

Illinois Institutes of Higher Education Partnership

Winter 2013 Newsletter



IHE Partnership Update

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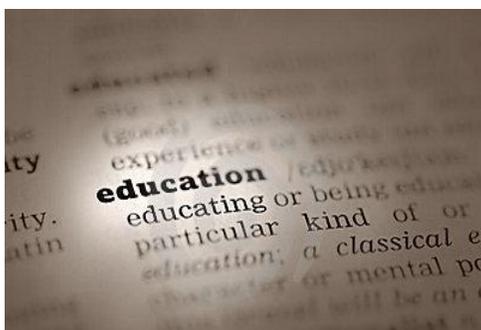
The Illinois Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) Partnership is a project under the Illinois State Board of Education's federally-funded State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). The IHE Partnership is coordinating the ongoing work of participating universities as they implement response to intervention (RtI) content in their pre-service curricula. The scope of this project has state-wide significance, and as such, participating institutions represent each geographic region of the state and include: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Illinois State University, Loyola University, National Louis University, Northern Illinois University, and Western Illinois University.

The current phase of the project expands beyond the technical assistance and support already being provided to faculty in Elementary Education programs to include Educational Leadership (i.e., School Principal preparation programs). This expansion will clearly increase the capacity of universities as they address new Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS) and teacher evaluation procedures such as the Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA).

The collaborative nature of the IHE Partnership provides the structure for exciting synergy. Technical Assistance Coordinators assigned to each university dialogue with their faculty, project staff, and the SDPG evaluation team to identify specific action steps and recommendations, and these will lead to improve educational outcomes for all K-12 students by strengthening pre-service programs.

In this issue, some of the activities and progress being made at four partner universities are highlighted.

Focus: Eastern Illinois University



The Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle Level Education Department at Eastern Illinois University has been working to revise its programs to meet the new IPTS standards, Common Core standards, and to more explicitly incorporate the principles of the Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework into coursework and field experience at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. With the help of our Advisory Committee, local educators and EIU faculty have partnered to design an RtI course for our graduate program. It is taught by a district RtI Coordinator.

As the department makes changes to its undergraduate program, this graduate course has provided guidance about the integration of RtI into other courses. A new class entitled, *Assessing Student Learning: A Field Based Experience* will begin to be offered fall 2013 and will be required of all Early Childhood and Elementary Education majors. This course will emphasize monitoring children's behavior and learning through data-driven assessment in order to meet the needs of diverse learners. Other courses within our revised program are currently being modified to specifically address multi-tiered systems of support, universal core instruction, collaboration and evidence based practices. New and revised course syllabi will be completed by spring 2013. Next steps include continued collaboration with our Advisory Committee to identify specific partnerships that will enable pre-service teachers' greater opportunities to participate in data collection and progress monitoring to analyze and support the needs of all learners in the classroom.

Partnerships to embed RtI practices extend beyond the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle Level Education at Eastern Illinois University. Our department has also collaborated with the Educational Leadership Department and the Department of Special Education to develop two new courses for the principal preparation program. One course, *Supporting High Quality Instruction across All Content Areas*, examines research based instruction with an emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy; Response to Intervention including an analysis of the three tiers of intervention; assessment; and data to drive instructional decisions. This course is intended to complement the second class, *Assessments, Programs and Services for Students with Exceptionalities and English Language Learners* which focuses on assessment, assessment strategies and use of data to address the curricular and behavioral needs of learners with exceptionalities.

The resources and expertise provided through the IHE Partnership Grant has assisted Eastern Illinois University as they review and revise their teacher certification programs.



“Teacher preparation must, in the words of a recent NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel report, be 'turned upside down'.”

James G. Cibulka, President NCATE and CAEP



Focus: Northern Illinois University

Over the past year NIU has been working diligently to ensure that our candidates are getting instruction and clinical experiences that integrate RtI or MTSS as part of the overall knowledge-base required for successful teaching. Students who are placed in the DeKalb (District #428) school also participate in weekly team meetings that focus on the use of assessments and other indicators as measures of student progress and success.

In order to facilitate our work with schools and within our own programs, one of our faculty members, Dr. Christine Malecki, has developed an online tutorial for RtI. Titled *What is Response to Intervention? An Introduction to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support*, the webinar is divided into five modules, each with its own series of engaged and interactive exercises drawn from real examples and data sets. The tutorial, “a brief and broad overview,” guides participants toward learning more and developing a deeper understanding of the concepts, practices, and objectives of MTSS, and utilizes a series of downloaded course handouts and exercise sheets in order to enhance the experience.

The tutorial has already been used to great success in several classrooms within teacher preparation programs, as an entry-point for professional development in partner districts, and is now being integrated into the course offerings of NIU’s Virtual Lab School (VLS). It is currently located on our P20 webpage at: <http://www.niu.edu/p20/resources/index.shtml>.

It can be found at the bottom right of the page under *Response to Intervention*. The more direct link is:

<http://www.learn.niu.edu/rti/responseIntervention.html>.

Focus: National Louis University

Faculty at National Louis University (NLU) has been busy with the IHE Partnership Project since it began almost 2 years ago. Overviews of RtI big ideas have been presented to all faculty in the National College of Education (NCE). Thus far, implementation focus has been on 2 programs: BA Elementary Education and Educational Leadership. The BA Elementary Education program has been working diligently to infuse the new Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS), RtI big ideas, and TPAC into program content.

The NLU advisory council member, Eun Ko, will be piloting a culminating RtI assignment as part of her Practicum III course this winter quarter. The assignment will require candidates to apply multi-tier system of supports (MTSS), data-based decision making, and evidence-based instruction (EBI) concepts.

The Educational Leadership program developed a visual display of the RtI content across required courses. The technical assistance coordinator at NLU, Madi Phillips, will continue to co-teach the RtI content in various courses to support increased competence in NLU faculty. Finally, two mini-lessons on MTSS/RtI and assessment are being created for a foundations course required across the college of education.

IHE Partnership Staff Contact Information

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kathryn Cox, SPDG Project Director
e-mail: kcox@isbe.net

SIU EDWARDSVILLE-Fiscal Agent

Wendy Fuchs, IHE Principal
Investigator/Program Coordinator
e-mail: wfuchs@siue.edu

Phillip Weishaar, Technical Assistance
Coordinator
e-mail: pweisha@siue.edu

Gwyn Abrams, IHE Partnership Graduate
Assistant
e-mail: gabrums@siue.edu

SIU CARBONDALE

Nancy Mundschenk, TAC/Program
Coordinator
e-mail: nmunds@siu.edu

CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Victor Williamson, TAC
e-mail: victwillson@aol.com

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Joy Russell, TAC
e-mail: jlrussell@eiu.edu

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Craig Blum, TAC
e-mail: cblum@ilstu.edu
Mark Swerdlik, TAC, Evaluation Liaison
e-mail: meswerd@ilstu.edu

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

Diane Morrison, TAC
e-mail: dmorri@luc.edu

NATIONAL-LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Madi Phillips, TAC
e-mail: madi.phillips@gmail.com

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Christine Malecki, TAC
e-mail: cmalecki@niu.edu
J.D. Bowers, TAC
e-mail: jbowers@niu.edu

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Sara Simonson, TAC
e-mail: sd-simonson@wiu.edu

Focus: Chicago State University

The Chicago State University (CSU) College of Education recently completed NCATE review (Spring 2012) and they were highly recommended for continued accreditation. This past fall the College underwent Higher Learning Commission (HLC) review and their recommendations are expected this January (2013). Each of the teacher certification and degree seeking programs, including the General Administration program, is undergoing program redesign in accordance with the new IPTS and edTPA. Personnel in these programs are working closely with the IHE Partnership Technical Assistance Coordinator, Victor Williamson, to ensure that their program redesign includes aligning their curriculum with the Response to Intervention (RtI) key knowledge and skills.

Victor has also encouraged departments within the College to invite him to their monthly department meetings to discuss any concerns regarding implementation of RtI in pre-service programs. CSU is looking to form a partnership with IHE participating school districts within the Chicago-land area to allow pre-service candidates an opportunity to apply RtI knowledge acquired in their methods courses in area schools.

IHE Partnership Advisory Council Members

Dr. Lingguo Bu

*Southern Illinois University
Carbondale*

Dr. Laurel Borgia

Western Illinois University

Dr. Cathryn Busch

Chicago State University

Dr. Liza Cummings

*Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville*

Dr. Jane Hunt

Loyola University Chicago

Dr. Eun Kyung Ko

National Louis University

Dr. Susan L'Allier

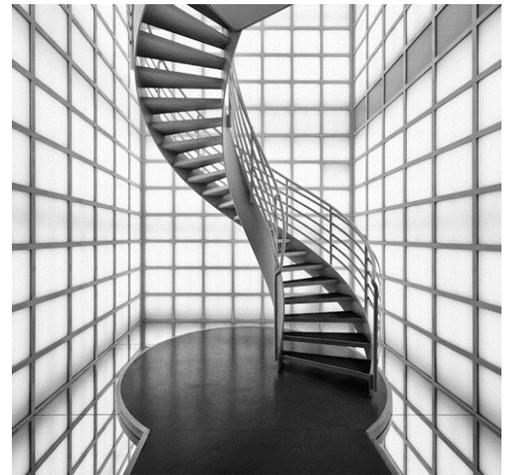
Northern Illinois University

Dr. Jeanne Okrasinski

Eastern Illinois University

Dr. Rolland Schendel

Illinois State University



Contact Us

Illinois IHE Partnership
Attn: Dr. Wendy Fuchs
Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville
Campus Box 1147
Edwardsville, IL 62026
618.650.3487
wfuchs@siue.edu