

# Educational symposium to focus on research

By Denise Clifton  
Emerald Reporter

The president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) will be the featured speaker at a University-sponsored symposium Jan. 17-20 that will address how today's research on thought processes could influence tomorrow's classroom techniques.

The four-day symposium will focus on educational reform and provide local educators with information on how reform may be influenced by cognitive studies of thinking and knowledge, according to University psychology professor Michael Posner, one of the conference organizers.

"The symposium addresses the question of what relevance various kinds of psychological and cognitive research might have on classroom processes," Posner said. He added the research reveals ways to improve students' learning abilities.

AFT President Albert Shanker will open the symposium with his presentation "Cognitive Research and Educational Reform" at 8 p.m. Jan. 17 in the Eugene Convention Center Composer's Hall. The following five lectures, scheduled Jan. 18 to 20, will be held in the CATE Auditorium of Condon School.

Margaret Nichols, superintendent of Eugene School District 4-J, will outline reform ideas being instituted in local schools as she introduces Shanker's talk.

Shanker is concerned with cognitive research as it relates to individual students and teachers, said Vicki Roloff, a research assistant for the University's Institute of Cognitive and Decision Sciences, also a symposium sponsor.

"Educational reform are definitely key words for Shanker. He is calling for a challenge for educators to combat systematic processes in schools," Roloff said.

"His focus is on students as individuals rather than as a

classroom of students," she added.

Shanker has been involved in United States education policy decisions as AFT president since 1974. A proponent for reform in education for almost 25 years, he supports testing teacher candidates and improving teachers' salary structure. Moreover, he believes tougher courses, standards and discipline should be included with a return to teaching as a common core of democratic values.

In addition, Shanker advocates an educational system where teachers have the opportunity and responsibility to diagnose the individual student's needs. Then the teacher develops and executes an educational plan for each student.

Shanker, who received his doctorate from Columbia University, is a national vice-president of the AFL/CIO as well as president of the Labor Federation's Department for Professional Employees. He is also a board member of several national educational organizations, including the Carnegie Forum on Education and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

In addition to his educational concerns, Shanker is active in human and civil rights. The author of a weekly newspaper column, "Where We Stand," he also belongs to groups such as the A. Philip Randolph Institute and the Committee for the Defense of Soviet Political Prisoners.

"His (Shanker's) talk will be the broadest, and the others will come in more specific areas of cognitive research," Roloff said.

Roy Pea, a researcher at the Institute for Research on Learning in Palo Alto, Calif., will present "Distributed Intelligence, New Media and Processes of Education" at 4 p.m. Jan. 18.

Pea earned his doctorate in developmental psychology from the University of Oxford, England. He has written more than 40 articles and chapters on

distributed intelligence, and he has taught at several colleges and universities.

"Mechanisms of Reasoning and Teaching in the Artificial Domains of Science and Mathematics" will be presented at 8 p.m. Jan. 18 by Jill Larkin, director of the Cognitive Studies for Educational Practice program and professor at CarnegieMellon University in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Larkin received her doctorate in science and mathematics education from the University of California, Berkeley. She has taught psychology at CarnegieMellon University since 1978, and she has written more than 30 papers and books relating to her field.

Morton Gernsbacher, a University psychology associate

professor, will speak on "Cognitive Research in Comprehension and Composition," at 4 p.m. Jan. 19.

"Some of the cognitive psychological research I do concerns how it is that people comprehend textbooks as well as how people learn to compose and write essays," Gernsbacher said. "My focus in the presentation will be on the composition segment of that research."

A former high school English teacher, Gernsbacher earned her doctorate in psychology from the University of Texas, Austin in 1983. She has published 19 articles and has taught at the University since 1983.

"Cognition and Classroom Physics Instruction" will be

presented by James Minstrell, a physics teacher in Mercer Island (Wash.) School District, at 8 p.m. Jan. 19.

Minstrell received a grant from the James S. McDonnell Foundation to develop and implement a cognitive teaching program for high school physics in cooperation with researchers at the University of Washington and the University of California, Berkeley.

Thomas Givon, a University linguistics professor, will speak on "Natural Language Learning and Organized Language Teaching" at 4 p.m. Jan. 20.

"I am going to be talking about the basic research in both first and second language acquisition, the way it's done nat-

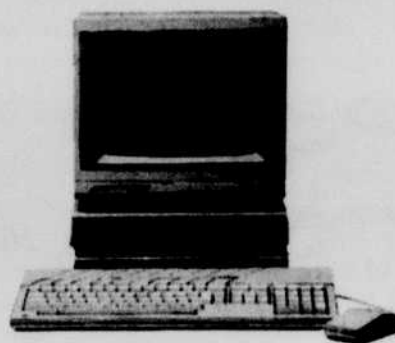
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By GARY LARSON



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