



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE



As the fall term begins, we find ourselves still facing the unprecedented impact of not one, but two pandemics: COVID-19 and the pandemic of racial injustice that continue to grip our nation. I have spent time this summer reflecting on these pandemics and what role we as educators who prepare educational professionals might have in ensuring that we don’t “return to normal” once the viral pandemic is resolved, as normal wasn’t working for each and every learner. I also have been thinking about our faculty and how they have been responding to both pandemics.

Once Chancellor White announced in May that the CSU would be primarily virtual in the fall, the teaching and learning centers on all 23 campuses rolled out an array of professional learning for faculty. According to Dr. Emily McGruder, Director, Institute for Teaching and Learning, Office of the Chancellor, “...it would be difficult to overstate the significance of what CSU faculty did in the spring. They kept teaching, so our students could keep learning. They quickly pivoted to what some called “emergency remote teaching” – some practically overnight – with the support of teaching and learning centers, directors of academic technology, instructional designers, faculty serving as peer mentors, and very likely students who offered suggestions for selecting and using new academic technology and digital platforms.”

In Fall 2019, there were 4,323 fully online sections. In Spring 2020, approximately 74,000 sections transitioned from face-to-face to remote modalities. And this summer, CSU faculty continued to hone their teaching skills by enrolling in professional development in unprecedented numbers. Clearly our faculty continue to put student success at the forefront of their work.

In regard to the pandemic of racial injustice, as you have read, the COVID-19 virus has had a disparate impact on Black, Brown, and poor communities and has shone a bright spotlight on the systemic inequities that exist in

our schools and communities. Our department leadership team believes that schools are the epicenter to dismantle racism and inequities, and if this is true, what is our role as educators? What do educator preparation programs need to include to ensure that future teachers, counselors, and leaders have the knowledge and skills to educate their students to ensure equity and excellence for all? What content and clinical experiences do our programs need to provide to prepare all of our students to become culturally responsive educators who can be the change agents that we so need at this time. And most importantly for all of you as CSU literacy faculty, how can literacy be used as a tool for social justice and change?

I don’t presume to have the answer to this last question, and I look to your guidance to help our system answer this question and the many others that are resulting from these unprecedented times. I look forward to the lessons you are learning about teaching and clinical experiences that will help to inform our collective path forward, so that when we do return to “the new normal” there will be a heightened focus on equity and excellence for all students.

Take good care, Marquita

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Mimi Miller is a professor and literacy educator at CSU Chico, where she teaches and supervises pre-service teachers in the Multiple Subject Credential Program. Dr. Miller's scholarly work focuses on literacy instruction across disciplines and the meaningful use of assessment for student learning and teacher development. During her 20 years at CSU Chico she has held several leadership roles in the School of Education including Director of Assessment and Accreditation and Multiple Subject Program Coordinator.

Dr. Miller has also been a leader in grant-funded initiatives to transform teacher preparation. After co-directing CSU Chico's Triad Project as part of the New Generation of Educators Initiative (NGEI), Dr. Miller documented learnings from 10 CSU campuses in the report [*Transforming Teacher Education: The New Generation of Educators Initiative*](#). The focus of the New Generation of Educators Initiative (NGEI) was to answer the question "What would it take to transform teacher education?" From 2016 to 2019, with support from the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, teacher education programs at 10 California State University (CSU) campuses partnered with local school districts to design and demonstrate innovative practices that could transform teacher preparation. The report documents the learnings from multiple participants in this transformative work, including Foundation program staff and representatives from partnerships between universities and school districts. Currently, using the outcomes from the NGEI grant, Dr. Miller is working with a team of faculty and the chancellor's office to write a grant that would establish a CSU Center for the Transformation of Teacher Education. The mission of the center is to fundamentally transform educator preparation to achieve its vision of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive educator workforce for California's students.



At the state level, Dr. Miller's record includes service to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing as team lead on accreditation visits and expert panel member for revising the literacy Teacher Performance Expectations. Dr. Miller is an advocate for policy change in teacher education in California, collaborating with representatives from educational organizations to write legislation that removes barriers to the teaching profession for teachers of color.

Dr. Miller earned her BA in English and Psychology from the University of Notre Dame and her PhD in Education from Stanford University. Before becoming a teacher educator, Dr. Miller taught in diverse settings, including urban San Diego and the Navajo Nation.

The Center for the Advancement of Reading and Writing is fortunate to have such a passionate and accomplished faculty member. We are so grateful for Dr. Miller's presence on the Faculty Council!



NEWS FROM THE CENTER

Another first day of school has come and gone. On the surface, this school year appears very different from many others. However, one thing that remains constant is the educator's quest for continuous improvement. The PK-12 teachers I know are working tirelessly to make their virtual curricula relevant, rigorous and engaging. For teachers, this desire to do better never seems to cease regardless of the circumstances. And, similarly, CAR/W is driven by CSU-teacher educators who position their own continuous improvement at the core of their work regardless of the circumstances.

This summer, I had the good fortune to work with a diverse group of dedicated teacher-educators from the CAR/W Faculty Council. As part of our ongoing work with the 2020 CSU Literacy Project, these faculty spent the summer collaborating so as to critically reflect on practice and improve their own pedagogy. Faculty hailed from nine different CSU campuses and represented both multiple and single subject credential programs. Each faculty member identified a particular course in the literacy sequence at their campus that they would like to focus on for improvement work.

First, the team spent time sharing course syllabi and reflecting on a signature assignment that they thought was of great value. Each of these syllabi, assignments and accompanying materials was uploaded to a shared drive so that faculty could collaborate and utilize these resources. Some of these high-quality assignments included:

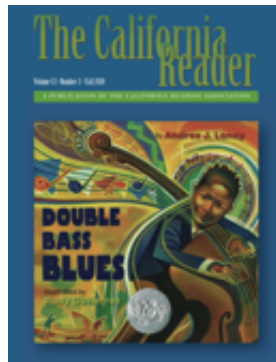
- detailed and rigorous case studies focusing on the comprehensive assessment of young readers,
- in-depth learning segments fronting the importance of modeling as a high-leverage practice when teaching comprehension in ways that disrupts patterns of inequity, and
- a unit of study focusing on enabling, launching, and orchestrating group discussion using non-fiction texts and young adult literature to support literacy across the content areas.

Then, the faculty self-identified a segment of the same course that they would like to improve. Upon synthesizing areas for growth, faculty were placed in three focus groups based on the following topics: embedding the CA Dyslexia Guidelines in coursework, identifying and utilizing high-quality video for English single-subject courses, and how to best use technology when teaching multiple-subject reading methods in synchronous Zoom class sessions. Some of the finished shared products included:

- research-based dyslexia learning modules embedded with the CA Dyslexia Guidelines,
- literacy-based inquiry observations utilizing video rather than in-person student data collection methods, and
- an annotated spreadsheet that summarizes and evaluates sources of video for use in single-subject literacy methods courses.

The finished products were shared with the subgroup and will be shared with the larger council at our meeting in fall. Additionally, faculty who worked in the subgroups will report out to the larger council on the collaborative process. One reason for sharing with the council is to discuss the notion of building this type of work into the infrastructure of the Center so that continuous improvement efforts become normal operating procedures. Our plan is to continue this subgroup work throughout the 2020/2021 academic year.

THE CALIFORNIA READER



At CAR/W, we continue to value our partnerships with other important California stakeholders in literacy education. Most recently, I was invited to publish a piece in the California Reading Association's *The California Reader* (Flushman, 2020). The intention of the piece was to both share our efforts with their readership but also make

clear the relationship between our mutual work. CRA has been a longstanding partner with us in fostering literacy achievement in the state and we are happy to contribute to the most recent issue of their journal!

EXPOSITORY READING AND WRITING CURRICULUM (ERWC) UPDATE

This summer has been a very busy and exciting time for ERWC as we have adjusted to the new normal and put our professional learning, our curriculum, and our leader certification online. We have moved our work to Canvas and are putting all of our professional learning for teachers in the field online with Canvas. We certified over 150 professional learning leaders this summer and have already hosted or scheduled over ten workshops.

We also published our professional learning resources binder and have almost completed ERWC 3.0 with over 60 modules available for teachers to choose from as they are designing their classes. We hosted seven Summer Institutes as part of our i3 grant and hosted module chats with the authors of many of the modules coming on to discuss with teachers how to modify the modules for online instructions. We are still working on the customizable readers and the mini-module reader is almost ready to be ordered.

We hosted seven spring webinars plus a special webinar session in June with Vershawn Ashanti Young and a special book chat with Carol Jago. These webinars have been attended by hundreds of teachers and can be accessed on the ERWC homepage. Please stay tuned for more webinars in the fall as well as a number of other ways to be and stay involved.





MISSION STATEMENT

The CSU Center for the Advancement of Reading and Writing, dedicated to excellence in literacy instruction, promotes the preparation of knowledgeable and highly skilled teachers and reading/literacy specialists in the California State University by:

- Facilitating faculty communication and research;
- Disseminating research and policy information;
- Fostering connections among the CSU literacy faculty, P-12 partners, and public education stakeholders; and
- Serving as a forum for the interchange of public and academic interests.

The Center is committed to ensuring that California's children and adolescents will be capable readers and writers; as such, they will have the greatest chance of becoming successful and productive citizens in today's changing world.

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CONTACTING THE CENTER

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