

In 1997, UC LMRI established an Education Policy Center at UC Davis to disseminate research findings to policymakers. The Center sponsored research and colloquia on policy issues in the education of English learners.

In January, 2007, Patricia Gándara, Associate Director for Policy, relocated to UCLA and although the Center, as such, was essentially dissolved as a unit, Professor Gándara continues her work on EL policy issue for UC LMRI.

POLICY NEWS ARCHIVE:

October 29, 2007

[California Education Policy Convening](#)

This unprecedented event brought together more than 300 top-level education leaders and stakeholders to focus on California Education policy and ideas for reform. More than 50 organizations and individuals submitted policy briefs for the Convening, including UC LMRI's **Russell Rumberger and Patricia Gándara**.

February 1, 2007

Patricia Gándara, UC LMRI's Associate Director for Policy, moved from UC Davis to UCLA effective January 1, 2007, where she will also be co-directing the [Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles](#) (with **Gary Orfield**, its co-founder).

The Civil Rights Project, formerly at Harvard University, will take on a broader and more western agenda as it is resurrected at the Los Angeles campus. Its augmented focii will include issues of immigration, language, and schooling of undocumented students. Gándara notes that she expects *El Proyecto* and UC LMRI to work closely together on many shared interests.

Posted 4/20/07:

The Education Policy Center has been engaged in [the Coachella case](#), which will be heard on April 23, 2007 in San Francisco Superior Court. At that time the judge will be considering an injunction. If that proceeds as expected, he is expected to hear arguments in the case during the third week of May. The Policy Center has been engaged for more than a year in examining the evidence in this case that involves 10 school districts in California that have banded together to sue the state for requiring them--contrary to the language laid down in NCLB--to use invalid and unreliable English-only tests to assess the academic progress of their English learners. We are hoping for a ruling before the end of June.

Julie Maxwell-Jolly and **Patricia Gándara** made presentations to the [Latino Caucus of the California Legislature](#) meeting on education in San Diego county March 22-23, 2007. They reviewed the current situation with English learners in the state and focused on opportunities for legislative intervention around preparation and support of teachers of English learners, as well as on the issues of assessment of these students. These are important opportunities to help legislators and legislative staff shape future legislation.

Julie Maxwell-Jolly continues to work actively with the [Davis Unified School District](#) in rethinking their educational delivery system for English learners. The district is considering some fairly dramatic intervention, which could provide a laboratory for innovation to be closely watched.

Posted 12/5/06:

["UCLA captures academic plum: Luring Harvard's respected Civil Rights Project west is a coup for the university"](#) from the LA Times, 11/29/06: Gary Orfield, the project's current director and its co-founder, will be joined as co-director by [Patricia Gándara](#), a UC Davis education professor since 1990 and frequent collaborator in Civil Rights Project research.

Patricia Gándara, Associate Director of UC LMRI and Director of the UC LMRI Education Policy Center at UC Davis, has taken a position with UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies beginning January 1, 2007. Gándara will continue to direct the Policy Center, and support for the Center through UC Davis will also continue to be provided.

From UC LMRI's Newsletter, Vol. 16, No. 1:

During the recently completed California state legislative session, **Patricia Gándara** and **Julie Maxwell-Jolly** testified on behalf of a bill to increase the professional development opportunities available for teachers of English learners. Although, in the end, the bill did not result in the program and activity originally intended, it did lead to an increase in resources dedicated to providing teachers with opportunities to improve their English learner instructional skills (as part of **SB 472**). The state will soon be looking for providers of quality professional development in this area, so those interested and qualified should contact the CDE regarding this process.

The most recent biliteracy network meeting, held on Thursday, September 28th, featured speaker **Martha Zaragoza-Díaz**, legislative consultant and lobbyist for the **California Association of Bilingual Educators** and **Californians Together**. She provided a review of the recently ended legislative session with regard to English learner-related education legislation and projected issues that will be important in the upcoming session. **Julie Maxwell-Jolly** also reported on a soon-to-be-released paper resulting from a conference organized by the Education Policy Center and sponsored by the **Hewlett Foundation**. The conference focused on providing instruction that promotes academic English among secondary English language learners. The next Biliteracy Network meeting will be held on Thursday, November 30th. For more information, please contact **Sandra Mercuri** at spmercuri@ucdavis.edu.

Thursday, October 19th, the Education Policy Center made a presentation to the **Davis Joint Unified School District** Board of Education, reporting on the Center's year-long, in-depth study of EL programs in the district. The investigation comprised detailed analysis of quantitative data, including a longitudinal analysis of dropout and CAHSEE passage as well as qualitative research including classroom observations, surveys, and interviews. This has been an exciting opportunity to analyze a school system in depth, make recommendations, and now, work with the district on implementing those recommendations. Graduate student researchers, **Cecilia Gómez** and **Lina Méndez-Benavidez** conducted much of this research. Ms Méndez-Benavidez received a grant to support her work on the project from the **UCD School of Education CRESS Center**.

From UC LMRI's Newsletter, Vol. 15, No. 3:

On May 8, 2006, [Patricia Gándara](#) made a presentation to many top officials in the Mexican educational establishment on the plight of Mexican immigrant English learners in the U.S. Gándara was in Mexico City marking a partnership between the [University of California](#) and Mexico to provide online college preparatory curriculum to Mexican-origin students in the U.S. and in Mexico. The collaboration, "**Access To Education Opportunities Without Borders Through Online Learning: The University of California - Mexico Binational Collaboration**," marks a major step in cooperation between the two countries around the education of migrant students, and engages LMRI in these educational innovations. More information can be found on the [UC College Prep web site](#).

The Policy Center was also engaged in writing a declaration on behalf of English learners who are asked to pass the [California High School Exit Examination \(CAHSEE\)](#) when they may not have been given the

opportunity to gain a command of English. Such students often know the material, but cannot express their knowledge in English.

A class-action lawsuit, filed in February 2006 in order to halt the state from denying diplomas to students who do not pass one or both portions of the CAHSEE, resulted in an [injunction](#) against the use of the test for 2006 and is currently expected to be appealed by the state. (See [related item](#), dated May 25, 2006, from the *San Francisco Chronicle*)

From a policy perspective, UC LMRI felt it was important for the state to justify why a student would need to perform math problems in English, or why it is necessary for a student to know only English language arts (as opposed to language arts in another idiom), if the student is able to pass the [California English Language Development Test \(CELDT\)](#) at a level of "proficient," before withholding a diploma. These are questions that have never been addressed in a policy context.

[Julie Maxwell-Jolly](#) and Patricia Gándara have twice presented before the [Assembly Education Committee](#) during the quarter, and met with staff on several occasions to help advise on two Assembly Bills, both sponsored by [Assemblymember Joe Coto](#).

The first, [AB 2117](#), would develop a network of professional development specialists and begin a pilot program to train more trainers and teachers in the skills necessary to effectively teach EL students.

The second, [AB 1988](#), carries a number of provisions including EL-specific 10-hour modules in both teacher preparation and induction programs, more assessment alternatives for EL CAHSEE-takers, and better communication with parents about their educational options for EL students.

AB 2117 passed out of committee unanimously, however AB 1988 is likely to meet with more resistance as it carries a host of provisions all intended to improve the education of English learners, some of which have provoked considerable controversy.

From UC LMRI's Newsletter, Vol. 15, No. 2:

The Policy Center has been active over the last several months in following up on the [Survey of Teachers of English Learners](#), working with the [Latino Caucus of the California Legislature](#) to fashion legislation that would provide better and more professional development for teachers of English learners.

Currently [AB 1988](#), sponsored by [Assemblyman Joe Coto](#), is moving through the legislative process in response to our report. This has been the result of many hours of testifying and working with legislative staff.

On other fronts, we have been active in providing workshops and presentations to a number of organizations and agencies since the publication of "[Listening to Teachers of English Language Learners](#)". We conducted a seminar in the capitol for legislative staff and education stakeholders, an all day workshop in San Joaquin County Office of Education, and wrote an article on our findings for [Language Magazine](#) (January 2006, Vol 5, No. 5).

The North State Bilingual Consortium sponsored two meetings in the fall:

--On September 29, 2006, **Mary Hernandez**, the lead lawyer on [the Coachella lawsuit](#) (brought against the state of California on behalf of 10 districts for the invalid use of English-only tests with English learners), provided background and an update on the case.

--On December 8, 2006, **Donna Christian**, President of the [Center for Applied Linguistics](#), gave a talk on "The State of Dual Language Programs in the U.S." and discussed in detail the program self-evaluation tools that she and her colleagues have developed.

The Policy Center continues to work on a longitudinal study of the academic performance of English learners with the [Davis Joint Unified School District](#) and on a study of the experiences and outcomes of Latino students at the California Community Colleges.

From UC LMRI's Newsletter, Vol. 15, No. 1:

The first 2005-06 meeting of the North State Biliteracy Network was held in Davis on September 29, 2005. Education Rights Attorney **Mary Hernandez** discussed the effects of NCLB accountability on the testing of English learners.

The **Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD)** commissioned the Policy Center to do an evaluation of the English learners program in the district. The objective is to strengthen services provided to these students and develop a template for looking at similar issues in other school districts.

The Policy Center is in the initial stages of conducting a study of the experiences and outcomes of Latino students at the Colleges. We hope to identify predictors of successful retention and transition to 4-year colleges that will help increase degree completion among this population that is disproportionately EL.

The Policy Center is providing background assistance to an effort led by a dozen school districts in California to align state testing policy with NCLB provisions. The objective of this work is to provide more valid and useful test information for both the state and the teachers who teach these students.