

**Destandardizing Standard Written English and its Assessment:
Diversifying, Equitizing, and Fostering Success in College Composition**

Sabbatical Leave Proposal 2024-2025

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Introduction:

It is with immense excitement that I submit this **Sabbatical Leave project proposal for the 2024-2025 academic year (full-year project)**. During my leave, I will execute and synthesize research on the topic of composition equity. Current academic conversations emphasize the importance of decentering Standard Written/Academic English and its assessment to amplify African, Latine, and Asian Vernacular Englishes, and challenging conventional grading practices that privilege SW/AE. **This project proposes that pedagogy informed by language justice and assessed through ungrading methodology can increase student engagement, retention, and success.**

1a-c. Value of the proposed leave to students, College, and District:

This project focuses on creating best practices for implementing language and assessment justice in composition-centric courses (IGETC and UC transfer pathways) and student services (e.g. letter applications for scholarship, transfer, and so forth). Composition courses and assignments pervade all academic disciplines and many student support services. As community college students are presented with more choices than ever to achieve formerly academic-only certifications, and need increasingly innovative and unconventional methods through which to obtain them, outdated curriculum and views of success fail to equip students for success outside college and university walls, if they make it out with a certificate or degree in the first place. Thus, **identification and reimagining of linguistic and assessment barriers, and the academy's response to them, has the potential to transform not just English pedagogy, but student experience across all aspects of higher education.**

It is impossible to implement true language and grading equity without adapting an intentional, culturally responsive approach to working with students of diverse vernacular origins. Although seemingly new and revolutionary focuses, **linguistic and assessment justice speaks directly to the VCCCD District mission by:**

- **Focusing on the production of “student learning in lower division level academic transfer and career/vocational degree and certificate programs,”**
- **Working to “enhance state, regional, and local economic growth and global competitiveness,” of graduates and faculty, staff, and administration because it sees increased numbers of students persisting in and completing academic programs,**
- **Collaborating with the goals of offering “supplemental learning services that contribute to student success are offered” by reimagining practitioner-student interactions,**
- **Demonstrating “Ongoing, student learning outcomes assessment and systematic program review” to “ensure District-wide excellence through sustainable, continuous quality improvement” by reimagining of SW/AE and conventional grading practices.**

This project has immense potential to support all writing-centric courses and services college- and district-wide, especially transfer-required composition activities (courses and services) in the areas of onboarding, enrollment, retention, and transfer. It also speaks directly to the missions of AB705 and AB1705 by adding a particular emphasis on accessibility for minoritized student populations. This project also speaks to the College's and District's expectation that faculty, staff, and administrators engage in regular and ongoing professional development, which I have contributed

to in co-coordinating and co-facilitating the Division 128 Gaining Perspectives and College- and Districtwide Curriculum Audit workshops (2020-2022). The heart of these activities is cultural intelligence through the lens of language diversity as a cultural asset and requires formal training in understanding the systems and value of each vernacular English as well as best practices for assessing it using culturally responsive pedagogy.

1d. Value of the proposed leave on the candidate's professional competence:

Academia inhabits a period of transition from old to new ways of teaching and evaluating student writing, and it takes time to both learn the new ethos of diversity and inclusion, and unlearn the old Eurocentric privilege, and have the time and space to negotiate the ensuing personal identity transition in the process. My intention is that this sabbatical project will create the space for me to do this essential work so I can weave together the pieces of this tapestry into a complete, though ever-evolving, collective; this dedicated time will ensure my professional competence is sufficient to sustain this conversation upon my return.

Outcomes, Dissemination, and Implementation:

My goal is to meet student-centric outcomes that can be easily disseminated and adopted across College and District disciplines and divisions, and I propose the following deliverables upon completion of the sabbatical project:

- Language and Grading Equity Handbook
 - Adapting an existing template that I use in my current classes, I will develop a digital textbook-type handbook with theory, best practices, and worksheets for inclusive assessment and feedback that support diverse languages across academic areas requiring written and spoken activities.
- LibGuide:
 - I will create an annotated bibliography of the most recent and relevant research on language and grading equity and work with the library to create a user-friendly LibGuide for the College.
- Professional Learning and Development:
 - Using the style and spirit of the work I did designing and facilitating the “Gaining Perspectives” and “Curriculum Audits” workshops (2020-2022), I will design a semesterly presentation, webinar, and/or series of workshops for faculty, staff, and administration that identifies key theories and shifts in pedagogy and interaction with students through the lenses of language and assessment equity.

Timeframe:

My sabbatical project is robust and I believe 2 semesters is needed to achieve completion.

The first semester will be spent in research, collaboration, and synthesis of the existing body of literature and praxis:

- Semester 1: Fall 2024
 - *August-September: Research*
I will emphasize research approx. 2015-present because 2015 (see attached working bibliography) marked a groundbreaking shift in the establishment and promotion of culturally responsive pedagogy. It is also important to bring into these conversations all we have learned about student needs and learning since 2020, particularly with regard to COVID and the world's social justice reckoning.

- *October: Annotated Bibliography Production*
I will create an AB of completed research to organize material for each of the project's deliverables: language and grading equity handbook; LibGuide; professional development workshops
- *November-December: Interviews with Linguistic Justice Practitioners*
I will perform interviews with and observations of existing language justice- and ungrading informed- programs (e.g. Michelle Gonzalez, Los Positas College's Next Level English program; Glendale College Language Justice project; 3CSN programming on language and grading equity and ungrading; etc.)

The second semester will be spent in consolidation, instructional design, program development, and dissemination:

- Semester 2: Spring 2025
 - *January: LibGuide Development*
Working with College librarians, I will devise a guide with bite-sized best practices, research, and resources that the College community can use as reference and in their work with students.
 - *February-March: Handbook Construction*
I will adapt an easy-to-follow workbook with lesson suggestions and workshops informed by linguistic and grading equity that faculty and staff can adapt to the work they do with students.
 - *April-May: Presentation and Workshop Development for 2025-2026*
I will create a department presentation of the project as well as a devise a series of campus workshops (topics, slideshows, videos) that can be used as part of the campus Professional Development work. I will also participate in the 3rd annual Language Justice conference, hosted by Glendale College

Working Bibliography

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