

Reacting to Language Policy

I am applying for a CATL Scholars fellowship to revise a reacting pedagogy unit for one of my primary courses and to study student learning outcomes associated with the pedagogy. Additionally, since this fellowship project would include several opportunities for student participation, I plan to examine student involvement in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL).

Project Overview

Last year, I developed and integrated a “Reacting to Language Policy” unit into my Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) course so that students could examine their roles as stakeholders in language policies. Over a four-week period, we recreated the events that led to the passage of California’s Proposition 227, a ballot initiative that limited the amount and type of English as a Second Language instruction that non-native speakers in public K-12 schools could receive. In a role-playing mode, the students assumed the identities of parents, teachers, researchers, and politicians who had significant roles in the debates and campaigns leading up to the state-wide vote on the initiative, and they argued for or against the passage of the initiative, based on what they had learned about the people they represented, language policies, and theories of second language acquisition.

While the unit helped students better understand their roles as future educators/parents/concerned citizens in critically evaluating language policies, several features of the unit would benefit from revision to scaffold students’ research and analyses. Other Reacting to the Past Consortium units have helped address this gap with extensive guidebooks (published by Longman) for student participants; these guidebooks integrate instructions for the unit, resources that students should use as a starting point for their research, and reflective questions to help students connect the common readings to stakeholders’ values and goals.

A CATL Scholar fellowship would enable me to revise my rudimentary materials into a more comprehensive guidebook for students. My goals for these revisions are to:

- Better facilitate student learning about theories of second language acquisition and language policies;
- Communicate the goals of the unit more effectively to students;
- Enhance my own understanding of relevant language policies that impact the teaching of English to speakers of other languages – policies that often vary widely from state to state;
- Create interdisciplinary materials that also could be used in other courses, including a General Studies seminar; and
- Support student inquiry about second language acquisition and language policies through an engaging teaching method.

I hope to publish the unit through the Reacting to the Past Consortium, and a CATL Scholars fellowship would enable me to develop the unit more extensively before I propose the unit for future testing on other campuses. I anticipate that the unit could be used in a number of fields and disciplines beyond TESOL, including Professional Writing & Rhetoric (PWR), interdisciplinary studies, second language acquisition studies, and political science.

Additionally, a CATL Scholars fellowship would allow me to study the pedagogy as a way to teach language policy, second language acquisition theories, and civic engagement. I was hired to design and teach Elon's Introduction to TESOL course, which enrolls primarily English Education majors, but also attracts other education students, PWR students, and others interested in teaching English within the U.S. or abroad. Few schools offered this type of course at the undergraduate level when I first taught it in Fall 2004, so I have focused on refining the course design and on publishing about TESOL pedagogies that I have tried in my course. My previous scholarship has focused primarily on service-

learning, but as I extend my development as a teacher-scholar, I am interested in examining the other pedagogies I use in my classes, including reacting pedagogy.

Because the Reacting to Language Policy unit also emphasizes civic engagement, it has the potential to bridge my TESOL teaching with my responsibilities to the PWR concentration in English. A CATL Scholars fellowship would enable me not only to develop and refine the unit's materials, but also to extend my teacher-scholar research agenda through focused study of the reacting pedagogy in TESOL and PWR (likely in both face-to-face and online learning environments).

Research Design

My proposed CATL Scholars project has three layers: At the project's core, I intend to involve students in the development and revision of the reacting unit. In partnership with that curriculum development, I plan to study student learning outcomes facilitated by the reacting pedagogy. Finally, throughout the two-year fellowship, I hope to examine student involvement in curriculum design and SoTL.

I plan to invite one or two of my current or former ENG 206 students to serve as preceptors for the next iteration of the reacting unit, helping provide students one-on-one support throughout the unit and helping moderate the unit's "game days." In addition, I plan to enlist students both in the research design of a study on student learning outcomes and in revision of unit materials. Student preceptors and student researchers will have the opportunity to participate in both co-authoring the game materials for possible publication and collaboratively writing articles about the pedagogy for publication in TESOL or SoTL journals.

Although I hope to involve students in refining the research design for analyzing the outcomes of this project, my initial research plan includes videotaping class sessions during the unit for later analysis, keeping reflective logs (and assigning students a similar task), and administering pre- and post-

unit assessment measures on civic engagement regarding language policies. I also will collect pre- and post-unit measures of students' understanding of second language acquisition theories.

To study students' involvement in the curriculum design and in SoTL, I will conduct focus groups with my student preceptors and researchers and ask students to maintain reflective research logs. I also will audiotape or videotape preceptor meetings and research meetings so that I can chart students' involvement throughout both the development of the reacting unit and the study of learning outcomes associated with the reacting pedagogy.

Proposed Timeline

- Summer 2009: Test rudimentary materials in online summer course. Design study and obtain IRB approval for investigation of student involvement in Reacting Pedagogy curriculum design and research.
- 2009-2010: Extend and revise Reacting to Language Policy materials. Identify student collaborators. Work with students on research design and on IRB application for studying pedagogical outcomes.
- Summer 2010: Test revised materials in online summer course. Attend reacting conference with student collaborators.
- Fall 2010: Test revised materials in ENG 206: Intro to TESOL. Possibly test revised materials in ENG 313: Special Topics in PWR. Collect data for learning outcomes study.
- Spring 2011: Revise materials for submission to Reacting to the Past Consortium. Work with students on drafting and revising article(s) on pedagogical outcomes for *TESOL Quarterly* and/or a SoTL publication. Draft and revise article(s) on student involvement in Reacting Pedagogy curriculum design and research.

Budget Items

I plan to use the annual CATL Scholar funds for:

- Stipends for student preceptors and research partners
- Food/supplies for meetings with student preceptors and research partners
- Books/materials to review for use with the reacting unit
- Dedicated external hard drive for backing-up unit and research materials
- Travel funds for participation in reacting conferences

Since I will not be able to use both CATL Scholar course releases if I continue to serve as a writing program administrator, I will use the monetary equivalent of at least one course release each year to fund student travel to reacting conferences.