Title: Promoting Linguistic and Cultural Competence Among Pre-Service Teachers

Grant Category: Community Engagement

July 17, 2007

Primary Project Lead:
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Promoting Linguistic and Cultural Competence Among Pre-Service Teachers

Summary

In order to successfully provide learning experiences that lead pre-service teachers at EWU to develop linguistic and cultural competence, this $3,950 grant project will build an academic service learning (ASL) component into a 5-credit Fall quarter university course in the ESL Endorsement/Minor program. Each student in the course (working with a partner) will be paired with a newly-arrived refugee family in the Spokane area through close partnership with Spokane World Relief, a non-profit refugee relocation program. Over the 10-week quarter, each student will attend an orientation and meet five times with the family he/she is working with. During these meetings, the student will become familiar with the family’s needs and provide varied forms of assistance to the family. This may include interpreting the U.S. culture for the family, assisting with English-learning as necessary, and explaining how to navigate the U.S. K-12 educational system. Reflection, a necessary component of ASL, will be built into the curriculum in the form of discussions and products. This project addresses the needs of EWU pre-service teachers preparing to teach diverse students; stakeholders in area K-12 schools dependent upon local universities to inform and prepare teachers for diversity in the classroom; local newly-arrived refugee families in the area in need of additional cultural-adaptation assistance; and, within Spokane World Relief, a non-profit refugee relocation program. The budget will cover stipends for student expenses, picture dictionaries for each student, and a stipend for a Spokane World Relief employee.
Promoting Linguistic and Cultural Competence Among Pre-Service Teachers

Statement of the Issue

I request a $3,950 diversity grant to develop pre-service teachers’ ability to respond to cultural and linguistic diversity. This project will help Eastern Washington University achieve its goals to “integrate multicultural perspectives into the learning experience” (Academic Strategic Plan, 2004) and will result in “a stronger community that is inclusive, respectful, and supportive of all of its members” (EWU Board of Trustees Diversity Initiative Plan, 2002). It will do so by: (1) Pairing pre-service teachers working towards their English as a second language (ESL) Endorsement/Minor with refugee families new to this area; (2) Providing the opportunity for these pre-service teachers to gain a deeper level of understanding of the challenges faced by refugees and immigrants in our area; (3) Creating an academic service-learning (ASL) opportunity in which a number of local refugee families will receive additional cultural mentoring by members of the EWU community. This project addresses needs within four different communities: EWU pre-service teachers preparing to teach diverse students; stakeholders in area K-12 schools dependent upon local universities to inform and prepare teachers for diversity in the classroom; local newly-arrived refugee families in the area in need of additional cultural-adaptation assistance; and, within Spokane World Relief, a non-profit refugee relocation program, as the organization attempts to meet the contact and English needs of refugees.

As the number of English language learners (ELLs) grows in Washington State—over 46% in a recent ten year span (National Clearinghouse on English Language Acquisition, 2005), many pre-service teachers graduate without an understanding of the variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds they will encounter, the significance of cultural understanding in the classroom nor an understanding of the most effective strategies to use with diverse learners. According to Margaret Ho, Bilingual Program Supervisor for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, this is one of the most urgent matters schools face (2005).

Although it is taken for granted that cultural competency is necessary for teachers, what is less well-established is the process for bringing this about (McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Often pre-service teachers belong to the majority culture and language and lack an understanding of how differently the world can be experienced and viewed (Howard, 2006). Many pre-service teachers feel comfortable with the idea of diversity but uncomfortable with the reality that this diversity will ask of them. Faced with the question of how to bridge this learning, researchers have found that first-hand experience with other cultures and languages through academic service-learning (ASL) holds promise (Cooper, 2007; Garmon, 2004; Worrell-Carlisle, 2005).

However, these ASL experiences must contain two components: (1) Continuous reflection activities to name experiences and connect them with theory (Bringle & Hatcher, 1997; Eyler, 2002); and, (2) A close collaborative relationship between community partners and university faculty designing the experiences (Swaminathan, 2007).

Project Objectives

The objective of this project is to increase the linguistic and cultural competence of EWU pre-service teachers at EWU by providing an effective community-based ASL experience. These pre-service teachers will develop strategies for and a level of comfort with working with those from diverse backgrounds.
Project Design

In order to successfully provide learning experiences that lead pre-service teachers at EWU to develop linguistic and cultural competence, this grant project will build an ASL component into a 5-credit Fall quarter university course. This course, ESLG 496 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the Classroom, is primarily taken by pre-service teachers working towards their English as a second language (ESL) Endorsement/Minor. It is taught by Dr. Gina Mikel Petrie, the Project Lead. Each student in the course (working with a partner) will be paired with a newly-arrived refugee family in the Spokane area through partnership with Spokane World Relief, a non-profit refugee relocation program. (Two students will be paired with the family so that they can do home visits together for safety considerations.)

Over the 10-week quarter, each student will attend an orientation session during class time sponsored by Spokane World Relief and will meet a minimum of five times with the family he/she is working with outside of classroom hours. During these meetings, the student will provide an opportunity for the family to use and learn English. The student will also become familiar with the family’s needs and provide varied forms of assistance to the family. This may include interpreting the U.S. culture for the family, e.g. explaining how the buttons in an elevator work or where to purchase stamps, etc. It may include assisting with English-learning as necessary, e.g. helping with the English necessary to carry out a check-out transaction at the grocery store. In addition, because Fall quarter coincides with the beginning of the K-12 academic school year, it is probable that the families will need assistance understanding and navigating the U.S. educational system. In order to assist with communication breakdowns between the students and the families, each student will be given a picture dictionary as a tool to work with.

Reflection, a necessary component of ASL, will be built into the curriculum in several ways. Students will turn in written reflections following each visit with the family as a course assignment. Some of these reflections will appear in the Spokane World Relief newsletter. In addition, whole-group classroom discussions about the ongoing experiences will be held throughout the course, with the instructor and other students providing feedback to each student. Finally, students will write a short paper in which they share insights they have gained about how a family with the cultural and linguistic background they worked with would experience challenges in a U.S. school setting and how teachers can respond to assist them.

The pairing of families and students will be built upon a close working relationship between the instructor/project lead and the following staff at Spokane World Relief: Linda Unseth, Director; Jan Monroe, Volunteer Coordinator; and Mary Lou McDonough, Project Coordinator. Clearly communicating and aligning the goals between the two parties—the instructor/project lead and the staff at Spokane World Relief—will provide the second essential element for a successful ASL experience.

Explanation of the role and expertise of all participants

Gina Mikel Petrie is the project lead. She is the Coordinator of the ESL Endorsement/Minor Program, to which this course belongs. She is also the developer and the instructor of this course. She has successfully carried out several ASL projects with pre-service teachers in the Endorsement/Minor program including a Winter 2007 project in the ESLG 482 Second Language Materials Development and Adaptation in which the pre-service teachers worked with the Escuela San Miguel School in Nicaragua to evaluate the language teaching
materials, create additional materials for the teachers and students, and purchase additional materials (through an Alumni Association Mini-grant). Dr. Petrie is also the Director of the English Language Institute and has twelve years experience teaching language learners and eight years experience educating teachers. She has held the position of Project Coordinator on a U.S. Department of Education grant and the position of Principal Investigator on a Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board grant.

At Spokane World Relief, Linda Unseth is the Director of the organization, Jan Monroe is the Volunteer Coordinator; and Mary Lou McDonough is a Project Coordinator. All three have extensive experience working with university student volunteers and educating in-service teachers about the refugee experience. These participants have successfully worked with and integrated into the organization college student volunteers from Whitworth, Gonzaga and Eastern Washington University.

Dissemination Plan

Potentially 30 pre-service teachers may take part in this grant project during Fall quarter 2007. Because students in the ESLG 496 course are usually enrolled in other teacher-education courses at the same time, it is probable that the students participating in this ASL project may communicate their developing understandings and resulting linguistic and cultural competence informally to other pre-service teachers not enrolled in this project through other classroom discussions. Results of this project will be provided by the instructor and students to other language teacher-education programs through a proposed conference presentation at the Spokane Regional ESL Conference. In addition, information about the project will be published on the ESLG webpage.

Potentially 15 area refugee families may be impacted by this project. The employees at Spokane World Relief will be positively impacted as well through the assistance they receive from students both through increased contact time and English assistance for refugee families and the assistance with the writing of the newsletter (through the submission of student reflections). Dissemination of this project’s results will occur as well through Spokane World Relief’s newsletter.

Timeline for Project

The following timeline describes how the activities of the grant will be carried out during Fall quarter 2007:

Week 1: September 26-28
- Introduce students to ASL project and reflection activities
- Orientation by World Relief staff about project
- Students fill out background checks and volunteer application forms
- Picture dictionaries are handed out (having been purchased in August)

Week 2: October 1-5
- Students paired up and assigned a family (based on application form)
- First meeting scheduled between students and family
- Outside research about culture/language carried out
- Reflection discussion about first meeting/short reflection journaling due

Week 3: October 8-12
- Research about culture/language carried out
- Second meeting scheduled between students and family
• Reflection discussion about second meeting/short reflection journaling due
  **Week 4: October 16-19**
  • Reflection discussion on the needs of the families and impact of culture, culture-shock, and language

**Week 5: October 22-26**
  • Third meeting scheduled between student and family
  • Reflection discussion about third meeting/short reflection journaling due

**Week 6: October 30-November 2**
  • Reflection discussion on the role of experience with differing educational systems in understanding the K-12 U.S. system

**Week 7: November 5-9**
  • Fourth meeting scheduled between student and family
  • Reflection discussion about fourth meeting/short reflection journaling due

**Week 8: November 13-16**
  • Fifth meeting scheduled between student and family
  • Reflection discussion about fifth meeting/short reflection journaling due

**Week 9: Thanksgiving Holiday**
  • Project work not carried out this week

**Week 10: November 26-30**
  • Preparation for short paper on the specific challenges faced by certain cultural and linguistic backgrounds when experiencing U.S. K-12 schools and culturally responsive acts teachers can carry out

**Week 11: December 3-7**
  • Students turn in short paper
  • Students and instructor/project lead compose proposal for conference presentation (Spokane Regional ESL Conference)
  • Project lead meets with World Relief and writes final report about the success of the project
Detailed Budget and Rationale

The budget for this project is $3,950. This grant project will provide a stipend of $100 for each of the 30 students to cover both time and travel expenses and other expenses incurred by the students, e.g. purchasing and bringing soap products to the family in order to explain how to tell the difference between products meant for cleansing the body and those meant for washing dishes or windows, etc.

Also included in the budget is the purchase (including tax) of the Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary, 2nd Edition, by Margot Gramer (ISBN 0194372324; list price $13.95), for each of the students to use to aid communication with the non-native English speaking family they have been assigned.

Finally, a stipend has been included in the budget to cover the additional work that will be carried out by an employee at Spokane World Relief for the duration of the grant including the following tasks:

- Facilitate the application and background check process
- Assign students partners and families based on application information
- Design and carry out orientation
- Contact refugees and arrange appointments with the students
- Record and calculate volunteer hours logged by students
- Collection of reflection journaling for the newsletter
- Collection of release of information forms to print journaling stories

The budget is shown in the table below.

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References


July 6, 2007

The BOT Diversity Initiative Grant Review Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

I am delighted to serve as a reference for Gina Mikel Petrie’s work and suitability to conduct in a timely manner the project, “Promoting Culturally and Linguistically Competent Instruction” (Category: Curriculum).

Wayne B. Kraft
Professor of German and Chair
GINA MIKEL PETRIE  
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Patterson Hall 354S  
Eastern Washington University  
Cheney, Washington 99004  
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EDUCATION
2005  Doctorate of Philosophy in Education  
Washington State University, Pullman, Washington
1995  Master of Arts Degree in Applied Linguistics (TESOL)  
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
1991  Bachelor of Arts Degree in History of Ideas  
Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS
2005-Date  Assistant Professor. English as a Second Language Endorsement/Minor Program, Eastern Washington University. Currently coordinating, updating and teaching courses in the program as well as carrying out development and outreach activities.
2004-2005  Full-time Adjunct Instructor. Department of Teaching and Learning, College of Education, Washington State University. Currently teaching ESL courses as both undergraduate endorsement requirements and master’s-level courses. Also, carrying out HEC Board administrative duties to increase enrollment in the ESL program.
1996-2001  Lecturer. English Language Institute, Eastern Washington University. Cooperatively taught the four skill areas and pronunciation across all levels. Revised testing materials and curriculum. Developed and taught new courses in computer literacy. Developed proposals for special programs in technology.
1994-1996  Instructor. Center for English Language Training, Indiana University. Taught ESL courses in the four skill areas as well as TOEFL preparation and bridge courses.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE
2007-Date  Director. English Language Institute, Eastern Washington University.
2005-Date  Coordinator. English as a Second Language Endorsement/Minor program, Eastern Washington University.
2005-Date  Budget Authority. English Language Institute, Eastern Washington University.
2004-2005  **Higher Education Coordinating Board Faculty Position.** Department of Teaching and Learning, Washington State University. Responsible for planning, development, and increased enrollment in the ESL program.

2000-2001  **Curriculum Coordinator.** English Language Institute, Eastern Washington University. Worked with faculty to make decisions about materials, syllabi and program objectives. Coordinated curriculum piloting and revision. Consulted other intensive English programs in order to broaden understanding of current trends and issues. Remained current with research. Organized special programs. Worked with teachers new to curriculum. Co-organized program retreat.

1994-1996  **Coordinator.** Center for English Language Training, Indiana University. Supervised other instructors, advised students, assisted with program duties, arranged student activities and edited program newsletter.

**GRANT EXPERIENCE**

2005-2006  **Principal Investigator.** Parents and Teachers Negotiating Reading Strategies, a Washington State Improving Teacher Quality Program Grant from the Higher Education Coordinating Board. Responsible for administration of grant with East Valley School District.

2002-2004  **Project Coordinator.** Preparing Teachers to Help Language Minority Learners in Mainstream Classrooms, a Training of All Teachers (TOAT) Grant from OELA. Responsible for administration of the grant including: meetings, personnel, annual reports, purchasing, application process and facilitation of summer institute, participant facilitation.

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