



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE



With the spring term underway, I hope that you have had a smooth start to your classes and that you are all safe and healthy. I write to you reflecting on the historic events we as citizens have just experienced beginning with the insurgency in our nation’s capital on January 6 and the inauguration of our 46th president. As President Biden and Vice President Harris begin their work, I am both hopeful and anxious. Hopeful that President Biden and his team will work to mend the divisiveness that has erupted in our nation in the last several months, and anxious, that the “mountain” that our nation has to climb, is steep and fraught with potential pitfalls.

In reflecting on the work that you do, I am wondering about the civics and democracy lessons inherent in your work going forward. Education Week described teachers as the nation’s first responders to world historical developments and an interesting article in the Washington Post recently (<file:///C:/Users/mgrenot-scheyer/Desktop/Social%20studies%20and%20civics%20teachers%20struggle%20with%20real-time%20history%20lessons%20-%20The%20Washington%20Post.html>) describes what educators are thinking about as they plan lessons for their students.

As CSU literacy faculty, what are you considering as you design your lessons for our future teachers? What do they need to know (and be able to do) to demonstrate for their future students how our government works — or is supposed to work. And what are you teaching about America’s “truth,” which includes our history of slavery and white supremacy? How are you helping our future educators to understand equity and social injustice from both an historical perspective as well as in our contemporary context? As always, I look forward to learning from all of you.

Take good care, Marquita

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Marcy Merrill is a professor and literacy educator at Sacramento State, where she is the Chair of the Language and Literacy Graduate Master’s program. In this role, she recruits, manages, and evaluates the program, as well as teaches her wonderful graduate students, serves as thesis advisor, and runs the literacy clinic held on campus. Currently she is completing work to obtain the credential and authorization in literacy. In addition, she teaches academic literacy and methods to the English pre-service teachers in the Single Subject Credential Program. During her 20 years at CSU Sacramento she has held several leadership roles on campus to include the Chair of the Writing and Reading Subcommittee of the Senate, a group that manages the University student writing journal, local literacy conferences, and created the University-Wide writing rubrics.

Dr. Merrill’s scholarly work focuses on literacy instruction across disciplines and revision in the writing process. Her work in Cross-disciplinary teaching is exemplified

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT (*continued*)

in her work with her students and her scholarly work. She works with social science colleagues on issues such as Holocaust education, and with math colleagues on making curriculum accessible for language learners. The next edition of her literacy text, *Literacy in Grades 4-8: Best Practices for a Comprehensive Program*, will be completed this year. Dr. Merrill has been researching revision and the importance of writers spending time on that process during her career. She has written and presented about this topic internationally, and teaches a course each year on teaching writing.

Dr. Merrill has also been a leader in many CSU initiatives. One of the longest serving CARW members, she has served as her campus' representative for the Center for Advancement of Reading and Writing since 2003. Furthermore, she has served on the task force for the Expository Reading and Writing Committee (ERWC) since 2005, developing, assessing, and providing professional learning to hundreds of middle and high school teachers in northern California. Additionally, she has created material for the curriculum and studied and coached teachers, most recently with teachers of language learners, using this curriculum in a full year course. She has also worked with the Early Assessment Program (EAP) group for roughly 19 years. Currently, Dr. Merrill works with a team of faculty and the chancellor's office to evaluate a 12th grade math course, which was developed for students in California. She helped to create the online professional learning for math teachers who want to teach the course.

Dr. Merrill earned her BA in English and Secondary Education from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and her Reading Specialist's credential, Masters and Doctoral degree from University of Virginia. She taught high school English for 12 years before becoming a professor at California State University, Sacramento in 2002. Dr. Merrill taught in diverse high school settings, including English in Charlottesville, VA and Augusta, Georgia, and special education in an experiential school in Vermont. One of her great joys of her job is spending time in classrooms, learning from teachers.

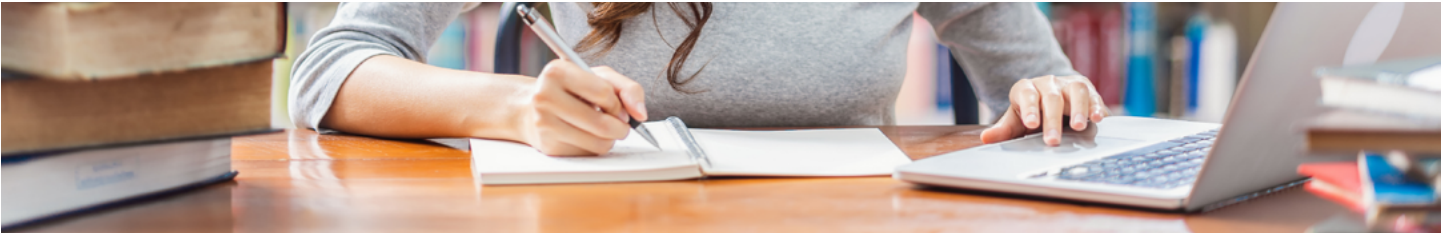
The Center for the Advancement of Reading and Writing is fortunate to have such a passionate and accomplished faculty member. We are so grateful for Dr. Merrill's presence on the Faculty Council!



NEWS FROM THE CENTER

We welcomed a new year with great hopes and aspirations for good health, equality and progress. And, even though we see glimmers of hope with vaccines and more equitable and humane policy, our country remains more divisive than ever. Teachers and teacher educators, however, cannot be swayed by this divisiveness as the work of literacy education goes on regardless of pandemics or political affiliations. Teachers, perhaps more than others, recognize the need to work with all stakeholders in order to collaborate while working towards a common good, the education and future of humanity.

To that end, we at CAR/W, continue to take an assets-based approach to literacy teacher education as we welcome the expertise and seek to partner with our diverse colleagues across the state. One such partnership that we are nurturing is with the UC/CSU California Collaborative for Neurodiversity and Learning. California established the UC/CSU California Collaborative in 2019 as a new initiative focused on using emerging brain research to inform better practices for California's children with learning differences. CSUN, in collaboration with UCLA and other California State University campuses serving the Los Angeles area, has been charged with the development of teacher preparation models that will embed new knowledge about how children learn and how the brain is involved in reading and literacy.



NEWS FROM THE CENTER (*continued*)

With the common goal of training high-quality literacy educators, I have been meeting with Dr. Sue Sears, Professor in the Special Education Department at CSUN and CSU-lead for the Collaborative. Our efforts began with learning and listening about our common efforts as I attended CSU Collaborative working group meetings to get a better sense of their aims and objectives. Likewise, Dr. Sears would later come and present their work at one of our CAR/W Faculty Council meetings. At CAR/W, we have the good fortune of having faculty on our council who also serve on the CSU-working group for the Collaborative. One positive outcome from this collaborative effort has been the sharing of research-based dyslexia learning modules based on the CA Dyslexia Guidelines and other materials.

We look forward to learning and growing through our continued partnership with the UC/CSU California Collaborative for Neurodiversity and Learning throughout this year and into the future. Together we can do good things for the children and teachers of California.



EXPOSITORY READING AND WRITING CURRICULUM (ERWC) UPDATE

ERWC is excited to announce its burgeoning social media presence, opportunities for teacher leadership, and expanded learning opportunities. We are currently launching a social media blitz in ERWC that will include webcasts, podcasts, a blog, a twitter account, and a LinkedIn account.

As we have been thinking about expanding the learning of ERWC beyond the 4 day workshop, we have decided to expand our presence in social media and provide opportunities for our teachers to share classroom tips, online transformations, and what works well for various settings. We hope to use this as a forum for teachers to explore modules they have not taught and to collaborate with other teachers on planning and implementation.

As all of this is coming into place, we do have our spring webinar series ready to go. We have three coming up as follows:

Talking and Teaching about Race in the Classroom

Presenter: Tricia Ebarvia

February 17th from 3:30 to 4:30 PST

Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy.

Presenter: April Baker-Bell

March 16th from 3:30 to 4:30 PST

Better, Faster, and More Equitable Feedback

Presenter: Matthew Johnson

April 20th from 3:30 to 4:30 PST

To sign up for the webinars, please go to <https://calstate.eventsair.com/teaching-for-change/site> to sign up. Be on the lookout for information on the blog and podcast launch sometime this spring.



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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