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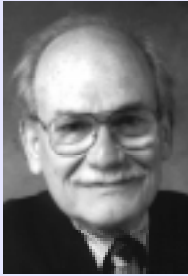https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6z0468sr

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CREDE

Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence

Talking Leaves

Rising from Risk

During this second year of CREDE, our principal focus has been on promoting, training, and continuing research on Standards for Effective Teaching and Learning for All Students. The history and status of these five standards is almost a history of research on risk, diversity, and excellence in American education.

For 25 years, many educators have been increasingly concerned for students placed at risk of educational failure due to poverty, race, or cultural and linguistic diversity. Early on, programs were developed to increase the success of specific groups: Native American, Native Hawaiian, inner-city African-American, Latino, or Asian immigrants. But there cannot be a separate program for every group, and most American classrooms have students of many ethnic and/or linguistic origins.

Is there any way of teaching and learning that is effective for all students? The five standards for effective pedagogy are the results of many years' work by CREDE and its predecessor, the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. We scoured the research and development literature, looking for agreements among educators working with every group. And we found five basic principles that everyone agrees on, whether they are working with Puerto Ricans, African Americans, Native Hawaiians, Native American Indians,

In This Issue

CREDE Program Showcase: Language Learning and Academic Achievement

Fred Genesee, University of California, Davis

In this issue of Talking Leaves*, we want to introduce another CREDE research program: Language Learning and Academic Achievement. Projects in this program are researching how English language learners and others develop their language ability and achieve academically.*

Researchers and educators alike agree that important goals of educational programs for English language learners are full integration in English-medium classes and the achievement of high level academic standards. The challenge is to create learning environments that build on the strengths of English language learners, accommodate their learning needs, and ultimately facilitate their integration into mainstream classrooms. Educators need to build on students' languages and cultures, since these elements provide a developmental base from which to extend the students' repertoire of skills and knowledge. A number of approaches aim to respond effectively to English language learners' needs: two-way immersion, sheltered instruction, newcomer, and tran-

Making the Transition from Spanish to English Instruction

Claude Goldenberg & **Bill Saunders**, California State University, Long Beach and **Ronald Gallimore**, University of California, Los Angeles

When language minority children make the transition to English mainstream instruction, they are especially vulnerable to academic underachievement. The transition can be problematic for both students and teachers. Student participation often goes down. Concerns about student achievement and special education referrals go up. Teacher expectations tend to drop and along with them, students' cognitive learning opportunities. If the transition is handled too abruptly and primary language support is removed too suddenly, student achievement can decline precipitously. Even in schools and districts with exemplary bilingual programs, transition is often a conundrum.

Working in two Los Angeles schools with large numbers of language minority students, CREDE researchers are trying to find the most effective ways to help students make the transition from instruction in Spanish to instruction in English. This article describes one aspect of the project.

Showcase, *from page 1*

sitional and developmental bilingual programs. The projects that comprise this program, Language Learning and Academic Achievement, are carrying out in-depth investigations of these and other approaches. Taken together, their goals are:

1. to examine how well educational programs meet the needs of elementary and secondary English language learners;

2. to describe programmatic features and instructional strategies that (a) enhance the acquisition of English for academic purposes; (b) promote academic achievement; and (c) facilitate the transition to English-medium instruction; and

3. to identify the professional development needs of educators working within these programs and assess the effectiveness of selected professional development activities.

This program supports six studies nationally. CREDE researchers are conducting a national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement (profiled in *Talking Leaves*, Vol. 1, No. 1). In this issue of *Talking Leaves* we describe the other five projects to illustrate the range of inter-related studies in this program.

The Role of Language in the Classroom: Hot Issues on the Front Burner

Gil Garcia, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education

Student talk is one of the most regulated aspects of classroom behaviors. The relative simplicity of this statement belies its complexity and importance to understanding many nuances of teaching and learning. The statement suggests language plays such a critical role in the classroom that the average teacher orchestrates many of its linguistic and cultural facets, even while allowing for the development of communities of diverse learners and encouraging the unique contributions of each student. The statement highlights three principles educators should understand and be prepared to act on:

Students and the teacher bring significant personal and social resources to the classroom. Research findings clearly support the premise that students at all ages come to school with an extensive arsenal of linguistic, cultural, social, and personal resources that define who they are and how they generally behave physically and otherwise. Good teachers capitalize on this information to enhance learning. Good administrators pay attention as well to the resources that educators bring into the school and classroom environments.

Teachers need to understand the diversity and range of the linguistic resources brought into the classroom. Demographic profile data establish that the average classroom includes children and youth from widely varied home and community backgrounds. As such, the spread of languages and dialects in the classroom is multilayered. Some students might be monolingual standard English speakers; others might be speakers of a dialect of English; still others might speak several dialects of one or more languages. This holds true whether the student is Anglo, African American, Hispanic, or "other."

The linguistic skill levels and abilities at which children and youth operate in English, in another language or dialect, or in both also varies across many classrooms. Good teachers capitalize on this information to help students acquire high levels of "classroom discourse" skills. Good administrators pay attention to the breadth and depth of the linguistic resources available from educators and make use of them for instructional and related educational management purposes.

Risk, *from page 1*

Mexican immigrants, Appalachian white urban immigrants, Southeast Asian newcomers, Eskimos or Aleuts, or any other cultural or linguistic group–or, for that matter, mainstream gifted and talented students. These five principles appear in the research-and-development literature, regardless of age or grade level, in all content areas.

Then we examined those five principles through a grassroots process, presenting them to every kind of educational group: researchers, teachers, parents, administrators, policy makers; in focus groups and in large auditoriums; in workshops and conferences; in professional meetings and community meetings. This process took five years; and we have a consensus.

CREDE is now issuing them as "standards," by which we mean ideals that we can set for ourselves–ideals for best teaching practices. These standards are remarkably congruent with the standards now published by the National Council of Teachers of English, by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, by the International Reading Association, and by virtually every major professional organization and certification agency. Although the standards represent best teaching for every student, for at-risk students they are *vital*. If there is any hope whatsoever for leveling the playing field in K-12 education for students placed at risk due to limited English proficiency, race, poverty, and cultural and

geographic diversity, it will be through providing these best teaching conditions for *all* students.

The five standards are:
I. Teacher and Students Producing Together
II. Developing Language Across the Curriculum
III. Making Meaning: Connecting School to Student's Lives
IV. Teaching Complex Thinking
V. Teaching Through Conversation

In future columns, we will address each of these standards. For this issue, consider especially #2, *Developing Language Across the Curriculum*. Developing competence in the language(s) of instruction, whatever they are, must be the superordinate goal of the entire school day, not only in literacy classes, but across all content areas. Likewise, teaching the academic language(s) of the content areas is the single most important aspect of content curricula. This issue of *Talking Leaves* focuses on CREDE's research in Language Learning and Academic Achievement. This is the leading edge research that will discover the methods by which different students can best acquire language proficiency. But Standard #2, *Developing Language Across the Curriculum*, reminds us that *all* students are language learners. And all teachers must also be teachers of language.

- Roland Tharp

The effectiveness of learning subject matter well and knowing how to behave in class are based in large part on a student's social and academic language abilities, cultural upbringing, and schooling experiences. Research evidence clearly establishes that learning a language and learning through a language are distinct but related actions. Thus, learning English language arts is a necessary but not sufficient condition for learning subject matter, especially for many linguistically and culturally diverse students. It can be very difficult for students to learn the subject matter in English in a bilingual or ESL classroom, or in an all-English classroom, if the classroom teacher and the school environment do not address the students' needs and characteristics. A key lesson from research is that the ability to speak English does not ensure that a student will achieve academically. But, when equipped with academic English proficiency, students are apt to learn subject matter effectively and efficiently. In short, language development in the language(s) being used for instruction is the first goal of teaching and learning.

The above key issues frame the current debate on how best to teach minority and language minority students, especially those who are at risk of educational failure. How issues regarding the role of language in the classroom and its relationship to learning to high standards will ultimately be resolved is anybody's guess at this point, given the wide range of policies and comprehension of the issues at hand. But, they are very real issues indeed because they have direct implications for approaches to schooling for all students. They might have an even more immediate impact on current efforts to improve the opportunities for schools to adopt or adapt available models of school reform.

Ironically, the current debate on the important role of language in the classroom has brought these issues to the forefront. Researchers, practitioners, and parents are debating–and should debate–the merits of teaching and learning in one or two languages or in a variety of English. The debate should extend to issues regarding the length of time that students, especially English language learners, should be taught in their native language, in English, or a combination of the two. The preponderance of the research evidence asserts the benefits of careful assessments to support such critical decisions. The debate should be neutral about students' ethnic and racial backgrounds while it focuses on each student's needs and learning characteristics.

The good news is that few people question the high standards to which all students should be taught. The regrettable news is that the three principles listed are not being debated equally across all student populations. The current debate is mostly focused on at-risk student populations who are minority, poor, underachieving, limited English proficient, or recent immigrants. Yet, the problems are pervasive. The 1995 U.S. Census, for example, indicated that the dropout rate for all Hispanic students was 30% (19.6% for U.S.-born Hispanic students). The dropout rate was 12.1% for African Americans; 8.6% for white, non-Hispanic students. None of these figures should be acceptable to anybody, least of all to the parents of students who drop out of school. Furthermore, census data indicate that family income and the social factors affected by family income seem to make a key difference in high school completion rates. Language is definitely one of the social and determining factors of dropout rates.

The issues at hand are complex and inter-related in ways that are not yet fully understood. Their common attribute is that they are intertwined with the current school reform movement and efforts to improve the academic achievement of all students, especially students at risk of educational failure. The issues are also related to efforts to improve the professional development of teachers and teacher candidates. On a fundamental level, the issues underscore a basic tenet in education: Language is central to effective learning and for learning how to use acquired knowledge. Overall, these issues represent a very complex arena within which to conduct education research. It should continue to be a national priority. CREDE researchers, funded by OERI, are fully engaged in it.

In future articles, I will address other topics. Always, I appreciate your recommendations on topics that interest you.

Gilbert N. Garcia is a Research Analyst in the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, OERI/USED. He is the Team Leader for CREDE; Manager of the Language Minority Studies Program for CRESPAR; and Contracting Officer's Technical Representative for the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. He can be reached at Gil_Garcia@ed.gov.

Newcomers: Language and Academic Programs for Recent Immigrants

Deborah Short, Center for Applied Linguistics

What do you do with immigrant teenagers who arrive in the U.S. with little knowledge of English? It is a race against time, a scenario many U.S. educators are all too familiar with. These students are expected to learn English; become accustomed to a new country; master the academic content of American high school classes; and graduate and find a job, all in just a few years after their arrival. How can teachers and administrators possibly meet the educational needs of such students? What if the students have gaps in their schooling that put them below the expected grade level for their age?

Faced with increasing numbers of secondary immigrant students, many school districts have established newcomer programs, either as a program within a school or at a separate location. Newcomer programs place recent immigrant students who have low English proficiency and often limited educational experience in their native countries into a special academic environment. The programs seek to provide students with a strong foundation in English language development and acculturation to U.S. schools, as well as some subject area knowledge, in preparation for the transition to English as a second language, bilingual, and/or mainstream classes.

"Newcomer programs like ours have a single focus: immigrant students," says Suzanne Barton, Director of the International Newcomer Academy in Ft. Worth. "Every decision that we make is based upon the needs of students and families new to the United States."

Over the last 10 years there has been a growing interest in newcomers and how best to serve them, but little is known about newcomer programs on a national scale. In the first year of a 4-year comprehensive study, researchers conducted a national survey to find out more about these programs.

The survey resulted in a database that profiles 60 middle and high school newcomer programs in 18 states. While most of these programs are located in urban areas, eight are in suburban areas, and five in rural locales. More than half (33) are found in high schools, with the remainder serving the middle school level (18), or a combination of middle and high school (9).

The Sociocultural Context of Hawaiian Language Revival and Learning

Lois Yamauchi, University of Hawaii, Honolulu

During the mid-19th century, most Hawaiian adults were fully literate in their native language. Hawaiian was the main language used in government, media, business, and schools. Children of immigrants spoke Hawaiian in addition to their first language.

But after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, things changed. The U.S. insisted that English be used for all government activities including education–the Hawaiian language was banned from public schools. Without formal educational support, fewer people were learning and speaking Hawaiian.

By the middle of this century, Hawaiian was on the verge of extinction. An entire generation of Hawaiians had grown up without exposure to their native language, and there were only a few elderly native speakers left. This crisis spawned a Hawaiian renaissance in the 1970s, with renewed interest in native language and culture. Political activism increased; greater numbers of university students enrolled in Hawaiian language courses; Hawaiian was reinstated to join English as one of the state's two official languages; and the legislation which banned the language from the classroom was rescinded in 1978.

In 1987, thanks to the efforts of educators, parents, and activists, a Hawaiian heritage language immersion program was founded to revitalize the Hawaiian language and culture. Now in its tenth year, Papahana Kaiapuni serves approximately 1100 students in grades K–12.

Papahana Kaiapuni schools have four main goals: to develop students' proficiency in Hawaiian; to develop a strong foundation of Hawaiian culture and values; to enable students to become active and responsible community members; and to develop knowledge and skills in all areas of the curriculum. Most school sites share their campus with larger English-medium programs. Instruction is entirely in Hawaiian until grade 5, when one hour of English is provided every day.

CREDE researchers are examining the key activities involved in the development and implementation of this K-12 indigenous language immersion program. They are documenting its accomplishments, and looking at how students, their families, teachers, administrators, and the wider community feel about the program's goals, outcomes, and challenges. Information gained from this study of Papahana Kaiapuni will be useful to other indigenous peoples interested in implementing similar programs in their own communities.

For more information on this project, contact Lois Yamauchi at 808-956-4294 or yamauchi@hawaii.edu.

Transitions, *from page 1*

The researchers first surveyed teachers to identify the most important instructional techniques which help students make the transition to instruction in English. The teachers stressed the importance of Literature Studies, which include use of literature logs and instructional conversations. Literature logs are intended to help students develop a personal connection to the story by having them write about and discuss experiences similar to those of the characters. Instructional conversations are small group, teacher-facilitated discussions designed to help students develop higher level understandings of story content and themes.

The researchers next conducted an experiment with five teachers and 116 fourth and fifth graders to measure the effects of literature logs and instructional conversations on students' comprehension of the story, "Louella's Song" (Greenfield, 1993). (In this story, a young girl is asked by her teacher to sing a solo as part of a class performance at a children's hospital. Although Louella loves to sing, she is afraid to sing alone in front of others, so she feigns laryngitis to avoid singing the solo. When Louella sees the joy and heartfelt gratitude of the children at the hospital as her classmates begin their performance, she changes her mind and sings her solo, much to everyone's delight.)

Approximately half of the students in the experiment were limited English proficient (LEP); the other half were fluent English proficient (FEP) students. The researchers randomly assigned each student to one of four different groups. The control group simply read and studied the story. Another group read, studied the story, and completed literature logs. A third group read, studied the story, and engaged in instructional conversations. The last group read, studied the story, completed literature logs, and engaged in instructional conversations. Each group of students was tested on factual and interpretive comprehension, and each group was required to write essays about the story.

The results? Both instructional conversations and literature logs helped students understand the story, although the data indicate that the instructional conversations were just slightly more helpful than the literature logs. A combination of instructional conversations and literature logs was most helpful for the LEP students. In contrast, the FEP students did not gain additional understanding about the story from using instructional conversations and literature logs jointly. Both approaches de-

Newcomers, *from page 5*

Although definitions of "newcomer" vary, most programs agree that important characteristics are recent arrival in the U.S. or school district and limited English proficiency. Half of the programs include students who are below grade level for their age, or have limited formal education.

Once enrolled, students are usually provided with ESL instruction or English language development and cultural orientation to the United States. Many programs offer sheltered or native language content instruction and some have courses in native language literacy. Most newcomers remain in the programs for a limited period of time, usually 6-18 months, and then enter regular language support programs at their home schools. Some programs allow students who make fast progress to exit early. Others permit students with large gaps in their educational background or who are illiterate in their native languages, to stay for an extended period of time.

The results of this survey were published in *Secondary Newcomer Programs in the United States: 1996-1997 Directory* (Short & Boyson, 1997), which profiles 60 middle school and high school programs located in 18 states. The directory is available through CREDE (202-429-9292, ext. 258).

This research project will continue for the next 3 years with case studies of selected sites and annual updates to the directory.

For more information, contact Deborah Short or Beverly Boyson at 202-429-9292.

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livered uniquely were helpful to them; but using them together did not enhance their comprehension.

What does this mean? This finding suggests that in classrooms with a mix of FEP and LEP students, teachers can be confident that using both instructional conversations and literature logs with their LEP students will be time well-spent, whereas for FEP students, it might not be time-efficient to use both. More research is needed to determine the best ways to educate FEP students in classes with large numbers of LEP students.

For more information on this project, contact Bill Saunders at 562-985-5644 or bsaunder@ucla.edu.

Greenfield, E. (1993). Louella's song. In J. Pikulski et al., *Dinosauring,* (pp. 430-436). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Two-Way Immersion

Donna Christian, Center for Applied Linguistics & **Fred Genesee**, University of California, Davis

In 1987 only 30 American schools offered two-way immersion (TWI) programs.[*] Today there are more than 200, and that number is steadily increasing. TWI programs are becoming not only a popular, but also an effective way to educate both language minority and language majority students.

CREDE researchers are embarking on a 3-year longitudinal study of 600 two-way immersion students in 12 programs as they pass through grades 3, 4, and 5. The goal of this study is to determine how well limited English proficient (LEP) students are learning English in two-way programs. Using test scores and writing samples, researchers are looking at LEP students' development in reading, writing, oral proficiency, and academic achievement in both English and Spanish.

Aware of the success and popularity of two-way programs at the elementary level, many school districts are eager to expand them, but are not sure about the best way to implement a two-way program at the secondary level. Researchers are investigating the successes and challenges of secondary two-way programs, in order to help school districts with implementation issues.

The researchers are also examining the achievement, career paths, and attitudes of native English speakers and LEP high school students who were enrolled in a two-way immersion program at the elementary school level. Using questionnaires and interviews, they are investigating whether and to what extent an elementary two-way program influences student outcomes at the high school level.

The project continues to collect data on new TWI programs and on programs that have expanded to the other grade levels. This information is added to the Directory of Two-Way Bilingual Programs. CREDE recently published *Two-Way Bilingual Programs in the United States, 1996-1997 Supplement* (Montone & Christian, 1997), which is available on line at http://www.cal.org/cal/db/2way/.

To promote communication across TWI sites, TWI participants on line have the opportunity to discuss their programs' successes and challenges with each other on a private electronic listserve set up by CREDE. Researchers have also started publishing a TWI newsletter to keep project participants updated with "news you can use," research findings, and information on upcoming conferences.

For more information on this project, contact Liz Howard at 202-429-9292 or liz@cal.org.

[*]*In two-way immersion programs students develop dual language proficiency by receiving grade-level instruction in English and another language in a classroom usually comprised of approximately equal numbers of native English speakers and speakers of the target language.*

The Effects of Sheltered Instruction on the Achievement of English Language Learners

Jana Echevarria, California State University, Long Beach & **Deborah Short**, Center for Applied Linguistics

What is the best way to train teachers to conduct high-quality sheltered lessons? CREDE researchers are working with middle school social studies, math, science, and language arts teachers to answer this question. Together researchers and teachers identified the components of sheltered instruction that differ from high-quality non-sheltered instruction. Then they developed a model of effective sheltered instruction, based on teacher input, previous research, and experience, which they are testing in eight classrooms on the east coast, and 11 classrooms on the west coast.

This model of sheltered instruction includes eight key categories: preparation, lesson delivery, comprehensible input, building background, instructional strategies, interaction, practice/application, and review/evaluation. The model encourages teachers to plan and enact lessons with both language and content objectives. Teachers are implementing it in their classrooms, while researchers are videotaping and observing the sheltered lessons. Findings are being recorded on an instrument called the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), which was developed and modified by project researchers and teachers. Teachers are using the SIOP as a tool in planning and delivering their lessons, and are finding it helps to keep them focused on both the language and content needs of their students.

Preliminary findings indicate that the sheltered instruction model developed through the project is effective for teacher lesson planning and professional development. The SIOP promises to be a valuable instrument for quantifying and assessing the level of implementation of the model and a useful tool for professional development.

The model will be systematically evaluated by examining the performance of students who receive quality sheltered instruction in comparison to control groups.

For more information on this project, contact Jana Echevarria at 310-985-5759 or jechev@csulb.edu or Chris Montone at 202-429-9292 or chris@cal.org.

New Publications from CREDE Researchers

Echevarria, J., & Graves, A. (1998). *Sheltered content instruction: Teaching students with diverse abilities.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. The book is specifically designed to prepare teachers to deliver content area instruction to students with diverse abilities using a sheltered instruction approach. ISBN: 0-205-16874-4. To order call 800-278-3525 or e-mail ABSales@aol.com.

Mehan, H., Villanueva, I., Hubbard, L., & Lintz, A. (1997). *Constructing school success: The consequences of un-tracking low-achieveing students.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. The book discusses the educational and social consequences of a successful educational innovation, "untracking" low achieving students. Previously low achieving students from groups underrepresented at the university are placed in college prep classes and provided with academic and social supports to help insure their success. For more information, call Cambridge University Press at 800-872-7423 or visit their web page (www.cup.org).

CREDE Symposium at TESOL '98

"CREDE's Language Learning and Academic Achievement Program"
Wednesday, March 18th, 9:30 - 11:15 a.m., Sheraton East Ballroom

Come hear CREDE researchers discuss their studies of two-way immersion education, newcomer programs, professional development for sheltered programs, and transitioning out of bilingual into mainstream classes.

CREDE Symposium at AERA 1998 Annual Meeting

"Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence"
Monday, April 13th, 12:00 - 1:55 p.m., Convention Center, Room 1A

In this syposium, CREDE researchers will discuss their studies of preservice teacher education for diverse student populations, how research on children of poverty affects teacher education, funds of knowledge, and other topics. CREDE researchers will present papers at additional AERA sessions. For more information, see the CREDE web page (www.cal.org/crede).