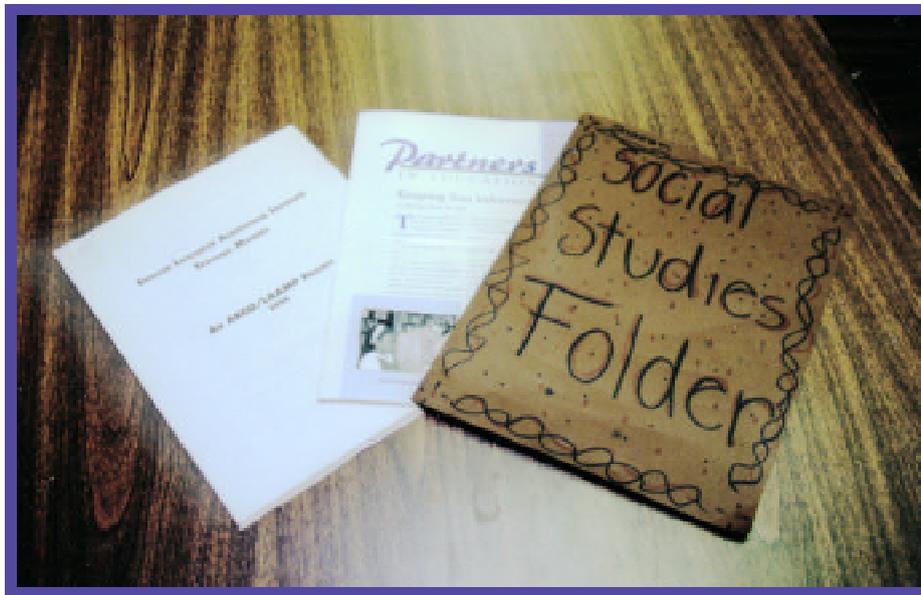


Progress Report to the ARCO Foundation

Language Acquisition Project



Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP)

INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP), created in 1995 with a five-year, \$53 million Challenge Grant from the Annenberg Foundation, is part of the national Annenberg Challenge to improve student achievement in America's public schools. LAAMP has collaborated with the ARCO Foundation to establish the LAAMP-ARCO *English Language Acquisition Professional Development Project* for teachers in LAAMP School Families. Specifically, the project has been developed to assist teachers in implementing appropriate and effective strategies for instructing students acquiring English language skills. Five distinguished professors from Los Angeles area universities participated in the project:

Alan Crawford, Ed.D., California State University, Los Angeles
Michael Genzuk, Ph.D., University of Southern California
Kris Gutierrez, Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles
Magaly Lavadenz, Ph.D., Loyola Marymount University
Sharon Russell, Ph.D., California State University, Dominguez Hills

Utilizing their extensive knowledge of the field and their research findings, these professors collaborated to address the challenges that teachers face in classrooms with large numbers of English learners. With the assistance of four teachers from the LAAMP Little Lake-Whittier School Family, the professors designed a professional development plan to provide teachers with the necessary skills for instructing students acquiring English language skills. The teachers involved in this collaboration included:

Luz Aguilar	Fifth grade	Paddison Elementary
Ana M. García	Third grade	William W. Orr Elementary
Vicki González	Fourth grade	Lakeland Elementary
Pat Solórzano	Kindergarten	Lakeland Elementary

In July 1998, the five professors piloted the professional development plan during a training institute for kindergarten through eighth grade teachers. Evaluations from the institute's participants indicated that the institute was highly successful in providing teachers with the strategies needed to work effectively with English learners.

Based on these experiences, the professors developed "Effective Strategies for English Language Acquisition: Curriculum Guide for the Professional Development of Teachers, Grades Kindergarten through Eight." This training guide provides professional development lessons for facilitators and instructors who will be training teachers to implement effective instructional strategies for English learners. The guide is divided into three substantive areas: Theoretical Perspective, Curriculum and Instruction, and Assessment and Evaluation.

The excellent professional development materials developed in collaboration with ARCO will benefit the teachers and students of our LAAMP families. The Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project is pleased to have been a partner with ARCO, the Little Lake City School District, and is especially grateful to the faculty who joined us in this endeavor.

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Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project

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Director of School Family Initiatives, Project Director
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Background Information

In the academic year 1996-1997 university faculty with expertise in language acquisition were brought together under the auspices of the ARCO Foundation and the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP) to create a course of study to improve the training for teachers of language minority students in the Greater Los Angeles Area. The University Partners, distinguished professors from a variety of metropolitan universities, were: Alan Crawford, Ed.D., California State University, Los Angeles; Michael Genzok, Ph.D., University of Southern California; Kris Guterrez, Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles; Magaly Lavadenz, Ph.D., Loyola Marymount University; and Sharon Russell, Ph.D., California State University, Dominguez Hills.



The strength of the group resided in their different areas of expertise. Though all members were experts in language acquisition, each specialized in different aspects of language acquisition. Thus all critical areas were addressed, including early childhood language development, teaching reading in first and second languages, the impact of culture and language socialization on learning, teaching adolescent second language learners, teacher as researcher, and program evaluation.

In the first year of the project the University Partners defined the scope and sequence of the curriculum.



Due to the breadth of the academic field and the varying degrees of training and expertise public school teachers may have, the crafting of the syllabus was a complex task. The first problem to be solved was how to create a unique course of study reflecting the synergy of so many experts. At their home campuses the Partners taught a range of courses on the critical topics of language acquisition to preservice teachers in credential programs and to experienced teachers seeking advanced degrees. The goal was not to replicate these situations but to create materials

which could stand on their own and be useful to teachers with various levels of preparation and to school districts with different student populations.

At the end of the first year of collaboration, the Partners had determined the nature of its organization and devised a plan of action for the following academic year. To facilitate the delivery of different components in school districts, stand-alone modules were developed which together represented the continuum of training for teachers of second language students-- from second language program entry to the time of redesignation into the mainstream classroom and beyond-- to support English learners' academic success.

The University Partners decided that during the second year it would be beneficial to pilot the modules by working with public school districts, public school teachers, and children.

Expenditure of Funds

As per the contractual agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding that the University Partners signed individually, a portion of the funds was dispersed in the Spring and the remaining portion upon completion of specific sections of the curriculum guide. The University Partners used the funds to pay (or reimburse) for release time and summer coverage of course load and other incidentals necessary to complete work. The School Family used the funds to pay for teacher stipends (Appendix A).

Progress Achieved

During 1997-1998, the University Partners 1) redesigned the curriculum outline; 2) wrote the Curriculum Guide for Professional Development Grades K-8; 3) collaborated with the School Family; 4) piloted professional development workshops to field test the curriculum; and 5) evaluated the products.

University Partners attended monthly meetings to finalize the components. In this year the Project acquired new depth with the addition of School Family Partners from the Little Lake/ Whittier LAAMP Family for the piloting of the Curriculum Guide for Professional Development. The School Family Partners were administrators Roberta Berg and Marty Maya, and lead teachers Luz Aguilar, Ana Garcia, Vicki Gonzalez, and Pat Solórzano. District administrators and lead teachers provided feedback to the University Partners regarding the content and the format of the complete draft of the Manual.

The curriculum outline identified the theoretical framework and the key instructional components needed in order to meet the second language literacy needs of diverse student populations. The components of the curriculum were:

- a reading language arts module on primary and English language reading designed for elementary teachers;
- a specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) module for upper elementary and secondary teachers;
- a socio-cultural-historical component on learning/teaching for all teachers, especially experienced ones;
- a “funds of knowledge” component for all teachers, demonstrating methods that teachers can use to effectively employ the cultural capital children bring with them to school;
- a component designed for experienced teachers to engage in research investigating the effectiveness of their own teaching practices;
- a component aiding the integration of technology into the curriculum; and
- a component to provide teachers with equitable assessment practices for second language learners.



In addition, a Curriculum Guide for Professional Development was developed, containing specific directions, procedures, strategies, materials and content necessary to deliver training for each module. The Little Lake Family prioritized and selected the components of the Second Language Literacy Professional Development Training Manual that were piloted during Summer 1998 Workshops. Each team of University Partners met individually with their Little Lake Partners to evaluate and modify the specific training modules. Together the Partners planned the workshops for the summer. Some School Family Partners decided to participate in the delivery of the workshop services, while others preferred to be trained as future trainer-of-trainers in their home schools. This decision was made by each lead teacher.

Workshops Presented

Two series of workshops were presented at Little Lake City School District during the Summer of 1998. The first, a three day workshop for future trainer-of-trainers in the elementary schools, took place from July 22-24, 1998 and provided a more complete overview of the second language literacy curriculum. The first workshop began in the morning with a keynote given by Dr. Kris Gutierrez who set the theoretical parameters of teaching/learning in specific contexts. Her keynote posed questions such as:



1. What knowledge should teachers have about how children learn?
2. What knowledge should teachers have about language and literacy development in their first and second language?
3. What instructional practices best support language and literacy development in first and second language?

The keynote was followed by breakout sessions which lasted for the next three days.

The modules presented in these sessions were:

1. The Reading Language Arts Module, planned and led by Dr. Alan Crawford (CSULA) and Ana Garcia and Pat Solórzano (Little Lake City School District).
2. The Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English Module, planned by Luz Aguilar (Little Lake City School District) and Dr. Sharon E. Russell (CSUDH) and facilitated by Dr. Russell.
3. The Teacher as Researcher Module, planned by Vicki Gonzalez (Little Lake City School District), Dr. Magaly Lavadenz (Loyola Marymount) and Dr. Kris Gutierrez (UCLA) and led by Dr. Lavadenz and Dr. Gutierrez.

The workshop participants were brought back together for a final presentation and workshop led by Dr. Michael Genzuk (USC). Dr. Genzuk's "Funds of Knowledge" presentation included an activity to introduce teachers to the importance of utilizing the cultural capital that children bring to school.

The second set of workshops on SDAIE strategies presented on August 19 and August 20, 1998 were planned by Luz Aguilar (Little Lake School District) and Dr. Sharon E. Russell. The participants were middle school teachers attending a week-long institute.

Evaluation

Dr. Reynaldo Baca from the Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research at the University of Southern California performed the formative evaluation of the workshops. The following are excerpts from his report.

Overall Evaluation: Overall, teachers had an overwhelming positive evaluation of the staff development but reserved final judgment until they had an opportunity to use what they learned in their classrooms.

Introductory Lecture: The lecture received generally positive feedback for its academic rigor and the professor's expertise. Teachers articulated that Dr. Guitierrez's ideas were new, complex, potentially had much to offer, but that there was insufficient time to absorb the ideas fully.



Teacher as Researcher: The workshop was well received. By the third day teachers expressed an appreciation for the role of research, especially research done by teachers. Of particular power was the presentation by one of Dr. Lavadenz' graduate students which illustrated the research process and how this enlightened the presenter in her teaching career.

Reading Language Arts: This module had greater participation on the part of Little Lake District Partners. The three days received uniformly high praise, reflecting, perhaps, a workshop that utilized a "preview-demonstrate-and-review" approach that tied theory/research to actual classroom practice.

Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (2 workshops): Dr. Russell gave two independent strands on SDAIE, one of them designed for middle school teachers. The elementary school teachers have uniformly high praise for the workshop. The middle school teachers were a mixed group in terms of experience and subject matter and these differences manifested themselves in terms of their evaluations.

Presentation/Workshop on Funds of Knowledge: Although the session was only one hour and not an elective session, it was generally well received. Teachers felt that it demonstrated what a research project would look like and gave them ideas for one of their own.

Recommendations

The participants in the project are in agreement that this is the beginning of deeper future collaborations. The workshops and their evaluations present data about what contexts and models of delivery seem to work best for teachers. The teachers' comments also suggest modifications in certain areas for future use of the manual. They recommended that the project be modified to:

- differentiate training for experienced and beginning teachers;
- provide discipline specific training for secondary teachers;
- provide follow-up during the school year; and
- collect data about student achievement from participating teachers.

Both University and Little Lake Partners expressed considerable interest in taking this project to a new level with continued collaboration.



Dissemination Effort

In 1999, the Partners will begin disseminating the Curriculum Guide for Professional Development. On February 11 over 100 administrators and teachers attended a one day institute sponsored by the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project. During the institute both University and School Partners trained key school site staff in the components of the Curriculum Guide. Each attendee of the institute received a published copy of the entire Curriculum Guide to use in training others at their school sites. By April 1999, Dr. Alan Crawford and Dr. Micheal Genzuk will place the Curriculum Guide on their respective Centers' internet site. A summer literacy institute where the Curriculum Guide will be further disseminated to LAAMP School Families is planned.