

Sabbatical Leave Report for Fall 2018

Sabbatical Project:  
UCLA Extension TESL/TEFL Certificate

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I am grateful for being given the opportunity to take a semester to add to my teaching skill set prior to my return to the classroom this spring. I chose to earn my TESOL certificate through UCLA Extension's TESL/TEFL program. I did this by completing the four required graduate courses listed below. I earned 20 graduate quarter units, which translates to 13.34 semester units.

- EDUC X 425.01 Methods of Teaching ESL
- EDUC X 425.02 Cultural Diversity in Schools
- EDUC X 425.03 Linguistics for TESL Educators
- EDUC X 435.04 Instructional Technologies for TESL Educators

I chose this as my sabbatical project for a few reasons, but primary among them is that both my teaching and administrative experiences revealed that many students who would be best served in an ESL course choose to take "regular" English instead. I have often wished that I had more formal training in teaching the ESL students as they struggled in my English courses. In addition, I now can be a more flexible faculty member who can cover classes in two of the division's programs.

All of the courses were offered online exclusively, so in addition to learning the content, I also became much more adept in the online teaching environment; having had recently completed Canvas training, I found this particularly useful. In fact, one of the courses, 425.04, focused almost exclusively on technology in the ESL classroom. One of the course objectives for this course is for students to understand the pedagogical principles for using technology in the ESL classroom. ESL learning presents specific challenges and opportunities, and it was very useful to learn about and practice using different technologies in the service of language acquisition.

The first course, 425.01, covered all aspects of ESL teaching, including teaching listening and speaking (ECC's ESL 51 series), reading (the 52 series), and writing (the 53 series) and, like all of the certificate courses, required the creation of lesson plans and a teaching demonstration. I was fortunate to have our own excellent ESL instructors for observations as each course required classroom observations as well. While this course specifically addressed the ESL classroom, all of the content is applicable to non-ESL English courses. The principles of language acquisition are similar across all languages, whether it is a foreign language or another register (such as academic/formal English), so I will put this knowledge to use in all of my classes.

The program features an entire course, 425.02, devoted to cultural diversity in schools. In this course, students explore "issues related to cultural concepts, perspectives, cultural contact, and cross-cultural interaction." This course also required lesson plans, a classroom observation, and a teaching demo, but with a focus on cultural relevance and inclusivity in the classroom. There was much discussion of the classroom environment and the instructor's role in creating a culturally diverse and welcoming teaching environment. Again, this content is not exclusive to ESL as the strategies learned can be applied to all courses.

The course most focused on the nuts and bolts of ESL teaching, 425.03, provided the most concrete teaching practice. In this course, students read about and discussed etymology, semantics, grammar, syntax, dialects, and more. This was probably the most useful course because it is in these areas that many of our

students struggle—teaching grammar to adults is one of the most difficult challenges, and we find this in not only the ESL classroom, but in most of our “regular” English classes as well.

In addition to completing the courses and earning the TESOL certificate, I also compiled several binders full of the coursework and readings from the program. I will share this with the ESL department. As the department looks at growing its non-credit offerings, there has been discussion about minimum qualifications and the different TESOL certificates. My compilation of the syllabi and coursework will provide information on exactly what UCLA Extension’s program entails, and this will serve as a good reference point as the faculty decide which certificates are appropriate for minimum qualifications for teaching both credit and non-credit ESL.

I would like to thank the sabbatical committee for allowing me this amazing opportunity. I am ready and excited to return to the classroom.