed in classes with students of like academic ability. But there is a growing feeling now that such thinking is flawed.

A workshop sponsored by UC Santa Barbara will bring teachers from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties to Oxnard, Thursday, Nov. 29 to discuss the benefits of "de-tracking" classrooms.

The workshop, titled "Teaching in the Heterogeneous Classroom," will be held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Marriott Residence Inn, 2101 West Vineyard Ave., in Oxnard, and will feature a talk by Jeannie Oakes, an associate dean in UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and a leading expert on the de-tracking of schools.

Organizers expect up to 100 teachers representing high schools and middle schools in Santa Maria, Lompoc, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Port Hueneme and Oxnard.

Tom Ostwald, director of UCSB's School-University Partnership, said current research shows that tracked classrooms do not pay the achievement dividends school officials once thought, and in fact, both fast-track and slower-track students seem to do

better when schooled in the same classrooms. The purpose of the workshop is to find strategies to help teachers deal with the challenges of working in a class with students of varying abilities.

Oakes will give a presentation titled "Are We De-Tracking?" at 9 a.m. After a seven-year career as a high school English teacher, Oakes returned to college and earned a Ph.D. in education from UCLA.

Since then, her research has been devoted to inequality in schools and the effects of tracking on minority and low-income students, most of whom have been identified as slow learners or of low ability.

In addition to hearing Oakes' remarks, teachers will take part in workshops titled, "How Are Classes Composed?" and "Sharing Strategies for Heterogeneous Classrooms."

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.