

## **The New Majority: Highly Qualified Teachers Maximizing the Success of Hispanic English Language Learners**

### **A. Extent of Need for the Project**

This proposal addresses two articulated needs within the Prince George's County Public School system: helping conditional teachers meet the qualifications for becoming "highly qualified" and providing specific teacher development activities related to reading and language skills for Hispanic students, the fastest growing segment of the school age population in the state and the nation (*The Progress of Education Reform 2004*). According to this recent report, in some states, one of every two children entering school is of Hispanic descent. Hispanic students are significantly more likely than white students to enter kindergarten unprepared for learning, to have to repeat grades, and eventually drop out of school. As articulated in another seminal work, "*Closing Achievement Gaps: Improving Educational Outcomes for Hispanic Children*" (Tomas Rivera Policy Institute 2003), the achievement gap between Hispanic and white children is a product of a range of social, economic, and educational disparities. Among their recommendations for closing the gap within the context of education are the following activities:

*--Increasing the number of teachers with knowledge and skills to teach students from culturally and linguistically, non-English backgrounds*

*--Taking action to ensure that teachers and leaders of schools which serve Hispanic children are knowledgeable, understanding, and respectful about the culture, history, and language of the various Hispanic communities in their respective districts.*

*--Increasing the planning and training necessary to integrate computers, the Internet, and related technologies into more widespread use, across all subjects.*

The current proposal uses these recommendations as guide for a two year teacher professional development program jointly offered by the University of Maryland's **College of Education** and **College of Arts and Humanities** (specifically, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese) and **Region II of Prince George's Public School System** (a high need local educational agency or LEA). Prince George's county is experiencing a surge in the numbers of Hispanic children enrolled in the public school system (16,644 in 2005). Region II has 15% of these students (3721) enrolled. As will be more fully described below, the present proposal is the outcome of extensive joint university/school planning and is designed to help Region II teachers address this growing and needy population with specific emphasis on the core skills of English, reading and language arts. The goals and activities proposed are also highly consistent with national priorities as articulated in the **No Child Left Behind** (NCLB) legislation. Improving the number of "highly qualified" teachers and raising the reading and language arts achievement scores of students are central to this mandate. Hispanic students for whom English may not be their primary language, are particularly vulnerable to falling behind in these critical assessments.

The basis of the proposed intervention ("**The New Majority**") grew out of long standing relationship between the College of Education and Region II of PGCPs. Originally called the "**Bladensburg Project**," the effort began in 2001 as a part of the Maryland Institute for Minority Achievement and Urban Education ("**The Institute**"). Designed to be a truly collaborative effort with the direct involvement of top leadership in the COE and PGCPs, the project has been recognized by the Mid-Atlantic Dean's and Superintendent's Network as a model of its network of federally sponsored partnership support. The Bladensburg Project has provided professional

development activities for over 150 teachers in full credit graduate level courses in mathematics and reading taught by COE faculty. The project has also provided a site for undergraduate students to interact with urban children and serve as role models and sources of information about preparing for college. Student achievement in Region II has been positively impacted: from 2002-2005 Bladensburg high school students doubled High School Assessments (HSA) and Maryland School Assessment (MSA) passing rates in both algebra and geometry. William Wirt Middle school MSA results in math showed improvements in all grade levels from 2004 to 2005. A summary of the achievements to date of the Bladensburg Project is included in the Appendix.

At the request of participating school principals and district administrators and a strong commitment from the College of Education to address relevant community issues, the **“Latino Project”** has been initiated to assist Region II educators in addressing the challenges of educating Hispanic youth (note, while the term “Hispanic” is official US Census language, it is the preference of the professionals involved in this project to use the term “Latino/a” which is more accepted among the target population). A joint agenda has been established that consists of teacher development (to which this proposal is addressed), research on community-school perspectives including gang behavior, and activities to increase family involvement in the public school system. The Appendix includes minutes of the joint COE and Region II planning meetings as well as the other components of the Latino Project, most of which are beyond the scope of the present proposal.

As a result of these discussions, priority was given to creating within Region II of Prince George’s County Public Schools, **a teacher professional development project related to English Language Learners (ELLS), specifically Latino students, that addresses reading and language arts achievement.** Middle and high school teachers were targeted because, in addition to needing to be experts in their certification content area (e.g., history) these teachers require the skill and knowledge to communicate and effectively teach their subject to students in the process of acquiring English as a second language. Thus, the present project intends to provide professional development activities to address these students’ developing language and literacy skills **in secondary content areas.** Based on the educational research and articulated Region II needs, the **New Majority Project** was conceived using a two prong approach to teacher development: intensive, focused and sustained content area **graduate courses and professional development activities** across a two year period. Specifically:

**-Three graduate level courses:** Education Technology Outreach, will address the use of technology as an aid for ELLS in the 3 credit course *“Universal Design for Learning and Literacy for English Language Learners.”* A number of technologies encourage and support the development and maintenance of high levels of language proficiency. The Internet brings authentic language and cultural experiences to students and provides opportunities for them to interact with native speakers. To ensure appropriate education for all students, teachers must enter the classroom equipped with the content knowledge, diverse instructional strategies, and technology integration skills. This course will help amplify a teacher's skills in these areas by adding the additional knowledge of AT devices, Universal Design, curriculum adaptation and integration strategies to help ALL students in the general classroom setting. Participants will learn about the principles of UDL and its application to literacy curriculum for ESOL, to include cross-language relationships, language learning differences, immigration, and inclusive teacher

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practices. *Universal Design for Learning and Literacy* provides a framework for individualizing learning in a standards-based environment through flexible pedagogy and tools.

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**- A four part workshop series**

ETO will offer the technology for the diverse classroom workshop (“*Assessment and Design Strategies for Instructional Decisions for the Diverse Classroom*”).

ETO will also develop a project website that will serve as a resource for teachers during the course of the project. The website will be used as a 1) means of building community among teachers, 2) a communication tool between teachers and the University, and 3) a resource site for materials related to ELLs, reading, language arts, and technology. Furthermore, the website will facilitate the project assessment by permitting electronic data collection of some measures. By the end of the project, effort will be made to link the website to the College’s ETO and therefore continue as a teacher and public resource beyond the original project funding. Additionally, instructional materials and findings will be disseminated to teachers, school administrators, and higher education faculty through conference presentations (e.g. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, National and Maryland Associations of Bilingual Educators).

## Appendix A Graduate Course Syllabi

### *Universal Design/AT for Learning and Literacy for English Language Learners for the General Classroom Settings*

#### Syllabus

**Instructor:** Davina Pruitt-Mentle  
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**Website:** <http://www.edtechoutreach.umd.edu/>  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Credits:** 3 credits

#### **Course Description:**

A number of technologies encourage and support the development and maintenance of high levels of language proficiency. The Internet brings authentic language and cultural experiences to students and provides opportunities for them to interact with native speakers. To ensure appropriate education for all students, teachers must enter the classroom equipped with the content knowledge, diverse instructional strategies, and technology integration skills. This course will help amplify teachers' skills in these areas by adding the additional knowledge of AT devices, Universal Design, curriculum adaptation and integration strategies to help ALL students in the general classroom setting. Participants will learn about the principles of UDL and its application to literacy curriculum for ESOL, to include cross-language relationships, language learning differences, and inclusive teacher practices. *Universal Design for Learning and Literacy* provides a framework for individualizing learning in a standards-based environment through flexible pedagogy and tools.

#### **Goal:**

Amplify teachers' skills in these areas by adding the additional knowledge of AT devices, Universal Design, curriculum adaptation and integration strategies, and assessment and evaluation protocols for ALL students in the general classroom setting.

#### **Objectives:**

With the focus on theories and practices of computer-assisted language learning, the participants in this course will be able to:

1. Promote universal access to learning and communication through technology and discuss **universal design principles** in the context of general education environments and curriculum materials;
2. Explore research on technology alternatives that address students' communication needs across all subject matter areas and all K-12 levels in the context of equity, ethical and legal issues in using technology in schools (MTTS IV);
3. Create appropriate contexts in which ESOL students interact and negotiate meaning in the computer-assisted classroom;
4. Effectively evaluate software and technology-based projects and activities for use in their own classrooms.
5. Develop new computer-enhanced tasks and adapt existing computer-based tasks to suit the needs of their learners, which support "assistive technology" in both interactive and communicative settings and enable learners who have "language differences" and "language disabilities" to benefit from advances in communications technology;
6. Understand the importance and use of on-going assessment in the classroom which illuminates the importance of the interaction as the group's "classroom culture" commingles with individuals' learning characteristics in language, culture, and disabilities;
7. Provide a selective research review, including effective UD instruction in the general classroom, that assists teachers as they reach out to all their culturally and linguistically diverse students, some of whom have disabilities;
8. Review legislative policies and mandates that led to all educators becoming familiar with AT/UD options and become familiar with different technologies and strategies available to meet the mandates designed by IDEA (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act-IDEA '97, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Maryland COMAR regulations that support student access to and progress in the **general curriculum which are applicable and benefit ESOL populations**. To include:
  - discuss the use of "no tech" and "low tech" strategies (larger font size, type of font used);
  - demonstrate how a computerized graphic organizer can assist students;
  - use software to develop an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and exchange information with another professional so that appropriate assistive technology is identified;
  - explore the use of portable keyboards and word processors as assistive technology devices;
  - demonstrate the use of Personal Communication Symbols (PCS) in a variety of instructional situations;
  - explore the use of various software to develop an Individualized Education Plan that includes modifications which are based on the student's strength's and needs;

- explore the use of adaptive keyboards to interact with instructionally appropriate multimedia software;
  - review augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) through the development of multi-level environments;
9. Explore the process for finding the right technology and the right applications for culturally diverse populations, and determine how to pay for it;
  10. Explore and discuss how to establish a technology team with an assistive technology representative, perform a school wide assessment of all student needs and develop a school and/or classroom tech plan;
  11. Share knowledge of important issues and trends related to assistive technology-enhanced content through online collaborative group discussions and reflect upon student experiences in a Web enhanced/Web-based course;

### **Readings:**

Recommended readings are included in this syllabus. **Others** can be found at [www.edtechoutreach.umd.edu](http://www.edtechoutreach.umd.edu) and within a WebCT supplement.

### **Texts:**

### **Not Required to Purchase:**

- Full Text Found Online
  - David H. Rose & Anne Meyer. Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age: Universal Design for Learning. ASCD, 2002. Full text online at: <http://www.cast.org/teachingeverystudent/ideas/tes/>
  - How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School. <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309070368/html/>
- Additional recommended readings are included in this syllabus. Others can be found at: <http://www.edtechoutreach.umd.edu/>

### **Methodology:**

This course will utilize a combination of on-line lecture (and if needed face-to-face lecture) and reading materials, hands-on experiences, discussions, virtual guest speakers, case study analyses, group work and projects to help participants understand effective strategies for integrating assistive technology into their classroom (when and where appropriate) .

### **Student Expectations and Procedures:**

1. Students are expected to obtain and actively use a computer account with access to the Internet and WebCT discussion site (the University provides such accounts free to enrolled students.) Students are expected to use **anti-virus software and backup all work**. Since the course will primarily meet on-line it is of importance that you assure that your computer access can easily support the WebCT

environment. WebCT Student Manual -

<http://www.courses.umd.edu/studentmanual/>

2. Completion of assigned tasks and readings **prior to each class** (the preset catalog time) is required in order to facilitate student learning.
  - o Take the Online Self-Assessment Survey -  
<http://www.vto.vt.edu/survey.php>
3. It is expected that students will initiate, participate in and facilitate on-line discussions on course topics, issues and readings.
4. **If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations please contact me as soon as possible.**
5. Students missing the deadline for an assignment must make immediate arrangements with the instructor to fulfill that requirement before the next class session.
6. Please carefully edit all written assignments. A lack of care in proofreading or composition can negatively effect your final grade.
7. The citation style employed should be accurate, acceptable, and recognizable (MLA, Chicago or APA) practice. **The American Psychological Association (APA: <http://www.apa.org> ) style of citation is preferred.** For quick basics, visit:
  - o UMCP reference site [http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/library\\_guides.html](http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/library_guides.html)
  - o Purdue Owl Lab  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/APA/index.html>
  - o Columbia University Press -  
[http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx\\_basic.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html)
  - o Columbia Guide to Online Style/ACW style "help sheets"-  
<http://www.cas.usf.edu/english/walker/mla.html>
8. The University of Maryland has developed a policy describing appropriate academic conduct. Turning in assignments that use substantial portions of the work of others without attribution is considered plagiarizing and is specifically prohibited. Please review information regarding the [Honor Code](#) and other academic integrity policies at: <http://www.jpo.umd.edu/conduct/conduct.html>.
9. Should you find it necessary to take an Incomplete (I) in this class, please complete the standard UMCP Incomplete Contract form available in the College of Education Access Center, 1210 Benjamin Building, two weeks before the end of the semester.
10. No part of any lecture or course content may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any informational storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the instructor.

## **Instructor Responsibilities**

Just as we have high expectations for students, we also have high expectations for ourselves. Students should expect that the instructor for this course will:

1. Be prepared for class, read and return students' work in a timely manner, and be interested and engaged in students' work;
2. Remember that each student brings different background knowledge about both content and online experiences to this course, as well as help students develop their personal interests whenever possible;
3. Help students identify sources of additional substantive and methodological expertise, as needed;
4. Meet with students individually or in groups upon request and be available in person, by telephone, and by email to answer questions; and
5. Work hard, have fun and empower students to plan and engage in high quality discussions and experiences.
6. Email with students is not always a low threshold technology. Students sometimes feel that faculty/instructors should be available to answer questions 24/7 or whenever the student is online. This expectation of an immediate response can occasionally create a negative communication environment. Students' emails can also add significantly to faculty/instructor workload. While my past performance has indicated that I return emails promptly (sometimes to students surprise within minutes), in order to eliminate the possibility of problems due to assumptions, the following is the course minimal guideline: All emails will be answered within 24 hours of receipt except on weekends (begins after 4:00 on Friday)-which may take longer. I do however; **HIGHLY** recommend that you send emails whenever a question arises, while the above is only a statement of minimal expectations on my part.

### **Grading Policy and Rubrics:**

Grades will be based on the on-time completion of course requirements and on the scope, quality and creativity of the papers/projects. Consideration will also be given to the content, clarity of writing and creativity of work in assignments completed for this course. The **extent and quality** of participation in course discussions (face to face and virtual) will also be evaluated in determining the final grade. The relative portion of the grade assigned to each course component will include:

1. **Participation** in face to face/**on-line discussion threads and scheduled chat sessions** (~3-5 chats will be scheduled throughout the semester. Dates and times are determined by the group-chats are mandatory/worth double points/200 instead of 100 points) and follow up replies (**25%**)
2. **Mini-assignments and activities** (i.e., consultant case studies, **one field trip** is scheduled to the on campus AT lab or a virtual tour) and evaluation, critiquing, and discussion of peer work (**25%**)
3. **Group IEP** (Individualized Education Plan—based on ESOL case study, not 508) **Exercise/Lesson Plan (20%)**
4. **Individual IEP** (Individualized Education Plan—based on your own ESOL student/s, not 508) **Exercise/Lesson Plan (20%)** [[Description](#)]
5. **Final Reflection** -- reflecting on your own ideas and practices as well as on those introduced in this course -informal discussion thread (**10%**) [[Description](#) - [Word ... PDF](#)]



The evaluation criteria for this course are described in more detail in the [grading rubric](#).

The grading rubric describes participant performance expectations and efforts most valued. Professionalism, completeness, timeliness and quality are all considered in the evaluation process.

Chat Times are periodically scheduled to support group work, bring in a guest speaker or just to get class feed back. The times and days will be a collaborative decision-we will try to pick a set time and day when we can all attend. We can communicate this via email or discussion thread.

## **Tentative Course Outline**

- Session 1: X/X Introduction and Connection to the General Classroom
  - **(F2F)**
- Session 2: X/X AT Connection and Impact in the General Classroom: Definitions and Laws/ Federal & State Mandates NCLB-COMAR
- Session 3: X/X Interactive Technology & Second Language Learning: Computer-Assisted Language Learning (**CALL**)
- Session 4: X/X Categories of AT, SETT and QIAT and UD Framework (Part I)
  - **Possible chat week**
- Session 5: X/X Categories of AT, SETT and QIAT and UD Framework (Part II)
  - **IEP Group exercise will be given out**
- Session 6: X/X Access to Print: Learning and Visual Organizers
- Session 7: X/X What's available: Devices, Services and Strategies
- Session 8/9: X/X What's available: Devices, Services and Strategies Part II
- Session 10: X/X What's available: Devices, Services and Strategies Part III
  - **AT Tour**
- Session 11: X/X Software and Web-based Applications
  - **MICCA Conference**
  - **IEP Group (Individual Educational Plan Due)**
- Session 12: X/X Connection to General Curriculum and State Standards/aids in IEP (Individual Educational Plan) & Intro to Universal Design-history and Impact
  - **Paper Due**
- Session 13: X/X Universal Design and Technology Integration & Diverse students: Equity & Gender Issues
  - **Possible Chat week or F2F**
- Session 14: X/X Funding, Resources and Organizations
  - **Possible Chat week or F2F**
  - **Present IEP (Individual Educational Plan Due)**
- Session 15: X/X Closure
  - **Possible Chat or F2F**
  - **Present IEP (Individual Educational Plan Due)**

**Final Reflection and all work due by December XXX, 2006**



**Technology Literacy for Administrators Workshop**  
**Assessment and Design Strategies with Technology Tools**  
**for Improving Student Learning**

***Date TBD***

***Agenda***

Pre-Workshop Quick Pre-Profile survey (on-line)

Time            Welcome and Introductions [PPT]- Davina Pruitt-Mentle  
                  Program Overview  
                  Objectives, Goals, and Outcomes

Pre-Profile **a similar pre-assessment profile will be developed for this cohort**

<http://cgi.umd.edu/survey/display?edtechoutreach/HarfordExcelQuiz>

**Data Connections Overview**

Working Towards Improving Student Achievement  
Using State, Local School System and School Data

Organizational Goal/s: The Big Picture  
School Data Analysis

Time            Overview of School Data: "Surface Snapshot"  
                  **Mock School Data Analysis (Group Activity): WebQuest**  
                  **Debriefing** of school data analysis exercise  
                  What Possibilities Technology Affords

Time            Making the Connections: Having the Right Tools  
                  Excel Overview and potential  
                  Excel Basics- Exercises

- Sum, Min, Max, Average
- Graphing/STDEV/Variance/CondForm
- Simple Case studies (Tilly, JoJo)

Time            Break

Time	<p><b>Excel Basics- Exercises</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade book and formatting</li> <li>• Case Study Filtering</li> </ul> <p><b>Excel Moving Beyond Basics- Exercises</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Studies: LOOKUP</li> </ul> <p><b>After Lunch Preview</b></p>
Time	<b>Lunch</b>
Time	<p><b>Catch Up if Needed</b></p> <p><b>Advanced Features with Excel (exercises)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combining worksheets</li> <li>• Connecting assessments with standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Within Excel</li> <li>○ What's available through MSDE</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sorting-one and multiple columns (possible)</li> <li>• Pivot Tables (possible)</li> <li>• Converting Access to Excel</li> <li>• Working with your data</li> </ul>
Time	<p><b>Closure and Debriefing</b></p> <p>How to Access Quick Post-Profile survey (on-line) <b>a similar post assessment profile instrument will be developed for this cohort</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://cgi.umd.edu/survey/display?edtechoutreach/HarfordExcelPost">http://cgi.umd.edu/survey/display?edtechoutreach/HarfordExcelPost</a></li> </ul> <p>How to Access Materials <a href="http://www.edtechoutreach.umd.edu">www.edtechoutreach.umd.edu</a></p> <p>Follow-Up Session</p>

