

• *How do the Swiss and the American educational systems address the linguistic needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students? A series of case studies*

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PEERS (Student Team Project in Social Networks) aims to focus on a student exchange project commonly defined by a group of students being part of the University of Teacher Education of State of Vaud (HEP VD), in association with a group of students from a Partner Institution, which is in this case the College of Education of the San Diego State University (SDSU). Under a common umbrella question, focusing on the way two different educational systems address the linguistic needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students, every group of three students is carrying out a project implemented in two particular contexts: foreign languages classes in the high school system of State of Vaud, respectively bilingual education in the Californian public school system. In every country, teaching and learning languages is closely linked to educational policies, social and economic situation, status of the different languages and of their native speakers in the country. On the other hand, those elements entail important impacts on the ways languages are taught and learned. A particular issue to research on is the way educational systems address the linguistic needs of linguistically and culturally diverse (CLD) students, especially in the context of teaching and learning a foreign language. In every group of students involved in the HEP-SDSU project, every student is researching individually of a different point of view and trying to answer a particular question.

SDSU's researches

- Institutional point of view: how effective and socially conscious are alternative approaches to education in resisting the social relations of power promoted by English monolingual education?
- Teacher's point of view: what is the impact of teacher ideology on educational outcomes of English language learners (ELLs)?
- Student's point of view: what is the effect of high-stakes testing on the drop-out rate of ELLs and students of low socio-economic status?

HEP's researches

- Institutional point of view: how does the institution address the linguistic and cultural needs of CLD students in the context of foreign languages teaching and learning?
- Teacher's point of view: how does the teacher address the need to include CLD students in his foreign language course? What instructional support is available for foreign language teachers of CLD students?
- Student's point of view: how do the CLD students deal with his marginal position?

• *Educational intervention plan to promote protection of environment and improvement of living conditions: Reduction of firewood consumption from Polylepis forests (Andean Mountain forests)*

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PEERS (Student Team Project in Social Networks) aims to focus on a student exchange project commonly defined by a group of students being part of the University of Teacher Education of State of Vaud (HEP VD), in association with a group of students from a Partner Institution, which is normally another teacher training University. Nevertheless, with the aim to develop the interrelation teaching- research, HEP and USIP (Simón I. Patiño University in Cochabamba, Bolivia), which is not a teacher training university, conceived a special project joining research in environmental sciences and in education. This project in fact put together many important concepts for understanding the evolution of society in today's world: cultural diversity, environmental conservation, educational techniques to go beyond cultural barriers, the relation between our health and our life habits, the impact of university research in the common citizen life and of course the interrelation teaching-research. Joining the experience and the work of HEP VD students and Environmental Sciences students of USIP, the presented conservation project pretends to reach groups of people from San Miguel, Janco Kala and ...communities who live in the Andean native forest in Cochabamba Bolivia. The importance of native forests of Polylepis in the Andes, lies in several ecological services (protection and retention of nutrients, water retention and runoff regulation, erosion control) due to the presence of a high number of animal and vegetal species which only occurs when close relation with Polylepis forests. Furthermore, the usefulness of the forests must be considered (wood for construction, fuel, tannery and medical applications). One the most concerning issues is the traditional use of firewood to cook inside the house facilities because it releases high amounts of soot which has been demonstrated as a primary cause of respiratory and ophthalmic diseases.

Taken into account that conservation of *Polylepis* forests and the biodiversity it sustains is critical, this project aims to contribute in the conservation of *Polylepis* forests and the improvement of people's life quality by rising consciousness on the environmental and health advantages of reducing the use of *Polylepis* trees as firewood. This project foresees the reduction of firewood consumption by using an ecological stove. It has been established that ecological stoves such as Rocket or Lorena are appropriate to save fuel consumption and reduce soot and smoke. It is also the cheapest ecological stove to install. Thirty Rocket stoves have been planned to be installed in the communities mentioned earlier and a systematized educational campaign with the communities (as adult as children) is also included in the plan, as an essential requirement for the success of the project.

• *The PEERS concept: a New Approach to Internationalization in Teacher Education*

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Today's Higher Education is facing the challenge of a Global World, an interconnected multifaceted reality. The Universities of Teacher Education have to respond to the need to create a process of integrating an international and cultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution itself. Developing an international and intercultural comprehensive frame is an extension of the academic horizon and it is an improvement of the quality, and international academic standards. PEERS is based on a student exchange project commonly defined by a group of students being part of the University of Teacher Education of State of Vaud (HEP Vaud), in association with a group of students from a Partner Institution. Each team will be coached by one faculty member from each Institution involved in the project. Faculty may also carry out joint research works or establish a common interest ground to develop future research with the partner Institution. Through this communication we wish to explain the PEERS concept and the benefits it offers in comparison with other internationalization programs in teacher education. We will present the results of a questionnaire based on the quality approach paradigm and suggest some avenues for future PEERS developments.

• *A PEERS Project involving the HEP Vaud and Lesley University: teaching Urban Ecology*

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This PEERS Project involving the HEP Vaud and Lesley University is dedicated to the theme Urban Ecology on David Morimoto's initiative. The participating students have very different profiles: the three American are studying Early Childhood Education and Environmental Studies or English Literature at Bachelor level, when the two Swiss have got Master degrees in Geography or Biology and are involved in initial training as teachers for Senior High School. This initial training includes practical training, which means that the Swiss students have to teach Geography or Biology to Senior High School students. This situation lead therefore to design the project as follows: the two Swiss students develop a teaching unit (about 10 lessons) dedicated to Urban Ecology and focused on the topic of Ecodistricts. This teaching unit involves 1) an introductory lesson focused on the problematization of the issue Urban Ecology, 2) a course about ground principles of sustainable development, urban ecology, and ecodistricts, 3) field work around the location of the high schools, 4) simulation of the possible improvement of these areas to ecodistricts, 5) comparison with existing ecodistricts and 6) synthesis (and assessment). Collaboration with the three American students takes place in the discussion of the different parts of the teaching unit, the possibility of adaptations to younger pupils and the conception of a teacher's guide to the teaching unit.

• *Pre-service Teachers in International Teams: Intercultural Competence and Teaching Diverse Learners*

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Student Team Projects in Social Networks (PEERS) is an international collaboration consisting of teams of university faculty and students. A team involving members from the University of Teacher Education, State of Vaud (HEP) and Humboldt State University (HSU), focused on the development of intercultural competence of pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers from HSU and HEP formed a Lesson Study team and created aligned science lessons, modified to use effective methods for meeting the needs of marginalized high school students. .