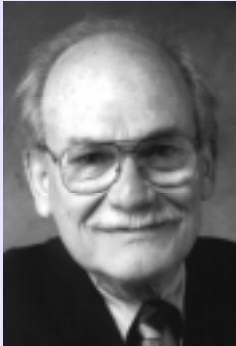


Director's Corner



We know much more about what to do in school improvement than we know about how to do it. In many respects, we have done the “basic science,” but have made little progress in the “engineering.” How can we translate research findings into positive changes in educational practice and policy?

As an example, let's consider parent/community involvement. Though we educators often act as though schools function in a vacuum, they do not. In fact, children are often placed at risk *because* schools are separated from families and community. When parents and community members participate in the design, performance and evaluation of schooling, student learning increases, and school alienation weakens and disappears. Community involvement provides values-contextualization, allows an integrated socialization, assures more meaningful applications of abstract learning, and solves potential identity problems.

In my last column, I mentioned the extraordinary achievement of the Cherokee people, who turned within one generation from a non-literate, oral society to one of universal literacy. How did schools accomplish such a heroic feat of education? They didn't. Cherokees learned literacy at

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Talking Together about Educational Research and Practice

CREDE Researchers Present at AERA

In March 11,000 people gathered in Chicago for the 78th annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). The meeting featured paper and symposium sessions, seminars, roundtables, poster sessions, and networking events. CREDE researchers were on hand for a two-part symposium entitled “Research Programs of the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence” where they presented findings from their work on subjects ranging from effective instructional practices to successful professional development programs.

The symposia were organized by the Bilingual Education Research Special Interest Group of the AERA. CREDE Associate Director, Dr. Barry Rutherford, chaired both sessions. Dr. Gil Garcia, Education

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Partnerships that Work

Gil Garcia, OERI, USED

The research centers funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) represent the Department of Education's efforts to manage state-of-the art research and development initiatives. Their collective objective is to produce knowledge that advances our understanding of how best to help all students learn to high standards.

Centers operate along a wide range of scopes from community-wide investigations to student-level observations. While each center is unique, they share other common features. All are cooperative agreements between the U.S. Department of Education and the lead institution. But the leap from a cooperative agreement to the creation of a partnership should not be taken for granted.

A partnership only works when each partner brings something of importance and usefulness to the table. The OERI/UCSC partnership is effective because both sides speak frankly and with confidence about what each partner can count and build on. OERI is prepared to manage research and development projects from their inception (and, at times, their conception) to their completion and beyond.

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CREDE Projects Presented at AERA

Bilingual and Biliterate Development in Two-Way Immersion

Donna Christian, Center for Applied Linguistics (202) 429-9292
Fred Genesee, McGill University (514) 398-6107

Sheltered Instruction Is More Than Just Good Teaching — Or Is It?

Jana Echevarria, CSULB (310) 985-5759
Chris Montone, Center for Applied Linguistics (202) 429-9292

Improving Classroom Instruction and Student Learning for Resilient and Non-Resilient English Language Learners

Yolanda N. Padrón, University of Houston-Clear Lake (281) 283-3584
Shwu-yong L. Huang, University of Houston-Clear Lake (713) 743-9816
Hersholt C. Waxman, University of Houston-Clear Lake (713) 743-5009

The Sociocultural Context of Hawaiian Language Revival and Learning

Lois Yamauchi, University of Hawai'i (808) 956-4294

Effective Preservice Teacher Education for Diverse Student Populations

Leonard Baca, University of Colorado (303) 492-5416
Stephanie Dalton, UC Santa Cruz (408) 459-3501

Linking Home and School: A Bridge to the Many Faces of Mathematics

Marta Civil, University of Arizona (520) 621-6873
Norma Gonzalez, University of Arizona (520) 621-6282
Rosi Andrade, University of Arizona (520) 621-2246

Identifying Salient Elements of a Successful Transition Program

Claude Goldenberg, CSULB (310) 985-4443
Bill Saunders, UCLA (310) 536-0156
Ron Gallimore, UCLA (310) 825-0203

Newcomer Programs for Secondary School Students

Deborah J. Short, Center for Applied Linguistics (202) 429-9292

Continued from page 1

Research Analyst for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), served as Discussant for the first panel. “These research projects collectively highlight at least two emerging national trends: a better understanding that issues of diversity are a powerful impetus for schools to make full use of the ‘funds of knowledge’ students and teachers bring into the classroom; and a more widespread acceptance that English and native language arts can be taught in a mutually supportive way to enhance the acquisition of core content,” he said.

Dr. René Gonzalez, former Senior Associate for the U.S. Department of Education, OERI, served as Discussant for the second session. “This Symposium addressed a number of related issues in a very concrete fashion. The acute needs of newly arrived students to this country, their passage and transition to our current educational system, and the necessary requirement to forge a strong linkage between their school and family, were articulated by the presenters in a very lively session that generated considerable response from the audience,” he said.

Following are summaries of the morning’s presentations.

Bilingual and Biliterate Development in Two-Way Immersion

Donna Christian and Liz Howard explained their study of language development and use in grades one through five at a two-way immersion school where half of the instruction is in Spanish and half is in English. The researchers described the bilingual and biliterate development of several native Spanish speakers, and discussed the effects of the additive bilingual environment on the lan-

guage minority students, all of whom tested orally proficient in English by third grade.

Sheltered Instruction Is More Than Just Good Teaching — Or Is It?

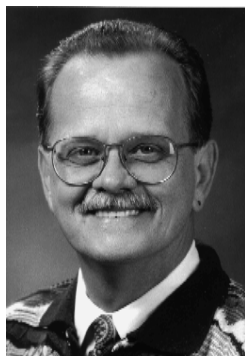
Chris Montone read a paper by Jana Echevarria, Claude Goldenberg, and Gary Greene on sheltered instruction, an instructional approach in which content instruction is offered in English to classes composed solely of English learners. The researchers are working collaboratively with teachers to discuss, define, and identify the critical components of sheltered instruction. Some features of sheltered instruction that differ from regular effective instruction include high levels of student interaction, small group and cooperative learning, student-centered instruction, more hands-on tasks, and careful comprehensive planning, selecting key concepts from core curriculum.

Improving Classroom Instruction and Student Learning for Resilient and Non-Resilient English Language Learners

Yolanda Padrón presented findings from her research on resilience factors, which heighten the likelihood of success in school and in other life accomplishments, for Latino English language learners (ELLs). Padrón is investigating four facets of this resilience: individual attributes of learners, school and classroom factors, family factors, and out-of-school factors. She explained that although many programs and school-based interventions have been found to be effective for some types of students at risk of failure, these programs and interventions may not necessarily be effective for Latino ELLs. Once studied and analyzed, these four areas will contribute to the

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From the Associate Director



A Time for Reflection...

In our world of contract research, June 30 is the last day of the year. It is an appropriate time for us to reflect on our professional accomplishments as a Center. It has been a very busy and productive year for CREDE.

The first few months of CREDE were busy with startup activities. Staff were hired; offices were set up; supplies were ordered. By November, the core staff consisted of a Center Assistant, Melissa Foraker, the Fiscal Manager, Laurie Burnham, and her assistant, Barbara Behrens, and myself as Associate Director.

This spring has been a busy one for our Center. After the first annual CREDE retreat in Santa Cruz in February, attended by over 100 researchers, Advisory Board members, and Program Evaluators, CREDE researchers attended the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Chicago in March. We participated in two symposia that highlighted CREDE research (as reported in this newsletter). Individual researchers from each program area presented in paper sessions, and meetings were held with both the Advisory Board and researchers. April and May were busy with the annual summary of project activities and hiring a Communications Coordinator for the Center.

These activities represent the most visible part of our Center work. The guiding force behind our work is the conceptual framework on which the Center is built. Care was taken in designing the conceptual framework, and putting together programs and researchers to carry it out. Each Program Area represents cutting-edge research in linguistic and cultural diversity.

As we look forward to a new year, our primary task is to solidify our research efforts into a cohesive whole. CREDE staff will assist researchers by making available opportunities for collaboration both within programs and across programs. We are exploring ways that we can continue collaboration with organizations such as the California Center for Teacher Development in the production of a compact disc that both informs and trains teachers in the use of the "Five Principles of Effective Instruction." One of the tasks with which we are charged is collaboration with other organizations funded by the United States Department of Education. Exciting possibilities are opening up with two regional Comprehensive Centers that provide technical assistance to states, districts, and schools who are in the process of reform.

On July 1, a new Communications Coordinator, Liz Goodman, will begin oversight of our strategic plan of communications that includes developing materials from our research. We approach our "new year" with enthusiasm; and we count on your support as we continue to conduct research that is vital to the academic success of the linguistic and culturally diverse populations that we study.

Happy New Year!

—Barry Rutherford

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the fireside and the roadside. In the 1820s, thousands of illiterate Cherokees were teaching each other, wherever families were, in their cabins and on the trails. Families taught each other, learned together, and schools had no part in it. Reliable stories exist for hundreds of children and adults who learned to read and write in several days or weeks, and 90% of Cherokees were apparently literate within 10 years of Sequoia's invention of the Cherokee orthography.

How do we get that kind of parent/community involvement? Certainly times have changed, but human nature has not, and the power of that motivation and community organization lies below the surface in full potential. CREDE projects, especially in our "Peers/Family/Community" and our "Integrated Reform" programs, are investigating a variety of ways to awaken that parent power. In Arizona, math teachers are working with parents to find community-based activities for mathematics instruction; in Kentucky, teachers and researchers are visiting homes regularly to find ways that home activities can influence curriculum; in New Mexico, Native American parents and Anglo teachers are working in focus groups to devise more community-contextualized instructional units; and in Southern California, parents are working with their children in literacy activities after school and at bedtime. These are only a few of the explorations in CREDE. With hard work and a little luck, we will soon know *how* to get that involvement that we so clearly need.

Part of it must be the motivation. Why did the Cherokees want literacy so much? More next time...

—Roland Tharp

Project Showcase

Estimating the Population of At-Risk Students Using Multiple Risk Indicators

David Grissmer, The RAND Corporation

Who are the at-risk students in the U.S.? How has this population of students changed in the last 25 years? What changes in this group can teachers expect? This project seeks to answer these questions and draw implications for school reform. The purpose of this project is to improve estimates of the number and characteristics of students at risk of educational failure.

Accurate estimates of these numbers and characteristics are essential for improving the allocation of education and social resources among and within states and for developing more effective programs and policies. Previous estimates of students at risk have relied on basic measures. In contrast, we are developing comprehensive composite indicators of risk and will use these to estimate the number, location, and socioeconomic and racial/ethnic characteristics of students at risk of educational failure. We are also analyzing how these estimates may change as the population becomes more diverse in the next decade.

Research Questions

This project addresses the following questions:

- How should composite measures of educational risk identify and weight the various factors that place students at risk?
- How is the U.S. population of students at educational risk distributed by racial/ethnic groups, geographical location, and other characteristics?
- Do the characteristics (in terms of racial/ethnic composition and geographical location) of the at-risk population change when we use alternate measures of educational risk and to what degree?
- What have been the changes in the characteristics of the at-risk population of students from 1980 to 1990? What are the likely changes in the geographical location and racial/

ethnic mix of students at educational risk over the next decade?

Study Design

Using large federal datasets from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), the NLSY-Mother Child Survey, and the National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS), we are relating student achievement to indicators of risk, such as family, demographic, school, and community characteristics. We will use 1980 and 1990 Census data, which contains many of these indicators, to predict students' achievement in school and beyond.

This project will help provide teachers, administrators, and policy-makers with more accurate estimates of the number of at-risk students and their linguistic and socio-economic characteristics. This project has the potential for significant impact on local, state, tribal, and national policy affecting the education of language minority students.

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The ESL Standards help educators develop student competence in three important areas:

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Sociocultural Knowledge**

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From At-Risk To Excellence: Research, Theory, and Principles for Practice

the first publication of the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence

By Dr. Roland Tharp, Director, CREDE

For more information, contact CREDE/CAL, 1118 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037 or call 202-429-9292, ext. 224.

Project Showcase

Teaching Science to At-Risk Students: Teacher Research Communities as a Context for Professional Development and School Reform

Beth Warren and Ann S. Rosebery, TERC

In this project we are investigating teacher research communities as contexts for professional development in science for teachers of language minority students. Our focus is on understanding what and how teachers of language minority children learn in a teacher research community, and how their learning shapes and is shaped by their classroom research and teaching. Our goal is to develop this mode of teacher research as a model for professional development that is responsive to the allied goals of equity and excellence, and sensitive to local needs and diverse student populations.

Research Questions

This project addresses the following questions:

- What scientific understandings and practices do teachers develop in these research communities of practice? How are these supported within the teacher research community? How do they shape and how are they shaped by classroom practice?
- What understandings do the teachers develop about their students' culturally-based ways of knowing and talking and how these relate to science learning? How do these understandings develop within the teacher re-

search community? How do they shape and how are they shaped by classroom practice?

- What kinds of practices, dilemmas, and experiences are key in the learning of individual teachers and of groups? How can these inform our theoretical and practical knowledge of teacher professional development, especially for the education of language minority students?

Study Design

Building on the work of the National Science Foundation-funded Chèche Konnen Center, we are focusing on two urban sites: Cambridge, MA and NYC District #10 in the Bronx. We are developing case studies focusing on 1) development of teachers' discourse(s) in the seminars and the classrooms in relation to students' learning; 2) evolution of the seminars as learning communities; and 3) local conditions that support or hinder the development of these communities. We are also developing two videotapes of extended episodes of science teaching and learning in language minority classrooms. These videotapes will provide rich data for study by teacher educators who wish to explore intersections among science, teaching, learning, and culture.

In Cambridge we have assembled a Teacher Research Seminar comprised of elementary and middle school content and ESL teachers from five different bilingual programs: Spanish, Spanish-English two-way, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Korean. The seminar includes teachers who are trained as science specialists and those who are not; teachers who share a first language with their students and those who do not; teachers whose students share a first language and those whose students do not.

The seminar meets twice monthly, and is organized into two main strands of work: teachers' inquiry in science and teachers' inquiry into their students' learning and ways of knowing. Teachers have been conducting investigations around Fast Plants: their growth patterns; factors affecting their growth, light and color; anatomy and physiology; variation, selection and inheritance. In parallel, they are reading and discussing sociolinguistic and ethnographic studies of children's talk, discussing videotapes of classrooms from our prior work, and they are talking with other teacher researchers from the area.

The New York case study will be developed in the third year of this five-year study.

REMINDER

Please return your User Survey from the last issue of *Talking Leaves*.

Mail it to CREDE/CAL, 1118 22nd St NW, Washington, DC 20037, or fax it to 202-659-5641.

Survey results will appear in the next issue!

Other People's Words: The Cycle of Low Literacy

by Victoria Purcell-Gates

reviewed by Stephanie S. Dalton

The 1996 Grawemeyer prize-winning book for education is a touching case study of emergent literacy in an Appalachian mother and son. As Appalachians, this family belongs to a minority that represents a significant segment of the nation's urban poor population. The case study describes the experience of an illiterate mother who was determined that her son learn what children of literate families implicitly understand: "reading as one way of listening and of writing as one way of talking" (p. 48). Using a sociocultural lens, the case study examines the cognitive, social, and practical issues of literacy development for students who do not acquire reading and writing skills.

To date, remedies for closing the gap between levels of literacy in the urban and rural poor and the middle class have proven disappointing. Explanations of such severe literacy problems as those affecting the mother and son in this study have been inadequate in producing strategies for reducing levels of illiteracy or breaking their cycle. In this case study, the daunting problem of illiteracy is clear. The book documents the remarkable progress of the mother and son into literacy with Purcell-Gates' assistance. At the start of the two-year relationship, neither could read or write beyond their first names, although the son was a second grader who had attended Head Start and the mother had attended seven years of public

school and four of adult education.

In Purcell-Gates' view of literacy as a cultural activity, the teacher's role is that of a guide for entering into the world of literate activity. In a sense, it is guidance for students to breach a wall, the barrier between the learner and literacy. Early in the book, she reports the son's persistence in avoiding interaction with print, preferring to convert writing activity into crafts and persuading others to read to him. When he continuously resists reading or writing anything himself, she says, he "proved to be incredibly adept at ignoring the print I was attempting to point out" (p. 77). Since literacy is not "discovered" by learners, neither mother nor son in this study could breach the wall and acquire literacy outside of participation with a literate other. For example, in their home, there were calendars, bills, a family Bible, prints with stitched sayings, and boxes of children's books, but no member of the family ever read these materials themselves or to one another. As a result, the son had never experienced print. His success in literacy depended on how print could be meaningfully brought into his world for the first time. For the mother, it was necessary to connect her experience of life with literacy, making it have real world use.

Emergent literacy, according to Purcell-Gates, means that literate abilities develop in children's daily lives, from birth, as they observe and engage in experiences mediated by

print. This is different from the traditional view that children begin to read and write only at the onset of formal literacy instruction. As she explains, the role of print in children's everyday lives, if engaged, builds conceptual understandings about reading and writing. For children from literacy-rich environments, their experience of participation with print in their culture gives them implicit knowledge about the meaning of print, making them insiders. For those new to literate culture, they lack insider information or implicit knowledge needed for literacy to develop as did the mother and son in this case study. Literacy only comes to individuals through participation in literate events as an insider, which includes receiving guidance and corrective feedback to learn the cultural practices that are integral for success. "Reading and writing are cultural practices, and direct instruction is required for those experiencing problems with them. It is unfair and unethical to withhold insider information until children, or adults, 'figure it out for themselves,' as if they were insiders all along" (p. 98).

In this view of literacy as a cultural practice, reading and writing are perceived as they are functional in home, community, or culture. Purcell-Gates' successful guidance of this mother and son into literacy is instructive in a number of ways. For teachers, the case study means

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development of an instructional intervention for improving the resilience of Latino ELLs.

The Sociocultural Context of Hawaiian Language Revival and Learning

Lois Yamauchi discussed her research on Papahana Kaiapuni, the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. In Hawaiian public schools with this program, students are being taught all content areas in the Hawaiian language. Yamauchi is documenting the historical and political events that led to the development and implementation of the program, the program's accomplishments and challenges, and reaction to the program from students and their families, teachers, administrators, and the wider community.

Newcomer Programs for Secondary School Students

Deborah Short presented some preliminary findings of a four-year research study to describe newcomer programs that serve limited English proficient secondary students who are recent immigrants to the U.S. Short discussed program design variables such as length of program enrollment, amount of daily contact, identification and placement practices, language development plan, language of instruction, staffing practices, characteristics of student populations, and articulation with and transition to the home school. A database of programs across the U.S. is being developed to share information across current programs and with potential future programs.

Linking Home and School: A Bridge to the Many Faces of Mathematics

Norma Gonzalez explained her previous research on Funds of Knowledge, based on the theory that household and community knowledge can provide strategic resources for classroom practice, and then discussed her

current research. She is creating mathematical learning environments in which students engage in mathematically rich situations, through the development of learning modules that capitalize on students' knowledge and experiences in everyday life. She described the four key components of this work—household ethnographic analysis, teacher-researcher study groups, classroom implementation, and parents as learning resources—and presented a vision for the future products of this research.

Effective Preservice Teacher Education for Diverse Student Populations

Stephanie Dalton gave the background and preliminary findings of a national investigation of pre-service teacher education programs. She and Leonard Baca are investigating how well teachers are being prepared for linguistically and culturally diverse U.S. classrooms. They are studying the 356 sites of the OBEMLA-funded Training and Development Institutes to identify effective program strategies; develop universal guidelines; assess their implications for professional development; and analyze the impact of reduced federal funding on bilingual teacher training.

Identifying Salient Elements of a Successful Transition Program

Finally, Bill Saunders described a project with Los Angeles area schools to improve Latino students' transition from native language (Spanish) to mainstream English instruction. The researchers are helping schools implement a "late exit" bilingual education program with a content-based ESL component and an explicit, long-term transition program. They are also helping schools implement a second through fifth grade language arts model that can be applied to Spanish, transition, mainstream English, and sheltered language arts classes.

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eliminating assumptions about what notions of literacy students bring to school. It means including all students productively in reading and writing activities with other emergent and competent literates in a classroom community of literate practice. For researchers, the case study means emergent literacy investigations need to focus on questions about what children come to school knowing, for example, about the use of paper and pencils and the meaning and functions of print. It also argues for theory building to account for the variation in students' early literacy learning in this print-rich society. Purcell-Gates' sociocultural view in this case study offers the insight that knowing literate cultural practice through participation with significant others in real world terms makes a crucial difference for the learner: it is key to literacy.

Purcell-Gates, V. (1995). *Other people's words: The cycle of low literacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. \$16.95. ISBN# 0-674-64511-1. For ordering information, call Harvard University Press at 800-448-2242.

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The work of the education research analysts at OERI is varied, yet engaging, rewarding, and frustrating. OERI staff work with accomplished education scholars who represent a wide variety of disciplines and expertise. It is important for the staff to present OERI's perspective in clear terms and to offer any assistance to enable grantees and contractors to operate efficiently and effectively.

During the planning process for the research centers, OERI developed a set of guiding research priorities. This step required extensive reviews of the knowledge base on education research and practice in order to identify and refine each priority. The priority on linguistically and culturally diverse students was an assertive response to the profound educational issues that affect a large proportion of this population of students in American schools.

OERI solicited and reviewed proposals based on a set of objective technical criteria. The reviewers (scholars in their own right) understood OERI's priority on cultural and linguistic diversity and understood the issues as they played out "in the field." When the reviewers submitted their scores

and recommendations, we were satisfied that the review had been conducted according to the highest standards and that the award could be made to the University of California at Santa Cruz after the standard negotiation process.

Thanks to the efforts of Roland Tharp, Donna Christian and other CREDE representatives, and those of Ed Fuentes and René Gonzalez, we developed a leaner scope of work that included a better understanding of how the Center and its programs would be managed, and how the interim and final results might best be synthesized and disseminated. I am proud to be part of the OERI and UCSC teams!

In future articles, I will address other topics from the Federal perspective. As always, I appreciate your recommendations on topics that interest you.

Gil N. Garcia is an Education Research Analyst in the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students in OERI/USED. He is the COTR and Team Leader for CREDE. He can be reached at Gil_Garcia@ed.gov.

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