

## Project IMPACT (Improving Motivation, Pedagogy, Assessment, and Collaboration for Teachers): Year One Annual Report

By Kristina LaVenía, Tracy Huziak-Clark, and Beth Ash

### Description of the activities and work completed in April 1, 2019 – September 31, 2019:

**Project planning and implementation:** Project IMPACT centers on five specific project objectives: (a) recruiting, preparing, and mentoring **highly qualified** teachers, especially from historically underrepresented populations, to fill difficult-to-staff positions; (b) establishing and strengthening **partnerships** between BGSU and local area school districts; (c) development and implementation of a three-year **induction** program to support teachers who graduate from BGSU and work in one of our partner districts; (d) establishment of a process for **reform-based educational curriculum** to be infused in BGSU's undergraduate teaching training programs; and (e) assemble an **advisory board** made up of members from the local school district partners to help guide the project work to identify areas of need for professional development, plan for induction, and improve strategy around retention.

From April 1, 2019 to September 31, 2019 the members of the Project IMPACT leadership team have worked to further each of the five objectives outlined above. We are actively recruiting the **second cohort** of BGSU undergraduate students (n = 53 who have expressed interest) from various undergraduate teacher education programs. Because our goal was to recruit 60 students for cohort two, we continue to encourage participation. It has been more challenging, however, for us to recruit students from historically underrepresented populations. This is not a problem unique to Project IMPACT; this is something that BGSU's College of Education and Human Development is struggling with in general. Because we are located in Northwest Ohio, our overall university demographics skew toward middle-class white students. In our education majors in particular, we tend to attract mostly white female students. The project leadership team is working to do all we can to attract students of color, as well as male students, to participate in cohort two and will continue these efforts for the duration of the project. Furthermore, our partner districts, while interested in more special education majors, math, and science teachers, they did not want to limit participation to just these areas. They asked us to extend the invitation to all pre-service teachers in their districts. The student demographics for Cohort 1 and 2\*:

Major	Number of Cohort 1 students	Number of Cohort 2 students*
Business and Marketing Education	1	0
Dual Intervention Specialist	6	10
Inclusive Early Childhood (Dual early childhood and special education)	13	26
Integrated Language Arts	2	7
Integrated Mathematics	1	6
Integrated Social Studies	2	2
Life Sciences and Chemistry	1	2
Total	26	53

Note: \*We have 53 students who have expressed interest in being part of Cohort 2; we are actively recruiting these students, but do not yet know how many of them will commit to attending and participating in project activities.

We believe Project IMPACT is continuing to excel with regard to establishing and strengthening **partnerships** with local school districts. We were able to recruit administrators and staff members to serve on our advisory board from each of our four district partners. The first advisory board meeting was held on January 18, 2019, and we have held monthly meetings since. These meetings are always well attended by both Project IMPACT leadership and district team members. Meetings are scheduled from

10am – noon, and the location varies due to different district partners being willing to host. In advance of each meeting, the leadership team works to draft an agenda, send out an invitation for district advisory board members to add or edit agenda items, and share updates. In addition to these monthly meetings, we also held a day-long planning retreat this summer on June 20, 2019. At this retreat we co-constructed the field coach model utilizing the **GoReact** technology. We developed the job description for the school-based coaches, discussed coaching models, and district protocols for this process. Next, we finalized the professional development for the academic year. From these discussions we determined the common goals for PD to **outline specific areas for PD and curricular reform** at BGSU. So far, the following priorities have been co-constructed with the full group: culturally responsive teaching (CRT), social-emotional learning (SEL), universal design for learning (UDL), positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS), high-impact instructional practices (HIIP), and technology integration. Finally, this retreat focused on planning for new teachers in their first three years of teaching.

For year one, we chose to focus specifically on **CRT** because the advisory board team members all agreed that this is the most critically important area for PD. To this end, on March 21, 2019 we held our first PD training. Including district administrators and BGSU faculty, we had 56 people in attendance. We invited all of the BGSU Cohort 1 preservice teachers to attend, their classroom mentor teachers (CMTs), as well as any other in-service teachers from the four partner districts who would like to participate in CRT PD. We invited an expert in CRT, Dr. Vernita Glenn-White from Stetson University, to lead the PD session. The PD included a general focus on articulating core values, implicit bias, equity and racial equity, identifying cultural filters, experiential learning activities, and the importance of being a leader. On March 22, Dr. Glenn-White held a professional development with BGSU faculty on-campus from 9am – 11:30am. This involved a presentation and conversation centered on CRT. After the March 21, 2019 PD, we decided – in consultation with the advisory board members – to continue our focus on CRT for year two, and to supplement that focus with work on **SEL**. Thus, our year two work has a dual focus on both **CRT** and **SEL**.

The BGSU leadership team (Huziak-Clark, Lavery, Weaver, LaVenia, and Vrooman; Ash and Brodeur added in year 2) have been meeting weekly since December 2018 to plan and facilitate project goals. In addition, the larger faculty and staff team meet every other week. This group of 20+ has been focused on curriculum reform and implementation of professional development. We have also engaged in reading articles and discussions around CRT following the PD from Dr. Glenn-White. In addition to curriculum reform, this group has also participated in local training on the program GoReact. Team members and other interested faculty have participated in two different online training sessions where we learned how to access, utilize and provide feedback in the GoReact environment.

So far, Project IMPACT is successful in meeting our goals toward Competitive Preference Priority 1; we have recruited and offered PD to Cohort 1 and in-service teachers across all four district partners, and are providing PD to Cohort 2 members as this report is being written (November 20 and 21, 2019). We have not had any changes in our partnerships; all four district partners who were identified in our application are still working closely with Project IMPACT. The biggest **challenge with partnerships** so far has been negotiating induction activities with one of our project partner's union leadership. These conversations are ongoing, and we are determined to find a way to achieve our project goals while respecting and responding to the union's questions and concerns.

In terms of **implementation challenges**, the primary challenge has been coordinating schedules for all participants (i.e., students, advisory board members, inservice teachers, and BGSU faculty). For every activity we plan to provide or lead, scheduling seems to always be one of the biggest obstacles. Students have their individual course schedules to navigate, districts have constraints around securing substitute teachers and honoring testing windows, faculty have their own teaching schedules and outside research activities to plan around. We are working to find ways to minimize these obstacles. For example, we

have discussed different formats for delivery of PD (e.g., face-to-face vs. virtual, weekend vs. weekday, etc.) with both the larger BGSU faculty group as well as our advisory board members.

### **Evaluation Activities**

We had 3 pre-service teacher participants from our March 21 PD (focused on culturally responsive teaching) complete follow-up activities to earn a CRP digital badges. We asked participants to take several of the implicit bias surveys on the Harvard website (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>). They submitted written reflections on what they learned about themselves from this activity. We have also completed one face-to-face follow-up interview with a practicing teacher who attended the March 21 PD so we could learn about their experience in the professional development on March 21 and how their perceptions on culturally responsive teaching. Continuing this CRP work, we presented findings from our PD at a regional conference, MWERA, in Cincinnati in October (see Appendix A).

On April 4, 2019 we held a training with our first preservice teacher candidates (14 participants) on GoReact. At this PD, we did a deep reflection on the CRP PD day and students shared what they have tried to implement from the PD in their classrooms. Next, they learned how to use GoReact, they created and uploaded a video and did a peer review. Students shared several ways they thought GoReact would be useful in their classrooms and in future BG curriculum courses.

On May 2 we provided a face-to-face PD workshop focused on Social Emotional Learning. Our preservice teacher participants engaged in a mindfulness training workshop.

On May 13-14 we held a two-day, face-to-face “mini conference” at BGSU. There were sessions on Growth Mindset, Advanced Google Apps, LAFF strategies to support a variety of learners, reading strategies to support struggling learners. Preservice teachers had the opportunity to interview with partner administrators. Finally, 2 different Mursion demos were set up for this cohort to participate in: Parent Teacher Conferences and Classroom Management Skills. The feedback from this mini-conference was overwhelmingly positive, with all participants indicating that the PD experience was meaningful and they would recommend this PD. Based on this experience, our team plans to offer a similar experience during AY 2019-2020.

Our internal SEL team delivered face-to-face training on SEL with one of our partner districts on August 13 as well as a follow-up date on September 16. The focus of the PD on August 13 was be learning specific SEL strategies for use in classrooms using resources from AIR that we modified to suit our district partner’s needs. On September 16 we met to discuss and debrief on implementation successes and challenges. The BGSU SEL team is delighted to have one of the district partner’s working directly with us on SEL PD development and delivery. Springfield Local Schools, the partner collaborating on this PD, has an SEL coach in their district, and this SEL coach is working directly with BGSU Project IMPACT faculty to develop and deliver this PD within the district.

The BGSU faculty member who is an expert in lesson study has worked out a detailed plan for delivering lesson study PD for our district partners during AY 2019-2020. This plan includes three full-days plus three half-days of lesson study training and implementation. The purpose of this PD is to create professional collaborative research lessons conducted by teams consisting of both school and university partners. Through these efforts, we hope to establish strong professional teams improving teaching and learning.

- We are working with the district to help manage the need for substitute teachers during these lesson study PD days.
- We have already ordered the lesson study PD book (*Lesson Study Step by Step* by Catherine Lewis and Jaqueline Hurd) for these lesson study teams.

**Other Important Project Activities:**

We are continuing with our monthly advisory board meetings, and these have been very helpful for project planning and troubleshooting. Our BGSU Project IMPACT leadership team met for a full-day working retreat with the advisory board members on June 20 so that we could collaborate on plans for AY 2019-2020.

We have trained the graduate students who are working on the project for the coming year, including our Mursion simulation specialist. The Mursion lab is operational (i.e., equipment installed and simulation specialist working) at this time and we already have BGSU faculty who are working to include virtual simulations in their upcoming courses. The simulations available are all aligned with the project goals and objectives, so seeing this work come together is something we are very excited about.

**Lessons Learned and Highlights:**

- We have established collaborative advisory board with our partners. They are supportive, excited and motivated to move this project forward. We are beginning to discuss the possibility of adding one more partner for next year. We are also presenting our collaboration successes and challenges at AACTE in February, 2020 (see Appendix B for acceptance notification).
- We hired a full-time Program Manager who joined our team on September 1, 2019. Ms. Ash is already a significant part of our team, and her efforts are helping us move our project agenda forward in a timely manner.
- We have received excellent feedback from our partners so far, and are working very hard to be responsive to their needs and suggestions. This is sometimes challenging, primarily due to bureaucratic and/or logistical slow-downs that we don't have much control over (e.g., time to secure contracts for things like Mursion and GoReact).
- So far, the feedback we are receiving from our participants and partners is overwhelmingly positive. We do see a consistent trend from PD participants that they are eager for "action steps" and "strategies for use" in their teaching. We are working as a team to make sure our PD offerings include a clear focus on classroom and/or teaching strategies.
- Because our participants have made clear that they want and need PD that can help with instructional strategies and building relationships with students, we are working hard to avoid "one-off" PD sessions. Our thinking is that if we can offer training that provides instructional strategies, and follow up with additional training and/or opportunities for reflection, this will give participants a chance to implement and reflect on strategies while they have support from us to deepen their knowledge and skills. Ideally, these steps will help with sustainability after the grant period ends.

## Appendix A MWERA Acceptance

**From:** DO\_NOT\_REPLY@allacademic.com  
**To:** [Kristina Nell LaVenia](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] MWERA Submission Confirmation  
**Date:** Saturday, September 21, 2019 5:11:45 PM

---

Dear Kristina LaVenia,

Thank you for submitting a proposal for the 2019 MWERA Annual Meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, this October 16 - 18, 2019. Please keep this email, as it provides tracking information for your submission.

The title of your proposal is: Interrupting the Pattern: Knowing Why and Respecting Who We Teach Abstract

You may return to this site at any time before the submission deadline to edit your proposal.

If you uploaded a document, the file you uploaded will be scanned for viruses and converted into PDF format. The process will take no longer than 72 hours. During this time, you will only be able to view your submitted file in the format in which it was uploaded.

To become an MWERA member, or to get more information on becoming an MWERA member, please visit the MWERA homepage at [www.mwera.org](http://www.mwera.org)

This is an automatically generated message. Please do not reply to this email. You may email your division chair or any of the conference program committee members if you have any questions or requests. These contact info can be found in the Call for Proposals.

Sincerely,

Nicole V. Williams  
2019 MWERA Conference Program Chair

## Appendix B AACTE Acceptance



Dear Matthew,  
Congratulations on being chosen to present at the AACTE 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA!

This year's increased interest in presenting, combined with a limited number of available openings for sessions, made it truly difficult for AACTE's peer reviewers to select the sessions to be offered.

It is my pleasure to inform you that your proposal #78658, "Disrupting Partnership Norms: Educating for the Change our Partners Need" has been **accepted for presentation** at the 2020 Annual Meeting.