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Talking Leaves Newsletter

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Talking Leaves

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About the Center

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE) is housed at the University of California, Santa Cruz, with research sites across the United States. Funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, US Department of Education, the Center will operate until June 2001 under the direction of Dr. Roland Tharp. CREDE is operating 30 research projects under the following programmatic strands:

- Research on **language learning and academic achievement** highlights exemplary programmatic choices.
- Effective **professional development** practices for teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals are being explored.
- The influence and interaction of **family, peers, and community** on the education of linguistically and culturally diverse students are being examined.
- **Instruction in context** looks at teaching these students in different content areas, such as science and math.
- Successful **integrated school reform** initiatives are being identified and documented.

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From the Director

On behalf of the more than one hundred researchers who comprise the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence, "Welcome to CREDE!" And welcome to *Talking Leaves*, this newsletter whose name reflects the mission of CREDE, to bring high achievements of language, literacy and numeracy to all American children. Sequoyah, a Cherokee born around 1770, referred to the white man's ability to put words on paper as "Talking Leaves." He was so impressed with this that he created the first Cherokee syllabary, which in one generation created a society of universal literacy from a previously non-literate one. In 1828, thanks to Sequoyah's contribution, the Cherokee printed *The Cherokee Phoenix*, the first Native American Indian *and* bilingual newspaper in the United States, with parallel columns written in both Cherokee and English.

CREDE is turning a new leaf. We have built on the work of our predecessor, the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, and continue a focus on linguistic and cultural diversity. And our brief has now expanded, reflecting congressional and US Department of Education prioritizations, to include research on other risk factors—of race, geography, and poverty.

As our responsibilities have increased, so has our scope of work. Compared to our predecessor, the CREDE budget is four times the size. Our geographic range expanded from Providence, Rhode Island to Honolulu, from Miami to Homer, Alaska, and participating communities expanded to include American communities with origins in Africa, Southeast Asia, China, Hawaii, Alaska, Appalachia, as well as our continuing emphases on Latino and Native American students placed at risk. This provides exciting opportunities for understanding the role of such shared risk factors as poverty, low status of culture and language, and cycles of low literacy. And it brings new challenges of making common cause and building mutual respect across even wider groups.

CREDE researchers and leadership welcome both the opportunities and the challenges. General truths can be found only when a

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Director's Message
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full range of variation is considered. So truly foundational research on reformed schools, reformed communities, and reformed pedagogy can be carried out *only* in a context of diversity. Therefore, what we discover about mitigating risk factors will lead directly to truly universal principles of teaching and learning for *all* the nation's students.

In future issues, I'll have the opportunity to report on our progress, and discuss with you the problems solved, and the problems that remain. In the next issue, we'll focus our efforts to translate research findings into positive changes in educational practice and policy.

In the meantime, we at CREDE ask your help. If CREDE can be a positive influence on the entire national agenda of assisting students placed at risk, it will be through hearing about your needs, your discoveries, and your own triumphs and nagging difficulties. We hope to conduct our own specific research as well as we can, but also to find ways of assisting the work of others.

Perhaps because of my Cherokee blood, I feel a special obligation to deserve the *Talking Leaves* name. How did Sequoyah and his leadership group manage such a feat of commitment, discipline, and pedagogy? One way to honor their achievement is to learn from it. How did their families and communities organize their literacy learning? I'll try to find out, and let you know next time.

Roland Tharp, Director

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- Research on **assessment** investigates alternative methods for evaluating language minority students' academic achievement.

CREDE's research program is based on a sociocultural framework that is sensitive to diverse cultures and languages, but powerful enough to identify the great commonalities that unite people. It is based on eight premises:

- All children can learn.
- All children learn best when challenged by high standards.
- English proficiency is a goal for all students.
- Bilingual proficiency is desirable for all students.
- Language and cultural diversity can be assets for teaching and learning.
- Teaching and learning must be accommodated to individuals.
- Risk factors can be mitigated, by schools that teach the skills that schools require.
- Solutions to risk factors must be grounded in a valid general theory of development, teaching, and schooling.

Because of the large number of projects, we want to introduce readers to a few at a time. This issue of *Talking Leaves* will introduce you to two of the Center's projects.

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User Survey

The Center would like to know more about you and how we can help meet your needs. Please complete the form below and mail it to CREDE/CAL, 1118 22nd St. NW, Washington DC, 20037-1214 or fax it to 202-659-5641. The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), one of CREDE's partners, will compile this information. Thank you for your assistance.

1. Tell us about yourself and where you work. Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School administrator | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle/junior high school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District administrator | <input type="checkbox"/> High school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professor | <input type="checkbox"/> School district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College/university student | <input type="checkbox"/> College or university |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> State department of education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State education official | <input type="checkbox"/> Research institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal education official | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

2. How did you find out about the Center? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conferences | <input type="checkbox"/> Referrals, word of mouth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-service workshops/sessions | <input type="checkbox"/> College or university |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Journal articles and reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic mail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ERIC system | <input type="checkbox"/> NCBE system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web site | <input type="checkbox"/> Brochure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter announcements or through another publication | <input type="checkbox"/> TESOL, NABE, AERA, or other professional organizations (which: _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

3. Please tell us how the Center newsletter can meet your needs. Which topics would you like to read about? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching in the classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Educating recent immigrant students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development for teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> Links between parents, schools, and communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development for principals | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment and alternative assessment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Two-way immersion education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working with administrators | <input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual and ESL education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sheltered instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual special education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-service teacher education | <input type="checkbox"/> African American students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science and math education | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School reform and restructuring | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tracking and untracking students | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research on: | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pedagogy <input type="checkbox"/> methodology <input type="checkbox"/> theory | |

4. What regular features or columns would you like to see? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research into practice | <input type="checkbox"/> African American education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Project showcases | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book reviews | <input type="checkbox"/> Multicultural/multilingual education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upcoming events, conferences | <input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual special education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American education | <input type="checkbox"/> US Department of Education initiatives/updates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Project Showcase

National Study of School Effectiveness for Language-Minority Students' Long-Term Academic Achievement

Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas, George Mason University

How long do LEP students need to become academically successful in English? What variables have the greatest influence on academic achievement? This project, part of the language learning program cluster, focuses on the length of time that language minority students need to become academically successful in a second language, and the student, program, and instructional variables that influence their academic achievement. The study will extend and expand the research Collier and Thomas have been doing for many years in the field of language minority education.

The research consists of a series of studies conducted as collaborative research with the bilingual/ESL school staff in each of ten school districts across the U.S. Research sites include school districts that have large numbers of language minority students, maintain well-collected long-term data on these students, and provide many services for them, including two-way bilingual immersion, late-exit bilingual education, early-exit bilingual education, ESL taught through academic content, and ESL pullout or ESL as a subject. Collaborative, policy, and decision-oriented analyses of the data will be conducted with school staff, and interpretation will consider the sociocultural contexts in which the students function.

Research Questions

Three major research questions frame the study:

- What are the characteristics of language minority students in terms of their primary language, country of origin, L1 and L2 proficiency, prior academic performance, school attendance, degree of student retention in grade, and other student background variables?
- How much time is required for language minority students to become academically successful after participating in the various alternative education programs, characterized as stable, well-established, and well-operated?
- What are the most important student, program, and instructional variables that affect the school achievement of language minority students?

Study Design

The researchers are collecting data from a variety of sources within each participating school system, including records from testing offices, centralized student information systems, language minority registration centers, and surveys of teachers, students, and parents conducted by participating school systems. School staff will be interviewed to collect information on the sociocultural context of schooling within each instructional setting. The researchers will use data capture software and relational database computer programs to restructure data from these sources into a comprehensive language minority student database for each school system. Analyses will include descriptive summaries for each variable, as well as exploratory data plots and graphical analyses. Hierarchical multiple linear regression will be used to explore the relative importance of student, program, and sociocultural variables on long-term student outcomes. Research reports on this study will focus on analysis of general patterns in the data across multiple school district sites.

The language minority students in these school systems include US-born and immigrant populations of Hispanic, Asian, and other language backgrounds, including over 100 different language groups, as well as Native American groups.

This research will be useful to teachers of LEP students and school districts with large numbers of language minority students. By identifying the most influential or significant variables that impact on LEP students' achievement, this project and the others in the language learning cluster will provide guidance to educators and policymakers to enable them to meet the educational needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students better.

Project Showcase

National Study of Effective Teacher Education For Diverse Student Populations

Stephanie S. Dalton, University of California, Santa Cruz
Leonard Baca, BUENO Center, University of Colorado

As more language minority students enter U.S. schools, teachers are facing greater challenges in the classroom. What kinds of professional development are the most effective for teaching in a diverse classroom? How must teachers change their instructional styles to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students? This project is part of a program cluster which examines the characteristics, careers, pre-service education, and in-service professional development of educators of bilingual and culturally diverse at-risk students.

This national study will examine teacher education programs that prepare teachers for the linguistic and cultural diversity of U.S. classrooms. These programs seek to educate teachers to translate rigorous content standards, enhanced curriculum, and innovative pedagogy into teaching and learning for all students who are present in bilingual, multilingual, and multi-cultural classrooms. To do so requires a shift from the traditional teacher education model to more reformed views of teaching and learning. However, documentation about preparing teachers for diversity is scant. So, teacher educators have many questions about characteristics of successful programs that support teacher development for effective instruction of diverse students. Teacher educators also lack meaningful ways to classify programs, catalog available models, and communicate with comparable programs.

This study will identify and review post-baccalaureate teacher education programs to discover how they build teachers' competency to provide successful educational environments for diverse students. The researchers are surveying teacher education programs identified and nominated through U.S. Department of Education-sponsored initiatives, state education agency recommendations, and other professional networks to obtain information about their program goals, structure, curriculum, and pedagogy.

Survey data from responding programs will be analyzed for its relation to the current knowledge base about effective teaching for diverse students, and

NCATE and NABE standards for professional teacher education program development. A national directory of programs will be compiled from the database. Programs whose data indicate teacher preparation that is productive for teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students will be selected through expert panels for case study.

Research Questions

To study effective teacher education for linguistically and culturally diverse student populations, the following research questions are addressed:

- What views of language, culture, teaching, and learning guide programs that prepare teachers to teach diverse students?
- What are the goals and outcomes of successful teacher training programs and what criteria identify these programs?
- What are the commonalities of successful teacher preparation programs and what makes them unique?
- What are the exemplary features of successful programs nationally, and how are these disseminated?
- To what degree do programs conform to professional standards set forth by NCATE and NABE? Are these professional standards consistent with contemporary views and research on native language instruction, second language acquisition, cultural considerations, learning, and teaching?
- What are the implications for professional development for teacher education faculty involved in delivering these programs?

As one of several studies on professional development, this project seeks ways to help teachers adapt their instructional methods to meet their students' needs, and become more familiar with their students' backgrounds, culture, and language.



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