

THE IRIS CENTER
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Administrative Progress Report
for
Year 1, Quarter 2

Submitted to:

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The IRIS Center Quarterly Report/ April-June 2013 [Year 1, Quarter 2]

The **IRIS Center** will produce these **Quarterly Reports** as both a narrative of our effort and a detailed account of our work and progress. This **Second Quarter of Year One** found the Center making significant progress on a number of OSEP-requested activities, including the finalization of our **Mission and Vision Statements** and **Logic Model**. Meanwhile, a major overhaul and redesign of our **Website** continued apace even as **Faculty Seminars** and **Symposia** were being planned. Read on to learn all the latest from the IRIS Center.

BUILD PROJECT INFRASTRUCTURE

At OSEP's request, the IRIS Center has undertaken a number of important activities designed to create a coherent conceptual and organizational structure for the new Center. A brief description of these is below.

Activities and Progress in This Quarter:

- **Steering Committee:** In coordination with OSEP, a **Steering Committee** for the Center has been selected and approved. We have sent out invitation letters to prospective members and are awaiting final confirmations.
- **Leadership Team:** We continue to hold weekly calls with our **Leadership Team** for the purpose of creating the Center's infrastructure, as well as to facilitate the ongoing development of instructional and training resources. Ilene Schwartz is particularly involved with the creation of research summaries and our work with focus groups, as well as being a representative on calls regarding early childhood. Vivian Correa is involved in the syllabi collection process and focus groups.
- **Logic Model:** In coordination with OSEP, the Center has created a new **Logic Model** to demonstrate how we intend to meet the overarching goals of the **cooperative agreement**: "(1) help address state-identified needs for highly qualified personnel—in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education—to work with children, including infants and toddlers, with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined, through evidence-based research and experience, to be successful in serving those children." The document has been approved as final.

- **Vision and Mission Statements:** In conjunction with OSEP, the Center has finalized its **Vision** and **Mission Statements**. These instruments serve as brief articulations of our Center, its primary goals, and how we seek to achieve them.
- **Conceptual Framework:** In conjunction with OSEP, we have created a final version of our **Conceptual Framework**. This instrument visually represents the interaction and feedback among the **development, dissemination, and TA/ Training** and the **evaluation, collaboration, and data-based decision making** elements of the Center's mission.
- **IRIS Center Title and Slogan:** In conjunction with OSEP, it has been decided that efforts at expanding the official **title** of the Center with a possible **marketing slogan** are not necessary at this time, as marketing and dissemination efforts will extend the reach of the Center to a greater extent.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **Work Plan:** To outline the specific steps necessary to meet specific development and dissemination goals, the Center has initiated the process of creating a point-by-point **Work Plan**.

DEVELOP

The Center will develop 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:

- **“Research Summaries”:** The Center is developing a library of **research summaries** (their official title is yet to be determined, though “Annotations about Evidence Based Practices” has been suggested) representing evaluations and annotations of a wide range of instructional and behavioral practices and interventions.

- **Video Vignettes:** Efforts are underway to compile a selection of **video vignettes**—representations of classroom and instructional scenarios, as well as stories about individuals with disabilities, their family members, advocates, and teachers and service providers—for inclusion on the IRIS Website. This process is expected to last into the next quarter and beyond, on an ongoing basis.
- **Wrap-Around Concept Maps:** These resources are designed to help IRIS users supplement a given *STAR Legacy* Module with other resources and materials, for example Case Study Units or Activities. An extensive collection of these is now nearing completion.
- **Book Directory:** Under the guidance of Mary Anne Prater of Brigham Young University, the Center’s new directory of books for children and adolescents that are about, feature, or have to do with individuals with disabilities is currently under construction.
- **Knowledge Development Activity (a):** In conjunction with OSEP, the decision was made to develop **innovation configurations** for this task focusing on the following six areas: 1) Use of technology for the delivery of PD and personnel preparation, 2) early intervention/early childhood, 3) personnel preparation, 4) professional development, 5) intensive interventions, and 6) adult learning principles. A number of these are already under development by the **Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center (CEEDAR)** with which IRIS is collaborating. Our Center has begun contacting experts to develop the remainder.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **Training Materials:** To reflect our new Website, the Center will post a revised and reformatted **collection of training materials**, including PowerPoint presentations for faculty and PD providers, new Seminar Workbooks, and revised Tips booklets.
 - **Instructional Materials:** In the coming quarters, the Center will enter an extensive period of **editing** and **reformatting** its library of instructional resources to reflect our revised standards and format parameters.
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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:

- **Website:** Work on the Center's brand new **online home** continues apace. Much of the design and functionality work have been completed, and we are entering the implementation phase during which existing IRIS materials are exported to the new platform. To accomplish this, the Center has enlisted the assistance of **MindSpark**, a company dedicated to employing people with disabilities—especially those with autism spectrum disorders—in the software industry.
- **Social Media Outreach:** We are working to leverage a number of **social media venues**—Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube among them—to coincide with our initial Website launch. Information about the Center and our dissemination and resource production efforts will be broadcast across these platforms, which have been carefully selected to reflect the **social media preferences** of IRIS constituents and users.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **Website:** The Center's new **Website** will launch in **August** in order to be ready for the upcoming school year.
- **Promotional Materials:** Following the launch of the Website, we will post a revised collection of **promotional brochures**.
- **Impact Study:** To help evaluate the effectiveness of IRIS outreach efforts, we are conducting an **Impact Study** to determine the extent and speed with which the curricular infusion and increased use of IRIS resources occurs in a particular state or region following a Faculty or PD Seminar. Preliminary data indicate a positive link, though further analysis is necessary. Work on the study will occur on an ongoing basis.
- **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 upcoming presentations is below.
 - ❖ In mid-July, the IRIS Center will attend the 2013 Annual **OSEP Project's Directors' Conference** in Washington, DC.

- ❖ The IRIS Center will make a presentation at the **Division of Early Childhood's (DEC)** 29th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families, to be held in San Francisco on October 16–18.
 - ❖ In November, we will present on our new Website and latest resources and services at the **National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC)** annual convention in Washington, DC.
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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:

- **Syllabi Collection:** The IRIS Center has made significant progress in our efforts to **collect syllabi** and **curriculum matrices** from college faculty who are also IRIS users. The focus group portion—designed to help us determine which syllabi to post to the Website—has concluded. A work group, made up of individuals from our Leadership Team, Steering Committee, EI/EC Task Force, and pool of trainers and mentors, has been established and a Syllabus Template and evaluation rubric created.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **Faculty Seminars:** The overarching purpose of these state or regional events is to improve preservice teacher preparation through infusion of IRIS resources in college curricula, coursework, and clinical experiences that are grounded in the use of evidence-based practices.
 - ❖ On September 26–28, the Center will host a **Faculty Seminar** in collaboration with **Tribal Colleges**. The event, which has been designed particularly for faculty from four-year programs, will be held in Rapid City, South Dakota.
 - ❖ Needs assessments strongly suggest sufficient interest and cause to justify a **second such event**, this one focusing on faculty from two-year programs, perhaps to take place in the state of Montana in October.

- **Symposia:** Held annually at the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Teacher Education Division's conference, Symposia bring together doctoral students and junior faculty interested in studying the effectiveness of IRIS resources in applied teacher education or professional development activities.
 - ❖ One such event scheduled to take place to coincide with this year's **Teacher Education Division's (TED)** annual conference is currently in the planning stages. The conference will take place in November in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
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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:

- **Needs Assessment:** We are continuing our needs assessment to inform the product development process. Potential topics for EI/EC and K–12 education having been identified, questionnaires from IRIS users have been collected and subjected to further evaluation. The list of potential topics, in turn, is being used to inform the **textbook analyses** process.
- **Textbook Analyses:** We have engaged in a pair of detailed analyses of textbooks. Analysis of K-12 textbooks has been completed, while another involving textbooks for early childhood is ongoing. The purpose of these analyses is to identify low-frequency topics that might provide the foundation for future module or other resource development.
- **Feedback:** We are currently **collecting feedback** about our seminar materials and faculty tips booklets with an eye toward the development of new materials, manuals, and documents.
- **Outreach Surveys:** Likewise, to further inform our work and to help us to learn more about IRIS users, we are revising and updating our Outreach Surveys.

- **“Research Summaries”**: The Center is working with a task force to evaluate effective practices with an eye toward creating a database of annotated Research Summaries (note, again, that these resources will be renamed at a later date). The members of the task force are noted researchers Don Compton, Kathleen Lane, Diane Bryant, Phil Strain, Deborah Speece, and Ilene Schwartz.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **Focus Group**: Using our needs assessment surveys and textbook analysis as well as needs assessment surveys from other centers, our **EI/EC Task Force** will serve as a focus group to help the Center select and prioritize topics for module production, particularly for a module slated for development in the coming fall.

COLLABORATE

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

Activities and Progress in This Quarter:

- **Website Accessibility**: With the assistance of David Rose and Chuck Hitchcock of the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) and Cindy Bachofer (a teacher with low vision), we are assessing our new Website with an eye toward greater accessibility.
- **Collaborative Calls**: IRIS has participated in a number of **collaborative calls** with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC), and the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy). The purpose of these calls is to work on collaborative partnerships and undertakings.
- **Resource Development**: The Center is providing its insight and experience about module development to members of **CEEDAR** and has also participated in a number of conference calls with that Center with an eye toward future collaboration and efforts to avoid project overlap (e.g., innovation configurations). We will meet with representatives of CEEDAR at this year’s Project Director’s meeting in Washington, DC.

- **Links to IRIS Resources:** Courtesy of Dr. Heidi Blair, Director of the Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, links to IRIS Resources have been added to the school's **Professional Learning Library** (<https://pll.asu.edu/p/>). The Professional Learning Library is also a member of the Center's proposed **Executive Committee of Partners**.
- **Needs Assessment:** We have exchanged initial survey needs assessment results with the **Early Intervention-Early Childhood Professional Development Community of Practice**. We will use this information to supplement our own needs assessment data. A follow-up call to further discuss states' needs will be scheduled during the third quarter of this year.
- **EI/EC Task Force Meeting:** In April, the Center met with our EI/EC Task Force at the **Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Annual Convention & Expo** in San Antonio, Texas.