



INVITED ESSAY

Identifying Critical* Competencies for Teachers of English Learners

By Barbara Merino

* *"Indispensable in tipping the balance toward success but so scarce as to require controlled distribution and exploitation of new sources."* —Webster's Dictionary

The United States faces a major challenge in educating a diverse population of students who are often also living in poverty. This challenge is particularly urgent in California, which serves the largest and most linguistically and culturally diverse school population in the United States, and where at least 75 percent of teachers have English learners (ELs) in their classrooms.

There is mounting evidence that ELs—when given access to qualified, well-prepared, and caring teachers—can meet the rising expectations of the American educational system. Yet these same students are more likely to have teachers who are less qualified and less prepared to address issues of diversity. Moreover, compared with more affluent schools, ELs attend schools which are more likely to experience higher teacher turnover, allocate fewer resources to classrooms, and face more challenging conditions overall.

Recently, researchers, educators, and policy makers have engaged in a robust conversation on how to improve teacher preparation to address the needs of ELs. This essay is meant to contribute to this conversation by describing the population of ELs, providing a brief review of alternative frameworks on the professional development of teachers, reviewing key traditions used to establish teacher competencies, outlining key themes that emerge, and considering the implications of this analysis for future research and policy to improve teacher preparation and to identify critical competencies for teachers of ELs.

Although the practice of education, like the practice of medicine, requires career-long continued professional development, the focus here is on teacher preparation at pre-service and early induction during the initial years of teaching.

Identifying English Learners

Efforts to teach and conduct research on ELs are challenged in part by a problem of definition. Legal and scholarly definitions of ELs—previously identified as "limited English proficient"—

have varied significantly over time. In practice, ELs are defined by the measures and policies used to identify them. ELs today, for example, must meet proficiency standards in English through a different set of standards than thirty years ago.

Legal definitions tend to be affected by policy and politics as much as by scholarship. In California, early definitions targeted oral proficiency, and utilized a variety of commercial test instruments. Since 2001, the state has relied on one instrument—the California English Language Development Test (CELDT)—that measures all four language modalities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), with different versions for different grade lev-

els. This measure is used only with those students who are identified as possible candidates for EL status through a parent survey of home language use. Over the years of its development, the CELDT has added more items to tap more complex aspects of English, known as *academic language*. The CELDT is also evolving under the influence of federal regulations, separating listening

from speaking scores. In making the final decision for classification as EL, districts must combine the CELDT with other criteria, including achievement test data and teacher judgment, depending on the grade level. Local policy defines how these criteria operate, specifying the level of performance required for entry into classes for students identified as ELs. These achievement tests have also been evolving, as new measures are developed or adopted to target additional areas of the curriculum.

Local school districts also develop or adopt their own approaches to assess, as they implement curricula or develop prompts and rubrics. This local control makes sense for both political and pedagogical reasons. ELs compete within the boundaries of the classrooms and schools in which they receive instruction according to local norms. Teachers must consider the local as well as the state and national policies that inform how ELs are identified and placed.

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Another challenging issue for teachers is the question of expectations for the pace of development of ELs as they move to fluent English proficiency. Policy has given much attention to the role of programs, but less to the degree of variation that individual background variables contribute to the pace of second language acquisition. For example, there is widespread agreement in the scholarly community that both the age of onset of exposure to the second language, and the nature and degree of proficiency of the students' native language, play a significant role on the pace of acquisition of the second language.

Frameworks of Professional Development

Teacher preparation is a complex process that encompasses a broad set of domains, including the development of both disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge and skills that can be addressed separately and as an integrated set of experiences. In discussing teaching preparation, it is important to distinguish between teacher *training* and teacher *education*. *Training* refers to the learning of routines and skills, such as how to use an overhead projector to enlarge an image, while *education* refers to the universe of knowledge, skills, and perspectives of teaching as a profession, such as how to investigate different ways of using an overhead projector to provide feedback and promote student learning.

This distinction is reflected in the two basic approaches to teacher preparation and professional development within the United States. One, sometimes called *deficit training*, views teaching as technical work and focuses on training teachers in a finite set of generic techniques, discrete behaviors, and a fixed knowledge base. The other approach sees teachers as professionals, needing a deep understanding of the disciplines they teach and the requisite knowledge to act on behalf of their students in the complex endeavor of promoting learning in their classrooms and in collaboration with colleagues.

Teaching English learners is even more complex. Teachers of ELs are also teachers of language; not just language as a static entity, but as it is situated and used within the classroom, within a discipline, in multiple modalities, and with students of varying social identities. Teachers of ELs must also negotiate a variety of cultural models of how to act and how to negotiate language in a variety of functions, in many cases with "authentic beginners"—learners without the early preparation or cultural understanding of more advantaged peers.

Given the fluidity of the procedures used to define and place the population of ELs across sites, the variability in the pace of acquisition of the second language, and the complexity of teaching and learning in diverse classrooms, an *embodied understanding of practice* seems particularly appropriate in identifying "critical or essential" competencies for teachers of ELs.

The concept of an *embodied understanding of practice* comes from a review of research by Dall'Alba and Sandberg, who examined studies on a variety of professions, but drew principally from teaching and medicine. Dall'Alba and Sandberg challenge the dominant model of professional development representing professionals' skill development as cumulative and step-wise, or progressing in hierarchical steps. They argue that because professional practice is situated in particular contexts with unique socio-cultural norms, it is impossible to specify a skill set which all professionals will develop and use in their work. They assert it is inappropriate to discuss knowledge and beliefs as somewhat separate from action. They propose *embodied understanding of practice* as an alternative theory for describing professional growth; "*embodied*" to capture how being in particular contexts shapes practice, and "*understanding*" to portray that individuals' perception about the nature of their role shapes the ways they interpret situations.

While this framework resembles others that emphasize the importance of beliefs in shaping practice, it overcomes the *belief versus action* tension that often arises when discussing beliefs by suggesting that teachers act out their understanding of practice as they participate in various contexts. Dall'Alba and Sandberg argue that, if professional practice for teachers is seen as knowledge transfer, improvement efforts target teachers' presentation of content. If, on the other hand, teaching is perceived as designed to facilitate learning, developing skills in monitoring and enhancing learning will be stressed.

Teacher educators then, need to build on productive features of teacher beliefs and seek to reshape those that are clearly detrimental to learning in ELs. For example, one belief that has potentially quite detrimental consequences is that ELs are unable to learn complex concepts until they have mastered so-called "basic language" skills. Prospective teachers who come from backgrounds where they have had little experience in minority communities or with EL students, appear to be more vulnerable to holding negative expectations for students who are ELs, or who are from a different race or class. If collaborative inquiry about EL student learning and instruction occurs early in their careers, however, teachers' beliefs can evolve in fruitful ways.

Some Traditions in Defining What Teachers Should Know

Historically, three principal traditions have shaped how teachers' competencies for serving ELs have become defined: (1) the Standards/Competency Tradition, (2) the Process/Product Teacher Effectiveness Tradition, and (3) the Case Study Tradition. Each of these traditions has informed teacher education programs and practices, but some more so than others. The following discussion examines each tradition with illustrative examples, its advantages and challenges, and how it relates to the framework of *embodied understanding of practice*. This analysis informs the inventory of "critical" competencies for teachers of ELs.

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1. Standards/Competency

This tradition is one of the oldest and most often used approaches to inform discussions of what teachers of ELs should know. Within this tradition, experts and/or stakeholders, often under the auspices of professional organizations or government agencies, define standards. In the United States the first such comprehensive list of competencies for educators of bilingual learners emerged, under the auspices of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in the 1970s. This list specified eight areas of competency: language proficiency, linguistics, culture, instructional methods, curriculum utilization and adaptation, assessment, school community relations, and supervised teaching.

The most recent example of efforts by a professional organization to define standards is by Teachers' of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), which issued a position statement on this issue in June 2007 calling for a national effort to establish full certification for ESL and bilingual educators working in public schools and, in addition, separate credentialing for mainstream and content-area teachers qualified to work effectively in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. The continuity in the domains identified by these two efforts, CAL and TESOL, is striking.

Another recent effort in this tradition has been launched by the American Educational Research Association, which collected reviews of research at various stages of teacher preparation: from teachers' characteristics, to coursework in the disciplines and the foundations of education, to methods courses and field experiences. The research tapped in this review principally addresses diversity from the perspective of culture, targeting race and ethnicity, with limited reference to ELs.

While these efforts can inform high stakes conversations among policy makers, they have limited impact because they do not dictate policy. In the United States, the states hold most of the power in shaping policy on teacher education through credentialing of teachers and accreditation of programs and institutions. California has been in the forefront in requiring that greater attention be given to how teachers are prepared to serve ELs. Most recently, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) has developed new "common standards" for professional preparation programs, and a new performance-based accreditation system that gives greater emphasis to outcome variables. In these "common standards," the needs of ELs are addressed in both implicit and explicit ways.

Some examples of implicit ways include "*sensitivity to California's diverse population*" as part of the admission's standard. Similarly, during the course of the program, the standard for fieldwork and clinical experiences requires that institutions: "provide candidates opportunities to *understand and address issues of diversity that affect school climate, teaching and learning and devel-*

op strategies for improving student learning." One difficulty with such standards is that they are hard to measure (e.g., "sensitivity") and thus hard to implement.

EL issues are targeted explicitly through program standards used in the development of program documents, and "teaching performance expectations" (TPEs) used in candidate assessment. One program standard (#13) targets ELs only, and taps the following domains: (1) legal requirements for placement and instruction, (2) pedagogical theories of language development, (3) assessments to diagnose language abilities and achievement, (4) lesson design that promotes language development and academic literacy to access and acquire academic content, (5) the role of cognitive, pedagogical, and individual factors that affect language acquisition, and (6) the role of students' families, cultural backgrounds, and experiences on learning.

In sum, through standards and assessments, policy makers in California have sought to ensure that EL issues are addressed at various levels in the education of all new teachers, from the teacher preparation experiences leading to a preliminary credential, to the induction experience leading to a professional credential. In the latest revision of the program standards, greater emphasis has been given to the development of academic language as a vehicle

for access and achievement of content standards; less attention is given to the role of culture and the first language.

A recent review of research on accreditation across the U.S. characterizes it as largely "informational"—focused on describing how the process proceeds. Analyses of EL-targeted program proposals in California have shown that institutions

varied in the attention given to issues of language and culture in the standards outlined for EL programs. The emphasis given to instruction and assessment of academic language within the disciplines, particularly at the secondary level, also varied. Institutions negotiate numerous challenges, and the variety of approaches and degree of emphasis given to different standards in program design should be explored systematically.

The principal challenges of the Standards/Competency Tradition include: insufficient resources to implement, monitor, and investigate the impact of these standards and competencies; the need for valid and reliable measures to assess teaching performance; and the lack of flexibility to investigate practices that are responsive to local needs.

The convergence of these policy changes offers California the unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to research on the preparation of teachers for all students, and ELs in particular. Under a seven-year cycle of accreditation with periodic biennial data reports, institutions will be charting the impact of their programs on their students. Revisions to one form of program accreditation, the "experimental program option," should give insti-

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tutions the incentive to investigate their practices. Under this new accreditation system, candidates must show competence to obtain the credential through a standardized assessment.

Two forms of standardized teaching performance assessments that give attention to ELs have been developed: (1) the California Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA), developed by Educational Testing Services, and (2) the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT), developed by a consortium of California universities. Each has value and offers different opportunities to investigate how different teacher preparation pathways influence teachers' development. The California TPA targets four distinct tasks, each tapping one of four domains: subject-specific pedagogy, designing instruction, assessing learning, and a videotaped lesson study. ELs are included in each task. The PACT targets planning, instruction, assessment, reflection, and academic language as independent constructs within an integrated cycle of lessons, called a "teaching event." The evidence includes a videotape and analysis of student work from a classroom with ELs. Both offer opportunities to develop and investigate embodied understanding of practice.

2. Process/Product Teacher Effectiveness

This tradition of defining what teachers should know has a rich research history which began with attempts to identify background variables, teacher formative experiences, discipline knowledge, instructional strategies, and in some cases, teacher preparation experiences and even teacher personality factors, investigating how these relate to student gains. This research stream was most prominent in the 1970s and '80s, and only a few studies focused on ELs. Very few targeted the link between teacher knowledge and instructional behaviors and achievement gains in ELs. Some have looked at the relationship between teacher and student discourse patterns within different curriculum areas across program models. Among the key instructional behaviors found to promote student gains in English language proficiency were: pacing of instruction, monitoring student engagement, and strategic explicit instruction of vocabulary and grammatical rules presented via examples.

Recently, this tradition has extended into studies on ELs for targeted areas, such as learning to read, and the transfer of skills from the first to the second language. Much of the reading research in young learners, with English as the language of instruction, targeting multiple language groups, draws from Canadian studies. While many similarities exist across U.S. and Canadian settings, the communities of ELs are different—Canada tends to draw a population of immigrants with a higher level of education and resources. Some of the studies in this tradition do draw on studies of bilingual (typically Spanish/English) students in the U.S. This research has yielded important findings now summarized for practitioners in a useful format, such as the federal government's recent Practice Guide, *Effective literacy and English language instruction for English learners in the elementary grades*. These findings

affirm previous research and extend it. Key findings outline essential elements for effective early literacy instruction, including the role of explicit instruction in developing word-level skills such as decoding and word recognition. Greater attention is now given to combining these elements with vocabulary development, listening and reading comprehension.

This tradition has seldom explored the implementation of teacher education, where most studies of pedagogy have used case study designs with self-study of practice as the predominant feature. Some pedagogical approaches that have been explored include micro-teaching and computer simulations. Again, this is an older tradition, often grounded in principles of behavioral psychology and targeting specific skills. This approach has been criticized as atheoretical, although some studies with ELs were grounded in theories of second language acquisition, giving particular attention to modeling, questioning, and feedback. This focus on teacher-centered instruction limits the generalizability of findings to other contexts. Findings indicate that teachers learned to use the targeted strategies in the short term, but often did not implement them in the field. Some more narrowly-defined techniques, such as extending "wait time" (giving students time to provide their own corrections) did transfer, and were shown to be effective in both the teaching of science and second language.

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Many of these studies, typically designed as interventions, have of necessity targeted a narrow range of instructional strategies within a limited number of settings, for a short time. Some of these studies have relied on scripted lessons which may work for short periods of time, but which need some variation or enhancement to maintain student engagement and to respond to local, evolving realities. Studies of this type are few because they are expensive to launch and difficult to negotiate. Nonetheless, studies on professional development in math and science have begun to identify those features (such as giving teachers opportunities for active learning and observation combined with inquiry about students' learning) that are effective in changing teaching practices.

If we consider this tradition from the perspective of an embodied understanding of practice, two models of use may be envisioned. A *transmission model* that seeks to replicate the exact strategies as implemented in the original studies, or an *investigative model* in which teachers and teacher educators explore how these strategies work with their own students. Teachers typically operate in more complex settings with more variables in play than the controlled experimental situations of this tradition. Some of these studies have used mixed methods approaches that tap into broader socio-cultural issues, but many have not, giving less information on the nature of the contexts in which these studies took place. These studies do offer clear pathways for how to implement instruction and help to identify key features or principles that work across sites.

Results are mixed in showing how effectively teacher educators have engaged teacher candidates in making substantive changes in practice, particularly through short-term efforts, and especially when targeting teacher beliefs. Studies on how belief systems influence action or implementation suggest that teachers' *embodied understanding* of their practice affects their engagement. Some cases show significant resistance to change, in the belief that diversity is an obstacle to learning. Some studies, however, found that when given the chance, teachers could make sense of new instructional strategies informed by group inquiry that engaged them in productive problem solving about teaching and learning.

3. Case Study Research

Case studies within the ethnographic, linguistic, or sociological traditions have played a key role in shaping our understanding of how teachers work with ELs, and how they develop through different pathways. In recent years, we have seen substantive improvements in the design of these studies, including the use of multiple sources of data, creating a well-defined case study data base, and actively monitoring a chain of evidence to increase the reliability and validity of the analyses.

Teacher Cases. Studies of exemplary EL teachers, and of EL teachers challenged by their circumstances, offer useful insights that can inform both teacher professional development and practices. This literature has been instrumental in enhancing our understanding of how exemplary teachers develop academic language in a variety of program models: bilingual, ESL, sheltered, or mainstream in grades K-12. These have also tapped a wide variety of disciplines in the upper grades, from science to mathematics, literature, and history. Insights from this research affirm the value of key instructional approaches: (1) explicit instruction on writing argument within the genre demands in science, literature, and history, (2) integration of authentic opportunities for inquiry in order to engage students in substantive ways, and (3) scaffolding instruction to respond to the linguistic and cultural characteristics of learners.

Lessons and insights have also been generated from cases where students have failed to develop. These longitudinal, ethnographic studies of student cases progressing from middle school to high school, for example, have found that lack of a broader understanding of the learners, their families, the school's demands, and community context, often serve to explain why success can be so ephemeral for some students. EL students—especially older ones, but even at very young ages—can dissemble and seem to be engaged while not making progress, reinforcing the need for focused observation and review of student work by teachers.

Teacher Educator Cases. Teacher educators, like teachers, have explored a variety of models for implementing teacher research about instruction and learning, both in combination with the credential and in MA programs designed for experienced teachers.

However, most studies using teacher research with ELs are recent dissertations and not widely available. For example, one recent study followed two white (Anglo) secondary teachers of English who worked with ELs from entry into the program through three years of follow-up. Like most teachers in the U.S., neither had prior experience working with ELs or teaching proficiency in a language other than English. Both teachers saw themselves as literature teachers first, but were influenced by the way the program faculty gave attention to the development of academic literacy in explicit ways, by the opportunities they had to work with ELs, and by supportive mentors in their field placement. Teacher inquiry was an important influence on these teachers for developing their expertise in investigating strategies designed to provide ELs access to the literature curriculum. Documentation of the selection of the cases, and the richness of the data sources linked to classroom practice throughout the program and for two years of follow-up observations, are key strengths of this study.

Teacher Education Programs Cases. Cases of teacher education programs are another genre that has informed teacher education. Again, these are typically self-studies, often documenting program effectiveness as part of the accreditation process. In some cases, programs use common measures of teacher efficacy and compare their results to those of other institutions or exemplary programs. These studies have tapped competency to teach ELs, often through very few items. In some studies, institutions chart progress and changes made over time within the same institution across several cohorts. This design offers the advantage of maintaining many contextual variables constant, while charting the influence of program features across cohorts.

For example, at UC Davis we explored two models of teacher inquiry through this design, at the elementary and secondary levels. This research led to the implementation of a Credential/MA program that prepares teachers to work in culturally and linguistically diverse communities with a special emphasis on ELs. This fifteen-month program spans five quarters; the last two are part-time and are integrated in part through distance education. Students receive their credential in the first year and participate in a four-course university-based sequence in which they conduct two teacher research projects, a case study while student teaching, and a more elaborate intervention study while in their first year of teaching. The program mission is organized around four key teaching roles: (1) reflective practitioners, (2) teacher researchers, (3) collaborative professionals working in communities of practice, and (4) advocates for equity in learning for their students.

Graduates of the program report high levels of self-efficacy in designing instruction based on student needs, on the use and design of data collection procedures for baseline and outcome analyses, and in serving the needs of ELs. Key features of effectiveness, as identified through surveys of students and faculty, include the following: (1) a scaffolded approach in learning how to conduct

When given the chance, teachers made sense of new instructional strategies informed by group inquiry that engaged them in productive problem solving.

preliminary data collection to guide the diagnosis of student needs, and in understanding the challenges/strengths of the school and community; (2) systematic training on effective methods of instruction in both methods and teacher research classes focused on identifying tested instructional practices in the research literature; (3) focused attention on the academic language demands of the discipline standards, combined with guided reviews of the literature to identify pedagogically sound ways to address these; (4) mentorship by faculty, school staff, and peers in small cohorts in carrying out classroom inquiry.

The major challenge of this tradition is also its great value—limited sample size. Cases of exemplary teachers, teacher educators, and teacher education programs, cannot be generalized to a broader context. Because so many of these involve self-study, at least in part, researchers have to ensure that multiple types of data

Towards Identifying Critical Competencies for Teachers of English Learners

Together, these three traditions have identified ten competencies that teachers of ELs should possess (*see box, this page*). Evidence on the nature and importance of these competencies is stronger in some areas than in others. In the area of academic language, for example, teachers working to develop ELs' proficiency in the components of argument can benefit from studies that have tested different approaches for doing so in quasi-experimental designs. They can benefit equally from knowing how to apply linguistic tools to understand the demands of argument in specific disciplines and tasks. But teachers, like doctors, are both knowledge users and knowledge makers; so teachers themselves can contribute to their knowledge base about teaching ELs as they investigate their own practices and establish a tool chest for lifelong professional development.

Ten Competencies that Teachers of ELs Should Possess

1. *Knowledge of research on first and second language acquisition and how this research has informed instruction and assessment.*
2. *Understanding academic language in English with experience in helping students make connections to the home language.*
3. *Knowledge of discipline content and its demands on ELs.*
4. *Understanding instruction deeply, both in practice and through research on the implementation of curricula and strategies effective with ELs.*
5. *Understanding and implementing assessment to inform instruction and monitor progress meaningfully and efficiently in response to EL needs.*
6. *Understanding how contextual factors in classrooms, schools, and communities influence learning and access to the curriculum for diverse learners.*
7. *Understanding learners and their families, their strengths and their challenges—especially the impact of language and culture on communities living in poverty.*
8. *Knowledge and expertise in the use of approaches to involve families in extending the learning of the classroom in diverse communities.*
9. *Knowledge and skill in conducting inquiry about teaching and learning in classrooms, in ways that are responsive to EL needs.*
10. *Skill and experience in working effectively and collaboratively within small communities of inquiry designed to advance learning for ELs.*

are collected and that researchers who are not engaged in implementing the program directly collaborate in the research. The most significant advantage of this design lies in the breadth and depth that these studies offer us of *embodied practice*. Cases can offer a more complete picture of how teachers work and test new ideas to explore in further research. Cases may be informed by the traditions within different disciplines in the social sciences and offer great power in understanding complex phenomena.

Teacher educator cases can enrich our understanding of how teachers develop. More importantly, when multiple institutions work together to pursue a joint research agenda with some common assessments, common features of effectiveness can be identified for further study in tighter designs.

Developing these competencies is most "critical" for teachers early in their careers, when habits of mind and action are often established, and when failure to develop a sense of efficacy can cause teachers to leave the profession. Yet we know less about how to develop these competencies in teacher education, where there is largely only case study research, with some systematic cross-case analyses, and little process/product research. How then can we prepare teachers to develop these "critical competencies" so that they can work with ELs effectively? To get the answer requires a major commitment of the state to promote the development of a research agenda and to foster opportunities for teacher educators to investigate effective teacher preparation practices.

Looking at professional development as a more complex, lifelong process, through the lens of *embodied understanding of practice* offers new opportunities for research. However, we should

prioritize those aspects that are unique to the circumstances of working with ELs. For example, the variability of the process of EL development calls for giving greater attention to assessment and how it should inform instruction in the development of academic uses of language.

Conclusion

Teachers engage in one of the most complex processes of any profession: promoting learning in young people. This process is more complex in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. Teacher education research in general, and for ELs in particular, is one of the most neglected areas of scholarship in the social sciences. To ensure a bright future for our state, all sectors of our educational system must join forces to leverage resources and to seek new ones in promoting sound scholarship on the preparation of teachers for ELs.

Barbara Merino is Professor and Director of Teacher Education, School of Education, UC Davis. She served on the UC LMRI Faculty Steering Committee from 1998-2007.

Further Reading:

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LMRI NEWS



Laura Romo

New Assistant Director Appointed

Laura Romo, Associate Professor at the UC Santa Barbara Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, has been appointed as UC LMRI's Assistant Director, effective July 1, 2007.

Dr. Romo will work with UC LMRI Director Russell Rumberger and the UC LMRI Faculty Steering Committee this next year on developing a long-term proposal for the Institute.

Dr. Romo completed her Ph.D. in developmental psychology at UCLA in 2000. Her training in both cognitive and social development has afforded her the opportunity to examine communication and health education processes within a variety of contexts, including teacher-student and parent-adolescent relationships.

She is also interested in improving mother-daughter communication on topics related to adolescents' educational aspirations. Her research areas and interests focus on adolescent development; Latina mother-daughter relationships; social, cultural, and cognitive influences on health behavior; health education and communication; and adolescent sexuality.



Briana and Lucas Villaseñor

Son Born to Business Officer

Briana Villaseñor, UC LMRI's Business Officer and Grants Administrator, gave birth on June 29, 2007 to a healthy baby boy, Lucas Christian Villaseñor. Briana will be out of the office on maternity leave through October 1, 2007.

UC LMRI congratulates her and her husband Christian.



Mark Erdmann

New Staff Member

Mark Erdmann joined the UC LMRI staff in April 2007, providing both technical and general office support in the Student Assistant position.

Before coming to UCSB in September 2006, Mark spent two years traveling and working as an English teacher in China. He is now in his final year of undergraduate study and expects to graduate with a B.A. in Asian Studies in June 2008.

Outside the university, Mark is an active member of the Santa Barbara Student Housing Cooperative. He has served on the Board of Directors since February 2007, and also manages the SBSHC web site.

**Open Call for Papers: UC LMRI's 21st Annual Conference
Sacramento, CA • May 2-3, 2008
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Co-sponsored by the Mary Lou Fulton College of Education, Arizona State University

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For more information, including proposal guidelines, visit: http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu/events/08_conf/index.php

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Reports in This Issue

The UC LMRI Newsletter features abstracts from UC LMRI Research Grant Award recipients and—as they are completed—the abstracts from their Final Grant Reports.

Complete copies of UC LMRI-funded Final Grant Reports can be found on the UC LMRI web site. (Abstracts featured in the newsletter are edited for space considerations.)

Dissertation Grant Reports can be found on the UMI ProQuest Digital Dissertations and Theses Database (<http://www.proquest.com/products.cgi/descriptions/pqdl.shtml>). Dissertations are available free from this site if your library is a Digital Dissertation subscriber.

Back Issues: Newsletters from 1992 to the present are archived on the UC LMRI web site. A limited number of hard copies are available by request.

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