

Sabbatical Leave Proposal: On-Site Research for Transfer-Level ESL Curriculum Development

Applicant: Daniela Guevara

Position: ESL & English Instructor

Institution: Moorpark College

Sabbatical Duration: One Semester (Fall 2025)

Previous Sabbaticals: 0

Hire Date: August 2018

I. Purpose & Rationale of Sabbatical Leave

This sabbatical leave proposal outlines a one-semester research and curriculum development project for an ESL course that would satisfy the first-year college composition requirement under the new CALGETC plan and meet AB705 and AB1705 recommendations for credit ESL programs. California Assembly Bills AB705 and AB1705 mandate that community colleges maximize the probability of students completing transfer-level coursework in English and math within one year of their initial enrollment (three years for ESL students). In 2018, the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (Alice Perez) and the president of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (John Stankas) released a memorandum advising California community colleges on steps to move towards AB75 compliance. This memo advises ESL Departments to “[e]xplore credit ESL pathways to transfer level English that allow for credit ESL faculty to...create a credit ESL course that is the equivalent to transfer-level English” (Perez and Stankas 2). Because I meet minimum qualifications to teach English and ESL at the community college level, I am uniquely positioned to spearhead this project at Moorpark College.

In the past two years, ESL enrollment at Moorpark College has increased significantly—from about 48 students in fall 2022 to about 92 students in fall 2024. Students completing the ESL sequence and transitioning to transfer-level composition will benefit from receiving specialized support from an instructor that has academic training and teaching experience in rhetoric, linguistics, and second language acquisition. I plan to develop my teaching skills by conducting on-site research, reading books, and ultimately designing curriculum that caters to the unique needs of ESL students, ensuring that they receive the specialized support required to succeed in transfer-level composition.

III. Objectives of the Project

1. **On-Site Research:** Conduct in-depth research on best practices in ESL instruction, particularly at institutions that have successfully developed transfer-level ESL composition courses. This will involve:
 - Identifying colleges that offer an ESL course that meets the first-year composition requirement and learning about their instructional strategies

- Interviewing faculty and curriculum developers to understand their approaches to ESL course design and student support.
2. **Reading:** I will read or consult the following books to inform my instructional practices:
- *Teaching Academic ESL Writing: Practical Techniques in Vocabulary and Grammar* **Author:** Eli Hinkel
 - *Second Language Writing in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook* **Editors:** Paul Kei Matsuda, Michelle Cox, Jay Jordan, and Christina Ortmeier-Hooper
 - *ESL Readers and Writers in Higher Education* **Editor:** Norman W. Evans
3. **Curriculum Development:** Use the findings from on-site research and readings to develop materials and lesson plans for a transfer-level ESL course that satisfies the first-year composition requirement. This course will:
- Incorporate best practices for teaching advanced reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar to English language learners
 - Embed language support systems, such as supplemental instruction, peer tutoring, and integrated language skills, to ensure student success.
 - Include directed learning activities for students to utilize library and Writing Center resources.
4. **Professional Competence:** As an ESL instructor, this project will significantly enhance my professional expertise by:
- Deepening my understanding of innovative pedagogical strategies in ESL and English education.
 - Equipping me with the tools to better support the academic success of ESL students in transfer-level courses.

IV. Benefits to Students, Campus, and District

For Students: Research conducted by The Public Policy Institute of California states that “Most degree-seeking ESL students do not successfully complete transfer-level English” (3). By offering a composition course with added ESL support, ESL students will be more likely to succeed in transfer-level coursework.

For Moorpark College: Developing research-based curriculum for a transfer-level ESL course will improve student retention and completion rates, which aligns with the college's goals of improving student outcomes and closing equity gaps. This is especially crucial because ESL enrollment is increasing, and Moorpark College must be prepared to serve a larger population of English language learners.

For the District: VCCCD will benefit from this curriculum development project because it:

- aligns with AB705/AB1705 recommendation of developing an ESL course that fulfills the first-year composition requirement
- will serve as a model for other colleges in the district that wish to offer transfer-level ESL composition courses in the future

V. Dissemination

I will participate in the following activities:

- Host a seminar for English faculty at Moorpark College to present the curriculum and obtain feedback.
- Meet with ESL instructors at Oxnard and Ventura Colleges to share insights gained from my research and provide copies of lesson plans, if requested.
- Lead a workshop at the Writing Center to train tutors in effective strategies for supporting ESL students with academic reading and writing.

V. Conclusion

This sabbatical leave will allow me to conduct research, read books, and write lessons/material to inform my teaching practices for a transfer-level ESL class.

I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the advancement of ESL teaching at Moorpark College and across the district.

Sources Cited:

Bohn, Sarah, and Sarah Reber. *English as a Second Language in California's Community Colleges*. Public Policy Institute of California, 2023, <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/english-as-a-second-language-in-californias-community-colleges.pdf>. Accessed 3 Oct. 2024.

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. *Assembly Bill (AB) 705 Initial Guidance Language for Credit ESL*. 2018, <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/docs/ab705/aa18-41-assembly-bill-70-initial-guidance-language-for-credit-esl.pdf>. Accessed 3 Oct. 2024.