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GRANT REPORT

Improving Instruction through Teacher Collaboration in Grade-Level Meetings

The recent passage of *No Child Left Behind* challenges schools and teachers to improve the academic performance of all students, including English learners. To meet this challenge, many teachers will need professional development to deepen their knowledge of academic subjects and to expand their repertoire of instructional approaches. However, policy makers and the public drastically underestimate the collaborative planning and discussion time needed by teachers to bring about these changes, while districts frequently cling to traditional, one-time workshop approaches to professional development with little follow-up support.

Considerable research suggests that teachers are more likely to change teaching practices when they form professional communities where they engage in collaborative inquiry into their instructional practices, plan and implement reforms to improve their practices, and assess the impact of these reforms. These communities often benefit from external experts who support these efforts, yet who respect teachers' direction and creativity. Creating such communities of instructional practice has been the hallmark of the Effective Schools Initiative, launched in partnership with the UCSB Center for Effective Schools and the Oxnard School District, where almost 90 percent of the students are Latino/a and over 50 percent are English learners. This initiative created communities of grade-level teachers in 10 participating schools, which meet regularly and are guided by a UCSB facilitator. Grounded in a socio-cultural perspective that highlights the knowledge and skills individual teachers bring to the team, the communities promote individual and collective learning through dialogue and exploration of beliefs about student learning, joint exploration of texts, examination of student work, collaborative development of units and lessons, and sharing of instructional strategies.

The current study, which examined two of the Effective Schools grade-level teams over a two-year period, found that these facilitated meetings give teachers a rich opportunity to engage in meaningful work, which can improve instruction. The study also suggests that group dynamics and leadership can affect the quality of the work and the degree of impact on classroom practice. Through analyzing videos of the team meetings as well as the lessons and instructional units produced by the teams, it was

possible to identify the similarities and differences in the functioning of the two teams and gain insights into team effectiveness. Both teams developed routines in their weekly meetings that facilitated their work, including:

- reviewing the day's agenda and setting the next agenda;
- designing interdisciplinary and integrated curricular units based on California content standards;
- identifying resources and activities, and developing culminating assessments to determine mastery of those standards;
- recording unit plans on the computer during the meeting.

These common routines found in both groups enabled the teams to be equally productive, creating 10 monthly interdisciplinary, instructional units that enable teachers to address several content standards in one unit.

The teams differed, however, in some of their routines, which were reflected in the quality of the units developed and the satisfaction of the team members. Three of the most significant differences were that Team A teachers implemented the units whereas Team B teachers used them

only as a resource in their teaching. Team A, based on implementation results, returned to revise the units later in the year whereas Team B did not see the necessity for revision. In addition, Team A shared leadership and responsibility for the work among all team members, which created a safe environment for sharing and more emotional support among members. In contrast, Team B's designated teacher leader dominated the group and limited input by other members. Because of the greater shared leadership in Team A, there was much more dialogue and debate among team members. This, coupled with the review and revision of the units, created more opportunities for teachers to learn and led to higher quality instructional units. When reviewed with a rubric designed to assess the quality of classroom assignments, Team A's thematic units required higher-level thinking and application skills than Team B's units.

These findings suggest that facilitated grade-level meetings can be an effective way to encourage and promote teacher learning through dialogue, joint work and social, emotional, and intellectual engagement with the content standards that enhance teachers'

"The meetings are a structured process that give teachers a sense of empowerment ...teachers will stay in the profession as it gives us the collegial support we need."

—Second Grade Bilingual Teacher

abilities to implement them (e.g., all the children in one Team A classroom were able to write a friendly letter with all of the required parts). The study highlights conditions that promote grade-level team learning:

1. Devote time to team- and trust-building from the beginning and throughout the process.
2. Establish routines that promote conditions for team learning such as reviewing the team’s work, reflecting regularly on practice, encouraging divergent views, and discussing collective doubts.
3. Ensure a continuous learning loop: ideas discussed and work produced by the team are tested and tried in the classroom and then cycled back for reflection and refinement at future grade-level meetings.
4. Regularly review student work to assess learning and probe deeply into the lesson designs and teaching strategies that produced the work.
5. Teach teams how to question, inquire and discuss their own teaching.

The study supports the benefits of teacher collaborative inquiry, and suggests that to achieve effective and sustainable learning communities requires attention to group processes and conditions for learning. It is important to study these grade-level groups in action over time to identify and promote effective forms of collaborative inquiry that rekindle the creative spark of teaching and enhance achievement of all students, especially English language learners.

—Janet H. Chrispeels,
Shiou-Ping Shiu and Robin Endacott Doerr

A complete copy of this Grant Report - An Analysis of the Habitual Routines and Effectiveness of Collaborative Teacher Grade-Level Teams in an Elementary School - (Grant #01-06G-SB) available on the UC LMRI web site.

Research Grants Awarded

Following the close of the February 2003 Call for Proposals, the UC LMRI Faculty Steering Committee met on February 14th and awarded eight research grants in three program areas for 2003-04 totaling \$162,405.00 (see details in sidebar). The next Call for Proposals deadline is October 1, 2003. Details can be found on the UC LMRI our web site.

Following are edited versions of the abstracts submitted by the funded grantees.

INDIVIDUAL GRANT AWARDS

The Transition to High School of Multi-ethnic Urban Youth: Opportunities and Risks

SANDRA GRAHAM, *UCLA*
GRANT #03-03CY-04IG-LA

The transition to high school can be a challenging and stressful experience for many youth. We propose to study that transition process in a large multi-ethnic sample of about 2000 students who have been participating in a longitudinal study of social and academic adjustment during middle school.

The sample is comprised of African American, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Caucasian students who were selected from 11 middle schools in Los Angeles County that vary systematically in terms of ethnic composition. The sample also can be distinguished according to generational status: about 10 percent are first generation immigrants, 50 percent are second generation children of immigrant parents, and 40 percent are third generation or beyond.

We plan to test hypotheses about the transition experiences of adolescents who have low status among their peers, whether strong identity might buffer their transition challenges, whether immigrant children suffer heightened adjustment problems as they enter 9th grade, and the role of parental involvement among language minority youth. Our long term goal is to track the academic and social adjustment trajectories of these ethnic and linguistic minority youth throughout the high school years

Helping Content Area Teachers Work with Academic Language: Promoting English Language Learners’ Literacy in History

MARY J. SCHLEPPEGRELL, *UC DAVIS*
GRANT #03-03CY-06IG-D

This project will identify knowledge about language that is important for teachers of middle school and secondary school history in California. Building on previous work on the linguistic features of the writing assignments expected in middle school and secondary school, as well as on analysis of the language of history textbooks, it will draw on data that has already been collected, but has not yet been fully analyzed. Developing another facet of a broader investigation of the challenges of school subjects for linguistic minority students, it will contribute a crucial perspective on the gaps in teacher knowledge that make it difficult for history teachers to address language issues.

Increasingly, teachers are working with English language learners and low literacy students in mainstream history classes. They need to be able to scaffold grade-level reading and writing tasks for these students. But few teachers are well prepared to focus on language in ways that promote the development of advanced literacy in

2003-04 Grant Awards	
Individual Grants Awarded (4)	= \$96,023.00
Dissertation Grants Awarded (3)	= \$43,182.00
Teacher Grant Awarded (1)	= \$23,200.00
Total for (8) Grant Awards	
	= \$162,405.00

school subjects. This project will identify linguistic challenges for history teachers through analysis of existing databases.

There will be two major outcomes of this project; suggested language topics that teachers can focus on when asking students to write classroom history genres, and recommendations about the aspects of linguistic knowledge that should be incorporated into pre-service and in-service history teacher development. Drawing on our previous experience with language-oriented workshops for teachers, we will develop explanations of language as it is used in history discourse that can enable teachers to help students read and write effectively.

In addition, the project will enable the development of a larger proposal for extramural funding related to supporting the development of academic language and advanced literacy in a greater range of subject areas.

High School Leadership Activities and the Adult Earnings of Mexican Americans: Evidence from Three Decades

PETER KUHN, *UC SANTA BARBARA*

GRANT #03-03CY-09IG-SB

Using three nationally representative surveys of high school students from different decades, we examine the participation of Mexican-American students in high school leadership activities (team captainship and club presidency), and the impact of the high school leadership experience on the adult earnings of this group.

Questions examined include the extent to which Mexican-American students are underrepresented in these activities, and the extent to which such underrepresentation is associated with language spoken at home.

We also assess the effect of participation in high school leadership activities on adult earnings and compare this effect to its effect in the general population. If we find that high school leadership opportunities are as important to future earnings among Mexican Americans as they are for other Americans, and if access to these opportunities is restricted for this group for either cultural or linguistic reasons, our results may have important implications for education policy.

Latent Growth Mixture Modeling of Language Minority Latino Children's Growth in Academic Achievement

SEHEE HONG, *UC SANTA BARBARA*

GRANT #03-03CY-10IG-SB

The challenge of serving language minority students in U.S. schools is a major focal point in educational research. It is not surprising to find that much of the research on the issue of language minorities has focused on Latinos because they compose the largest number of language minority students. Latinos have been the fastest growing minority group in the school-age population over the last several decades (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). However, Latino children represent the poorest and least educated of minority groups and are associated with underachievement in U.S. schools (Lopez & Cole, 1999).

Language minority children are highly at risk for educational failure (Arreaga-Mayer & Perdomo-Rivera, 1996; Goldenberg, 1996). In this study, we will attempt to identify important factors that are positively or negatively related to successful outcomes in academic achievement among Latino children.

Using the newly released Early Childhood Longitudinal Study dataset, we will employ a state-of-the art methodology—latent growth mixture modeling—to examine the effects of language of instruction, home language, and teacher effectiveness on Latino language minority children's achievement. Understanding the sources of success for Latino children will help educators, policymakers, and parents to narrow the achievement gap between Latino children and their peers.

DISSERTATION GRANT AWARDS

Studying "Success" at an "Effective" School

SARAH E. JONES, *UC SANTA BARBARA*

GRANT #03-03CY-02DG-SB

The Texas Academy of Knowledge, TAK, is a public charter school that includes fifth through eighth grades. Seventy-nine percent of the students at TAK are Latino (sixty to sixty-five percent of whom come from non-native English speaking families), seventeen percent are African American, and ninety percent participate in federal breakfast and lunch programs. For a school with such a population, a high percentage of low-income minority students, one might expect rather dismal outcomes. However, TAK is one of the highest performing middle schools in Texas.

In this dissertation I examine the "effectiveness" of this school. In order to understand their "effectiveness" I set out to accomplish three things in this dissertation. First, I will uncover how students, teachers and administrators define success and I will show how their version of success is built into the day-to-day activities that occur at TAK. Second, I will examine the structural and interpersonal features of TAK culture in detail. And, third, I will show if and how the racial, ethnic, class and linguistic identities of the students are relevant in understanding how members of TAK conceptualize and create success.

Language Socialization in the Korean American Community

ADRIENNE LO, *UCLA*

GRANT #03-03CY-03DG-LA

This dissertation explores the community factors which support or discourage the use of the heritage language in a Korean American community in Silicon Valley.

Using ethnography, interviews, surveys, participant observation and discourse analysis of selected videotaped interactions, I examine the ways in which first and 1.5 generation Korean Americans use the Korean language with elementary school-aged second generation children, and how children use Korean in interactions with each other in four community settings: an art school, a tae kwon do studio, a Saturday Korean language school, and an academic after school program.

I focus on three cultural factors which may explain second

generation Korean-American children's low rates of heritage language proficiency: (1) norms of language choice by adults and children; (2) how children's production in Korean is evaluated by members of the community; (3) the kinds of implicit social values which may become indexically linked to Korean vs. those linked to English.

Reading the Effects of Reform: A Qualitative Study of the Effects of Proposition 227, Accountability, and Reading Policy on English Language Learners

MARIANA PACHECO, *UCLA*

GRANT #03-03CY-04DG-LA

The reading achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs) has received increased attention among concerned educators and researchers that recognize the need for more reliable ways to assess their academic progress. In recent years, however, this concern has been met with policies that increasingly emphasize reductive notions of learning and English-only contexts that limit opportunities for ELLs to utilize their language as a resource.

In this study, sociocultural-sociohistorical perspectives inform an analysis into the ways that bilingual teachers and administrators in a high-achieving case study school negotiate the demands implied in the constellation of school accountability, reading policy, and 227.

Although the state, district, and school vary in their negotiation of these demands, teachers in particular are embedded in the social reality of their classrooms and thus instantiate these demands in much different ways to organize reading instruction for their ELLs. This is one of the central questions of this study: how do bilingual teachers negotiate policy demands with their own theories of learning to organize the teaching and learning of reading for their ELLs?

An additional goal of this study is to investigate the extent to which these policy demands constrain or facilitate reading achievement and learning opportunities for ELLs, as well as their overall schooling experiences.

TEACHER GRANT AWARD

Can Reading Intervention Take the Place of English Language Development?

RICHARD A. FIGUEROA, PH.D., *UC DAVIS*

GRANT #03-03CY-02TG-D

The proposed study aims to analyze the impact of a structured reading intervention program on the English language acquisition process of secondary age ELs.

Within the larger federal accountability effort embodied in No Child Left Behind (NCLB), English Learner needs have been interpreted a variety of ways. The federal focus rests primarily on literacy (reading) development as a demonstration of academic achievement. In response to increased accountability requirements for students scoring in the lowest quartile (essentially all ELs in California) secondary schools are beginning to replace traditional English Language Development (ELD) curriculum with highly structured reading intervention programs.

Data analysis will include the following independent variables: EL level, years in U.S. schools, ethnicity, primary language, grade in school, and gender. Dependent variables, to be analyzed include initial and final semester writing samples, tri-weekly reading comprehension tests incorporated in the reading intervention program, tri-annual student results on California's High School Exit Exam (HSEE) Language Arts portion - a graduation requirement for the 10th to 12th grade ELs in the study. Teachers will also maintain journals throughout the duration of the study detailing both their own and student reactions to the program, as well as the implementation process.

Key questions posed by this study include: To what degree does a reading intervention program align with ELD standards? To what degree does it follow what research purports to be the best practices in facilitating the language acquisition process in secondary ELs? Will students experience differential gains dependent upon their EL level? Will students experience differential gains by years in U.S. schools prior to program inception, gender or primary language?

DISSERTATION GRANT - FINAL REPORT

Constructing Meaning: A Study of a Teacher's Educational Beliefs and Literacy Practices in a First Grade Bilingual Classroom

CORINNE MARTINEZ, *UCLA*

GRANT #98-06DG-LA

Research on literacy teaching has examined teacher development, teacher education, beliefs, and teacher behaviors. Results from numerous studies suggest that teacher thinking is a holistic and integrated phenomenon where beliefs, planning, decision-making and classroom practice come together.

This study was designed to investigate the relationship between a bilingual teacher's educational beliefs and classroom literacy practices. The results of this investigation have shown that the beliefs teachers hold impact not only their perceptions about teaching, learning and students, but also their classroom practices.

This investigation has implications for bilingual teacher preparation as well as in-service teacher training. Further research needs are addressed, including the need to develop research agendas for developing English language development curricula, literacy curricula and improving the overall teaching of English language learners.

This is an edited version of the report abstract. The complete abstract as well as a full copy of this report can be found on the ProQuest Digital Dissertations Database at: <http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit/9993004>

NEW! 2003-04 UC LMRI PostDoc POSITION

Recent UC graduates: PostDoc position starts September 2003. \$50,000 award for 2003-04 academic year. Application deadline is May 1, 2003. Further details can be found on the UCLMRI web site.

TEACHER GRANT - FINAL REPORT

A Collaborative Partnership: An Investigation of the Effects of Implementation of Bilingual Cultural Pedagogy and Authentic Assessment on Deaf Children's Literacy

TOM HUMPHRIES, UC SAN DIEGO

GRANT #01-01TG-SD

The purpose of this investigation was to establish a collaborative partnership with local public school teachers who teach deaf and hard of hearing children in San Diego County, and faculty at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) in the Teacher Education Program. The teacher-researchers and UCSD faculty partnership combined efforts that supported the implementation of bilingual practices and authentic assessment while facilitating a deeper understanding of deaf and hard of hearing students as readers and writers through a disciplined inquiry approach.

The outcomes of this project were: (1) A community of learners (teacher-researchers and UCSD faculty) with the primary goal of engaging in collaborative inquiry was established. (2) Several bilingual practices for deaf and hard of hearing children were identified, shared and implemented. (3) Case documentation and study of deaf and hard of hearing children revealed reading behaviors and effective literacy strategies used. (4) From the case study documentation, the teachers built on what children knew and could do and began to plan for next steps in teaching and learning. (5) Deaf and hard of hearing students' reading and writing achievement levels were established. (6) Teacher judgments for scale placement were validated. And, finally: (7) Deaf and hard of hearing students' American Sign Language (ASL) development was determined based on an agreed upon scale of development that was designed and piloted specifically for this study.

This is an edited version of the report abstract. The complete abstract and full copy of this report can be found on the UC LMRI web site.

NEW! TECHNICAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE ON-LINE

"Academic English: A Conceptual Framework" is now available on the UC LMRI web site.

This long-awaited report by **Dr. Robin Scarcella, UC Irvine**, discusses approaches to the study of academic English, presents a multi-dimensional framework for analyzing it, and describes the relationship between the variety of English used in everyday situations and the variety of English used in academic ones. It concludes with a discussion of pedagogical implications pertaining to instruction assessment and professional development.

NEW! LOOKING FOR INFO ON ENGLISH LEARNERS?

UC LMRI has launched a new publication series called, "EL Facts." EL Facts will provide up-to-date information on California English learners, their teachers, and their schooling experiences. The first few issues, which are now available on our web site, feature information from the 2002 California Language Census on the EL population, their instructional services, and the credentials of teachers providing those services.



THE ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LEARNERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND POLICY

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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARLENE RIVERA
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- * Use and misuse of California's English Language Development Test (CELDT)
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**For those without access to the internet, please contact UC LMRI to receive a registration form by mail.*

Education Policy Center News

UC LMRI established an Education Policy Center at UC Davis in 1997 to disseminate research findings to policymakers. The Center sponsors research and colloquia on policy issues in the education of English learners.

* * *

During this last quarter, the Education Policy Center at Davis has focused on two priorities: (1) disseminating new information that **Director Rumberger** and **Associate Director Gándara** developed on the condition of education for English learners, with a particular focus on the preparation of teachers for English learners; and (2) working on a new initiative in the Sacramento area to turn the west's second oldest high school (**Sacramento High**) into a charter school that would include an innovative dual immersion program for high school students. In the first category, we have been actively testifying at legislative hearings on the depth and breadth of the achievement gap between English learners and English speakers, and the consequent need for teachers who are prepared to address these students' needs.

In mid-December 2002 we held a seminar on the teacher preparation issue for legislative staff, and in February we addressed the **Assembly Education Committee** on this issue.

We are continuing to work with the legislature and have been meeting regularly with legislative staff and with the **Legislative Analyst's Office** on this issue. We also met recently with the new Superintendent of Schools, **Jack O'Connell**, to brief him on the status of education for English learners.

In other news: **PACE** (Policy Analysis for California Education) is joining with UC Davis and is now housed with the UC LMRI Education Policy Center. **Julie Maxwell-Jolly** is the new Senior Research Associate for PACE at Davis and will be working on issues of English learners. By having PACE and LMRI working so closely together, we will be able to expand on our capacity to bring the issues of English learners into greater policy focus.

* * *

Contact Patricia Gándara for more information on the Center: pcgandara@ucdavis.edu

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