

THE IRIS CENTER
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT CFDA 84.325E
(PR/Award Number: H325E120002)



Administrative Progress Report
for
Year 1, Quarter 4

Submitted to:

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United States Department of Education

10 January 2014

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The IRIS Center Quarterly Report/October-December 2013 [Year 1, Quarter 4]

The IRIS Center produces these Quarterly Reports as both a narrative of our effort and a detailed account of our work and progress. This Fourth Quarter of Year One found the Center hosting our first Steering Committee Meeting, creating new instructional materials and resources, and taking part in presentations and conferences. 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:** The IRIS Center's 2013 Steering Committee Meeting was held in Nashville, Tennessee, on Friday, December 6, and Saturday, December 7. Prior to the gathering, homework and pre-reading materials were transmitted to those taking part. The Committee gathered at the Wyatt Center on the Peabody campus to discuss and prioritize topics for the Center's future module production efforts. We believe that the sessions were highly valuable and that the meeting's outcomes will help to shape the direction of our Center and work in significant ways for the foreseeable future. Besides various members of our Center, taking part in the meeting were Nancy Vye, Janet Digmon, Laurie Dinnebeil, Cathy Kea, Kate Mitchem, Deborah Speece, Pamela Winton, Vivian Correa, Ilene Schwartz, and Bianca Montrosse. Participating via phone were the Center's OSEP Project Officers, Sarah Allen and Tracie Dickson. A full summary of the meeting was sent to the Steering Committee members and our project officers.
- **Dissemination Plan:** Our Dissemination Plan was completed on time. Elaine Mulligan was indispensable in helping us to create the plan, in offering insightful feedback, and in providing templates.

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 our collection of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) Annotations and our work with focus groups, as well as being a representative on monthly calls with the early childhood centers and presenting at NAEYC and DEC conferences. Vivian Correa is involved in the Syllabi Collection Work Group, the Impact Studies Work Group, and focus groups.

MAINTAIN PROJECT BUDGET

The co-directors continue to monitor budget expenditures carefully.

- VU records show a Center balance of \$351,258.73 at the end of Year 1, Quarter 4. This remaining balance includes costs for the undeveloped early childhood module described in the Develop section below (roughly \$100,000) and the requisite 5% set-aside (\$75,000). The remaining balance is due in part to partial IRIS personnel salaries continuing on the no-cost extension of our previous Center, and on as-yet unbilled work (e.g., book directory consultant, Website redesign outstanding bills) or payments that have not yet "hit."

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:

- **Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) Annotations:** The Center is developing a library of EBP Annotations representing evaluations and descriptions of a wide variety of instructional and behavioral practices and interventions. To accomplish this, we are working with a task force made up of noted researchers Don Compton, Kathleen Lane, Diane Bryant, Phil Strain, Deborah Speece, and Ilene Schwartz. The content for the first group of EBP Annotations now complete, the first posting will take place early in the coming quarter once the programming for the tool is finalized.

- **Sample Syllabi Collection:** The IRIS Center posted eight sample syllabi in our new Sample Syllabi Collection. These can be viewed or printed in standardized components or as complete sets. In addition, an online tool for syllabi development or revision is available to faculty to assist them in program improvement. The Syllabi Work Group is re-convening during the upcoming quarters to decide what course syllabi will comprise Wave 2 with a goal of posting at least four more sample syllabi by the beginning of summer. The work group for this endeavor includes Kate Mitchem, Cindy O'Dell, Darcie Peterson, Kim Snow, Michelle Marchant, Vivian Correa, Nancy Hunt, and Melba Spooner.
- **Video Vignettes:** We have posted an update to our selection of Video Vignettes—representations of classroom and instructional scenarios, as well as stories about individuals with disabilities, their family members, advocates, teachers, and service providers—to the IRIS Website. At present, there are nearly 300 vignettes, with more updates and evaluations of the current entries in the works on an ongoing basis.
- **Top Tips for Faculty:** This online and printable tips sheet designed specifically for faculty includes many suggestions about how to use IRIS resources and online tools, including modules, case study units, video vignettes, evidence-based practices, coursework planning guides, and activities. The resource also includes technology ideas for course instructors.
- **Implementation Guide for Faculty:** This new online and printable guide provides faculty with an easy-to-read two-page reference for locating and using these online resources: 1) Sample Syllabi Collection, 2) Wrap-Around Concept Maps, 3) Coursework Planning Forms, 4) manuals and answer keys, and IRIS alignment to national education standards.
- **Book Directory:** [Note: The final name of this tool is yet to be decided.] 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 ready to post and will appear on the IRIS Website early in the new quarter, as soon as the tool's programming is finalized. Further expansion and additions will be posted on an ongoing basis.
- **Media Portrayals of People with Disabilities:** This online tool—which represents an attempt to catalogue the representation of people with disabilities in motion pictures—has been redesigned to improve its overall functionality.

- **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. Most of these are already under development by the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center (CEEDAR) with which IRIS is collaborating. We have contracted with Nancy Vye to develop the adult learning principles document.
- **Faculty Seminar Training Materials:** Initial drafts of new materials were developed: 1) revised day and a half Seminar agenda, 2) restructured and created new PowerPoint in alignment with revised IRIS Website and new resources, and 3) revised training materials, including faculty planning guides. A Training Workgroup was formed to provide input on these materials which included IRIS trainers Sally Barton-Arwood, Sara Bicard, Darci Peterson, and Kim Snow.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **Instructional Materials:** The Center has entered a period of editing and reformatting its library of instructional resources to reflect our revised format parameters. This process will continue into the coming quarter.
- **Coursework Planning Forms:** Updated planning forms—resources designed to help faculty as they revise either their individual courses or overall curricula for the initial preparation of education professionals—are now in the works and will be posted in the coming quarter.

Revisions/Reschedules/Cancellations of Activities

- One early childhood module was proposed for Year 1 but was not completed. The cooperative agreement negotiation activities (e.g., Conceptual Framework, Logic Model, Evaluation Plan, Work Plan, Dissemination Plan) took a good part of the year to complete. As a result, the needs assessment and subsequent topic selection processes were pushed back in our timeline. The IRIS Steering Committee met in December and selected future module topics, and plans are in place to complete that module during Year 2, bringing us back on schedule with our development activities.
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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:

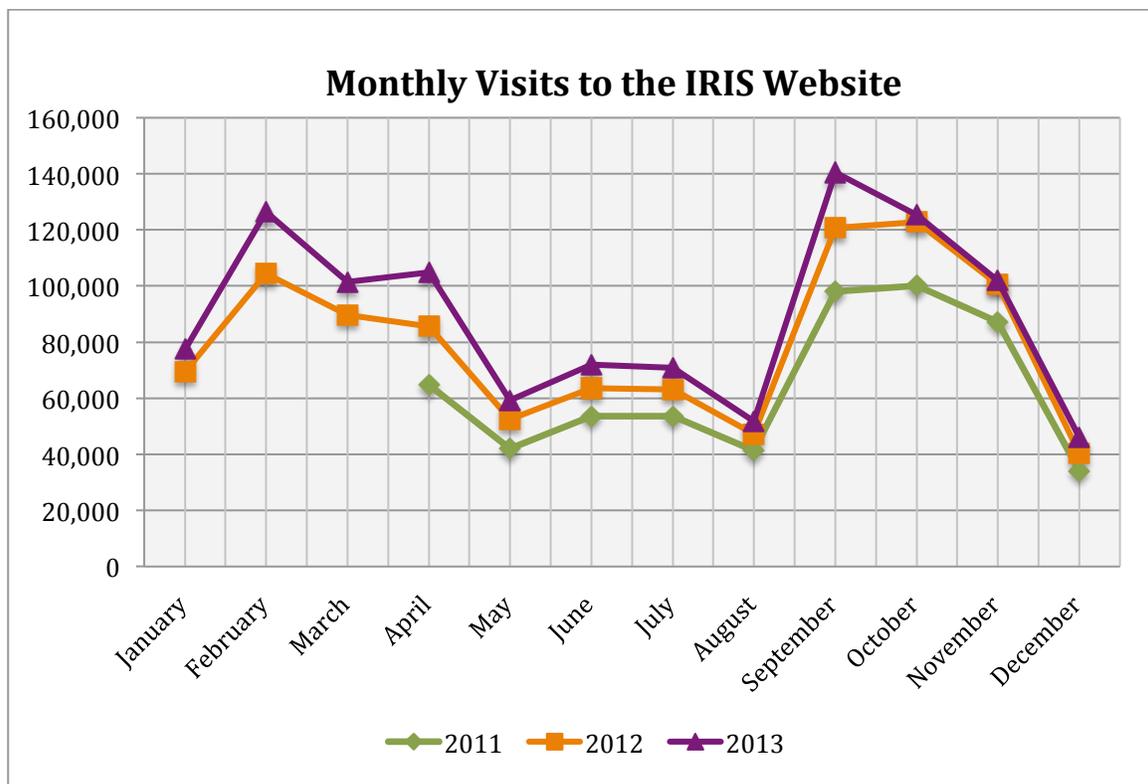
- **Dissemination Plan:** As was mentioned above, our Dissemination Plan has been completed.
- **Presentations:** Throughout the year, the IRIS Center attends regional and national conferences to present on our training and instructional resources and to keep audiences up-to-date on everything that is new with IRIS. Information about upcoming presentations is below.
 - ❖ In October, the IRIS Center presented on our resources at the Division of Early Childhood's (DEC) 29th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families, held in San Francisco. Deb Smith and Ilene Schwartz presented.
 - ❖ On October 22, the Center presented at a meeting of the Orange County, California, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA). Some 15-18 participants from the BTSA Cluster-5 Region took part.
 - ❖ In November, we presented 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. Amy Harris and Ilene Schwartz presented.
 - ❖ Also in November, we presented on our resources at the meeting of the Teacher Education Division (TED) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
- Deb Smith was interviewed about our Center and its work for the Autumn 2013 issue of the CA-SEA's newsletter *The Special Edge* (Volume 27, No.1).
- We have targeted at least seven state newsletters for possible articles about IRIS. Contacts with these states will be initiated in January, with hopes that three articles will be written in the spring. Additionally, we will be following up with others outlets—for example *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Education Week*—to determine the requirements for submitting articles for consideration.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- In April, we will present on our Center and resources at the CEC Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Website Visitor Data:

During this quarter, we continued to rely on Google Analytics for our Website data. For the third year in a row, there was a marked increase in visits to the Website during September. Visits then tapered off to 2012 levels for the remaining months of 2013. During 2013 there was a total of 1,078,024 visits to the IRIS Website. We should note that Google Analytics data indicate dramatically lower numbers than those that we have collected in the past using raw Website data (i.e., previous 2012 data collected using Summary showed 1.8 million visitors). However, given that Summary data collection is no longer available to us for multiple reasons, and given that Google Analytics is considered the gold standard for Website data collection, we have switched over to this method for the duration of this Center’s funding cycle.



Consumers of the IRIS Modules continue to respond steadily to the posted online survey, which 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 1,171 respondents. The first table (below) summarizes descriptive information about the respondents.

Respondents	Number
Graduate Student	255
College Student	248
Experienced Teacher	120
New Teacher	66
Other (e.g., parent)	38
College Faculty	26
School Leader	11
PD Provider	2
Total	766

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

	Mean Ratings
Usefulness	4.33
Relevance	4.34
Quality	4.33

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	256
General education	240
Other	127
Early childhood education	102
Early childhood special education	38
Early intervention services	3
Total	766

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:

- **Technical Training Request:** Part of our ongoing efforts to build IRIS services, we have posted a Technical Assistance Training Request Application to our Website. IRIS TA Trainings are primarily designed to provide products and services to faculty and PD providers. We are seeking applications for three types of IRIS services: IRIS Faculty Seminars, IRIS PD Seminars, and IRIS Intensive Work Sessions. The Request for Applications was announced and posted on the IRIS Website late in December.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- **Seminar Materials:** New IRIS Seminar materials are being developed and will be finalized in January for the upcoming round of training events.
 - **Intensive Work Session:** On March 21, 2014, the Center will host an Intensive Work Session at George Mason University. Steering Committee member, Kate Mitchem, will be the lead Technical Assistance Provider (trainer) for this meeting. The session will largely focus on imbedding IRIS Resources programmatically across curriculum. A pre-site visit meeting will take place in February followed by the March 21st work session. We believe this early effort will, in large part, tell us much about the structure and content of future events.
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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 have completed our needs assessment to inform the product development process. Potential topics for EI/EC and K–12 education have been identified, and questionnaires from IRIS users have been collected and subjected to further evaluation. The list of potential topics, in turn, was used to help our Steering Committee to make informed decisions about module topics for resource development.
 - **Focus Groups:** The Center enlisted the assistance of faculty and PD providers to sit on a number of focus groups, all of which were held on October 21–22. As with our EI/EC Focus Group (which was conducted on September 23), meetings were conducted via teleconference. We also asked those who took part to supply us with the names of recent graduates. The focus groups covered:
 - ❖ Elementary education (K–6)
 - ❖ Secondary education (7–12)
 - ❖ Transition
 - ❖ Intensive interventions
 - ❖ New faculty
 - **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.
 - **Collaboration:** For more information about our collaborative activities with experts at other OSEP-funded centers, please see the **Collaborate** section below.
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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:

- 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).
- The Center also holds periodic needs assessment conversations with experts at other OSEP-funded centers, including Doug Fuchs and Lou Danielson of the National Center on Intensive Intervention, David Test of the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC), and Ed O'Leary of the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center.

Activities Planned for Upcoming Quarters:

- A Webinar in partnership with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center (CEEDAR) is currently in the planning stages and expected to be held in early 2014.
 - In February, we will participate in a CDE State Leadership Team meeting in Sacramento as part of our collaboration with the new SPDG grant.
 - The Teacher Education Division (TED) has agreed to announce and encourage the use of our new Sample Syllabi Collection.
 - The Higher Education Consortium for Special Education (HECSE) has agreed to spread the word about our upcoming RFA for Impact Studies.
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EVALUATE

- **Evaluation Plan:** The Center's Evaluation Plan was approved on December 12.
- **Impact Studies:** To help evaluate the effectiveness of IRIS outreach efforts, we are soliciting proposals for small studies to investigate the impact of IRIS modules on the knowledge acquisition and application practices of college students of teacher education candidates who have been assigned IRIS Modules vs. those who receive instruction about EBPs through traditional course delivery methods. The Impact Work Group has been working during this quarter to establish the proper support for these studies, to be conducted by doctoral students and faculty. A request for applications for support for these mini-studies is being developed with an anticipated announcement for applications for mentoring and research design and analysis coaching to be announced mid-January.

PERSONNEL

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

- **Changes in IRIS Personnel:**
 - ❖ In November, the Center said farewell to Pamela Levy, our former social media coordinator, who has taken on other employment that aligns with her recently awarded MBA. Pamela played an important role in the recent expansion of the Center's social media visibility.