

Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion

Northeastern Illinois University

Director's Update

We are now in the final year of a grant from the U.S. Department Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) that prepares future teachers to integrate real life issues including substance abuse and bullying into classes across the k-12 curriculum. Objectives of the grant are to more effectively engage students in the learning process and connect teachers more closely to students and communities. The grant also emphasizes classroom diversity. Knowledge of diversity provides necessary context for understanding the real life issues students confront and for developing effective instructional strategies to address these issues. Real life issues curriculum infusion Curriculum Infusion contributes to faculty, departments and Colleges meeting the NCATE

diversity standard. Our Advisory Board has national experts on diversity, including Donna Gollnick, the NCATE senior vice president.

The grant work has proceeded well. More than 60 College of Education faculty members have been trained in Real Life Issues CI at the pilot institutions in Chicago, including Chicago State and Northeastern Illinois Universities. We have begun national dissemination which has included well received workshops and trainings in California and faculty and staff presentations at regional and national meetings. These include two presentations at the ATE and two pre-conference workshops at AACTE national meetings.

We are especially pleased

by the response of faculty to real life issues CI, including completion of a monograph by Special Education faculty at Northeastern. The monograph describes the vulnerability of special needs students to problems like substance abuse and bullying and indicates how real life issues CI can be infused in classes throughout a Special Education Department.

We are also very pleased that through Prevention First Inc., and the Department of Human Services Bureau of Community the state of Illinois is supporting the extension of prevention CI to Colleges of Education beyond the pilot institutions. We welcome the opportunity described in this newsletter to provide two additional trainings in May.

- Ron Glick

2007 Higher Education Trainings in Illinois

Due to the success of the program, the project has been funded for a second year to dissemination prevention curriculum infusion in Illinois. A training will be held at Illinois State University on May 4th and an additional training for Chicago area Colleges of Education at the Chicago Teachers' Center on May 18th. We welcome faculty

from any College of Education to attend these valuable trainings. (Faculty who prepare teachers in the area of special education may find the value of prevention CI of particular interest.) Those who attend this training will receive the following benefits: learn to prepare teachers to seamlessly integrate prevention content into existing k-12

classes, apply the five evidence-based strategies found successful in prevention education, and incorporate students' diversity characteristics into instructional practice. In addition, receive stipends upon completion of a write-up. Faculty members interested in participating should contact Sandra Beyda Lorie at (773)442-4908 or s-beyda@neu.edu.

Network for Dissemination of Curriculum Infusion

5500 N. St. Louis Ave. C-523
Chicago, IL 60625

2007 Newsletter

Inside this issue:

Evaluation Update	2
Faculty Involvement in Dissemination	2
Curriculum Infusion Training	2
Acquiring knowledge and Understanding of Diversity	3
CI and NCATE's Diversity Standard	3
Higher Education Program in Illinois	4
Be Real K-12 program	4

"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"

Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion

Dr. Audrey Edwards
Professor,
Eastern Illinois
University

"I believe that the most effective teachers not only teach their subject specialties but also address real life issues their students face. Yet many teachers, pressed to meet standards, believe they do not have time to deal with their students' personal lives and behavior. The Curriculum Infusion (CI) Model offers future teachers a highly practical strategy for dealing with these issues. This past year I have taught my prospective teachers about CI by actually modeling it in my certification classes—doing a little CI myself. Since my students are assigned to do micro-teaching to their classmates, I have asked some of them to focus their lessons on high-risk behavior. This approach has fitted smoothly into my course framework and has in fact made the course more interesting. My students want to make a difference, and Curriculum Infusion offers them a way."

Evaluation Update

By: Bruce Joleaud, Project Coordinator

Evaluation of the current FIPSE grant has proceeded very well. The NDCI has trained more than 60 College of Education faculty members at the pilot universities in Chicago. Supported by funding by the State of Illinois more than 40 additional faculty have now been trained at workshops offered to other Colleges of Education in Illinois. Evaluation results are consistently positive. Pre-post assessment of faculty trainings indicate substantial gains in knowledge of real life issues, diversity, evidence based

strategies and capacity to effectively incorporate Real Life Issues CI into College of Education courses; non-participant observation of courses where Real Life Issues CI is taught indicate a high level of student interest; pre-post student assessment in courses that include Real Life Issues CI indicate gains in understanding the importance of the life issues, the value of incorporating them into the curriculum, and confidence that future teachers can effectively integrate life issues into their classes. Responses have also been con-

sistently positive to presentations and workshops by NDCI staff and participating faculty at state and national meetings including the ATE and AACTE.

Project staff members are currently reviewing student lesson plans that were developed in foundations and methods courses and beginning work on the final evaluation report to FIPSE. Findings will be posted on the project website this summer and included in our next newsletter.

Faculty Involvement in Dissemination: Special Education Monograph

By: Dr. Sandra Beyda Lorie, Associate Professor & Project Manager, NEIU

Hot off the presses, faculty members in the Department of Special Education at Northeastern Illinois University have completed a monograph about the Real Life Issues CI Methodology. Faculty members Dr. Sandra Beyda Lorie in conjunction with Dr. Effie Papoutsis Kritikos, Dr. Jeffrey Messerer and Dr. Phyllis Le Dosquet have worked for over a year detailing how Real Life Issues CI can be integrated at the

higher education level to prepare teachers gaining their initial certification in the area of special Education. The monograph includes a comprehensive review of the scholarly research on the vulnerabilities faces by individuals with learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional/behavioral disorder regarding each real life issue. Faculty members who

prepare teachers and administrators who support these programs will find numerous examples of how the CI model can be implemented throughout a teacher preparation program. Interested faculty members can obtain a copy of this monograph by contacting the NDCI office at (773)442-4908.

Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Training

By: Bruce Joleaud, Project Coordinator

On September 15, 2006, faculty members in the Department of Special Education at Northeastern Illinois University participated in a half-day training of Real Life Issues CI focusing on the diversity component of the methodology. The session was facilitated by Sandra Beyda Lorie, Shellie Coleman and Bruce Joleaud. In addition, to Sandra Beyda Lorie, special education faculty participants included Berry Birnbaum, Effie Kritikos, Phyllis LeDosquet, Mark Melton, and Jeff Messerer. Following the pre-evaluation survey, Dr. Beyda Lorie discussed the progress of the Special Education Monograph. The group reviewed and discussed innovations and the renewed emphasis on diversity as evidenced by recent additions to the CI Handbook, the project website, the faculty guidelines, student pre-post evaluation, and the new student logs. Participants engaged in an enthusiastic and animated discussion about CI in their courses and how they would incorporate diversity consideration more fully into their teaching. The session concluded with a discussion of courses that would be offered in the fall and spring semesters, the status of faculty write-ups, and the post evaluation survey.

Acquiring Knowledge & Understanding Diversity

By: Dr. Sandra Beyda Lorie, Associate Professor & Project Manager, NEIU

Educators who are trained in the Curriculum Infusion Methodology acquire knowledge and skills to competently address the diversity characteristics of their students. They engage in critical reflection about their students' race, ethnicity, including language and religion, socio-economic status, and excep-

tionality. They understand that the real life issues their K-12 students confront are influences and /or mediated by a variety of social and environmental factors including social injustices that impact diverse groups. Furthermore, they use this information to inform their lesson planning and related instruc-

tional practices (e.g. classroom management techniques, communication styles), thus contributing to a school department or college of Education's meeting the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) on diversity.

Dr. Maureen Gillette, College of Education Dean, Northeastern Illinois University

It has been my pleasure to support the Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Grant. As a member of the Advisory Board, I have been fortunate to have first hand knowledge of the impact of the grant on faculty as well as on our teacher candidates. The work of our faculty has been instrumental in preparing our teacher candidates to address topics that impact K-12 learners in all communities. Having witnessed the events of September 11, 2001 firsthand, I was shocked to hear that many teachers did not know how or did not feel comfortable talking with students in the greater New

York City area about what had transpired. I realized that as teacher educators, it is our responsibility to help our teacher candidates develop the knowledge base and the strategies for addressing difficult issues in the classroom. The key to the success of this grant is that important issues such as substance abuse, violence, HIV/AIDS, bullying and social ostracism are infused into the K-12 curriculum. This not only increased the time teachers spend on helping students achieve standards, it provides relevancy and promotes engaged learning.

The staff has worked exceedingly hard over the last year to focus on diversity issues as they relate to the infusion of real life issues in the curriculum. This provides yet another way that our faculty can prepare teachers who can address the needs of all students, regardless of ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. NCATE requires that we infuse diversity into curriculum and clinical experiences. The research based strategies in Real Life Issues provide another way that faculty can accomplish this goal.

Dr. Eleni Makris, Associate Professor, Educational Leadership and Development, Northeastern Illinois University

"The Real Life Issues Program has taught and given me the opportunity to show my students that addressing sensitive topics like HIV/AIDS and bullying can be fun and simple. My pre-service teachers enjoy learning that they can easily integrate these real life topics in their own teaching and feel empowered that they have learned techniques to reach out to their own students. Participating in this program has been invaluable to me as a professor because it has taught me that I can address student misconceptions, present sound data, direct my students to reflect on their own lives, and identify school and community resources that will help them. Mostly, the Curriculum Infusion Method has shown me and my future teachers that knowledge can be shared easily and effectively in the curriculum."

Contributing to NCATE's Diversity

Standard

NCATE requires Colleges of Education to meet Standard 4 on Diversity. One component of this standard is to offer experience to candidates in teacher education programs that help them demonstrate knowledge, skills and dispositions related to diversity.

The Real Life Issues CI Methodology requires teachers to:

- Gather and examine data on student and community diversity in the schools where they teach
- Obtain a realistic understanding of how diverse social environments influence the real life issues students confront
- Apply their knowledge of classroom diversity in selecting and modifying instructional methods and materials
- Demonstrate sensitivity to how diverse cultural backgrounds or environments have affected students' lives.

Dr. Monie L. Hayes, Assistant Professor of Educational Studies, Monmouth College

"What I like most about his model is that it calls for teaching healthy decision making in an authentic, contextualized manner. The program calls for academically sound as well as socially responsive curriculum and instruction; teachers are prompted to look at their students' prior knowledge and concerns and at curriculum area goals to inform their planning. I appreciate that the program provides multiple opportunities for students—including young adolescents, of whom we don't always expect enough and thus often fail to engage—to reflect critically on their experiences and interpretations of their social worlds. Finally, I like the way the program so readily admits reading, writing and critical media literacy activities across the core curriculum and across Real Life Issues."

Network for Dissemination of Curriculum Infusion

**Northeastern Illinois
University**

Phone: (773)442-4908
(773)442-5685
5500 N. St. Louis
Building C-523
Chicago, IL 60625

We're on the Web!

www.neiu.edu/~K12pac

Curriculum Infusion Higher Education Program in Illinois

By: Dr. Sandra Beyda Lorie, Associate Professor & Higher Education Project Manager, Northeastern Illinois University

NDCI received funding from the Governor's Office, through Prevention First, INC. to train higher education faculty throughout Illinois to prepare teachers to infuse real life issues throughout the K-12 curriculum. The Higher Education work focused on recruitment and training downstate Colleges of Education (Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Illinois State University, Eastern Illinois University, MacMurray College, Blackburn College, Monmouth College and Illinois College) at a training site at Illinois State University. Many of the faculty at these trainings completed write-ups indicating how they planned to incorporate CI prevention into existing College of Education courses. Faculty feedback has been positive. Last year's training has already resulted in faculty presentations at national conferences.

**Dr. Barbara Livingston Nourie,
Department of Curriculum and Instruction Chair,
Illinois State University**

"Several of us at Illinois State University have now participated in the Real Life Issues Curriculum Infusion Module Design workshop. Sandra Beyda Lorie, Bruce Joleaud, Ron Glick and Nadia Jelinek came to campus to conduct the workshop and did an outstanding job. As the chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, with programs in early childhood, elementary and middle level education and support courses in secondary education, I can easily see how the curriculum infusion model would work well in any program. Further, these are important issues for students in all our schools and in all of our communities."

BE REAL K-12 Program

By: Shellie Coleman, BE REAL K-12 Project Manager, NEIU

In October 2006 we conducted four days of really exciting Curriculum Infusion training for 6th grade teams from three middle schools; Sam Rotolo (Batavia), S.E. Gross (Brookfield), and Henry W. Cowherd (Aurora). Twenty-five teachers, prevention specialists, social workers, counselors, and a principal participated in the trainings.

The CI methodology inputs were delivered interactively. In small and large groups, participants explored diversity, the real life issues and self-assessment. A history of prevention which detailed the evidenced-based prevention strategies was provided as well as an overview of resources including the NDCI website.

Participants were especially engaged with Shannon Sullivan's "Let's Get Real About Bulling" presentation. Ms. Sullivan, Project Director, Coalition for Education on Sexual Orientation, showed the "Let's Get Real" documentary depicting young people discussing their personal experiences as victims and perpetrators.

A highlight was NEIU faculty, Dr. Kathryn McKnight's introduction to the Be Real Lesson Plans. Dr. McKnight used several interactive exercises to help the teams begin development of implementation plans by core subject areas. She also facilitated Book Talks, sharing some of her favorite juvenile literature.

Bully and alcohol prevention have been infused into math, science, literature, and language arts lesson plans at S.E. Gross and Sam Rotolo Middle Schools. Classroom observations and teacher reports rate implementation of the infused lesson as either successful or very successful.

The contents of this newsletter were developed under several grants including Prevention First, INC., Illinois Department of Human Services and the Fund for Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.