

# *mentor's introduction*

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Bill's interest in and support of multicultural art education comes from his personal experiences as a student and as a teacher. He was born and raised in San Diego, California and is of Mexican American heritage. He found his early years in school frustrating for him and his brothers and sisters. Their education was always centered around achievements of others with whom they could not identify. Finding his family traditions and cultural experience of little importance to those at school he became disinterested.

After serving in the army, he graduated from college and went into private business. Ten years later he then decided to become a high school teacher. He accepted his first teaching position at Calexico High School in California and taught special education. Calexico High School has predominantly Mexican American students, almost all of whom speak Spanish at home and in the community. At this time, 1986, multiculturalism had little impact on the schools and was not reflected in the textbooks. Remembering his own disenfranchised education, he was aware of how the established education, even within a Spanish speaking community, was not providing an overall relevant education. The students with their strong Mexican traditions were being excluded from the curriculum. Most of the teachers were Anglo and did not speak Spanish or feel Mexican. Students were rarely represented in the texts, and when they were, it was as a defeated and vanquished people. As a result of his experiences teaching in Calexico, and sensing that his students felt as he used to feel, he became a *multiculturalist*. He realized that the school process had to be directed more at the individuals and the community in which students live.

In the fall of 1991, Bill began work on his doctorate in Art Education. He is continuing his interests in multicultural education as part of the post-modern educational reform movement, with a conceptual analysis of the *construct multicultural art education*.