

Application for Professional Leave for 2004-2005

Yilin Sun, Ph.D.

Seattle Central Community College

December 4, 2003

A. Project Description

1. Abstract

My sabbatical project is to conduct class observations and develop case stories about working with immigrant adult ESL students at community colleges. I have been involved with case writing for the Critical Moments (CM) project coordinated by the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education at Seattle Central since 1999. However, those case stories mainly focus on issues around students of color or underrepresented students at regular college programs. The goal of the Critical Moments project is to increase the number of students of color and other under-represented students to complete their college programs. The few ESL cases that the CM team at SCCC developed focused exclusively on the issues of ESL students integrating into the mainstream college classes. At present, there is little case study done on issues surrounding adult ESL students not yet in college level programs.

As an ESL educator and an active team member of the Critical Moments project, I see the real needs to use case study approaches at a different level and develop cases on issues around adult ESL students in the Basic Studies program using life experiences from ESL students and for ESL students. The ESL cases can serve as an effective tool to foster students' critical thinking skills and increase their success in learning English and integrating into the U.S. society.

I propose to develop 3-5 cases on various ESL students' issues at the community college setting where a large majority of immigrant ESL learners are served. The cases will be used for high intermediate and advanced ESL students, such as Level 5 and 6 ESL students in the Basic Studies Program at Seattle Central.

The project will not only enhance the breath of my teaching experience at a different level, but also will provide ESL students new opportunities in language learning and problem solving. I will also share the cases with interested colleagues and other ESL teacher educators.

2.

Goals/Objectives

My first objective is to conduct library research on relevant resources on different case study approaches in order to design cases that work best for adult ESL students at community colleges. The second objective is to interview ESL students and teachers to identify key issues for case writing. The third objective is to observe ESL classes at different community college ESL programs, such as programs at Bellevue Community College, Highline Community College, Renton Technical College, South Seattle Community College, North Seattle Community College and Seattle Central, to gain in-

depth information on what is going on in the classroom. The fourth objective is to develop 3-5 cases with study questions. The fifth objective will be to incorporate the cases into the department course syllabi and enhance students' learning.

Plan and Timeline

March 2004: Prior to my sabbatical leave, I will attend the TESOL International Convention at Long Beach California to learn current theoretical and practical information in TESOL field and find out the trends and key issues of working with adult immigrant students at community college settings at the national level.

During Sabbatical:

Week 1-2

- Conduct library research on relevant resources on developing case studies; I'll visit libraries, such as SCCC library, University of Washington library, Northwest Resource Library and TESOL website.
- Contact Washington Center on their resources on case studies.
- Contact potential students, teachers and programs and develop interview questions.

Week 3-5

- Interview ESL students and teachers at SCCC to identify issues for case writing
- Visit at least three other community college ESL programs and conduct class observations and teachers and students interviews to gain more insights from other programs for developing cases.

Week 6-10:

Analyze and synthesize collected information and resources, identify key issues and develop and write 3 - 5 ESL cases with study questions.

Week 11:

Develop final report of the project:

3. Demonstrate How You Have Achieved the Objectives

Within one quarter of returning from the leave, I will submit three copies of a written report with a summary of the steps I took to accomplish the objectives and the final product and 3- 5 ESL cases, each accompanied with study questions.

I will make the cases I developed available in the ESL Department Syllabi binders and will conduct case study workshops and seminars to share the project with colleagues and other ESL educators.

4. **Additional Financial Support:** I plan to request support from the President's Fund and/or the Lockwood Foundation Faculty Development Fund at Seattle Central to cover some of cost for in state and out of state site visits.

5. Not applicable to this project

B. Benefits of This Project

B.1. Benefit to Students: Case studies have been proven to be effective in fostering students' critical thinking and problem solving skills. Important for mainstream students, these are even more crucial for ESL students in their language learning and on their journey of integrating successfully into the U.S. society. The cases that I plan to develop will address important issues that are identified by other ESL students, such as second language learning difficulties, being misunderstood or discriminated, unable to negotiate articulately, and cross-cultural differences and stereotypes so they can relate the issues in the case studies to their own experience and explore strategies and ways to overcome barriers and challenges. They can also gain confidence and support from each other to achieve success at school and at work.

B.2. Benefit To Instructional Program: Instructional programs will benefit in terms of deepening the division's effort to provide students with course materials rich in critical thinking and cultural diversity content. The authentic issues in the cases will help the ESL instructors in the division better understand the challenges and difficulties that ESL students face and inspire teachers to work together and develop effective ways to enhance teaching and students learning. The Core Values of the Basic Studies Division clearly states that we need "to expand student awareness of self-worth and of access to opportunities, including higher education". The goals of the cases are to inform and inspire ESL students to excel in their school and career lives, and to help our ESL program gain insights into ways we can further improve and facilitate students' success. Thus, the proposed study fits the mission of the division in a very responsive way.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the cases in the existing curriculum will further enhance and broaden the ESL program's ability to incorporate diversity issues, to promote more successful students into the college program and strengthen the multicultural education commitment of the college.

B.3. Benefit the College and Community: The product and the process from such project will benefit college and ESL community in a number of ways. The cases will enrich the college's retention and diversity efforts, further raise the awareness of ESL students and profession, enhance the existing college ESL curriculum materials and have a positive impact on facilitating ESL student success and improving institutional programs and services for ESL students.

I will also share the project with other ESL educators at the National TESOL's Adult Education work group, WAESOL's annual conference and at WAESOL newsletter so more ESL educators and programs could use or adapt the cases for their ESL students as an out reach effort to the local and national ESL communities.

3. Benefit Professional/Personal Development Potential for Instructor

I have been working at Seattle Central Community College for more than nine years now and this is my first time applying for a sabbatical leave. I have a strong interest in research and curriculum material writing. Doing a project like this has been in my mind for a long time, and I look forward to the opportunity to step back from the demands of daily teaching and other duties to focus on this project. With this project, I will update my skills in ESL material development and writing. It will also help me increase my understanding of the case studies and explore ways to use case studies in ESL teaching and learning. In addition, I will be refreshed and eager to resume my teaching and learning experience at Seattle Central when I get back from the sabbatical leave.