

Monica Axelsson from Stockholm University, Sweden – Semester 1 2017.

Associate Professor Una Cunningham and Professor Monica Axelsson

Where you have come from and what do you teach?

My name is Monica Axelsson, Professor of Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition at Stockholm University, Sweden. At my Department, Language Education, I am mainly involved in our PhD programme, supervising the doctoral students towards their thesis. Additionally, I give lectures to students in teacher education on how to promote bilingual development and the acquisition of Swedish as a second language.

What interested you in the Erskine Programme/Why did you want to come to UC?

My involvement in the Erskine Programme and the University of Canterbury has been through my host, Associate Professor Una Cunningham at the College of Education, Health and Human Development. Due to our mutual research interest in bilingualism and our earlier collaboration in Sweden, Una appointed me as international adviser for the Nation Science Challenge project A Better Start and suggested that I should apply for a Visiting Canterbury Fellowship. The opportunity for me to come here as a Visiting Canterbury Fellow was a fantastic chance to continue our work 'in real life'.

What have you been doing at UC?

My work at UC has so far focused on meetings and tutorials with the PhD students forming the LATL-LAB group created by Professor Cunningham. This group has become an important forum for the PhD students sharing each other's work and knowledge and collaborating to improve their research. The professional and dedicated attitude of these PhD students and their generous way of sharing their knowledge impresses me. I will also be delivering a Prestige Lecture at the College of Education, Health and Human Development on 9th February at 4:30 in Jack Mann Auditorium on Newly arrived students and how to meet their needs and a seminar at NZILBB on Language across the curriculum.

What have you most enjoyed about your time here at UC/Christchurch?

To meet the PhD students and learn about their work, to discuss their and my knowledge and experiences on research issues is really enjoyable. Furthermore, colleagues at Teacher Education, NZILBB and Aotahi are feeding in to several of my research and teaching fields in a most rewarding way. Earlier work I have done on early bilingualism and the indigenous Sami in Scandinavia has been reawakened here and the UC work on technology-enhanced language learning is to some extent brand new to me.