

Sabbatical Report

Lillian Vega Castaneda

Professor of Education – Multicultural/Multilingual

School of Education

California State University Channel Islands

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PURPOSE

The purpose of my Sabbatical Leave in spring 2009, was to support my work on a text entitled *Understanding Second Language Acquisition: Theory to Practice*. This book focuses on research based practice as it pertains to the education of students whose native language is other than English. Work included research, case study development, teacher interviews, writing drafts and attendance at meetings with experts in the field and one conference presentation.

ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

Research

I conducted background research in several ways. First, I visited classrooms which serve linguistically diverse students. As a way of connecting the content of the book to “real” practice – each chapter is designed around a case study. Each case study is based on the classroom, teacher and the children who I observed. Classroom visits lasted up to 2 hours and the observations were open-ended. I also interviewed teachers about their practice and thinking about current trends in curriculum and instruction related to ELL’s. I was interested in gaining insight into current practice and curriculum used by teachers with their English Language Learners.

I spent regularly scheduled hours at the UCLA library to uncover current scholarship related to ELL's. Additional time was spent searching CSUCI's digital library to uncover research and develop a working bibliography for inclusion in a critical review of the literature. Chapter One begins with the theoretical framework and includes a review of the relevant and current literature in the field. Additionally, each chapter incorporates current scholarship and practice as it relates to the specific content. Time spent in the library and searching on-line data bases was vital to this work.

Writing & Chapter Development

The first three chapters of the text are devoted to the development of theory for pre-credential and practicing educators. For example - Chapter 1 is titled - "What do teachers need to know about language acquisition and proficiency and why they need to know that?" This chapter analyzes demographic trends with respect to the influx and movement of ELL students and their families across the US. The sociopolitical and socio-cultural contexts of their communities as it connects (or not) to the schools they attend. This discussion is a necessary knowledge base for all educators who work with ELL students. The chapter ends with a discussion and analysis (of the literature) on what constitutes effective practice and moves toward a model for a new pedagogy. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 focus on effective instruction for beginning, intermediate and advanced ELLs. These chapters focus primarily on practice and strategies for classroom use. The development and writing of the case-studies were especially helpful in shaping these chapters, based on the classroom observations and teacher interviews. Chapter 8 focuses on younger ELL learners and includes specific information on scaffolding content based on the level of English proficiency. Again, this was supported by the case study approach intertwined with related theory and scholarship. Chapter 9 focuses on Adolescent learners and Chapter 10

considers Elements of effective instruction for ELLs. Chapter 10 – Elements of Effective Instruction for ELLs, is the last chapter and addresses specific elements that lead to effective instruction. Writing is in the final stage and the publisher has adjusted the timeline for publication to summer 2010.

Paper Presentations at the American Education Research (AERA) Conference, San Diego, CA, April 2009

Last Spring 2009, I presented a co-authored paper at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association (AERA). The paper, “Language, Policy and Practice in the Context of Demographic Shift,” which was part of an invited session. This paper serves as the framework for the demographic section of the text. It is the culmination of hours of research and writing, with respect to the influx of ELL’s across the nation’s schools and the challenges associated with an under or un-trained teaching force. Additionally, I co-authored a research paper related to the preparation of California teachers to address the needs of the ethnolinguistically diverse student: *Are California Teachers Qualified to Meet English Learners’ Needs? An Investigation into the Impact of Teacher Education Reform in the 21st Century*. I attended various sessions related to recent scholarship in the field.

Summary

The Sabbatical Leave afforded me the opportunity to conduct background research for the text, *Understanding Second Language Acquisition: Theory to Practice*. The time spent researching included library, on-line searching and the development and writing of a bibliography and critical review of the literature to support the work. I also spent time visiting classrooms, conducting classroom observations and interviews. Each of these activities evolved into content

for the text. Attendance at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association allowed me to present two peer-reviewed and co-authored papers related to the subject matter.

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