Early Academic Career Excellence Award

Dr. Susan Gomez Zwiep
Science Education

When strangers ask Dr. Susan Gomez Zwiep “What do you do,” she has a quick and clear answer.

“I am a teacher,” she says. “This identity forms my values, my beliefs and my actions. My view of teaching and learning is very much influenced by my belief that students need to make their own meaning for new knowledge to be constructed and endure.”

Dr. Gomez Zwiep has taught a wide range of courses, from University 100 to graduate science courses and courses for the elementary teacher credential program. She also supervises secondary science teachers in middle and high schools and teaches content to a cohort of teachers in Orange County who provide math and science support to teachers working in juvenile halls and other alternative settings.

In 2009, Dr. Gomez Zwiep was appointed to the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics College Council where she assists the college and its departments in developing and approving faculty Retention, Tenure, and Promotion documents.

But her service extends beyond CSULB. She was one of the original panel members who created single subject science program accreditation guidelines for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and now reviews submissions from colleges and universities across the state seeking accreditation for their single subject teaching programs.

During her time at CSULB, Dr. Gomez Zwiep has written or co-written nine articles published or in press with peer-reviewed national and international journals. In addition, she has chapters published in four refereed books and 24 formal, peer-reviewed research conference proceedings. In the last six years, she has obtained (in collaboration) six grants with awards totaling more than $3.3 million. The most notable of the grants was her groundbreaking K-2 Teaching Learning Collaborative Grant in 2007 that attempted to implement a blended curriculum of English Language Development and Science, an emerging topic of science education research.

Dr. Gomez Zwiep joined CSULB in 2005 as a lecturer after working as a middle school science teacher and a district science coach in the Montebello Unified School District. She earned her bachelor’s degree from UC Berkeley, her master’s degree from Whittier College and her doctorate from USC in 2005.