

## Grant to UC Riverside Graduate School of Education Aims to Improve Reading Instruction and Achievement

**The \$1.5 Million, Three-Year Grant Supports Efforts to Increase Reading Comprehension among Upper Elementary Students**  
(March 29, 2005)

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – [www.ucr.edu](http://www.ucr.edu) – University of California, Riverside officials today announced the award of a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to focus on the development of reading comprehension skills of third through sixth graders in southern California public schools.

The three-year grant, entitled *The Read-Write Cycle: An Integrated Model for Instruction and Assessment of Reading Comprehension through Reading and Writing in the Disciplines*, aims to raise student achievement in reading through research-based reading and writing activities in content-area subjects such as science, social studies, and mathematics.



**Robert C. Calfee, Ph.D.**

The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences Program of Research in Reading Comprehension and will be directed by Co-Principal Investigators Robert C. Calfee, Distinguished Professor in UCR's Graduate School of Education, and Roxanne Greitz Miller, Assistant Professor of Education at Chapman University, Orange.

Reading comprehension is critical to success in school, and in the workplace. The National Reading Panel's 2001 Report comments that comprehension is critically important to the development of children's reading skills and therefore to the ability to obtain an education, making it essential not only to academic learning in all subject areas but to lifelong learning as well. Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show limited improvement nationally in reading comprehension over the past few decades, and a substantial achievement gap between students of high and low socioeconomic backgrounds. While both reading and mathematics have been targeted for improvement by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), reading achievement has proven far more resistant to reform efforts than mathematics. For instance, the Education Trust's 2004 report that reviewed NCLB data over a three-year span, reported 23 of 24 states improving in math, but only 15 of 23 states showed improvement in reading.

The Read-Write Cycle was conceptualized during Calfee and Miller's prior grant work at UCR on reading and writing in the science content area. "We found that teachers traditionally view reading comprehension as something done separately from instruction in content area subjects. By creating a cohesive instruction and assessment model that addresses reading comprehension within the content areas, rather than as separate domains, we have seen students and teachers take great strides



**Roxanne Greitz Miller, Ed.D.**

toward deeper reading comprehension and writing ability. The greatest gains were made by students most in need of help, those from low-achieving backgrounds and students for whom English is a second language. We are looking forward to this project and its extensions beyond science into other subject areas and with even younger students,” said Co-Principal Investigator Roxanne Greitz Miller.

In its first year, the Read-Write Cycle Project will train teachers in proven techniques for delivering reading comprehension instruction in the content areas. Teachers will work collaboratively to develop lessons that they will implement with their classes in the second and third years. During these years, students will be observed and evaluated on their progress in multiple areas related to reading comprehension.

The Read-Write Cycle Project centers around what researchers have proven to be the most critical factor influencing student achievement, the classroom teacher. “The promotion of knowledge requires more than reliance on scripted material, such as we see being promoted in many classrooms today. Innovative practices need to be responsive to teachers' work and needs, rather than disconnected from the reality of today’s classrooms and students. All of the techniques we will be using in this project are designed to be efficient, effective, and adaptable, making them “teacher-friendly” while aiming for the highest quality of instruction,” says Miller.

Project activities will begin this June. Teachers of third through sixth grades, or their school principals, from public elementary schools in Riverside and Orange County who would like to participate in the project should send an email to [info@rwcproject.org](mailto:info@rwcproject.org).

#### **Related Links:**

- [Graduate School of Education at UC Riverside](#)
- [School of Education at Chapman University](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences](#)

*The University of California, Riverside is a major research institution and a national center for the humanities. Key areas of research include nanotechnology, genomics, environmental studies, digital arts and sustainable growth and development. With a current undergraduate and graduate enrollment of nearly 17,000, the campus is projected to grow to 21,000 students by 2010. Located in the heart of inland Southern California, the nearly 1,200-acre, park-like campus is at the center of the region's economic development. Visit [www.ucr.edu](http://www.ucr.edu) or call 951-787-5185 for more information. Media sources are available at <http://www.mediasources.ucr.edu/>.*