

September 2021
Issue 8

Early Childhood Studies

*“Do work that matters.
Vale la pena”*
— Gloria E. Anzaldúa

¡Bienvenidos! Welcome to our new academic year. I hope everyone had a restful time and ready to begin to do the work “that matters.” This semester we are still facing the tragedy of the pandemic and its effect on young children, families, and ourselves! In order to move forward I invite you to stay connected with us as we are here to help and assist you to succeed in your program. Our goal is for you to graduate on a timely manner and go and continue doing the work *that matters* in early childhood. You can contact me at mari.riojas-cortez@csuci.edu.

Dr. Mari Riojas-Cortez, Professor & Chair, Early Childhood Studies

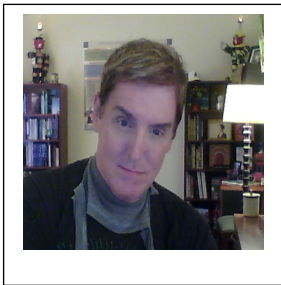
Dean’s Welcome

Hello CSUCI Early Childhood students! Great to connect with you via the ECS Newsletter as we embark upon the 2021/22 school year. I am honored to be the Dean of the School of Education and, among my greatest joys, to work with the amazing folks who teach and staff the ECS program. Many of you may know that my mother worked for years in early childhood education, first as an aid and then, after completing her AA degree, as a teacher in a birth -preschool center. But I am also the only child in my family who experienced preschool! So, I have a very special place in my pedagogical heart for early childhood education and educators.

These are enduringly difficult times for prospective educators like you who seek out student - teacher relationships because of the power and potential these relationships have for enabling young folks to learn and explore and grow! Your dedication to entry into this profession despite the less-than-ideal contexts and circumstances of your educational experience says volumes about your passion for this work. We know that you- and ultimately the children and families with whom you will work-will be so very glad that pursued your ECS degree at CSUCI.

This is an incredible time for early childhood education at CSUCI and in California. We have two brand new faculty joining the School of Education: Drs. Aura Perez and Assadullah Sadiq! And, as we transition back to a kind of normalcy this year, we pick up the work of pursuing and Early Learning Center on the CI campus. Finally, the governor and legislature recently renewed and re-avowed their dedication to the education and educators of our youngest citizens. We are looking forward to exploring and experiencing the ways in which the state and CI will partner deeply in the early learning enterprise. Great things are coming from the promises and commitments of powerful advocates for early childhood education!

Wishing you the best this year,
Brian Sevier
Dean, School of Education



*New ECS
Faculty*

Welcome/**Bienvenidos**/**Pakhair raghlay**

Dr. Aura Perez, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Studies—Early Literacy



Dear ECS Students,

I'm so excited to begin working and learning with you this fall semester! I'm Dr. Aura Pérez and I have recently joined as faculty for the Early Childhood Studies program here at California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI). I was born in Los Angeles, California and was raised in the San Fernando Valley. As a young learner, I attended Los Angeles Unified School District (L.A.U.S.D.) schools throughout my Pre-K through 12th grade education. I began my higher educational trajectory by attending UC San Diego where I earned my Bachelor's in Human Development. I then went on to receive my Master's in Early Childhood Education from California State University Northridge (CSUN). Lastly, I earned my Doctorate in Early Childhood Education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Throughout my higher educational journey, I have also been an early educator and had varying roles within the field of early childhood education. Some of my past roles have included being an infant/toddler teacher, preschool teacher, early education center director, mentor teacher, and a student teacher supervisor. My inspiration to become an early childhood educator began when I was an undergraduate practicum student at a Head Start preschool in San Diego, California. Working alongside a predominantly Latinx community and having the ability to communicate with the students and their families in Spanish as well as sharing cultural commonalities with them as a Latina myself was enlightening and inspiring. My experiences there made me realize the need for more teachers of Color within the field of early education and how important it is for early educators to be prepared to work with diverse communities and young children.

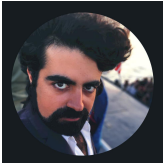
As a teacher educator, I have taught early childhood studies courses in universities such as CSUN, Queen College City University of New York, and Teachers College, Columbia University. Some of my favorite aspects of working with students enrolled in teacher education programs has been learning more about their own trajectories and life experiences and how they influence their teaching. It also brings me so much joy to be a support system to other first-generation students like myself!

My experiences as a first-generation college student and daughter of immigrants have largely shaped my perceptions of early childhood education and how essential it is for early educators to practice inclusion, foster equitable learning experiences, see the brilliance of each child, and to celebrate the cultural assets of our historically minoritized communities. Moreover, as a first-generation college student, I am aware of the pressure and challenges that come with being the first in one's family to navigate institutions of higher education. Such insight inspires me to constantly reflect on ways I can make the course material relevant and engaging, be more inclusive of my student's cultures and knowledges, as well as shed light on some of the support systems that students can utilize to thrive at a holistic level.

In my spare time I like to go hiking, running, travel, dabble in photography, and attend music concerts. A few random things that bring me joy are searching for the best iced lattes in town, seeing my indoor plants flourish, videos of baby animals, pop culture references, and discovering niche playlists on Spotify.

I am eager to get to know each of you! I can't wait to work with you and learn more about your own life experiences, as well as how we can work together to meet your professional and educational goals. Please reach out by emailing me at: aura.perez@csuci.edu. Wishing you all a great fall semester and academic year!

Dr. Assadullah Sadiq, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Studies



Dear ECS Students:

Welcome to a new semester and a new school (or university) year! I wish you a productive semester ahead and wish you every success on your journey. Despite these times, the fact that you are back on campus, taking classes in person or online, you are making strides, and for that, you should feel very proud. All of us at Early Childhood Studies, are rooting for you!

My name is Assadullah Sadiq, and I am a new faculty in the Early Childhood Studies, in the School of Education. I come to you from Boston, Massachusetts, where I grew up and attended school from fifth grade (all the way) to my master's degree. My BA and MA degrees were both in Literature, with a minor in education. While studying, I also worked as a preschool and PreK teacher. During my master's degree program, I was teaching first-grade full time and taking full-time classes and working in the children's museum on the weekends. Yes, I was going crazy and not sleeping much, but I often reflect on this time to remind myself and others that we are capable of doing quite a bit if we set higher standards for ourselves.

In addition to first grade, I also taught second grade and worked as an assistant in a third-grade classroom. My passion for teaching also allowed me to travel. For instance, in 2015, I went to Saudi Arabia, where I taught English to first-year university students. I loved it so much, that I went back in 2019 and taught in another university in Riyadh, the capital of the country.

In September 2015, I began my PhD program at the University of British Columbia in the Department of Language and Literacy Education, in Vancouver, Canada. I focused on early literacy and particularly focused on the literacy practices of children from diverse and low-income communities. For my dissertation, I traveled to Pakistan and focused on the language and literacy practices of Afghan refugee children and their families who were living there. Today, my research interests consist of but are not limited to, early literacy, Afghan refugees' literacy and language practices, literacy practices in refugees' and low-income communities, and research on first language maintenance. In essence, if one was to ask me "Assadullah, what impact do you hope to have through your research?" I would answer with something like this "I hope that our research first and foremost benefits teachers in the classroom. I believe the impact of our research is amplified when it helps teachers connect with and build on the knowledge that students bring into the classroom, particularly students like refugee and immigrants who are often, unintentionally or intentionally, marginalized in our schools."

Here is some other information about me: I am a former refugee; my family comes from Afghanistan and my mother tongue is Pashto. I also speak some Spanish and my family would hover around the telenovelas on TeleFutura. Some of the most memorable telenovelas that I enjoyed with my family included: De Pocus Pocas Pulgas, Complices Al Rescate and (mi favorito) Vivian Los Niños. (Wasn't Ms. Lupita an amazing teacher!) I also love reading and my favorite genre these days includes self-development books. For example, currently, I am reading a book about finding peace and becoming a better person. However, fiction is also a big genre that appeals to me. Some of my favorite authors are Toni Morrison, Leila Aboulela, George Orwell, and Sandra Cisneros. Moreover, I love nature, and walking through greenery fills me up with solace and *y siempre estoy rezando por días llenos de sol!* However, rain also holds a special place in my heart. When it is raining outside at night; the first thing that comes to mind is me walking with my siblings at night in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, and seeing the lights reflected in the puddles, from the rain. At that moment, I feel such a sense of serene, that I cannot put it into words. I ask God to one day return me to Kabul so that I can walk at night freely and look for puddles and see the lights reflected in the puddles. However, rather than streetlights, I hope the light that is reflected in the puddles, is the light of the Afghan people- resilient, kind, and loving!

Enough about me, I am excited to meet and learn from and with you! Welcome, Bienvenido, Pa khair raglay!

~Assadullah Sadiq

Our Reading Corner/El Rincón de los Libros

René Has Two Last Names/ *René tiene dos apellidos* by René Collazo Lainez



As we begin the school year, this book reminds us to be respectful of children's cultural background including something so personal such as their name.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT FROM OUR ECS FACULTY...

Dr. Assadullah Sadiq

Get a planner that works for you and write all your to do lists (including assignments) in one place. Treat yourself every two to three weeks for staying on track! 😊

Ms. Lorena Ramos

"just when you think you can't...You can!"
author unknown

Dr. Aura Perez

My advise for ECS students as they begin the new academic year is to remember why they're here (at CSUCI)! Remembering why I was a student always motivated me to do my best and keep going! -

Dr. Annie White

"Self-care is essential when working with young children. We cannot take care of others unless we take care of ourselves first. Remember, the principle is the same as when flying on an airplane, "Put the oxygen mask on yourself first before you help to assist another with theirs."

Debbie Connolly

Just remember that your true power comes from standing in your own truth and walking your own path.

From Loretta Galaviz Celebrating National Hispanic Heritage

<https://sites.google.com/venturaedu.org/vusdcelebrateshispanicheritage/students-estudiantes>



ANNOUNCEMENTS/ANUNCIOS

UNIVERSITY NEWS

Please go to this website for information for important news and updates including COVID-19 information:

<https://www.csuci.edu/news/campus-updates/fall-2021/index.htm>

STUDENT TEACHERS/SENIORS

Please check this website for information regarding the child development permit stipend

<https://www.childdevelopment.org/students-workforce/applications/child-development-permit-stipends>. If you need more information, please contact Mrs. Lauren Chase at lauren.chase@csuci.edu.

EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES ORGANIZATION

IF you are interested in joining the early childhood studies organization, please email dr. Cortez at mari.riojas-cortez@csuci.edu. Our first meeting will be in October. More information to come.

NEW ACADEMIC ADVISOR FOR ECS!!!

ECS has a new academic advisor, Karla Aguirre, please email her at karla.aguirre@csuci.edu.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Center for Community Engagement has openings in the CSUCI STEM Corps program! CSUCI STEM Corps aims to add extra STEM and academic support to elementary school-aged children.

Applicant Criteria:

- be a current CSUCI **undergraduate** student
- commit to working 15 hours per week in the fall and spring semesters
- available between the hours of 3:00 PM-7:00 PM
- make a one-year commitment
- enjoy working with children and comfortable in K-12 subjects
- bilingual, Spanish-speaking is a plus, as is previous experience working with K-12.

Pay Rate: \$16.00 an hour.

To Apply: Please send a [Student Employee Application](#) to pilar.pacheco@csuci.edu. In the subject, please type CSUCI STEM Corps.

