



April, 2005

REAL LIFE ISSUES CURRICULUM INFUSION

“ Our mission is to connect education to life realities of students and communities by preparing future teachers to seamlessly integrate real life issues into classes across the k-12 curriculum ”

Director’s Update: *Participating Faculty Key to Grant Success*

Our FIPSE grant that prepares future teachers to integrate real life issues into the K-12 curriculum has two objectives both of which involve the active participation of College of Education faculty. The first objective is establishing Real Life Issues CI as part of the educational mission of the participating Chicago Colleges of Education at Chicago State, Northeastern Illinois and North Park Universities. As this newsletter indicates we are on course to achieving that objective. In the 18 months since the grant began we have trained 56 faculty from the three participating universities. They teach courses across the College of Education curriculum. For participating faculty the grant provides the opportunity for valuable work that fulfills professional requirements in the areas of teaching and service.

The second grant objective which also actively involves faculty is dissemination of Real Life Issues CI in Illinois and nationally. Participating faculty have served as mentors to new and prospective faculty participants. They have presented at state and national conferences and are preparing journal articles related to their experience teaching Real Life Issues CI. We welcome additional dissemination involvement by faculty. These activities provide the opportunity for faculty to contribute in the area of research /creative activity.

- Ron Glick, Project Director

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Dean’s Point of View

Dr. Nan Giblin—Northeastern Illinois University

As former Dean of the College of Education at Northeastern Illinois University, I was very glad that many of our faculty chose to participate in the Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Grant. I think that it is very important that our pre-service teachers learn how to make their curriculum interesting for the K-12 students. This means that the topics that are covered must be pertinent to the children’s lives. The subjects that we infuse into the curriculum through this grant are issues that students deal with every day. Our professors have found that by teaching our students at Northeastern how to make their lessons interesting, they also find classroom management easier

From a Dean’s point of view, I have observed that the faculty are able to use their work in this grant to enhance their retention and/or promotion portfolios. Faculty are producing fine research and journal publications from their work with real life issues. This project has also helped new faculty to feel more a part of the college. They have *met* and worked with many other faculty that they may have not otherwise had the privilege to meet.. In short, I think that the benefit of these grants are far reaching--for our faculty, pre-service teachers and the k-12 students we serve.

Dr. Sandra Westbrooks—Chicago State University

I continue to strongly support the work of our faculty preparing future teachers to integrate real life issues into the k-12 curriculum. I am concerned with the educational development of young people in our communities where problems including substance abuse, violence, HIV/AIDS bullying and social ostracism are major barriers to personal and academic success. The Curriculum Infusion initiative is a pragmatic and innovative approach that addresses these issues. It engages students more fully in the learning process by bringing greater relevance to the subject areas being taught. I encourage my faculty and other faculties to engage future teachers in this realistic and meaningful experience.

Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Trainings

The key technology utilized in promoting Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion involves the training of College of Education faculty members, K-12 teachers, and interested administrators along with follow-up and support services. The primary components of Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion training are:

Defining curriculum infusion - the seamless integration of prevention content into existing K-12 classes.

Evidence-based prevention strategies - the five strategies we stress include: 1) involving students in community prevention efforts; 2) promoting prosocial norms; 3) correcting misperceptions of norms; 4) increasing perceptions of risk; and 5) developing and enhancing life skills.

Diversity - consideration by teachers of how: 1) race and ethnicity; 2) socio-economic status; 3) gender; 4) sexual orientation; 5) age and developmental status; and 6) special education needs impact student learning and lesson plan design.

Each of the above areas is essential to include for a Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion lesson plan to be effective. Assessing and selecting what real life issues (e.g. substance abuse, violence, bullying, social ostracism, HIV/AIDS, etc.), teachers as leaders, student aspirations, learning objectives, learner characteristics, instructional design, and evaluation are important secondary training components.

Training follow-up and support services include providing feedback on lesson plans or course modules, random classroom observations, and follow-up training in areas where evaluation tools have indicated additional training is required. A training manual, a student handbook, and a project website have been developed to support training activities.

-Bruce Joleaud, Project Coordinator

Faculty Impressions

I cannot think of more valuable content to address in a methods course than how to teach educators about the issues that matter most to their students. There are a myriad of empirically validated ways to teach the three R's. What our preservice teachers desperately need are strategies for arousing the attention of youngsters who are trying to fit in with their peers, typically by engaging in risky "rites of passage." Curriculum Infusion offers these needed evidence-based practices. I am proud to be part of a project where what I teach has the potential to truly transform children's lives. It takes a little more planning time up front, but the rewards are well worth the effort. *-Sandra Beyda Lorie, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education and Project Campus Coordinator, Northeastern Illinois University*

I have thoroughly enjoyed working on the Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Project. Based on students' comments, I feel they are benefiting from the lecture, discussions, and group projects utilized in this project. The students have also reported that they have used these techniques with their own students. I am thankful for the research materials, instructional strategies and support I have received from the Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Project. The presentation and research opportunities have been extremely beneficial. *-Effie Papoutsis Kritikos, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education, Northeastern Illinois University*

After being a part of the Real-life Curriculum Infusion Project for three years, I see that my students benefit greatly from researching, reflecting and constructing thematic plans on their choice of real-life areas. They are amazed at the statistically significant need for this information and the lack of grade appropriate material that specifically addresses strategies that can be used at the kindergarten through 8th grade level. I am particularly impressed with the way that these topics have brought about discussions of teacher dispositions and professional responsibility. This project has helped my students gain valuable information that they can use when they become bilingual elementary teachers. *-Cindy Valenciano, Associate Professor, Special Education, Early Childhood and Bilingual Education Department, Chicago State University*

Faculty Involvement in Dissemination: *Presentations of Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion*

Participating faculty members have been actively engaged in the dissemination process by presenting at professional conferences. We encourage faculty members to present on their Curriculum Infusion work. If you are planning to speak at a conference about your experience with this project, please let us know so that we can support your efforts and include you in upcoming newsletters.

April 2004

Effie Kritikos and Eleni Markris from NEIU presented at the Illinois Professional Learner's Partnership Forum.

September 2004

Bruce Joleaud presented at the Association of Illinois Middle-Level Schools (AIMS) Fall Conference in Peoria with Tari Marshall, a Be Real Prevention First staff member.

November 2004

Ron Glick and Bruce Joleaud presented the first year findings at the National FIPSE Director's Meeting in Washington D.C.

Also, Ann Marie Frank (DePaul) and Shaine Henert (CSU) presented at the Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance State Meeting (IAHPRD) in St. Charles, IL.

December 2005

Cindy Valenciano from Chicago State University presented at the State Bilingual Conference.

February 2005

A panel that included Sandra Beyda-Lorie, Effie Kritikos, Eleni Makris, Claudia Rueda-Alvarez, Ron Glick and Bruce Joleaud from NEIU presented at the National Meeting of American Teacher Educators (ATE) in Chicago.

April 2005

Sandra Beyda-Lorie presented at the Council of Exceptional Children National Meeting in Baltimore.

Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Conferences

On May 19, 2004, The Network for Dissemination of Curriculum Infusion (NDCI) hosted a Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Conference at DePaul University. Seven faculty members and thirteen of their students presented to their colleagues on their Real Life Issue Curriculum Infusion innovations. Presenters included Pamela Cannamore, Sureshrani Paintel, Charlene Snelling, and Cynthia Valenciano from CSU, Sandra Beyda-Lorie (represented by her students) and Claudia Rueda-Alvarez from NEIU, and Marisa Reyes from North Park University. Conference presenters provided attendees with knowledge on how and why to incorporate real life issues into the classroom in a variety of subject areas including Bilingual Education, Special Education, Counselor Education, Library Science, Elementary Education, and Secondary Education.

On April 8, 2005, NDCI hosted a Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Chicago Area Training at the Chicago Teachers' Center. Twenty-two faculty from Chicago area Colleges of Education attended the one day dissemination workshop. The Universities represented were: Columbia College, Dominican University, Lewis University, Northern Illinois University, University of St. Francis, and University of Illinois at Chicago.

How Interested Faculty Can Get Involved

- **Review the Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Website:** www.neiu.edu/~k12pac
- **Contact your campus coordinator:**
 - Chicago State University*
Shaine Henert
shenert@csu.edu / (773) 995-3647
 - Northeastern Illinois University*
Sandra Beyda-Lorie
S-beyda@neiu.edu / (773) 442-5583
 - North Park University*
Marisa Reyes
mreyes@northpark.edu / (773) 775-5233

Participating Faculty do the Following...

1. Attend a one day Curriculum Infusion Training.
2. Produce a Curriculum Infusion Module Design by our guidelines.
3. Integrate Curriculum Infusion into the College of Education course(s) you teach to prepare future teachers to seamlessly integrate real life issues into classes across the k-12 curriculum.
4. Carry out required grant evaluation activities including pre-post testing students in CI classes and collecting samples of student projects.
5. Make real life issues CI part of your professional work including state and national meetings and publications.

Project Evaluation Update

The project is guided by a thorough evaluation process which includes:

1. Pre-post evaluation of faculty trainings – Year I pre-post measures of training of 37 faculty indicate that faculty members increase their knowledge of real life issues and the CI methodology as well as their confidence that they can teach the methodology to their students. A few examples are provided below:

- During Year I the percentage of faculty who indicated “high” or “very high” knowledge of the prevalence of real life problems among K-12 students increased 24% for substance abuse, 22% for violence, 37% for violence, 12 % for social ostracism, and 25% for HIV/AIDS on post-test scores
- The percentage of faculty who felt they “could” or “definitely could” prepare students to integrate real life issues into the curriculum rose to 87% for substance abuse, violence, and bullying, 66% for social ostracism, and 71% for HIV/AIDS on post-test scores, representing increases of from 12 to 37% over pre-test measures.
- The percentage of faculty who indicated they “definitely could” teach future teachers to use data to effectively utilize two evidence-based prevention strategies rose from between 13 and 37 % on post-test measures.
- Ratings among faculty who indicated they “definitely could” teach future teachers to incorporate diversity into prevention curriculum increased an average of 18.2% between the five identified real life issue areas.

In follow-up training during the beginning of Year II the percentage of faculty who are confident or very confident that they could integrate real life issues into the curriculum to prevent substance abuse, violence, bullying, and social ostracism increased to 100%.

2. Evaluation of faculty write-ups indicating how Real Life Issues CI will be incorporated into College of Education courses

- Assessed areas of strength in faculty member write-ups during Year I included: 1) Course Information; 2) Teachers as Leaders; and 3) Instructional Strategies and Activities.

Assessed areas of weakness included: 1) Inclusion of Evidence-based Prevention Strategies and 2) Consideration of All Identified Areas of Diversity.

3. Pre-post evaluation of education majors in courses where Real Life Issues CI is taught.

- Initial measures of student responses indicate confidence they can effectively integrate real life issues into their teaching.

The percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I believe I currently have the knowledge to effectively integrate prevention content into my classroom teaching” increased from 77.2 to 88.6% from pre to post test.

4. Non-participant observation of College of Education courses which include Real Life Issues CI.

- Strength areas noted in non-participant observation during Year I included 1) Student Involvement and 2) Student Rapport and Compatibility

Weak areas noted included 3) Utilization of Evidence-based Prevention Strategies and 2) Consideration of Each Area of Diversity.

5. Evaluation of student lesson plans

6. Observation of student teaching of Real Life Issues CI

We are beginning to gather data in the last two areas. As a result of Year I data the project has strengthened the emphasis on Evidence-based Prevention Strategies and Diversity during both initial and follow-up training in Year II. Initial data results during Year II indicate significant improvement in results in these areas.

-Compiled by Evaluation Committee

Bruce Joleaud, Project Coordinator

Job Ngwe, Social Work, Evaluation Coordinator

Wamucci Njogu, Sociology

Faculty Who Have Been Trained in Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion

Chicago State University

Catherine Busch, Reading & Elementary Education
 Pamela Cannamore, Technology & Education
 Rhonda Davis, Educational Leadership
 Indranie Dharmadasa, Early Childhood Education
 Gayles Evans, Reading & Elementary Education
 Gabriel Gomez, Technology & Education
 Nancy Grim, Reading & Elementary Education
 Cindy Groh, Health, Physical Education & Recreation
 Sherelene Harris, Reading & Elementary Education
 Trena Hawkins, Technology & Education
 Shaine Henert, Health, Physical Education & Recreation
 Mensah Kufame, Educational Leadership
 Carl Lawson, Special Education
 Kathleen McInerney, Bilingual Education
 Phyllis Merkin, Reading & Elementary Education
 Toya Montgomery, Reading & Elementary Education
 Margie Neal, Reading & Elementary Education
 Sureshrani Paintal, Early Childhood Education
 Jashu Patel, Library Science
 Justy Reed, Health, Physical Education & Recreation
 Desiree Simpson, Early Childhood Education
 Charlene Snelling, Technology & Education
 Cindy Valenciano, Bilingual Education
 Jackie Young, Technology & Education

DePaul University

Anna Frank, Health, Physical Education & Recreation



Northeastern Illinois University

Rachel Adeoudu, Teacher Education
 Sandra Beyda-Lorie, Special Education
 Nancy Brinkerhoff, Educational Leadership
 Lynn Bush, Educational Leadership & Development
 Elaine Chakonas, Teacher Education
 Diane Ehrlich, Educational Leadership & Development
 Alice Giacobbi, Special Education
 George Giacobbi, Special Education
 Julie Henderson, Health, Physical Education, & Recreation
 Nicole Holland, Educational Leadership & Development
 Elaine Koffman, Educational Leadership & Development
 Effie Kritikos, Special Education
 Phyllis LeDosquet, Special Education
 Eleni Makris, Educational Leadership & Development
 Katherine McKnight, Teacher Education
 Jeff Messerer, Special Education
 Janet Pariza, Teacher Education
 Roger Passman, Teacher Education
 Claudia Rueda-Alvarez, Counseling Education
 Katy Smith, Teacher Education
 Terry Stirling, Acting Dean
 Fred Tarnow, Teacher Education
 Joaquin Villegas, Teacher Education

North Park University

Jean Dames, Teacher Certification
 Jacqueline Feare, Acting Director of Master's Program
 Mary Ann Gilbreth, Early Childhood & Elementary Ed
 Diana Hernandez-Azcoitia, Director, School of Education
 Gerald Palmer, Teacher Education
 Viveca Poinsette, Technology
 Marisa Reyes, Student Teaching

www.neiu.edu/~k12pac

The project website is designed to be a useful tool for College of Education faculty, pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. On the website you will find:

- **The components of the CI model**
- **Current data on real life issues**
- **Examples of lesson plan designs**
- **Guidelines for faculty**
- **Resources and links to evidence based strategies**
- **Resources and links to seven areas of diversity**

Network for Dissemination of
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Things to Remember for Participating faculty members...

- *Forward examples of student Real Life Issues CI work including one good, one average, and one weak example from each CI class for project evaluation, and all other high quality student products from each class to be considered for the project website.*
- *Remember to administer Pre and Post tests to your students. Please contact the NDCI office for copies of student pre and post tests at (773)442-5685.*
- *Let us know when you will be integrating Curriculum Infusion, so that we can supply you with materials, arrange for your class to be observed for evaluation purposes, and arrange your reimbursement.*

Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion in High Schools

In the summer of 2004 the Network began working with the Aspira Alternative High School, Antonia Pantoja, and the brand new North-Grand High School which opened last fall with a freshmen class of nearly one hundred eighty students. Thirty-two teachers and faculty completed training in the Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion methodology; 19 teachers developed infused lesson plan; and 11 have already implemented the lesson plans.

Overall, the infused lesson plans were creative and reflected significant understanding of the students' lives and the issues which impact their academic performance. The lessons were varied and included

- marijuana use prevention was infused into Health, Computer Science, English and Biology curricula;
- cigarette smoking prevention was infused into Math curricula;
- bullying and social ostracism was infused into Literature, World Studies, and Health curricula;
- violence prevention was infused into Spanish and World Studies curricula;
- substance abuse prevention was infused into Science units for students with disabilities; and
- an Art teacher structured her lesson plan so that students selected the real life issues to be addressed.

We are pleased to be involved with these high schools and acknowledge that we have been able to do so because the principals, Daisy Lopez at Antonia Pantoja and Asuncion Ayala at North-Grand, are committed to the learning and well being of their students and the continued professional development of their teachers and faculty.

We are planning to continue working with these schools during the summer to strengthen and build on our current work and to identify and link with community-based resources with the intent of providing comprehensive prevention support services to North-Grand and Antonia Pantoja high schools. *–Shellie Coleman, Project Consultant*