

## **DOCTORAL DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

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College of Education, Health and Human Services

## **KENT STATE UNIVERSITY**

College of Education, Health and Human Services

## **DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE**

of

Debbie L Rozner

for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Interprofessional Leadership  
Cultural Foundations

**INSTITUTIONAL LINGUISTIC RESPONSIVENESS IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION: A PRACADEMIC APPEAL FOR UNIVERSITY WIDE  
SUPPORT FOR MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS**

Monday, October 30, 2023

1:30-3:30 p.m.

Microsoft Teams

**Debbie Rozner**

M.A., Education  
George Washington University, 2004

B.S., German  
Georgetown University, 1994

Debbie has been a university lecturer in the English Department at Kent State since 2015 and the program director for the English as a Second Language Center since 2017.

Upon completion of her undergraduate degree, she was awarded a Fulbright teaching assistantship in Merseburg, Germany, which is where her interest in language instruction began. She has taught English language courses at the University of Akron and at a variety of language programs in Washington, D.C., and Germany.

In addition to teaching English language courses, she also teaches English composition, courses in the Teaching English as a Second Language program, and Honor's Colloquium. She is a frequent presenter at the Ohio TESOL conferences and is active in the international TESOL organization.

**INSTITUTIONAL LINGUISTIC RESPONSIVENESS IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION: A PRACADEMIC APPEAL FOR UNIVERSITY WIDE  
SUPPORT FOR MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS**

Internationalization at institutions of higher education in the United States results in greater linguistic diversity of the student body. Admission policies for international students include English proficiency standards which are meant to ensure that multilingual students for whom English is an additional language can function linguistically in university coursework. Still, full engagement in academic coursework through English for multilingual students can be a challenge. Those who meet the minimum English requirement, best identified as emergent bilingual (Garcia, 2009), need ongoing English language support for language intensive course requirements. Even those who exceed the English requirement face a period of adjustment to academic language demands (Zhang-Wu, 2021). Both groups need to acquire the language of the discipline into which they are entering which is a process that takes place inside of disciplinary courses (Ewert, 2011; Gallagher & Haan, 2018).

Linguistically responsive instruction (LRI) is an orientation and instructional approach that tasks discipline-specific faculty with providing language support to multilingual students (Lucas & Villegas, 2011, 2013). This dissertation in practice is a conceptual analysis that seeks to better understand the needs and challenges of multilingual students in an English-speaking university environment and proposes an institutional approach to support them based on the principles of linguistic responsiveness. A key question explored in this project is how the principles of linguistic responsiveness can be employed to help institutions like Kent State University support multilingual students in their development and refinement of advanced academic language skills in alignment with institutional goals of internationalization and inclusivity. Three key campus offices and their alignment with institutional goals are identified as strategic partners for institutional adoption of linguistic responsiveness: the Office of Global Education, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Center for Teaching and Learning. The analysis suggests the University's English as a Second Language Center plays a critical role in supporting the design and development of post-matriculation language support.