

“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”

-Ludwig Wittgenstein

I am a doctoral student with the University of La Verne, working on a doctorate in Organizational Leadership. As part of that study I am currently working on a dissertation related to academic language. I am contacting you to see if you would be interested in participating in this study. The faculty advisor for my dissertation is Dr. Larry Machi. He may be contacted at (707) 433-1638.

The study has as the central research question: What are the essential characteristics of academic language as it applies to the education of students in grades K-8? The purpose of this study is to develop an expert model for academic language by which curriculum and instruction can be developed and assessed. Current definitions of academic language vary with several authors proposing various models. As a result, there is no comprehensive model that describes the critical elements of academic language as it relates to students in kindergarten through grade 8.

The study will use a Delphi method involving a panel of twenty-four experts including two subgroups. One subgroup of twelve experts will be the theoretical subgroup, those with expertise and research experience in linguistics and language acquisition. The second subgroup of twelve experts will be the practitioner subgroup, those with expertise in the teaching of language, the education of English learners and/or experience teaching educators about these topics.

The study will consist of up to four Delphi rounds in which the panel members will rate elements based on importance to the overall model of academic language, will contribute to the definition of those elements rated as important to the model, may suggest additional elements to be included in the model, and will categorize the selected elements in order to develop a theoretical model. All of the communication will be through e-mail and a web based survey program, though the option of responding via fax or traditional mail is available.

You have been recommended to serve on the panel for my study. Recommendations for potential participants in the study were elicited from a review of the literature and from colleagues in the field of language development and language acquisition.

I have already developed the instruments for my study and have received approval to proceed from the University of La Verne's Institutional Review Board. For more information, please contact Paul Alvarez, PhD, ATC, University Research Chair at 909-593-3511, extension 4259 (Institutional Review Board, 1950 Third Street, La Verne, CA 91750).

As soon as I have assembled my panel, I will be ready to begin this process. It is my expectation that the Delphi process will be completed within two months, though the actual timeline will depend on the promptness with which the panel members respond.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please respond to this e-mail and indicate which of the following criteria you meet so that I can designate whether you fit in the theorist or the practitioner group. Also, please review the attached Consent to Participate in Research form. If you agree to participate you will be asked to indicate your consent to participate in this study on the first survey.

If you cannot participate at this time, please indicate that below and I will remove you from my e-mail group and will not receive any other e-mail communications from me.

Please mark all that apply:

#### Theorist Criteria

Within the past ten (10) year I have:

published two or more articles or books on academic language.

acted in the capacity of a lecturer or university instructor in the field of linguistics or academic language.

conducted research related to academic language.

#### Practitioner Criteria

I have worked in the field of education and have:

at least ten years of experience working with language learners in the area of academic language development.

presented at conferences, workshops, seminars or trainings related to academic language.

expertise in the area of language acquisition as evidenced by a degree or certification related to language learners (EL authorization or credential).

I cannot participate at this time.

If you can recommend any other educators with expertise related to academic language, please provide the following contact information so that I can get in touch with them.

Potential Panel Member Name

e-mail address

phone number

I appreciate your consideration of my proposal and look forward to hearing from you soon. I can be reached at [cawoo@comcast.net](mailto:cawoo@comcast.net) or by telephone at (209) 473-7758.

Academic success is closely tied to the development of academic language. As philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein said “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.” Let us not limit the language nor the world for our students.

Sincerely,

Carol Anderson-Woo