

Sabbatical Leave Proposal

for

Academic year 2009-2010

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Background Information

I have been employed by the Ventura College District since 1999. My first instructional position was with Ventura College as adjunct faculty teaching three child development classes at the East Campus (Santa Paula). I became a full-time faculty member with Oxnard College in school year 2000-2001 and was offered tenure on 2004. During year 2007-2008 child development became a Department and I was selected as Department Chair. This is my second year as Child Development Department Chair. I currently teach theory classes, child development curriculum classes and the Practicum I (CD R111) classes. Teaching the CD R111 class gives me the opportunity to connect the students with preschool teachers working in child development centers in the community. My responsibilities include visiting the students while they are working with the children.

In addition to my classes, I am the Coordinator for the California Early Childhood Mentor Program. My responsibilities include identifying experienced teachers in the community who can serve as mentors for our Child Development practicum students. At present we have 15 mentors who were selected by a selection committee that I convene and work with. Every semester we offer four practicum classes averaging 100 students. These students must be sent to the community to do their student teaching as required by the State Department of Education. I work closely with the Mentors and with the students to ensure the work experience is positive and affords the students with hands-on learning.

Another related responsibility includes coordinating the stipend program that is funded by the Child Development Training Consortium (CDTC). I am designated to serve as the coordinator for Oxnard College. Administering the grant offered by the CDTC requires that I oversee the stipend process where child development students can apply to get tuition reimbursement for their classes every semester. I distribute and collect applications, review them for completion and forward them to the State for their approval. When the State approves the applications they send payment to Oxnard College and we then pay the students at the end of the semester.

I am very interested in child development and over the years have held different positions but all focusing on the education of young children. My experience of more than forty years in working with young children and their families, as well as my education and background keeps me motivated and interested in improving the quality of child care in our community. With mothers returning to work shortly after the birth of their infants it is imperative that children go into day care. Research informs us that only 10% of care is considered high quality. It is alarming to see that most infants go into homes or facilities that are inadequate and with caregivers that do not meet the qualifications.

At this time at Oxnard College we have only one 3-unit class that is dedicated to the development and care of infants in group settings. I see the need to expand our infant/toddler track in our program. Currently our practicum classes focus on preschool age children (3-5 years-of-age). I want to assess what other colleges in the State are doing to meet the course work that is needed in the area of infant and toddler care. I

recognize that if we want high quality in child development centers we have to educate and train the workers. It is for that reason that I entered the profession of teaching at the college level. My years teaching at Oxnard College have been enjoyable as well as challenging. The challenge I frequently encounter is that students enroll in our child development classes seeking a certificate but are not prepared for college work.

Proposal

I propose to design and modify our child development classes including an infant/toddler track. To develop this new program I am requesting a sabbatical leave for the year 2009-2010. During this year I will assess, and prepare a plan to incorporate on-line child development classes and to develop an infant/toddler track that includes a 3-unit practicum experience where students can observe and work with infants/toddlers.

My sabbatical year will be divided in two phases. The first phase will be researching what other colleges offer as far as infant/toddler classes as well as labs that offer opportunities for practicum experiences. San Diego and Santa Monica Colleges have within their child development program an emphasis in infant/toddler education. I know that they offer infant/toddler classes using a Reggio Emilia approach. Reggio Emilia uses an effective infant/toddler method for group care. Reggio Emilia is in the Tuscan region in Italy (well known and respected world wide in the field of child development). Another philosophy that has shaped the current trends for infant/toddler education is the research that was developed by Dr. Emmi Pikler. Dr. Pikler was a pediatrician from Budapest who based his philosophy for his institute on the idea that infants are capable of helping in their own care. This idea came through his observation that it is difficult to give individualized attention to infants/toddlers when you have limited caregivers and many infants in a group setting. My time during phase I will be heavily used to learn more about the Reggio Emilia approach as well as the philosophy proposed by Dr. Pikler and his followers such as Magda Gerber. Magda Gerber studied with Pikler in Budapest and in the United States founded an institute called Resources for Infant Education (RIE). I will learn more about RIE and take the courses that are offered to become a RIE certified instructor. In addition I will communicate with faculty from other colleges and will visit some of their classes. I will prepare a list of resources that will include names of faculty who teach infant/toddler classes as well as possible textbooks, videos and current articles on infants and toddlers that I will share with colleagues in our program.

The second phase will take place during the semester of Spring 2010. I will visit child development centers in México City where I will interview the directors to discuss the training and preparation for their preschool teachers. I will collect lesson plans, assessment and staffing models. The information will be shared with colleagues as well to develop course outlines, class syllabi and resources for classes. I am bilingual and teach some of the child development classes in Spanish in our campus. Learning more about the educational system for preschool in México will be of great benefit because many of our students are Mexican. I will contact professors in universities in México City

to learn about the pedagogical approach they use as well as textbooks that are used in the child development classes.

Along with doing the research I will be taking computer classes at Santa Barbara City College. I hope to gain computer skills to write course outlines for on-line child development classes. Knowing more about technology and how to effectively use it will help me bring new modes of delivery for child development classes at Oxnard College. After a semester of doing research of classes that are offered in other colleges and firming a philosophy that can be used as the base for the Oxnard College program. I will write a report that will include a plan to revise the Child Development Certificate at Oxnard College. This new certificate will include the infant/toddler track. The information and materials I gathered will be packaged and shared with faculty in my discipline. After I assess and organize the information I have I will write the new course outlines.

Timelines:

- August 2009- June 2010 attend workshops, classes or on-line classes to learn more about the Pikler Institute philosophy, the Reggio Emilia approach, and the RIE certificate.
- September-December 2009 visit California colleges that offer a certificate/permit with an infant/toddler emphasis. Communicate with faculty and review their course outlines for infant/toddler classes.
- January- June 2010 enroll in computer classes.
- March-May 2010 visit and research in México City.

Personal Benefits

- I will increase my knowledge of computers to write on-line course outlines. I will be able to teach on-line child development courses.
- I will be able to incorporate into my classes the resources that are available in the internet.
- I will learn what other colleges are offering for the care of infants and toddlers.
- I will be able to see another country and learn about what they are doing in group care for infants. I will be able to teach my students and share my experiences with colleagues in our college. I will be able to use many examples of what I see in México.

Benefits to the students

- The students at Oxnard College will have a choice to go into the infant/toddler track or the preschool track.
- Students have been requesting for the last three years an advance class covering infants and toddlers. After my sabbatical I will write four 1-unit courses and a 3-unit practicum class involving observation and interaction of infants and toddlers.
- The students will be able to take on-line classes because I will be able to write the course outline and offer them thus reaching students who are not able to come to the campus.
- The students will be able to learn from the resources that are available through the internet.

Benefits to the District

- The District will benefit because Oxnard College will be having an infant/toddler track that is similar to what is happening at Moorpark College and it helps students who move or work in different communities. I believe that the more similarities we have among the three Child Development programs the better it is for the students.

Benefits to the Oxnard Community

- The community receives the benefit of a more educated work force for child development centers. Child development facilities are licensed by the Department of Social Services-Child Care Licensing that requires caregivers who have at least 6 units in infant/toddler development and currently Oxnard College only offers 3 units.
- The Child Development Department will be viewed as a model for providing classes for infant/toddler education because we will be offering four new classes.