

**Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Proposal**  
Curriculum Enhancement Project for Fall 2014  
Submitted by Jennifer Parker  
Child Development Department  
November 2013

**Instructor's Sabbatical Leave Status**

**Full-time hire date: August 1998**

**Previous Sabbaticals: 0**

**Background of Sabbatical Project**

In the last five years the landscape of Early Care and Education (ECE) has changed significantly due to a movement towards high quality childcare/early education that provides specified outcomes for children. Some of the key players driving these changes are the Child Development Division of the California Department of Education, First 5 California, the Packard Foundation and various other private grant funders, Ventura County Office of Education, and the United States Department of Education. The primary changes that are influencing our Child Development instructional department and how we should be operating our laboratory at the Orfalea Child Development Center include the following:

- The California Department of Education has developed and adopted the Early Learning System (ELS). Some of its components include foundations for children from birth through preschool age. These foundations are linked to the K-12 standards and define what children should know and be able to do at various ages of development.
- The Early Learning System (ELS) includes three volumes of Framework, highly detailed resources describing what early childhood teachers should know and be able to do in order to promote the development of the Foundations in children.
- The California Department of Education has developed and adopted the *California Early Childhood Educator Teacher Competencies*, course and program specific competencies for teachers at four developmental levels. The competencies clearly identify the level of performance of beginning teachers to those early childhood teachers who hold B.A. and M.A. degrees.
- The development and implementation of the nationally used Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).
- The development and national implementation of the teacher pyramid from the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL).
- The national implementation of the Early Childhood Environmental rating scales (ERS).
- The national, statewide and countywide development and adoption of criteria for improving and rating the quality of early childhood programs, formally known as the Quality Improvement Rating System (QRIS). Criteria include use of the Early Learning System, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System.
- The influx of Race to the Top funding from the US Department of Education to implement elements of QRIS.

In an effort to keep up with these significant changes in the field, I have chaired the county QRIS ad hoc and Professional Growth committees of the Ventura County Child Care Planning Council. I have participated in numerous trainings throughout the state as well as been a professional expert in some of the writing of the early learning foundations. While I have been able to participate and be deeply involved at the county level, some adjunct faculty and the classified staff in the Orfalea Child Development Center have not had the benefit of any training and updating. The Child Development Center serves as the laboratory for observing students and student teachers in core classes of the Child Development program. The classified staff supervise these students. Now that the QRIS has been implemented in local childcare programs, there is a large disconnect between the existing curriculum and practices in the Child Development Center and what is expected in the childcare centers. Additionally, no one in the Child Development Department has ever had the time to develop a laboratory manual for the students and there currently is no manual in publication that is compatible with our program. Most existing manuals include superfluous activities and practices that are outdated and/or not feasible in our facility and materials.

The purpose of my sabbatical leave is to develop two laboratory manuals: one for each of the practicum classes that utilizes the Orfalea Child Development Center as a laboratory. These manuals will additionally serve as a tool to update the classified staff in current curriculum and practices. These two original laboratory manuals and workbooks will be specifically designed to best utilize the facilities and integrate all of the primary elements of the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). Additionally, these will provide students with cost effective resources that can ultimately be useful to them in the workplace. Furthermore, it will provide me the opportunity to deepen my working knowledge of the elements of the QRIS, further clarify the student learning outcomes in courses, and improve my skills in topic research and in writing to the audience of students enrolled at Ventura College. I am a published author and have the capability of writing these manuals.

### **Purpose of Sabbatical Project**

The purpose of this sabbatical project is twofold: (1) to develop a publication quality laboratory manuals and workbooks specific to Child Development practicum courses at Ventura College, and (2) to create a comprehensive collection of information to inform the knowledge, skills and practices of the classified staff who supervise students in practicum classes.

### **Components of Sabbatical Project**

#### **\* Creation of Laboratory Manuals**

The focus of my sabbatical project is to develop two original activity manuals; one for use with the laboratory portion of CD V64A Practicum: Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education and one for CD V64B Practicum: Fieldwork in Early Childhood Education. Both of these courses are required for the Certificate of Achievement in Child Development, the A.S. in Child Development, and the AS-T Transfer Degree in Early Childhood Education. Over fifty of these certificates and degrees are awarded each year.

- Academic study/Literature Review/Laboratory Research

In order to fulfill the first phase of the project, I will work with the coaching team of the Ventura County Office of Education, Preschool Programs to identify the most salient concepts, skills, and dispositions needed by early childhood educators in community programs who are part of the Race to the Top project. I will engage in extensive literature review to strengthen my knowledge of laboratory practices and techniques specific to working in classroom settings with young children. I will also work with classified staff of the Orfalea Child Development Center to field test various laboratory activities in order to choose, trouble shoot, and refine the activities to be included in the final laboratory manuals.

### **Value of Sabbatical Project to VCCCD and Ventura College**

Developing publication quality manuals for Child Development can provide recognition to the district and the college. Creating a comprehensive collection of activities for use in practicum classes will improve the competency level and success of students in these classes. Additionally, it will provide an additional venue for adjunct faculty to see the bigger picture of how the content of their individual classes adds to the knowledge and skills that students must demonstrate. By strengthening the laboratory components of the practicum classes, Ventura College will potentially attract students from throughout the district to participate in a model laboratory experience and unique career track educational opportunity that directly links to the competencies required in the workplace.

### **Value of Sabbatical Project to Ventura College Students**

My project of developing two laboratory manuals will have a direct, tangible, benefit to Ventura College students.

Our students are negatively impacted by the fact that there are no comprehensive, compatible laboratory manuals available for Child Development practicum classes and the disconnect between what they learn in their classes and are able to implement in the laboratory. There are no manuals that contain the California specific elements of the Early Learning System and the recently developed and adopted Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). These manuals will:

- Provide a seamless link between what students are learning in their classes, what is demonstrated in the laboratory with children and the competencies they can develop from implementation of the current curriculum and teaching practices.
- Avoid outdated and superfluous laboratory activities.
- Align practicum activities and experiences with competencies required in the workplace and content of the elements of QRIS.
- Provide clear communication to students about expectations that are understood by both faculty and classified staff to ultimately improve student success and workforce skills and competency.

- Provide an affordable resource to students as it can be copied by the campus Cannon Center
- Easily be updated to include content that reflects current changes in the field, thus keeping the students on the cutting edge of early care and education.

### **Value of Sabbatical Project to the Instructor**

Completion of this project during my sabbatical will contribute to my teaching and assist other instructors in the department in seeing how what they teach becomes a part of the demonstrated competencies of students. The information in the manuals will serve as a conduit to further communicate with the classified staff about the changes in the field. This project will allow me to be immersed in the early care and education workforce of Ventura County to see first-hand what is expected of our graduating students. My personal mantra is "What is best for students" and I truly believe the development of these manuals is best for students. I am excited about the possibility of students leaving Ventura College with a resource that can help them transition to the workplace.

Thank you to the committee members for their time and consideration of this Sabbatical Proposal

Respectfully,



Jennifer Parker  
Professor of Child Development