Introducing the Research of New Faculty

Professor Susan Lenski joined the Department of Curriculum and Instruction this fall. She comes to Portland from Illinois State University and serves on the board of directors of the International Reading Association. She is a well-recognized scholar and teacher, and here are four samples of recent work:


This core reading methods text takes an integrated, developmental approach to reading instruction, an approach supported by the text's unique organization. The sections of the text weave together discussions of skills, strategies, and assessment procedures that support literacy growth. Grounding their presentation on social constructivist learning theory, the authors encourage teacher candidates to develop their own evolving philosophy of literacy learning, to use assessment as the centerpiece of instruction, and to become teachers who can reach children of all cultures, races, ethnic groups, language abilities, and developmental levels.


The issue of teacher quality currently dominates national education debates. Teacher education partnerships, however, hold the potential to develop and sustain simultaneous educational renewal and communication between those who prepare teachers and those who teach in various educational settings. Each informs the other about best practices and current research in education. This book highlights research projects and the development of programs that use partnerships to transform teacher education.


In light of current demographic changes showing that Hispanic learners are having an increasingly significant presence in United States schools, Reading Strategies for Spanish Speakers was written to provide teachers of English and Spanish speakers with a repertoire of reading strategies that could be implemented in a variety of teaching contexts. These teaching contexts could range from classrooms in which English is the only medium of instruction to classrooms that are bilingual.


Multiple Ways to Bilingualism: K-5 Private and Public Schools with Japanese and Chinese Bilingual Programs

Abstract of Presentation: Xiaoqin Sun-Irminger, Ph.D., and Kayoko Kasai, MA.

This is a research paper of a Japanese immersion program in a private international school in Oregon and a Chinese bilingual program in a California public school. Using a mixed research method where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected, this comparative study focuses on (1) societal and school contexts, (2) program structure and organization, (3) curriculum design and standards in two languages, (4) staffing and staff qualification issues, and (5) student bilingual abilities as evidenced by both student products and test scores of state-wide standardized assessment.

This paper was presented to the National Association of Bilingual Education in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in February 2004. For more information please contact Sun-Irminger at xiaoqin@pdx.edu.

Completed Dissertations 2004


Instruction that Helps Students Meet State Standards in Writing

Abstract of Article: Steve Isaacson, Ph.D.

Two key components of recent educational reform are (a) new attention to writing as an important academic skill, and (b) the establishment of national and state standards for student achievement. State standards for writing vary considerably in their form and specificity. Many are not listed separately but are included within integrated language arts benchmarks. Most state standards make reference to the writing process and address several aspects of writing, although most focus on conventions. The most frequently required genres are personal narrative, letter, report, persuasive or opinion essay, and imaginative narrative. Recent reviews of the research literature on writing instruction for students with learning problems have suggested that pupil achievement in writing is linked to explicit strategy instruction. In this article, I present a day-by-day plan for teaching the writing process in a way that will help students meet state standards in writing. Two especially important teaching practices are modeling and highlighting critical features. “Instruction that helps students meet state standards in writing” was published in Exceptionality, 12(1), 39-53. For more information please contact Isaacson at isaacson@pdx.edu.

Articles and Chapters


Grants/Awards

Julie Esparza Brown, director of the Bilingual Teacher Pathway Program, has been selected as one of 15 new participants in the Linking Academic Scholars to Educational Resources (LASER) grant program.

She received her funds based on her project entitled “Using the Cattell-Horn-Carol/Cultural and Language Matrix as a Framework for Non-biased Assessment.” With this grant she will join a community of diverse researchers engaged in action research related to special education issues. She will receive support and mentoring to facilitate her experience as a researcher. The group will meet four times in the academic year to monitor research progress and to support initiatives.

These think tank gatherings provide Brown with grant writing support, publishing workshops, and access to editors of research publications to edit and review work. From her first meeting Brown has already had one article accepted for publication.

The LASER program is in its fifth and final year of helping a growing group of diverse faculty publishers strengthen their publication records. They select about 15 recipients each year from around the U.S. They focus their work on special education, bilingual teaching and merging work around equity issues.

The LASER project is a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education and Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). For more information please contact Brown at jebrown@pdx.edu.