

THE IRIS CENTER
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Administrative Progress Report
for
Year 5, Quarter 3

Submitted to:

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Office of Special Education Programs
Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services
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The IRIS Center Quarterly Report/June–September 2017 [Year 5, 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 Five found the Center creating new instructional resources and materials and updating others. Read on to learn all the latest from the IRIS Center.

SPECIAL MENTION

- **Janet Church:** It's with bittersweet feelings that we bid farewell to longtime IRIS Center dissemination specialist Janet Church, who retired at the end of August. Janet was a fixture at IRIS@VU for nearly 19 years, overseeing the distribution of IRIS materials to trainings, conferences, presentations, and seminars, in addition to managing IRIS' voluminous listserv and contacts list. With great fondness, we wish her all the best and a joyous and much-deserved retirement. IRIS will never quite be the same without her.

MAINTAIN PROJECT BUDGET

The co-directors and budget managers at both locations carefully monitor expenditures and encumbrances. Costs for events and activities are under close scrutiny to ensure that no over-expenditures occur in Year 5.

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:

- **WCAG Compliance:** IRIS is currently combing through our Website and resources to ensure that they conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. Stricter and more rigorous than 508 Compliance standards, WACG 2.0 covers a wide range of recommendations for making Web content more accessible. Following these guidelines will increase the IRIS Website's accessibility to a wider range of people with disabilities, including deafness and hearing loss, print disabilities, and other disabilities that might affect how users interact with online resources. These efforts will continue into the coming quarter and on an ongoing basis as new resources

are posted to the site.

- **PD Hours Store Optimization:** IRIS has improved the functionality of our online PD Hours Store. This optimization results in a much faster and smoother-running experience for IRIS PD Hours users, improving load times and speeding up the sorting functions for teachers, Modules, and more.
- **IRIS Archive:** IRIS is currently developing an archive of important materials developed during the last five years. The archive will include records related to training events (e.g., Trainers' Booklets, the names of attendees for each event, and evaluation documents) and materials (e.g., handouts, promotional materials).
- **IRIS Summative Report:** IRIS is working on a summative report of our past training events. The process involves verifying the dates, places, schools, and participants for all faculty and PD provider events. These data will be instrumental in informing future IRIS reports and will also document the work accomplished during the current funding cycle.
- **The IRIS Server:** To reduce the personnel time and effort associated with the IRIS server maintenance, all IRIS development files are now hosted on a Vanderbilt University server, resulting in considerable savings for the project.

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:

- **IRIS Professional Development:** IRIS continues to make significant progress in upgrading, expanding, and promoting our recently launched PD Hours Store. More items of interest can be found below.
 - **New Modules:** IRIS will add at least two new Modules to the list of available resources in the Professional Development Hours Store. We expect to do so in the coming quarter.
 - **IRIS PD in Utah:** On behalf of the IRIS Center, the Utah Professional Development Network (UPDN) will host a pair of trainings to acquaint educators in the state with IRIS Professional Development options. Roughly 175 PD professionals representing state LEAs are expected to attend. Darcie Peterson of Utah State University's Department of Special

- Education and Rehabilitation is key to this effort and will conduct the orientation presentation on December 7, 2017. IRIS has created an informational flyer for the events, which will be promoted in Utah via the UPDN's Facebook account and Webpage, as well as in the state's SPEDometer newsletter.
- **Micro-Credentials:** The IRIS Center has finalized a contract with Digital Promise/ Bloomboard, an online provider of PD micro-credentials, and those resources are now available on the Bloomboard Website. In the coming quarter, we will field-test our “stack” of four micro-credentials through an arrangement with the University of Nevada-Las Vegas and the Clark County, Nevada, school district. Digital Promise requires that every proposed micro-credential be piloted by a minimum of 50 individuals for the purpose of refining its content and grading rubric.
 - **IRIS PD Information Sheet:** In many states, teachers are free to select their own professional development options as long as they first achieve “pre-clearance” from superintendents, principals, or other school leaders. To help them to do so, IRIS has created a single-page fact sheet to assist teachers as they introduce the PD Hours Store to busy school leaders who might otherwise lack the time to investigate on their own. This downloadable, printable resource will be posted to the IRIS Website early in the new quarter.
 - **IRIS STAR Legacy Modules:** Our signature products, these resources offer in-depth looks at topics of great importance to educators in today's classrooms.
 - **Student-Centered Transition Planning:** A new Module, *Secondary Transition: Student-Centered Transition Planning*, is now available on the IRIS Website. The resource helps users to understand the benefits of student-centered transition planning, identify ways to involve students in collecting assessment information and developing goals, and understand how to prepare students to be active participants in their own IEP meetings. Erik Carter and Jessica Bumble of Vanderbilt University provided expert content for the Module.
 - **Math Modules Revised:** The content for a revised and updated version of an IRIS Module on mathematics instruction—*High-Quality Mathematics Instruction: What Teachers Should Know*—has been completed, and the resource is now ready for internal review. A second mathematics Module—*RTI: Mathematics*—will undergo revision early in the new quarter and be completed during the no-cost extension period. The original versions of both Modules were reviewed by Paula Maccini of the Institute of Education Sciences and Benjamin Starr of OSEP's Research to Practice Division, who made recommendations

for revision and expansion.

- **DEC Recommended Resource:** A third IRIS Module—*Dual Language Learners with Disabilities: Supporting Young Children in the Classroom*—has been submitted to the Division of Early Childhood for consideration as a DEC Recommended Practices resource. Two other IRIS Modules—*Early Childhood Behavior Management: Developing and Teaching Rules* and *Early Childhood Environments: Designing Effective Classrooms*—have already achieved that distinction.
- **Module Outlines in Spanish:** Module outlines are now available for every IRIS Module on our Website.
- **Case Study Units:** These resources ask users to analyze and respond to a number of problem-based classroom issues and challenges—for example classroom norms and expectations, algebra instruction, or classroom arrangement—through increasing levels of complexity and detail.
 - **Case Studies Revised:** A number of IRIS Case Study Units are undergoing revision and have been divided into grade-level specific versions.
 - “Effective Classroom Arrangement: Elementary” and “Fostering Student Accountability for Classroom Work: Elementary” are now available on the IRIS Website. “Fostering Student Accountability for Classroom Work: Secondary” and “Establishing Classroom Norms & Expectations” are out for external review and will be posted during the new quarter. The revised resources were created with the assistance of Vanderbilt University’s Inge Poole and Carolyn Evertson.
 - “Effective Classroom Arrangement: Secondary” has been reviewed and will be posted at some point in the new quarter.
 - Another Case Study Unit, “Encouraging Appropriate Behavior,” developed and revised by Christina Curran of the University of Northern Iowa, is also out for external review.
 - **Case Study Units in Spanish:** A pair of IRIS Case Studies—“Effective Room Arrangement: Elementary” and “Fostering Student Accountability: Elementary”—are currently being translated into Spanish. The resources will be available on the IRIS Website at some point in the new quarter.
- **IRIS Activities:** These handy classroom assignments cover a diverse range of topics—behavior, language disorders, secondary transition, and many

others—for use as independent assignments or to promote classroom discussion.

- **New Activities:** IRIS is currently developing five new Activities. These will be posted on the IRIS Website during the new quarter.
 - **Sample Syllabi Collection:** This resource offers examples of the components that should be included in the coursework typically found in credential programs for initial teacher licensure.
 - **Collection Update:** IRIS continues to update and augment this resource. Four new and one revised syllabi have been received, and we await three more new and two revised resources. The syllabi will soon be available on the IRIS Website.
 - **IRIS Online Tools:** The IRIS Website is home to a variety of online tools about or having to do with young people with disabilities and evidence-based instructional practices.
 - **Films: Portrayals of People with Disabilities:** This tool, an attempt to catalogue the representation of people with disabilities in motion pictures, has been updated with new titles and movie descriptions.
 - **Books: Portrayals of People with Disabilities:** Companion to the IRIS Film tool, the Book tool contains information and synopses of children’s and young adult literature about or having to do with people with disabilities. Mary Anne Prater, a leading expert in the field today, is working on an update to this resource. The expanded Book tool will be available early in the coming quarter.
 - **Web Resource Directory:** This searchable list of other federally sponsored projects and centers that provide resources and information useful for educational professionals has undergone updating and revision.
 - **High-Leverage Practices:** IRIS is developing this resource to help educators know which of our resources best align with which HLPs.
 - **IRIS on YouTube:** IRIS is in the process of identifying which of our existing Module video clips will be uploaded to YouTube, offering another way for IRIS users to access them. We anticipate that the addition of these resources will begin sometime in the coming quarter.
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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:

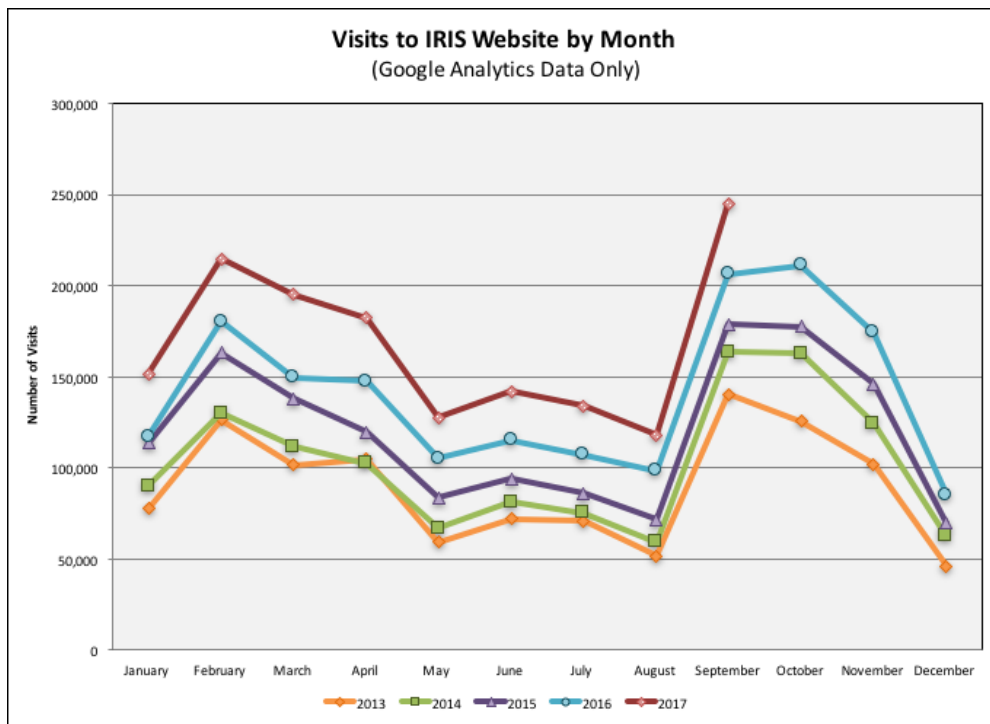
- **Presentations and Outreach Efforts:** Throughout the year, the IRIS Center attends regional and national conferences to present on our training and instructional resources and to keep audiences up-to-date on everything that is new with IRIS. Information about presentations is below.
 - **Lipscomb:** In September, IRIS presented on our resources for a trio of classes at Lipscomb University, a private college in Nashville, Tennessee.
 - **Metro Nashville Public Schools:** IRIS recently took part in a Metro Nashville Public Schools in-service day on special education during which we hosted a booth with information about the IRIS resources.
 - **SPDG:** In October, IRIS will make a pair of presentations at the SPDG National Meeting in Washington, DC. One of these, a “10 & 10 Tool Sharing” session, will focus on IRIS online tools. The second IRIS will present in partnership with Theresa Farmer and Curtis Gage of the AL SPDG in a session covering IRIS professional development.
 - **TN CEC:** In late October, IRIS will make a trio of presentations at the annual meeting of the TN CEC to be held in Franklin, Tennessee. Our sessions will focus on our resources related to secondary transition, juvenile corrections, and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
 - **TED:** In November, the IRIS Center will present on our resources at the annual meeting of the Teacher Education Division in Savannah, Georgia. The first of these will focus on the latest IRIS resources. The second will feature a panel discussion about the sometimes surprising and inventive uses to which teachers in the field apply those resources. This panel will feature Sally Barton-Arwood of Belmont University, Kimberly Paulsen and Alexandra Da Fonte of Peabody College, and Mary Little and Cynthia Pearl of the University of Central Florida.
 - **IRIS Reception:** IRIS@CGU, with funds provided by CGU, will host a reception at November's CEC/TED Conference in Savannah, Georgia. The reception will be a way to say thank you to those who have

worked with and worked on behalf of CGU’s services and work groups, as well as to provide a space to inquire about current and future needs of faculty and their students.

- **TSTA:** Also in November, IRIS will make a pair of presentations at the annual meeting of the Tennessee Science Teachers Association (TSTA) in Murfreesboro. Our presentations will focus on IRIS resources for elementary school teachers and for secondary school teachers.
- **CEC:** In February 2018, IRIS will attend the annual conference of the Council for Exceptional Children to be held in Tampa, Florida. There, we will make a trio of presentations covering our resources about data-based individualization, secondary transition, and IRIS Professional Development, respectively. IRIS will also host an informational booth in the exhibition hall.

WEBSITE VISITOR DATA

During the Third Quarter of 2017, the IRIS Center hosted nearly a half a million visits (497,040) per the Google Analytics software. Nearly half of these (245,128) occurred during the month of September. This sets a new record high number of visits to the Website in a month. Website visits during this quarter increased 21% from the same period last year.



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 Report:** IRIS continues to develop a list of state-approved teacher education programs offered through colleges and universities, documenting their characteristics, such as available programs (i.e., general education and special education, general education only), size, public vs. private, and more. These data are currently being analyzed to determine whether differences in the schools' use of IRIS resources can be attributed to these characteristics. This work will continue into the Fourth Quarter of 2017.
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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:

- **Los Angeles Natural History Museum's Mobile Museum:** IRIS was very pleased to take part in efforts with the LA Unified School District and the LA Natural History Museum for a discussion of students with special needs. Our contribution included an emphasis on the importance of people-first language in museum displays and materials, in combination with a needs assessments tied to differentiated instruction, behavioral supports, as well as supports for students with various disabilities who visit a mobile museum or the Natural History Museum itself. Further discussions related to access challenges may take place in the near future.
- **Digital Promise/Bloomboard:** In August, IRIS attended a conference on micro-credentials in Washington, DC, hosted by Digital Promise.
- **ASU Professional Learning Library:** The Arizona State University's Professional Learning Library is a "place to find professional resources by standard, topic, type and other attributes; participate in informal and formal professional learning (pedagogical and content-area); and connect with educators locally and across the globe in interest-based communities." The PLL hosts IRIS resources and recently provided us with updated user data

and feedback. In turn, IRIS will submit a list of our resources not currently hosted on the PLL site for future inclusion.

- **CalState TEACH:** CalState TEACH is a California State University teacher preparation program and prepares only general education teachers through a hybrid on-line, mentoring program. CalState TEACH is currently revising their curriculum—the third iteration of the curriculum since incorporating IRIS resources. They expect to finalize the curriculum in October. Once they have, they will share their revised curriculum matrix with IRIS, at which point it will become part of the IRIS Curriculum Matrix Collection.
- **NCLII:** IRIS@Vanderbilt serves as an internship site for the National Center on Leadership in Intensive Intervention (NCLII). Caitlin Craddock joins IRIS as a new doctoral student intern.

EVALUATE

The Center will collect and review data and feedback from IRIS users in order to improve and revise its resources, as well as to maintain contact with those making use of IRIS resources.

Activities and Progress in This Quarter:

The IRIS online survey asks respondents to rate the Modules' usefulness, relevance, and quality on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest rating). This quarter there were 1,290 respondents to this survey. The first table (below) summarizes descriptive information about them.

Respondents	Number
Graduate Student	427
College Student	372
Experienced Teacher	210
New Teacher	150
Other (e.g., Parent)	58
School Leader	39
Missing	19
College Faculty	11
PD Provider	4
Total	1290

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

	Mean Ratings
Quality	4.5
Relevance	4.6
Usefulness	4.5

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
Special education	431
General education	416
Other	183
Early childhood education	168
Early childhood special education	52
Missing	23
Early intervention services	17
Total	1290

- **Field-Testing:** IRIS is currently in the process of field-testing five Modules:
 1. *Autism Spectrum Disorder (Part 2): Evidence-Based Practices*
 2. *Secondary Transition: Interagency Collaboration*
 3. *Secondary Transition: Student-Centered Transition Planning*
 4. *Youth with Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections (Part 1): Improving Instruction*
 5. *Youth with Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections (Part 2): Transition and Reentry to School and Community*

Fifteen faculty and their students from IHEs across the country are participating in this field-testing. The resulting feedback will be used to improve and revise those resources.

- **Faculty and PD Provider Evaluation Report:** A final report by the IRIS Center's external evaluator Dr. Bianca Montrosse is now complete and will be posted to the IRIS Website in the coming quarter. Data were collected and reported around four key areas: (1) who is using the IRIS Center's resources (i.e., Modules); (2) how IRIS is satisfying current needs, (3) how the IRIS Center's Modules are being infused in courses, curricula, and professional development, and (4) future needs.

- **Seminar and Training Evaluations and Follow-Up Surveys:** To continually improve and refine its services, the IRIS Center solicits feedback from those taking part in IRIS Training and Seminar events.
 - **Follow-Up Surveys:** IRIS disseminated six-month follow-up evaluations for our Faculty Seminars in Las Vegas, NV and Phoenix, AZ. Repeated outreach took place to ensure response-rates were as high as possible, 94% and 95% respectively. The Quality (Q), Relevance (R), and Usefulness (U) ratings in the table below are based on a five-point scale.

Faculty Seminar 6-Month Follow- Up	Online Resources			Services			Training Materials		
	Q	R	U	Q	R	U	Q	R	U
Las Vegas, NV February 2017	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7
Phoenix, AZ March 2017	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.5

- **Survey Form:** The IRIS Center’s external evaluator Bianca Montrosse and IRIS have created a revised survey form that will soon be distributed to all past participants in our IRIS Faculty Seminars. We hope to develop ways to increase future response rates for IRIS surveys.

PERSONNEL

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

- **Caitlin Craddock:** IRIS welcomes a new doc student, Caitlin Craddock, who comes to us via an internship arrangement with Vanderbilt University’s National Center on Leadership in Intensive Intervention (NCLII).