



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

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Director’s Update:

Our FIPSE grant is operating in two stages. The first stage prioritized training College of Education faculty members at Chicago State, North Park and Northeastern Illinois Universities to prepare future teachers to integrate real life issues into classes across the k-12 Curriculum. This newsletter lists the names and departments of 61 College of Education faculty members who have completed training (on page 3).

The second stage of the grant emphasizes dissemination of the real life issues curriculum infusion strategy to other Colleges of Education in Illinois and nationally. In 2005, grant staff focused on dissemination in Illinois by providing trainings to Chicago area and downstate faculty. Forty-two faculty members from sixteen Illinois Colleges of Education participated in these trainings. Last month we were very pleased to receive a contract from the Illinois Department of Human Services. This will allow us to broaden our dissemination efforts in the state. The contract provides funds for coordination, trainings, and stipends for faculty write-ups as real life issues curriculum infusion is extended in Illinois; the contract prioritizes substance abuse and violence prevention.

We are beginning national dissemination. In late January, project staff presented a pre-conference workshop at the national AACTE meeting in San Diego and addressed the state AACTE presidents, encouraging adoption of the real life issues curriculum infusion strategy. Faculty members’ professional activity related to real life issues CI, including presentations at conferences and journal articles, continues to be a welcome, valued part of our dissemination effort.

In disseminating real life issues curriculum infusion, we emphasize the value of engaging students in relevant life curriculum that connects teachers more closely to the communities where they work. We also emphasize that real life issues curriculum infusion is an excellent way for Colleges of Education to meet the NCATE diversity standard. A section on page 2 of this newsletter indicates how real life issues CI can build knowledge and provide practice for education majors to effectively relate to diverse student and community cultures. **- Ron Glick, Project Director**

Addressing Real Life Issues is a Valuable Part of Teachers’ Work and Should Include Others in the School Community

As a classroom teacher, everyday it appears that there is just one more imposition on your time. Seemingly, school administration needs one more report, one more meeting, and just one more minute of your time to confer with guardians about their child’s personal, social and academic development. You often wonder, “Is it my responsibility to address students’ pressing life concerns?” From my personal

experiences as a former classroom teacher and public school administrator, my answer to that question is, “Yes! It most certainly is.”

Working smarter (and not harder) would permit us to address some of the issues students assigned to our classes struggle with daily. For example, the crossing guard, janitor, food service employee, educational support personnel, counseling professionals and teacher leaders all have something in common. You probably ask yourself how that could possibly be. Think about it. Each of them sees how children interact with one another on a daily basis: on the way to school, on the playground, in the hallway, restrooms, lunchroom, and classroom, just to name a few examples. Each of them can ascertain who the bully is, who is being bullied, and who is being ostracized by their peers; but do they take the time to handle the issue; probably not. If we networked with the support/ancillary/ and counseling professional and paid particular attention to their comments about students’ interactions, we would probably be in a much better position to resolve some of the conflicts students experience with real life issues.

As a College of Education faculty member of Chicago State University, I have incorporated valuable ideas from the *Curriculum Infusion of Real Life Issues* handbook into my Reading 405 graduate studies course: Best Practices in Emergent Literacy. Practicing teachers are helped to recognize valuable resources within their school community. In addition, they are provided with a methodology and suggested trade books that will allow them to incorporate content on any pressing real life issue into their daily instructional plan.

Multicultural trade books, often found in K-8 teachers’ classroom libraries, are essential and effective resources which address particular concerns children may be experiencing daily. If these real life issues concepts are integrated into the course content, students’ repertoires of ideas regarding ways to handle their concerns with bullies, violence and /or ostracism are enhanced. The employment of essential reading skills such as: predicting, reading aloud, silent reading, listening, retelling, discussing, responding to comprehension questions (verbally or in writing), and further exploration of key components through dramatization and/or reader’s workshop may prove to be invaluable to students’ understanding and/or their acquisition of skills which help them to better respond to personal and /or social concerns. **- Sherelene Harris, Assistant Professor of Reading, School of Education, Chicago State University**

Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Trainings Focus on Diversity

At the FIPSE Program Director's meeting a year ago, Ron and I met with Susan Tucker. In addition to serving as a FIPSE program evaluation consultant, Susan also is an NCATE (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) monitor. After reviewing our project, she suggested that the diversity component of our project might help Colleges of Education meet parts of the NCATE diversity standard.

Over the past year we have added Donna Gollnick, the Vice-President of NCATE, to our Advisory Board. Greater emphasis has been placed on diversity issues in faculty training workshops and in review of faculty write-ups. Additionally, we are expanding the diversity section of the project website to include papers written by faculty experts on a variety of areas of diversity. Our goal is to ensure that student teachers not only consider each area of diversity, but also apply their knowledge to their lesson plans and teaching while gaining understanding and empathy for their students. A brief overview of objectives follows:

1. Education majors will demonstrate that they know how to acquire knowledge of the diverse student populations they teach. They should be prepared to examine student and community diversity in the schools where they will teach by: Race and Ethnicity (including religion and language); Socio-economic status; Gender; Sexual Orientation; Developmental status; and Exceptionality. The candidates will understand how these elements of diversity intersect. They should be aware that meaningful generalizations about a group should not turn into stereotypes - there are always individual differences.
2. Future teachers will demonstrate a realistic understanding of how diverse social environments produce the real life issues students confront. (For example, problems of binge drinking, bullying and ostracism present in many high schools in upper income areas reflect the heavy drinking and competitiveness of the communities. Problems of drug addiction, drug dealing and gang activity reflect the low socio-economic status and sense of exclusion of low income minority communities.)
3. Candidates will demonstrate how they consider student cultures/diversity in selecting evidence based prevention strategies to incorporate into their real life issues lessons. (For example, high achieving students may be especially impacted by the evidence based prevention strategy of "misperception of personal risk." These students need to see how their academic futures are threatened by problem behavior such as binge drinking and bullying. African-American students who have been positively affected by the history of the civil rights movement may be especially affected by the evidence based strategies of involvement in community prevention and building pro-social (pro-community) norms.
4. Future teachers will demonstrate how they apply their knowledge of classroom diversity in selecting instructional methods that are appropriate to the culture and individual learning preferences of students in their classes or case studies of classes.
5. Candidates will demonstrate sensitivity to how diverse cultural backgrounds or environments have affected students' lives. They will demonstrate empathy even as they encourage change.

- Bruce Joleaud, Project Coordinator

Faculty Impressions

I've enjoyed my role as Chicago State University's campus coordinator for NDCI's Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion program. Program staff members work very hard to meet the program goals and continue to train university faculty members. The faculty and dean of the College of Education here at CSU have been very active in their pursuit of incorporating real life issues like: substance abuse, violence, HIV/AIDS, bullying, and social ostracism into their students' classroom and student teaching experiences. I feel strongly that these are important issues that our students must learn to infuse into their teaching in order to impact children in our community's schools.

- Shaine Henert, Associate Professor, Department of Health, Physical Education & Recreation, Chicago State University

My involvement with the Real Life Curriculum Infusion Project has included the teaching of one group of special education undergraduate majors, the methodology of the model, and its specific application to the issue of social ostracism. Additionally, my involvement has included a review of the student handbook. Significant pre-post measures were obtained from the undergraduate group I worked with. I feel the model is impressive in that it fosters greater awareness of real life issues and their consequences on school aged students. In addition, the model provides the tools by which educators may have a significant positive impact on their students regarding the successful resolution of real life issues.

- Jeff Messerer, Professor, Department of Special Education, Northeastern Illinois University

Faculty Involvement in Dissemination: *Special Education Monograph*

Faculty members: Dr. Sandra Beyda Lorie, Dr. Effie Papoutsis Kritikos, Dr. Jeffrey Messerer, and Dr. Phyllis Le-Dosquet from Northeastern Illinois University's Department of Special Education are collaborating on a special education monograph. This monograph will detail how real life issues curriculum infusion can be integrated at the higher education level to prepare pre-service teachers gaining their initial certification in the area of exceptionality.

The monograph will include the most comprehensive review of the scholarly research to date on the vulnerabilities faced by individuals with learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional/behavioral disorders regarding each real life issue. The authors will provide examples of how the curriculum infusion model can be implemented throughout an initial certification program. The program, Learning Specialist One (LBS I), has been approved by the National Accreditation Association for Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). It prepares teachers to work with individuals with exceptionality at the K-12 level who have learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, mental retardation and physical impairments. - **Dr. Sandra Beyda Lorie, Associate Professor of Special Education & Project Campus Coordinator, Northeastern Illinois University**

Work with Marangu Teachers' College Faculty Members

Northeastern Illinois University and the Marangu Teachers' College in Tanzania are engaged in a partnership funded by a U.S. Department of State grant. The goals of this grant are to assist Marangu in developing a school leadership program and to assist NEIU to better prepare Illinois teachers to teach about Africa. A cohort of three women from the Marangu faculty took courses at NEIU during the summer of 2005. The second cohort of four Marangu faculty men came to take coursework at NEIU during the Fall 2005 academic term. Their program will lead to an M.A. in Educational Leadership.

During August of 2005, we were able to meet and introduce our project to Damari A. Mchome, Jestina J. Mbilinyi, and Edith Tarimo. They were enthused about the possibility of developing HIV/AIDS prevention at Marangu. Because they were about to return to Tanzania, they suggested that we train their four colleagues who were coming to NEIU to study during the fall semester.

During the fall of 2005, Alice Pennamon, the coordinator of the grant, assisted project staff in arranging regular meetings with Freddie Iramba, Charles Jillanga, Patrick Moshi, and Raphael Mihaluma Msuya to train them in the Curriculum Infusion of Real Life Issues process, assist them in the development of course modules, and discuss ways that they might disseminate HIV/AIDS Prevention Curriculum Infusion at Marangu Teachers College and other colleges in Tanzania. Diane Ehrlich integrated these meetings into one of her Educational Leadership and Development courses which culminated in an oral final in which the four men developed a comprehensive plan for implementation and dissemination of the project in Tanzania. We were able to videotape this final for future reference. Our project director, Ron Glick, plans to visit Marangu College in June to assist the seven faculty members in implementing their lesson plans and training other faculty members. The project will be seeking funding to extend HIV/AIDS prevention teacher training at Marangu College and other educational institutions in Tanzania and Africa.

- **Bruce Joleaud, Project Coordinator**

Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Integrated into Educational Leadership Courses

The development of a Curriculum Infusion module for students who are in Educational Leadership courses is different than one created for teacher educators. It is vitally important to understand the content and strategies for infusing real life issues into the curriculum relating to real life issues, however school leaders also have the responsibility for getting their faculty, parents, and other stakeholders in the community involved. The principal, assistant principal, or any other member of a leadership team is responsible for involving school staff and members of the community in an overall effort to provide safe schools and a risk free environment. Teachers may be infusing prevention and other issues into the curriculum but leadership is needed to have a broader perspective. The principal is in charge of staff development, working with parent groups, local school councils or PTAs, handling school newsletters, and communicating with parents. In-class curriculum infusion is a key component in prevention, but school assemblies and other ways of communicating with students will expand the influence and perhaps involve teachers involved in reading journals, discussion groups, etc. to continue and deepen the dialogue. The objectives for the course in school community relations included:

- *Students will be able to identify challenges of creating effective staff development for real life issues.*
- *Student will develop strategies to effectively address resistance when introducing new idea to the school community.*
- *Students will develop an action plan for dealing with the problems identified in the Administrative Case Study and transfer the learning to their own school settings.*

Instructional materials included the case, the guidelines for the action plan and presentation, the use of both the Blackboard web-site as a repository for articles and additional discussion and the project website. - **Diane Ehrlich, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership & Development, Northeastern Illinois University**

Project Evaluation Update

Evaluation results during the first year were predominantly positive but showed areas of stronger gains along with some weaknesses. Those results informed decisions for refining training and retraining efforts during the second year of the project. The decisions appear to have paid dividends ... during Year II, evaluation results showed consistently higher gains in all areas with significantly higher gains in the areas (evidence-based prevention strategies and diversity) that were weakest in the first year.

1. Pre-post evaluation of faculty trainings – Both Year I and II pre-post measures of training indicate that faculty members increased 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:

- Among 31 faculty members trained during Year I, the percentage who indicated “high” or “very high” knowledge of the prevalence of real life problems among K-12 students increased from pre to post evaluations more than 19% overall for substance abuse, violence, bullying, social ostracism and HIV/AIDS. During Year II, the overall increase rose to over 41% among the 17 faculty members trained.
 - The percentage (combined for substance abuse, violence, bullying, social ostracism, and HIV/AIDS) of faculty who felt “confident” or “very confident” they could prepare students to integrate real life issues into the curriculum increased by over 4% on Year I on post-test scores and about 40% on Year II post-test scores, representing itemized increases from over 29% to nearly 59% over pre-test measures in Year II.
 - The percentage of faculty who indicated they could describe the major research-based prevention strategies to their students “well” or “very well” was a post-test average of just over 87% and a change average of over 46% from pre-test scores for the five identified strategies (comparisons to Year I are not possible due to a change in the evaluation rubric).
 - Ratings among faculty who indicated they were “confident” or “very confident” in their ability to prepare future teachers to consider five areas of diversity (race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, and age/developmental status) while they are designing prevention curricula changed from pre-test to post-test measure an average of just over 17% in Year I and an average of over 36% in Year II.
 - Among 15 faculty members who received follow-up training during Year II the percentage of faculty who indicated they were “confident” or “very confident” they could prepare students to integrate real life issues into the curriculum to prevent substance abuse, violence, bullying, social ostracism, and HIV/AIDS showed combined average increases of over 9% (compared to average increases of about 4% on Year I initial training post-test measures. This is an increase of more than 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.
 - During Year I, one of two assessed areas of weakness in our training and faculty member write-ups was the incorporation of five evidence-based prevention strategies. Comparison between the overall average of the mean scores for initial faculty write-ups (1.12) and those of revisions in Year I (2.03) showed an average overall improvement score of .91.
 - In Year II, the overall average of the mean scores for initial faculty write-up reviews for the evidence-based strategies was 2.15. It is noteworthy that this mean is significantly higher than that of the revision score of Year 1. These scores increased to 2.40 on revisions in Year II.
 - The second area of assessed weakness, diversity, also showed significant improvements in the revision scores from Year I to Year II. For example, incorporation of consideration of student: race and ethnicity rose from 1.56 to 2.13; socio-economic status rose from 1.39 to 1.88; gender rose from 1.33 to 2.13; and sexual orientation rose from 1.33 to 1.88 compliance on faculty write-up revisions (age/developmental status was not included in the Year I rubric and student cultures was not included in Year II, thus, they could not be compared). The overall average change in revision scores from Year I (1.40) to Year II (2.00) is .60.
 - The sections on Course Information, Teachers as Leaders, and Instructional Strategies and Activities remained strong throughout both the first and second year.
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 142 students who expressed confidence that they could employ five research-based prevention strategies averaged an increase from more than 88% to just under 97% from pre to post test.

Data from non-participant observation of College of Education courses which include Real Life Issues CI and evaluation of student lesson plans is still being gathered and entered and we hope to begin observation of student teaching of Real Life Issues CI in the near future.

-Bruce Joleaud, Project Director and Virginia Rossi, Research Assistant

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

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

Northeastern Illinois University

Rachel Adeoudu, Teacher Education
 Sandra Beyda-Lorie, Special Education
 Nancy Brinkerhoff, Educational Leadership
 Lynn Bush, Educational Leadership & Development
 Emily Chambers, Special Education
 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
 Alice Murata, Counselor Education
 Janet Pariza, Teacher Education
 Roger Passman, Teacher Education
 Parul Raval, Teacher Education
 Claudia Rueda-Alvarez, Counseling Education
 James Ruby, Counselor Education
 Brian Schultz, Educational Leadership & Development
 Katy Smith, Teacher Education
 Terry Stirling, Acting Dean
 Fred Tarnow, Teacher Education
 Mindy Ugolini, Special Education
 Joaquin Villegas, Teacher Education

DePaul University

Anna Frank, Health, Physical Education & Recreation

Things to Remember for Participating faculty members...

- *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.*
- *Remember to contact the NDCI staff to arrange a date and time for a staff member to administer the pre and post tests to your students. Please call Nadia Parreno at (773)442-5685 to make this appointment.*
- *Please 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 purposes. We would also like to see all other high quality student products from each class to be considered for the project website.*

Be Real Curriculum Infusion Program

As of January 2nd, we are up and running with the NDCI's latest grant project—The Be Real Curriculum Infusion Program in Illinois. With funding from the Governor's Office, through and with Prevention First, and the Association of Illinois Middle-Level Schools, the project has two major components. The first is directed to middle grade in-service teachers for whom NDCI staff and resource personnel will develop CI modules and thematic units to aid in training core teams of teachers to seamlessly integrate alcohol, tobacco, other drugs (ATOD), and violence prevention into existing curricula. The program will be piloted in six middle schools in both rural and urban settings in Illinois. First year activities will focus on 6th grade teachers.

The second component of the project is directed towards future middle grade educators. Future teachers will be taught to infuse ATOD and violence prevention into lesson plans across subject areas. A series of regional trainings are planned for faculty from Colleges of Education throughout Illinois.

In both components, the emphasis will be on the development of lesson plans which incorporate evidence based strategies, consider the diversity of student, and community cultures. They are also in line with Illinois State Learning Goals and are compatible with Social Emotional Learning Goals. The grant provides \$71,000 from January 2 to July 1, 2006 with an additional \$191,000 planned for next fiscal year.

-Shellie Coleman, Be Real In Service Project Manager

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**

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