

THE IRIS CENTER
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Administrative Progress Report
for
Year 2, Quarter 3

Submitted to:

Sarah Allen
Tracie Dickson
Research to Practice Division
Office of Special Education Programs
Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services
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Naomi Tyler
Deborah Deutsch Smith

The IRIS Center Quarterly Report/July–September 2014 [Year 2, Quarter 3]

The IRIS Center produces these Quarterly Reports as both a narrative of our effort and a detailed account of our work and progress. This Third Quarter of Year Two found the Center taking part in our 3+2 Meeting. We were also busy creating new instructional resources and materials, hosting trainings, and taking part in presentations and conferences. Read on to learn all the latest from the IRIS Center.

BUILD PROJECT INFRASTRUCTURE

See this section for brief descriptions of those items having to do with our ongoing infrastructure development and enhancement.

Activities and Progress in This Quarter:

- **Website Host:** We have completed the transfer of our Website to its new online host, WP Engine. This is a change from Pressable, the site's original host. This switch, while being more cost-effective, will also improve site access and provide us with the raw data logs, necessary to analyze Website traffic.
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3+2 MEETING

On September 15, IRIS Center Co-Directors Naomi Tyler and Deb Smith, along with external evaluator Bianca Montrosse, took part in our Center's 3+2 Meeting in Washington, DC, with members of OSEP participating on-site. The external reviewers and IRIS staff from VU, CGU, and the IRIS EI/EC Leadership Team participated virtually from their respective locations.

MAINTAIN PROJECT BUDGET

The co-directors and budget managers at both locations carefully monitor expenditure and encumbrances. Costs for events and activities are under close scrutiny to ensure that no over-expenditures occur in Year 2.

DEVELOP

The Center develops teaching and learning tools, and content and training modules reflecting evidence-based instructional and intervention practices. These tools are designed for use by IHE faculty, professional development providers, and practicing educators, and are high quality, useful, relevant, and non-duplicative.

Activities and Progress in This Quarter:

- **New IRIS Information Brief:** At the request of OSEP staff, we have created and posted a new IRIS Information Brief to our Website: “Comparison of the Diagnostic Criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder Across DSM-5, DSM-IV-TR, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Definition of Autism.” The resource also includes a summary of research findings regarding changes in the number of individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders when the DSM-5 criteria were used, compared to those same numbers under the DSM-IV-TR. Colleen Harker and Wendy Stone from the University of Washington READI (Research on Early Autism Detection and Intervention) Lab developed the Information Brief for the IRIS Center.
- **Books: Portrayals of People with Disabilities:** Curated in conjunction with Mary Anne Prater, a leading expert in special education and children’s literature, this online search tool contains information and synopses of children’s and young adult literature about or having to do with people with disabilities. This information includes the name of the author and illustrator, year of publication, publisher, appropriate grade level, and award status. In August, 54 new titles were added.
- **Curriculum Matrices:** This new tool—created in collaboration with our Curriculum Matrices Work Group—offers examples of the ways in which IRIS resources about evidence-based practices can be embedded into teacher licensure programs, in both special education and blended programs. Uploaded in September, our Curriculum Matrices collection now includes nine new resources related to the following:
 - Undergraduate Blended General and Special Education Programs (K–6 Blended, 7–12 Blended)
 - Undergraduate Special Education Programs (K–6 Special Education, 7–12 Special Education, Student Teaching)
 - Graduate Blended General and Special Education Programs (K–6 Blended, 7–12 Blended)
 - Graduate Special Education Programs (K–6 Special Education, 7–12 Special Education)

- **Faculty Seminar Companion Guide:** This standardized guide was posted to the IRIS Website in August. It will be piloted at the three Seminars to be held during the fall. Any revisions necessary will be made at the end of the calendar year, and a new and final version will be sent to the printer in December.
- **Sample Syllabi Collection:** This resource is composed of detailed syllabi examples from actual college courses implementing IRIS resources. In July, six new syllabi were added to the collection, four of which relate to early childhood instruction. The latest additions to this collection are:
 - Positive Guidance and Discipline for Early Intervention/ECSE
 - Recommended Practices for Early Childhood Special Education
 - Theories and Models for Understanding Behavior in Young Children with Disabilities
 - Foundations of Effective Assessment and Inclusion
 - Curriculum Models and Intervention Strategies for Early Childhood Special Education (Online)
 - Evidence-Based Practices for Secondary Inclusion (Online)
- **Sample Wrap-Around Concept Maps:** These resources—designed to help college faculty, professional development providers, and independent learners to extend and deepen the information included in our Modules and Case Study units—have been revised and reformatted.
- **Standards:** In conjunction with Nancy Hunt of California State University, Los Angeles, in July we added to our Website standards related to the Division for Early Childhood's (DEC) recommended practices for our Modules, as well as our Case Study Units and Activities. Additionally, we have revised the CEC standards and added standards for CAEP. The online standards tool itself has also been entirely overhauled and redesigned.
- **Brochure:** Our informational brochure related to the Center's reading resources was updated to include our new *STAR Legacy Module Secondary Reading Instruction (Part 2): Deepening Middle School Content-Area Learning with Vocabulary and Comprehension Strategies*.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **PD Hours:** We continue to make significant progress toward being able to offer professional development hours through the IRIS Website. We are currently planning to pilot the new program in November and December.

- **STAR Legacy Modules:** We are currently developing a significant number of new IRIS Modules:
 - A trio of resources on identifying and selecting, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based practices in the classroom
 - Two new EC Modules, one on behavior and a second on setting up classroom environments
 - A Module on autism spectrum disorders, with content developed by expert Ilene Schwartz of the University of Washington

 - **Spanish-Language Resources:** A Spanish-language version of our *Universal Design for Learning: Creating a Learning Environment that Challenges and Engages All Students* Module is forthcoming sometime in October. This Module will be part of an overall redesign of our Spanish resources—including Case Study Units, Activities, and Module outlines—in order to bring them into line with the Center’s current formatting standards.

 - **Sample PD Activities:** In conjunction with Silvia DeRuvo (WestEd Center) and Susan Courey (San Francisco State University), we are developing 3–4 PD samples appropriate for a two-hour event, two-week event, and long-term training event. These activities will then become a standard template/format for the development of more samples to be available for use at PD Seminars and for posting on our Website.

 - **Module Answer Keys:** These new resources detail possible responses to a given *STAR Legacy* Module’s Assessment questions. We will begin posting Answer Keys on our Website in the coming quarter and continue doing so for both older and newer resources.
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DISSEMINATE

The Center will build IHE faculty and PD providers’ awareness and knowledge regarding the infusion of IRIS and other federally funded products into their courses, program curricula, and PD trainings through multiple dissemination efforts.

Activities and Progress in This Quarter:

- **Presentations:** Throughout the year, the IRIS Center attends regional and national conferences to present on our training and instructional resources and to keep audiences up-to-date on everything that is new with IRIS. Information about presentations is below.

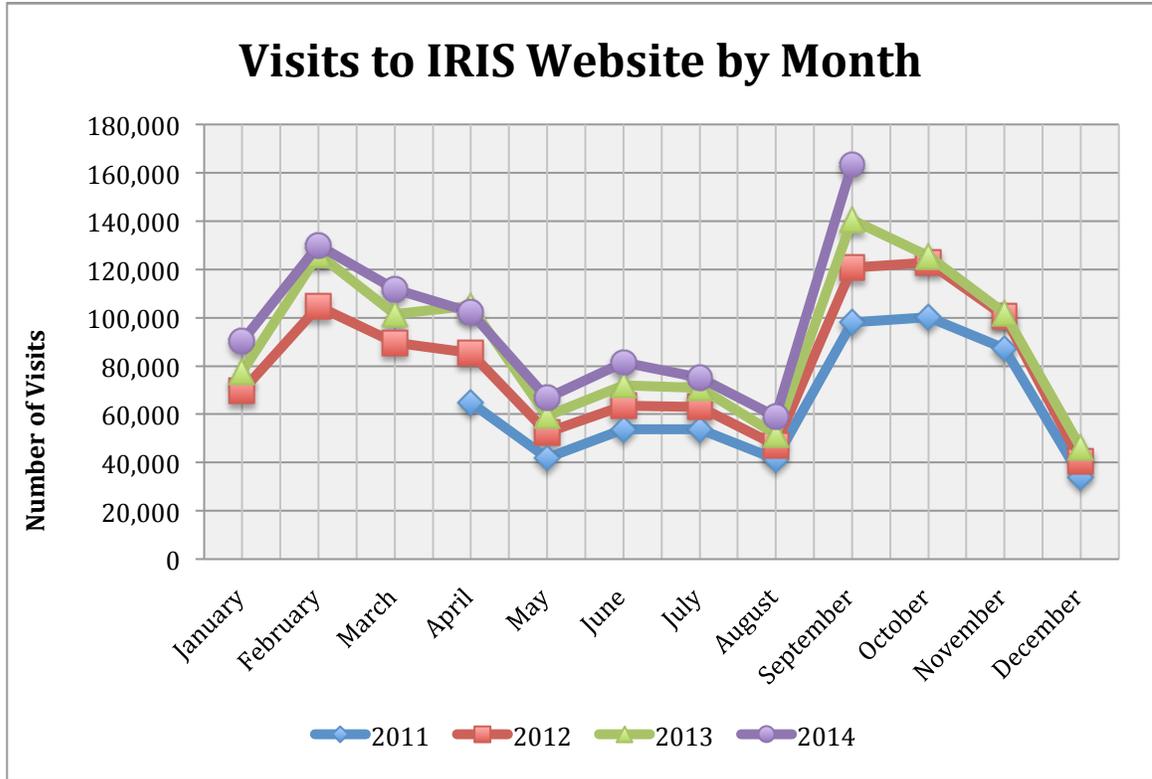
- **Project Directors' Meeting:** In July, Naomi Tyler and Deb Smith took part the OSEP Project Directors' Meeting in Washington, DC, where they participated in a panel that included 325T project directors discussing their revised curriculum and inclusion of IRIS resources. Meanwhile, Amy Harris of the IRIS Center and Ilene Schwartz presented on the use of IRIS resources to support the DEC recommended practices, and Naomi Tyler, Amy Harris, and Deb Smith showcased new resources at a poster session.
- **TACC:** In late July, we led a short Webinar to highlight our main resources for the Technical Assistance Coordination Center (TACC).
- **IARLD:** Also in July, we presented on our Center and resources at the thirty-eighth annual International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities (IARLD) conference in Vilnius, Lithuania.
- **Head Start:** In July, we sent brochures to be displayed on the OSEP Early Childhood Team's resource table at this year's Head Start National Research Conference on Early Childhood in Washington, DC.
- **NASDSE:** We have sent IRIS materials and information for dissemination at the annual conference of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) to be held in Denver, Colorado, October 4–7.
- **Articles:** The Center often publishes information about our work and our Center in various educational journals and newsletters. Among our recent efforts:
 - An article entitled "Managing Classroom Behavior: Learning How" by Sara Werner, Cammy Purper, and Taryn VanderPyl appeared in the Summer 2014 (volume 27, number 3) edition of the California Department of Education (CDE), Special Education Division's (SED) *Special Edge*.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **DEC:** In October, we will present on our Center and resources at the annual meeting of the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) in St. Louis, Missouri.
- **TN-CEC:** In October, we will present on our latest resources—including a number of new *STAR Legacy* Modules—at the annual meeting of the TN-CEC in Nashville.

- **CCTE/CAPSE:** In October, we will be sharing IRIS resources at the annual conference of the California Association of Professors of Special Education/Teacher Education Division's (CAPSE/TED) in San Diego.
- **TED:** The IRIS Center will present on its resources at the annual conference of the Teacher Education Division (TED) in November.
- **ASHE:** Also in November, the IRIS Center will present at The Association for the Study of Higher Education's (ASHE) annual conference.
- **Upcoming Articles:** The Center often publishes information about our work and our Center in various educational journals and newsletters. Among our upcoming efforts:
 - A new summary report—"Use of the IRIS Center's Resources at Institutions of Higher Education with Approved Special Education Licensure Programs: 2013–2014 Academic Year"—has been posted to our Website.
 - An article called "Reading and Delinquency" by Taryn VanderPyl, Sara Werner, and Cammy Purper is currently being edited and will be submitted to the *Remedial and Special Education* journal in the near future.
 - A third article, "Early Childhood," by Cammy Purper, Taryn VanderPyl, and Sara Werner is currently being edited and will be submitted to *Young Exceptional Children* journal.

Website Visitor Data: There was a 13% increase in visits to the IRIS Website during the months of July, August, and September 2014 compared to the same period last year.



The IRIS online survey asks respondents to rate our Modules' usefulness, relevance, and quality on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest rating). This quarter, some 698 respondents took part in our survey. The first table (below) summarizes descriptive information about the respondents.

Respondents	Number
Graduate Student	278
College Student	229
Experienced Teacher	84
New Teacher	50
Other (e.g., parent)	27
College Faculty	16
School Leader	11
PD Provider	3
Total	698

The next table (below) presents this quarter's survey respondents' overall ratings of the IRIS Modules for quality, relevance, and usefulness.

	Mean Ratings
Quality	4.44
Relevance	4.46
Usefulness	4.45

Respondent Work Areas: Respondents were asked to describe the area they worked or studied in. The table below summarizes the responses we received to this question this quarter.

Response	Number
General education	247
Special education	208
Other	132
Early childhood education	80
Early childhood special education	29
Early intervention services	2
Total	698

TA/ TRAINING

The Center will raise IHE faculty and PD providers' awareness and knowledge regarding the infusion of IRIS and other federally funded products into their courses, program curricula, and PD trainings through a targeted and intensive system of technical assistance and training; and the development of high quality, useful, relevant and non-duplicative products and services.

Activities and Progress in This Quarter:

- **IRIS Impact Study:** Fourteen RFAs for this IRIS Impact Study were submitted for external review, with the process concluded and four winners awarded at the end of May. Mentors have been assigned, and all winners are in communication on Basecamp, software that makes communications, as well as uploading and sharing documents, much easier. By the end of the summer, all projects had their campuses' IRB approvals, and data-collection efforts were either underway or ready for fall classes.

- **Work Sessions:** We continue to follow-up and extend the work initiated at the George Mason University and University of Cincinnati Work Sessions held this spring. Faculty there and our IRIS Team are working on program revisions to the overall curriculum. We anticipate these intensive interactions to continue into Fall 2014.
- **PD Seminars:** In August, IRIS held a Professional Development Seminar in Logan, Utah, for the State of Utah's new PD teams. Fifteen participants from across Utah took part in the event.
- **Faculty Seminars:** On September 18-20, we held an IRIS Faculty Seminar in Omaha, Nebraska. Twenty-two people—including faculty and PhD students from Nebraska, as well as PhD students and a new faculty member from the University of Kansas—participated in the event.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **Faculty Seminars:** We are now in the preparation stages for upcoming Faculty Seminars to take place in St. Louis, Missouri (October 9-11) and Charleston, South Carolina (October 23–25). All events are currently booked beyond their original capacity, and the Missouri event is considered two events in one with a wait list.

DATA-BASED DECISION-MAKING

The Center will implement a process for making decisions about development, technical assistance and training services, and dissemination efforts that align with developments in the field, reflect evidence-based instructional and intervention practices, and are responsive to the needs of IHE faculty, professional development providers, and practicing educators.

Activities and Progress in This Quarter:

- **IRIS USE, Schools List:** This major and multi-part data-collection effort was designed to determine how many colleges and universities offering state-approved special education personnel preparation programs currently use IRIS resources in their coursework. Assessment of IRIS use is important for evaluation purposes and strategic planning. Not only will information about these institutions of higher education help guide the Center in reaching out to programs that prepare general educators who will need to address the educational needs of students with disabilities but it will also help the Center's staff understand those characteristics that need to be reflected in outreach efforts to help them include more information about EBPs in coursework. Our work to more deeply examine and understand these data will be ongoing throughout the coming years.

A report detailing this effort and its outcomes and future is authored by Deb Smith, Jackie Lewis, and Bianca Montrosse-Moorehead, and we anticipate a manuscript to be prepared for submission to TESE in the fall.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **PD Survey:** To better serve our professional development constituents—through both PD Seminars and new resources—because of the guidance of the IRIS Dissemination Work Group, we will be conducting a short survey, disseminated via our listserv. We anticipate that responses will help us to learn more about what PD providers find helpful in their professional practice.

COLLABORATE

The Center will support development, technical assistance and training services, and dissemination efforts through collaborative processes to ensure that products and services align with developments in the field.

Activities and Progress in This Quarter:

- **Professional Learning Lab:** IRIS resources are being disseminated through the online learning lab developed and hosted by Arizona State University. Because of this collaboration, awareness of IRIS resources is being extended throughout the state of Arizona to PD providers and faculty working to improve educational programs offered to students with disabilities.
- **Early Childhood Collaboration:** The Center holds monthly calls with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), the Early Childhood Parenting Center (ECPC), and the Center for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy). Beginning in July, the coordination of these meetings moved from ECTA to IRIS.
- **EPB Annotation Work Group:** Because of unanticipated expenses due to the Impact Studies, the EPB annotation effort is on hold. We have already posted a substantial collection, and once funds are available the collection will be expanded. The EBP Annotations collection is designed to provide IRIS users with information about “what works” for which groups of learners at which age groups.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **CADRE:** On October 9, we will take part in a phone call with members of the National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) to discuss the creation and dissemination of our online resources and materials.
- **NASDSE:** As noted above, we have sent IRIS materials and information for dissemination at the annual conference of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) to be held in Denver, Colorado, October 4–7.
- **Steering Committee Meeting:** With permission from OSEP, this meeting has been moved to early in 2015 so that the results of our recent 3+2 Meeting can be discussed.

EVALUATE

Field-Testing: This past quarter we piloted revised field-testing forms in order to prepare for field-testing new IRIS resources. Fourteen faculty members field-tested five Modules (see the table below) with the students enrolled in their teacher licensure courses. With the exception of the *Teacher Induction: Providing Comprehensive Training for New Special Educators* Module, three faculty field-tested each Module.

Module	Number of Faculty who Field-Tested Module
Secondary Transition	3
Study Skills (Part 1)	3
Study Skills (Part 2)	3
Teacher Induction	2
Teacher Retention	3

Faculty gave the Modules high ratings on the variables of quality, relevance, and usefulness (QRU; see below).

Faculty Ratings of QRU

Module Name	Average Quality Rating	Average Relevance Rating	Average Usefulness Rating
Secondary Transition	4.50	5.00	4.75
Study Skills (Part 1)	4.67	4.33	4.33
Study Skills (Part 2)	4.33	5.00	4.33
Teacher induction	4.33	4.33	4.33
Teacher retention	4.33	4.33	4.33
Overall Average	4.44	4.63	4.44

The written comments by faculty were overwhelmingly positive. Below are some of these positive comments, as well as a couple of suggestions:

“This was an excellent Module it has a nice balance of language and was useful even in this basic class On the whole it provided some great opportunities for us to have online discussions about the concepts. In addition, the student [sic] reported that they especially enjoyed the question in the Assessment where they applied what they had learned in the Module. The other comment I got from students is that they liked how every time something was explained they were provided with a concrete example.” — of the Secondary Transition: Helping Students with Disabilities Plan for Post-High School Settings Module

“My graduate students expressed independently that the Module was helpful and contained ideas they could put into practice immediately regardless of the content area they teach. They also expressed that the Module was high quality and promoted real learning.” — of the Study Skills Strategies (Part 1): Foundations for Effectively Teaching Study Skills Module

“I would like to see each of the strategies (e.g., mnemonics, guided notes) put into its own Module. I feel as if each one could be expanded and covered in more depth, additional examples, research discussion, etc. Effective as written, but not as detailed as it could ultimately be.” — of the Study Skills Strategies (Part 2): Strategies that Improve Students’ Academic Performance Module

“[I wish IRIS provided] Downloadable guided notes (I make them myself now).” — of the Secondary Transition: Helping Students with Disabilities Plan for Post-High School Settings Module

Two hundred and twenty-two students were assigned one of the five Modules in one of their courses and responded to the field-testing survey (see table).

Module	Number of Students who Field-Tested Module
Secondary Transition	48
Study Skills (Part 1)	40
Study Skills (Part 2)	62
Teacher induction	34
Teacher retention	38
Total	222

Students gave the Modules fairly high ratings on the variables of quality, relevance, and usefulness (see table).

Student Ratings of QRU

Module Name	Average Quality Rating	Average Relevance Rating	Average Usefulness Rating
Secondary Transition	3.92	3.79	3.90
Study Skills (Part 1)	4.03	4.13	3.98
Study Skills (Part 2)	4.32	4.19	4.13
Teacher induction	3.91	3.61	3.79
Teacher retention	3.87	3.82	3.55
Overall Average	4.04	3.94	3.90

The written comments by students were, on the whole, positive. One recurring technical issue that students reported was difficulty watching or downloading the videos contained in the Modules.

PERSONNEL

See this space for notes and information on new or outgoing IRIS personnel.

▪ **Departing IRIS Personnel:**

- ❖ In August, we bid farewell to our longtime colleague Erik Dunton (technology support, audio/video engineer), who has relocated to California. His position has been posted through Vanderbilt HR and we are in the process of screening and interviewing applicants.