and federal authorities. Generally that includes race and ethnicity, special needs, first language other than English, and poverty (as indicated by free and reduced lunch).

Ask yourself these five questions. If you can answer yes to all five, you are in good shape with your data collection. If not, it's time to make changes to the data you collect.

1. Can your existing data on student enrollments in K-12 online courses report enrollment disaggregated by race and ethnicity (e.g., Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander, Asian, or other)?

2. Can your existing data on student enrollments in K-12 online courses report enrollment disaggregated by poverty (e.g., qualification for free lunch under current USDOE guidelines)?

3. Can your existing data on student enrollments in K-12 online courses report enrollment disaggregated by disability (e.g., students having a diagnosed "exceptionality," thereby qualifying the student for an "Individual Education Plan" and educational services sponsored under the Americans with Disabilities Act)?

4. Can your existing data on student enrollments in K-12 online courses report enrollment disaggregated by "Limited English Proficiency" (e.g., students diagnosed as English Language Learners under current USDOE guidelines for The Bilingual Education Act 1968 – 2002 or New Title III)?

5. If data describing the sub-populations described in items 1-4 is available, based on students currently enrolled in online courses within your program, does the data for each sub-group in your school and district's enrollments and student census compare favorably with that of your online courses?

(Adapted from: Blomeyer & Dawson, 2005)

Myth: In cyberspace, everyone is treated equally because "everyone looks the same."

The research into cultural gender and ethnic differences in online education conducted when the movement was getting started (Hanson, K 2002) showed gender and ethnic differences in online discussions. Online education benefits from the building of online community and there are a variety of proven methods for doing so. (Rose and Smith, 2007) Students are used to seeing each other and are curious, so it's not surprising to find them asking for photographs of classmates. With the popularity of social networking sites, students have a variety of ways to see images of classmates. A number of virtual education programs allow or encourage students to post photographs while other programs encourage the use of icons instead of actual photographs. Does the lack of student images or the use of icons or photographs change the way students interact with each other? Does it change the instructor's perceptions of individual students? This is an area ripe for additional research.

While there has been little research into cultural, gender, and ethnic differences in virtual school education, the subject of different treatment and behavior in other online situations predominantly