



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Psychology professor Helen Neville will speak today at the Brain and Education Workshop in 243 Lillis. The workshop, which continues Saturday, is sponsored by the University's Brain Biology and Machine Initiative.

Brain: Evidential support not required for methods

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"People who can't focus their attention, they can't read, they can't play music, they can't paint a painting because they don't have the focus," she said.

Neville said that unlike most other fields today, educators are not required to provide empirical support for their methods. She said that for a time, California used the whole-word method as opposed to the phonetics method to teach reading, although studies showed that the whole-word method hinders literacy. Neville said she now gets students from California coming to the University who tell her they can't read.

At 9 a.m. Saturday, Michael Merzenich, a neuroscience professor from the University of California, San Francisco, will present "Neuroscience of Brain Plasticity as a Foundation Science for Educators." Merzenich's laboratory studies the "neural bases of learning, recognition and memory"; "mechanisms underlying the origins of functional brain illnesses and disabilities"; and "strategies for remediating learning-disabled and movement-disabled adults

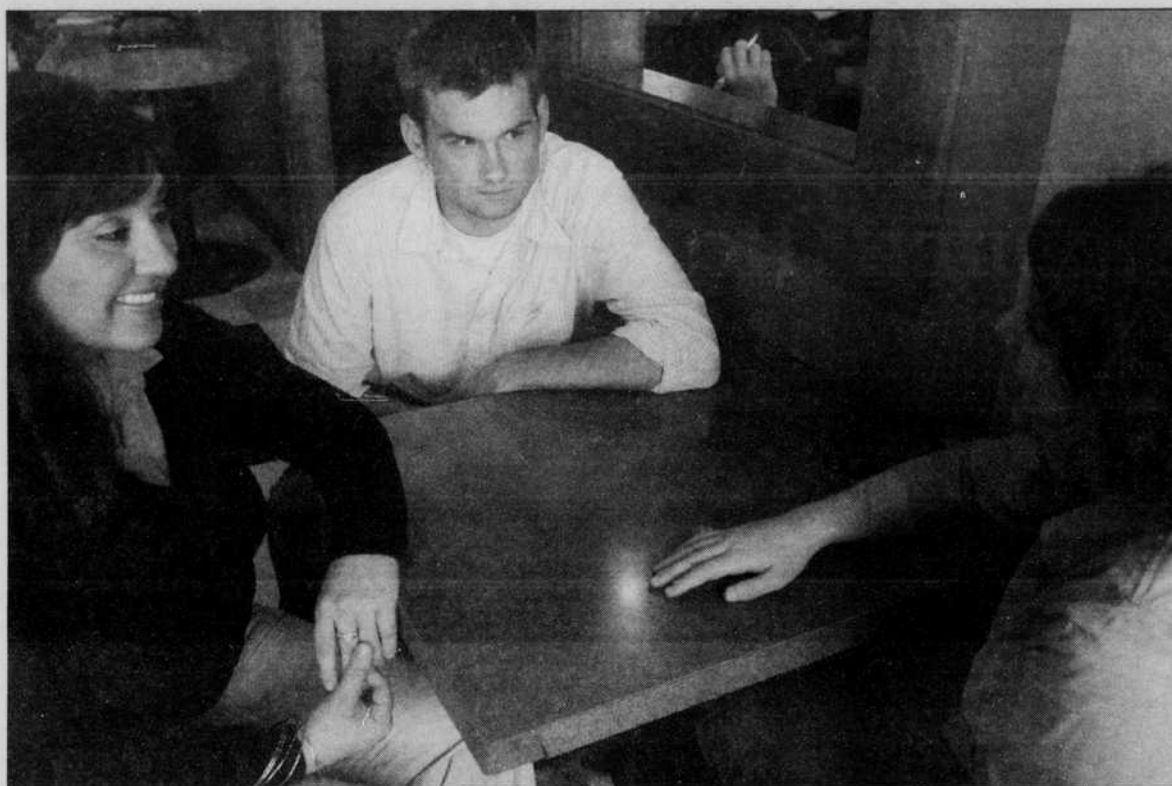
and children," according to the laboratory's Web site.

At 11 a.m. Saturday, Harvard University psychology professor Elizabeth Spelke will present "Origins of Knowledge of Number." Spelke researches the origins and development of concepts of objects, people, space and numbers at Harvard University's Laboratory for Developmental Studies. She said in an e-mail that most of her work focuses on human infants and preschool children but that she also occasionally studies cognition in adult non-human primates and in human adults.

People at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, Eastern Oregon University in La Grande and the University's Central Oregon Programs office in Bend will participate in Saturday's lectures via simulcast, which allows them to watch the presentations on a TV screen as well as ask questions.

Neville said recordings of the lectures can be downloaded for free from the University Brain Development Lab's Web site, bdl.uoregon.edu.

evasywester@dailyemerald.com



NICOLE BARKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Catherine Perez, left, Matthew Rowan, center, and Stephanie Day have been accepted to Teach For America, a program for which they will work to reduce social inequity in the education system.

Teach: Corps gives members continuing support

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movements and what better way to learn about that than an education reform movement?"

Day wrote that she is trying to set realistic goals for herself to prepare for the demanding job of teaching in a new city far from family and friends.

"I have only been to Washington, D.C., once, but it is an exciting place," Day wrote. "It is amazing that with all of the nation's social inequalities, one of the largest lies outside the doors of the nation's capital. But I think that will be inspiring rather than discouraging."

Maren Elliott, recruitment director of the Northwest Recruitment Team for Teach for America, said in an e-mail that in addition to regional inductions, or orientation periods, Teach for America provides ongoing support for corps members.

"Teach For America provides the resources and guidance they'll need to

succeed during their two years in the classroom," Elliott wrote. "This support includes organizing groups of corps members and alumni teaching in similar grad/subject areas, scheduling workshops and retreats and working with area school districts or schools of education to provide professional development opportunities."

Perez, a double major in Spanish and political science and a business administration minor, will be going to Los Angeles to teach special education in a secondary school. She said she's not as nervous or anxious as she is excited about the whole experience.

"L.A. was my top choice," Perez said. "I'm extremely excited because this program gives me the opportunity to work firsthand with children, which is something I've always wanted to do."

Perez said her long-standing goal of being involved in Teach for America is a great opportunity for her to get involved in the issue of

educational inequity.

"As much as protesting and rallying helps raise awareness about these inequities, it's the one-on-one interaction with the students that's really going to make a difference," Perez said. "I'm honored to be a part of it."

Rowan will be part of it in English as a second language classes in New York City this fall.

"As a political science major, social inequity in education is an issue that definitely interests me. In fact, I'm writing my thesis on it," Rowan said. "The educational system deserves more attention, and it's a very important issue."

Rowan, whose parents are both teachers, said more people need to volunteer to bring up this issue and to raise the standard of education.

"I'm hoping I can make a difference by instilling my love of learning into the students," Rowan said.

bmcclellanahan@dailyemerald.com

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