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Policy Brief

The Initial Impact of Proposition 227 on the Instruction of English Learners

In June 1998, California voters passed Proposition 227, which severely restricted the use of primary language for instructing English learners, and instead called for a transitional program of “structured English immersion” that was not normally to last more than one year. What has been the impact of Proposition 227?

Shortly after its passage, a team of University of California researchers began a series of studies to examine the effects of Proposition 227 in 16 districts and 22 schools throughout the state. The researchers have interviewed district administrators, principals, teachers, and bilingual coordinators and observed classrooms. Although the studies are ongoing, they have thus far yielded several important insights into the initial impact of Proposition 227 during its first year of implementation.

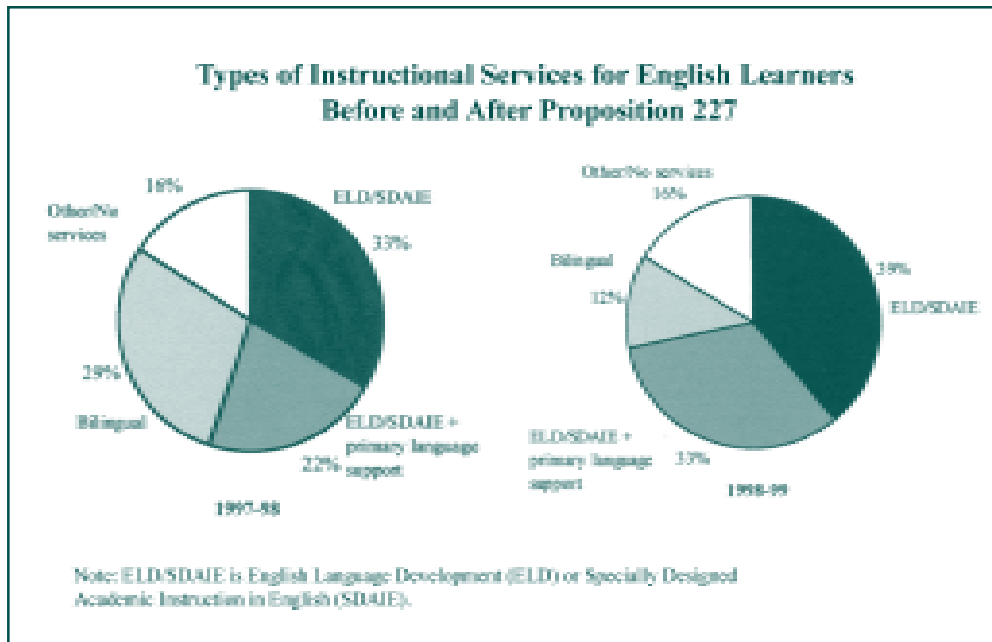
First, statewide, 29 percent of English learners were in a primary language program prior to 227, and only 12 percent were assigned to one after the implementation of 227 (see Figure). Across the districts and schools we studied, there was a wide diversity of responses. Districts with a history of extensive primary language programs and significant numbers of certified bilingual staff were more likely to continue these programs than were districts and schools with

weaker primary language programs and inadequate numbers of certified bilingual staff. Where strong leadership was exercised at the top of the district, either in providing parents with information about alternative options to structured English immersion classes, or in urging principals to discontinue primary language instruction, schools followed suit. However, where district leadership was less prescriptive, the decisions fell to principals, creating a diversity of responses within the district. In both situations, some

teachers exercised considerable autonomy in interpreting district and school directives, resulting in a diversity of instructional strategies within the same school.

Second, in the initial months of implementation, there was considerable confusion across the state about the role of the district and the schools in informing parents of their rights to seek waivers from the structured English immersion

program provided under the provisions of Proposition 227. About two-thirds of districts statewide formally notified parents of this option. Some districts interpreted the initiative as barring any proactive dissemination of waiver information while others considered it their duty under the law to provide parents with information about their program options. Schools and districts that facili-



tated access to information about the waiver option were more likely to continue to provide primary language instruction for significant numbers of students.

Third, what teachers chose to do in their own classrooms in the post-227 period depended to a great extent on what they had done prior to 227 as well as on their own skills, experience, and beliefs about students' learning. However, it was rare to encounter a teacher who contended that his or her instruction and class organization had not been affected. Teachers who were certified and experienced in bilingual instruction were more likely to continue to provide some level of primary language support for their students, although this varied greatly depending on the climate in their schools. These teachers were careful to keep primary language support within the strict confines of providing instruction "overwhelmingly in English," as defined by their district. Although many teachers who taught in waived classrooms, using bilingual methods, reported that their teaching had not changed significantly, they worried that they would be required to change their practice in the future. And many experienced bilingual teachers who were no longer in bilingual classrooms reported feeling frustrated by not being able to use the full range of skills they possessed to instruct their English learners.

The most important finding that has emerged from these studies is that schools and teachers were, indeed, undergoing profound changes teaching English learners even when schools and districts contended that their programs had changed little. These changes were spurred by a host of other reform efforts, not just Proposition 227. For example, the movement toward English-testing is causing teachers to leapfrog much of the normal literacy instruction to go directly to English word recognition or phonics bereft of meaning or context in order to raise English test scores. It remains to be seen how such responses will ultimately impact the learning and achievement of English learners.

— Patricia Gándara, Julie Maxwell-Jolly, Jolynn Asato, Julia Curry, Eugene E. Garcia, Kris Gutiérrez, Tom Stritikus

NOTE: A copy of this brief is available on the UC LMRI website at <http://lmrinet.ucsb.edu>

Small Grant Report

Korean Language Development and Academic Achievement of Korean Americans in the Los Angeles Unified School District

Educating language minority students is complex and controversial. Proponents of Proposition 227 maintain that English-only programs are the only way to educate English language learners while advocates of bilingual education insist that development of the primary language enhances second language acquisition. Furthermore, the range of program models that exist between these two poles is expansive.

In an effort to clarify some of the issues related to the education of minority language students, this study examines Korean Americans in the Los Angeles Unified School District to discover factors that either hinder or foster primary language development — second (English) language development and academic achievement in general.

Korean Americans in three program types were surveyed and tested: 1) All-English; 2) Modified Bilingual; and, 3) Dual Language (Korean/English Dual Language Program). Students in the All-English Program received instruction through the fourth grade entirely in English. Students in the Modified Bilingual Program received instruction predominately in English, but also received

primary language (Korean) support. The Modified Bilingual Program does not include development of Korean language literacy skills. Students in the Dual Language Program received instruction in both English and Korean in all curricular areas. The Dual Language Program develops literacy simultaneously in English and Korean beginning in kindergarten.

Data was collected from the district database which provided standardized test scores (Stanford 9) in reading, math, and language. Korean language proficiency was measured using a UCLA developed test that measured listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. A parent survey gathered information regarding use of Korean at home, socio-economic status, participation in extracurricular activities, and attitudes about bilingual education.

Examination of the results showed a positive correlation between Korean language proficiency and placement in the Korean/English Dual Language Program. A similarly positive correlation was also noted for students whose parents both spoke Korean at home. Students who attended Saturday Korean school programs were no more likely to have developed proficiency in Korean than counterparts who did not attend such schools. When compared to students in the All-English program, students in the Korean/English Dual Language program exhibited no statistically significant difference in English language skills as measured by the Stanford 9. Korean language and general academic skills of students in the Modified Bilingual Program were significantly lower than students in the Dual Language Program. In this study, socio-economic status did not appear to affect performance in either English or Korean. However, parents from lower-economic status were more likely to value development of primary language skills.

This study tends to support the position that instruction in the primary language is beneficial when it is consistent and includes literacy development as in the Dual Language Program. Because students in Modified Bilingual Programs performed poorly on all academic and language indicators, an examination of instructional strategies used in the program is warranted. Parents of children in All-English programs need to know that their children will not necessarily develop better English skills in an All-English program. Furthermore, students in All-English programs run a high risk of losing primary language proficiency.

—Sung-Ock Sohn, UCLA

Policy Grant Report

Education of English Learners in California Schools: An Assessment of the Influence of Proposition 227 in Selected Districts and Schools

The pilot study provides for the documentation of new state and local policy articulations and implementations specific to Proposition 227 and their influence on the education of English learners in the state of California. Specifically, this study included the documentation of local board of education and school policy articulations and their effects of practices at the district and school level. Proposition 227 was intended to place a premium of English language development in a highly uniform and prescriptive manner throughout the state. This pilot and developmental study begins an assessment of this policy intervention in eight selected school districts and 16 schools in those districts. The intent of this study was to document in these school districts the implementation of Proposition 227. This preliminary data gathering over the last indicates that all districts and schools responded to the requirements of the new Proposition 227 mandates. However, little in what school districts and schools implemented programmatically prior to and after 227 changed significantly.

A second part of the study focused on teachers' reaction to Proposition 227, the study examines how teachers both shape and are affected by Proposition 227 implementation. Proposition 227 was intended to place a premium on English language development in a highly uniform and prescriptive manner throughout the state. Our initial study reveals that the nature of Proposition 227 implementation has a great deal to do with teacher ideology.

—Eugene Garcia, Julia Curry, and
Tom Stritikus, UC Berkeley

NOTE: A copy of these reports are available on the UC LMRI website at:
<http://lmrinet.ucsb.edu>

Dissertation Grant Report

Towards an Equitable NAEP for English Language Learners: With Contextual Factors Affect Math Performance?

This study examines the validity of the national math assessment, known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), for English language learners or students with limited English proficiency (LEP). Secondary analyses of two existing CSE/CRESST datasets were conducted. Data samples were comprised of predominantly Hispanic 8th grade English language learners in southern California. Descriptive and hierarchical linear modeling analyses suggest that several variables influence NAEP math performance. Quantitative analyses were supplemented by informal interviews with a small sample of middle school math teachers.

In both studies, students' English reading proficiency and level of math class significantly predicted test performance, even after controlling for key student background and classroom-level variables. When these variables were held constant, differences in test performance between LEP and non-LEP students were no longer evident. Several proposed test accommodations for LEP students were also examined: Modified English, Spanish Translation, Glossary, Extra Time, and a combination of the Glossary and Extra Time. The data suggest that, after controlling for the key confounding variables, selected test accommodation formats have potential for "leveling the playing field" between students with limited English proficiency and their more English fluent counterparts.

Analysis of cross-level interactions in the final analytic model suggest that specific test accommodations may benefit LEP students under certain testing conditions. Students tend to perform better on a NAEP math test where the language matches their language of math instruction. More specifically, LEP students who received math instruction in Spanish were more likely to score higher if the language of the math test was also Spanish, rather than English. This effect was more profound for students in lower-level math classes. Additionally, LEP students who received an Extra Time accommodation benefited more than with other test accommodations, especially students in higher-level math classes. These findings suggest that no single math test accommodation benefits all LEP students.

The data suggest that accommodations yield only nominal effects for LEP students, and that accommodation effects vary by level of math class and language of math instruction. Additional methodological complexities arise, as the test formats are no longer standardized. Nonetheless, findings may be used to inform the development and interpretation of the NAEP for English language learners, as well as other large-scale, standardized content-based assessments.

—Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, UCLA

UC LMRI Awards 2000 Research Grants

The UC LMRI awarded funds in two research grant competitions for 2000-2001. The first competition was for small research grants. The UC LMRI Faculty Steering Committee awarded 2 Small Research Grants totaling \$30,000. The second competition was for dissertation research grants. The UC LMRI Faculty Steering Committee awarded 5 Dissertation Grants totaling \$37,412.

SMALL RESEARCH GRANTS

"Hey Jewish, Where's China?": The Community Practice of Teasing Among Mexican-Descent Children in Summer Youth Program

LUCINDA PEASE-ALVAREZ, UCSC

Traditional perspectives on learning/teaching conceive of knowledge as the transfer of self-contained information from one individual to another. These perspectives are also reflected in conceptualizations of metaphorical activity, including teasing, which consider meanings to be encapsulated within words and sentences, with no regard for how such activities may differ culturally. In contrast, sociocultural perspectives on metaphorical activity view teasing as a cultural practice through which children learn about and shape their community's norms, relationships, and attitudes. While the majority of the sociocultural work on teasing has focused on adult-child interactions at home and engagements among children in school, this study systematically examines the functions teasing plays among Mexican-descent children outside of school in a summer youth program. In this study, we will conduct video-taped follows of 17 children as they participate in this program. Interviews with the children, their families, and other community members will inform the development of our coding scheme and the interpretations of our data. The findings of this study will contribute important insights into the culturally defined nature of learning/teaching in community settings, providing a means for educators to help others move beyond deficit orientations of unfamiliar community practices toward culturally sensitive analyses that take into account community-based practices as resources for learning in school.

UC LMRI 2000 Policy Grant Proposals

Policy Research Grant Proposals (up to \$25,000 per year for up to three years)—Due May 1, 2000. Applications available online at <http://lmrinet.ucsb.edu> or contact LMRI office at (805) 893-2250 or lmri@lmrinet.ucsb.edu

Research On Planning, Assessment, and Instruction of Communication and Language for ESL Students with Moderate and Severe Disabilities

GEORGE SINGER, UCSB

Students with severe cognitive disabilities have difficulty acquiring a first language. Students from homes where Spanish is the predominant language may experience additional difficulties in learning to communicate when placed in English only school environments. No published, data based research on this population has examined the impact of immersion in English-only special day classes and inclusive general classrooms. The national law that governs special education, the IDEA, requires individualized team assessment and planning of Individualized Educational Plans and delivery of specialized instruction. In three studies researchers will examine school practices in the planning, assessment, and one form of instruction for students second language learning students with severe cognitive disabilities. The first study will focus school personnel and parents make decisions are about what communication and language skills to teach and in which language. It will examine the extent to which parents participate in this decision making. A second study will compare school assessments of students' communication with home based assessment. It will reveal the extent to which educators obtain an accurate understanding of students' full communicative repertoire. The third study will investigate the efficacy of one instructional method commonly used with students with severe disabilities, time delay prompting. The study will determine if students learn to switch between Spanish and English given simple verbal directions when this form of prompting is used in initial instruction. These studies will break new ground in an important area that requires research to inform practice.

DISSERTATION RESEARCH GRANTS

From Policy to Practice: Understanding the Influence of Proposition 227 on Literacy Instruction

TOM STRITIKUS, UC BERKELEY

In a century and a half of American school reform attempts and the passage of Proposition 227 represents the latest manifestation of public hope and anxiety, but-as scholarship on school reform has clearly indicated attempts to change educational institutions and educational practice do not always bring about the intended results.

This qualitative study will examine the nature of literacy instruction in the new policy context created by Proposition 227. In focusing on literacy instruction, this study will explore the connection between policy and practice as it relates to instruction for language minority students. To explore these connections, I propose a qualitative study of the literacy instruction in two schools in a rural school district that gave individual schools the choice to determine their own Proposition 227 implementation plans. In the first year of Proposition 227 implementation, one school, Open Valley made the school-wide decision to maintain the school's primary language program through parental waivers. Open Valley teachers organized meetings in which they informed parents about the waiver and used school testing data to make a case to parents for taking action to save the primary language program at the school. At Westway Elementary, the principal made a school-wide decision not to pursue waivers and the bilingual program at the school was eliminated.

During the second year of Proposition 227, both schools have kept the same instructional arrangements that they pursued during the first year of implementation. Open Valley has become a Charter School.

By focusing on the instructional choices that teachers make during literacy instruction, the study will attempt to understand classroom practice set against a backdrop of school-wide, district-wide, and state-wide issues as they pertain to the implementation of Proposition 227. Policy research has been dominated by "input/output" analysis that has viewed talking to teachers as an irrelevant method for illuminating the effects of policy. This research seeks to connect issues of teacher perceptions about Proposition 227 and its implementation at the school site with day to day literacy practices. In this sense, this study will illuminate both policy and practice based questions as I explore the connection between teacher ideology, state-wide policy, and by exploring classroom practice.

Latino Families and Schools: Tensions, Transformations & Transitions at a Student Study Team Meeting

ROSARIO JASIS, UC BERKELEY

The general purpose of this dissertation project is to explore the mechanisms involved in the process by which Latino students and their families are identified as requiring "special" services. The aim is to understand the dialectical relationship schools have with families of language-minority students by investigating the *process* by which they develop their ongoing social relationships with schools. Specifically, the study will focus on the Student Study Team (SST) as a unique place where parents have the opportunity to participate in extended discourse with school officials regarding the academic achievement of their child. By studying official processes such as the SST, it is my intention to provide a greater awareness of how the past and present are enacted through the accumulation of face to face encounters. Such research highlights the elements involved when parents' and schools' perceptions and expectations of themselves and the other are manifested through *tensions*, *transformations* and *transitions* at the meetings. Through these lens it should be possible to better articulate how certain dynamics constrain or open possibilities for the full integration of the children and their families into the social fabric of the two schools in the study. Through this inquiry, I hope to contribute to the body of knowledge examining the practices and policies which affect the schooling of Latino/ Chicano and other language minority students.

UC MEXUS 2000 Call for Proposals

Four grant categories are available with funding from \$1,000 to \$25,000 for one year. Proposals for most categories due *April 2000*.

Applications are available on line at <http://www.ucr.edu/ucmexus/index.htm> or contact Andrea Kaus, Program Officer, UC MEXUS Universitywide Headquarters, 3324 Olmsted Hall, University of California, Riverside, CA 9252, Telephone (909) 787-3519; Email andrea.kaus@ucr.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

UC LMRI

LINGUISTIC MINORITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE



School Reform and the Teaching of English Learners

**Annual Conference
May 13-13, 2000**

**Hyatt Regency Irvine
Irvine, CA**

The UC Linguistic Minority Research Institute (UC LMRI) 2000 Annual Conference will focus on recent school reforms and how they impact the teaching of English learners (ELs). In the last few years California has embarked on an ambitious school reform effort designed to improve the performance of California students and schools. Although some of these reforms—which include class size reduction, new curriculum standards including standards for English Language Development (ELD), and the elimination of social promotion—are just beginning to impact schools, they are all likely to affect the teaching and achievement of English learners. The UC LMRI is soliciting papers and presentations that can provide useful and timely research information on the challenges of teaching English learners in this period of widespread and systemic school reform. Papers and presentations on all other areas pertaining to the learning and schooling of English learners are also welcome. Possible topics include:

- How have teachers and schools responded to recent standards and frameworks (e.g., English, English Language Development, Math) when applying these to the instruction of ELs?
- How have schools and districts addressed shortages of qualified teachers prepared to work with ELs?
- How have ELs responded to the increased academic emphasis and high stakes testing?
- How do families and peers promote the academic development of ELs?

The conference is being co-sponsored by the California Policy Research Center and the California Department of Education, Language Policy and Leadership Office.

REGISTRATION: Student (w/ copy of ID) \$15.00 All Others: \$30.00 On Site: \$40.00

Conference registration includes materials, admission to all conference sessions, lunch on both days (May 12-13) and a reception on Friday evening (May 12).

**University of California
Linguistic Minority Research Institute
South Hall, Room 4722
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3220**

voice: 805-893-2250

fax: 805-893-8673

**e-mail: lmri@lmrinet.ucsb.edu
www: <http://lmrinet.ucsb.edu/confs/lmri>**

UC LINGUISTIC MINORITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
2000 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM
May 12-13, 2000
Hyatt Regency Irvine
Irvine, California

Please return Registration Form by April 21, 2000

Please list the following information:

NAME: _____

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Check day(s) you plan to attend the conference

- Friday, May 12 Saturday, May 13

Payment type: (check or money order payable to **UC Regents** only, please)

- Student \$15 (w/ ID) All Others \$30 (preregistration)

- Check here for vegetarian meals

Approved Presenters only:

- group (please list primary presenter _____)
- individual

Hotel Reservations must be made through the Reservation Desk at the Hyatt Regency Irvine (949) 975-1234 by **April 21, 2000**, to secure special discounted conference rates.

Please send a separate copy for each registrant (a photocopy is acceptable) with a check or money order payable to the **UC Regents** to:

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Belonging in School: The Politics of Race, Nation, and Emotion Among Mexican-descent Students at Hillside High

CLAYTON HURD, UCSC

Among the larger ethnic groups in California, Mexican-descent students overall remain the least formally educated, least likely to graduate from high school and the least likely to enroll in and complete a four-year degree. This dissertation intends to investigate the political processes that contribute to the low overall academic attainment of Mexican-descent students and to make sense of what seem to be trends of academic decline across generations. This research focuses ethnographically on Mexican-descent students' peer group relationships and the various expressive styles they use to define themselves (to themselves and others) within and outside the school environment. This approach highlights how patterns of school achievement, particularly for racialized groups like those of Mexican-descent, may be influenced by the relative compatibility between youth peer groups' understandings of what constitutes valid knowledge and expression and the kinds of discourse forms schools validate in their various institutional contexts.

This approach requires going beyond school-based ethnographic participation-observation to develop additional forms of documentation which can relate the micro-level politics of face-to-face interaction to macro-level historical concerns of race, class, language, and nation. To this end, my dissertation will pursue an understanding of the historical and everyday construction of forms of expressive style employed by Mexican-descent students within the school without simply reducing them to factors of class or cultural background.

Bilingualism: How Do Children Develop Bilingual Grammatical Competence

ILIANA REYES, UC BERKELEY

The nature of language development and the psychological, linguistic, and social factors that surround the experience of bilingual children have been the focus of research in the last couple of decades. However, very little is known about the psycholinguistic processes (e.g., the interaction between grammatical development and *relative* language dominance) involved in children who are becoming bilinguals in this country. For my dissertation research, I will investigate Spanish-speaking children who become bilinguals at an early age (5-years-old) by learning English at school. Two separate types of analysis will be conducted with this population. First, I will look at the way children use their two languages to achieve bilingual competence for communication with their peers. Here the alternation of the two languages, *code-switching*, will be compared to the use of one-word switches, called *borrowings*, to determine if there are parallels in shorter and longer code-switches. Secondly, I will investigate the syntactic strategies used by bilinguals in sentence comprehension. Studies investigating *lexical* development in Spanish-English bilingual children have revealed a shift from Spanish dominance before the age of 7 to more balanced proficiency between the ages of 8 and 13, and then to English dominance after the age of 14. My hypothesis is that *syntactic* strategies will show similar shifts in relative dominance for bilingual children. In addition, the syntactic patterns of English and Spanish monolingual children will be compared with those of bilinguals. The comparison of bilingual and monolingual children will help define the particular patterns that bilingual children develop when there is a shift in language dominance.

Patterns of Language Growth in Early Bilingual Development

BARBARA T. CONBOY, UC SAN DIEGO/SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Patterns of language acquisition will be investigated in 40 children from Spanish-English bilingual backgrounds to test hypotheses regarding separate (language-specific) vs. unitary (language-general) aspects of growth in each language. The children will be followed longitudinally, at 20-22, 24-26 and 28-30 months. At the first age, a non-invasive electrophysiological method (Event-Related Potentials, or ERPs) will be used to examine the children's processing of known vs. unknown words in each language. ERPs provide a time-sensitive record of the cortical neural activity elicited by different stimuli and have been shown to index word comprehension in toddlers (Mills et al., 1993;1997). Preliminary results have indicated language-specific patterns of word processing (Conboy & Mills,1999). In order to determine the effects of varied language ability on these ERP patterns, a larger sample of children will be examined. Standardized parent report measures will be used to estimate vocabulary size for each language. Vocabulary scores in Spanish, English and the two languages combined will be related to patterns of word processing in each language at 20-22 months. Parent report measures of expressive vocabulary will also be collected at 24-26 and 28-30 months, to explore subsequent differences in growth between languages. Parent report will also be used to obtain two measures of grammatical ability at each of the three ages. Rates of growth in vocabulary and grammar in each language will be compared to test (1) the hypothesis that grammatical development is continuous with vocabulary development and (2) the extent to which this process is language-specific vs. language-general. Language samples collected at 24-26 and 28-30 months will be used to measure children's productions of specific grammatical forms as well as overall grammatical ability in each language. Finally, sentence repetition tests developed for each language will be administered at 28-30 months, to (1) relate later grammatical complexity to earlier vocabulary and grammatical development and (2) explore grammatical error types in each language. Children from low and middle income backgrounds will be included to examine group differences in language processing and growth.

The Keynote Speakers at this year's UC LMRI Conference, May 12-13, 2000 will be:

Catherine Snow, Professor of Education and co-editor of the NRC report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*; and **Walter Secada**, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison and lead author of the Hispanic Dropout Project report, *No More Excuses*.

UC LMRI People in the News

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Delaine Eastin, formed an advisory panel to assist in the development of Title 5 California Administrative Code Regulations regarding the academic assessment and reclassification of English learners. Among the researchers and practitioners appointed to the panel were: **Eugene Garcia**, Professor and Dean, UC Berkeley; **Patricia Gándara**, Associate Professor of Education at UC Davis and Associate Director for Policy of the UC LMRI; **Kenji Hakuta**, Professor of Education at Stanford University; and **Russell Rumberger**, Professor of Education at UC Santa Barbara and Director of the UC LMRI.

Michel Gerber, Professor of Education at UC Santa Barbara, and **Jill Leafstedt**, Bilingual Graduate Fellow at UC Santa Barbara, were recently awarded a \$100,000 grant from the GTE Foundation for a research project, "School Link," an interactive, multimedia model demonstration project to link California teachers and parents of ethnic minority students to University research and training resources. A demonstration of the project can be seen at: <http://www.caselink.education.ucsb.edu/case3/index.html>.

Giorgio Perissinotto, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at UC Santa Barbara and a member of the UC LMRI Faculty Steering Committee was honored by the Goleta-based Spanish language television station Notidiario has one of the 10 most prominent Hispanics on the Central Coast.

Robin Scarcella, Associate Professor of Humanities at UC Irvine and a member of the UC LMRI Faculty Steering Committee, has been appointed to the State Board of Education's English Learner Advisory Committee, which was established to advise the Board on a wide range of issues relating to the improvement of curriculum and instruction of the state's 1.4 million English learners.

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