

University of California, Irvine is embarking on an ambitious effort to recruit faculty through the UCI High Impact Hire Initiative, which seeks to bring together clusters of faculty in research areas that are critical to the needs of the university and nation. We are recruiting faculty in education, psychology, cognitive science, sociology, and related disciplines who will work together to address a significant society challenge: *Creating opportunity for children living in poverty through effective educational interventions*. Faculty hired in the *Creating Opportunities* cluster will work on innovative, research-based approaches to transforming the classroom learning experiences of low-income children with focus on programs and interventions that may include the use of technology and will be targeted to support gains in foundational literacy and mathematical skills in pre-school and early elementary grades – the time when children’s achievement gains are the largest. We seek a diverse group of scholars for six tenure track positions: 3 in Education; 2 in Sociology; and 1 in Cognitive Science.

The Challenge. The stakes for promoting literacy and numeracy among low-income, often minority, children could not be higher. Over the past four decades, computer-driven technological changes and globalization have transformed the world’s economy, eroding the quality of low-skill jobs while driving up the earnings of college-educated workers. These changes have helped fuel a large increase in income inequality in the United States that has enabled affluent families to spend far more than before to foster their children’s development. These changes have been accompanied by large increases in the achievement and college graduation gaps between children raised in lower- and higher-income families that have placed great burdens on schools serving disadvantaged children in fulfilling their ability to promote upward intergenerational mobility for disadvantaged children.

The Mission. Creating opportunities for economic mobility for disadvantaged children requires improving the quality of students’ daily school-based learning experiences. Enriching these experiences amounts to what environmental scientists refer to as a “wicked problem,” because it involves dynamic and complex interactions among people and their environments. High quality teaching-learning experiences not only depend on teachers who know the scientific and conceptual underpinnings of effective instruction, but also on the close coordination between teacher and student – with the teacher understanding both individual learning needs and effective instructional approaches to meet these learning needs. Managing the demands inherent in such situations is overwhelming under the best of circumstances; it is even more challenging in schools with minimal resources and students with widely varying skills. The members of the *Creating Opportunities* cluster will work together to meet these challenges. Hence we look for scholars whose research strengths would greatly enhance UCI’s leadership in investigating these topics. We plan to hire a diverse group of scholars whose research is aimed at promoting school achievement among racially, ethnically, economically, and linguistically diverse students.