

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

By Kristina LaVenia and Tracy Huziak-Clark

Description of the activities and work completed in October 1, 2018- March 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 October 1, 2018 through March 30, 2019 the members of the Project IMPACT leadership team have worked to launch each of the five objectives outlined above. We have successfully recruited the **first cohort** of BGSU undergraduate students (n = 26) from various undergraduate teacher education programs. Because our goal was to recruit 30 students for cohort one, we feel that we have been fairly successful in terms of the number of students recruited. 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 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. The student demographics for Cohort 1:

Major	Number of Cohort 1 students
Business and Marketing Education	1
Dual Intervention Specialist	6
Inclusive Early Childhood	13
Integrated Language Arts	2
Integrated Mathematics	1
Integrated Social Studies	2
Life Sciences and Chemistry	1
Total	26

We believe Project IMPACT is off to an excellent start 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. During our first meeting, we worked in small groups to establish norms for our monthly meetings (screen shot in Appendix A). 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.

The leadership team has worked closely with the advisory board and the broader BGSU Project IMPACT team 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.

For year one, we have chosen 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. Please see **Evaluation** section below for a more detailed explanation of the PD results and feedback.

Beginning in December, 2018 BGSU leadership team (Huziak-Clark, Lavery, Weaver, LaVenia, and Vrooman) have been meeting weekly 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. Next, on February 19th, we had a 4-hour PD with Ryan Souter from GoReact. During this PD, we were able to talk with other users of GoReact and brainstorm many ways that we can utilize this technology to provide feedback to our pre-service teachers.

So far, Project IMPACT is highly 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 working to recruit Cohort 2. 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 that we do not yet have a full-time project manager in place. When we submitted our application, we did not see a way to have a full-time project manager and work within the budget constraints and requirements. Since we've been awarded, however, the project PI has had conversations (phone and email) with ED Program Officer Franka Dennis, and we are moving forward with hiring a full-time project manager. This position will be instrumental in helping manage logistics, coordination of communications, and tracking project activities. Right now, we see this as our biggest challenge, and are very appreciative of Franka's work to help us overcome this.

Evaluation

So far, the entire project team is working very closely with the evaluator. The evaluator has secured IRB approval for the program evaluation, research, and data collection activities (IRB approval letter attached). In addition, we have already collected and analyzed the data collected for the March 21, 2019

PD session. We have written a conference proposal so that we can present these findings with a broader audience.

For the March 21, 2019 PD session, we set out to provide professional development to a group of pre-service and in-service teachers who were interested in learning more about culturally responsive teaching (CRT). The professional development aimed to engage participants in reflection and discussion around: (a) their core values as individual educators, (b) thinking about why they want to teach, and how this maps onto their core values, (c) who their students are, (d) how to identify and address their own implicit biases, (e) and how to connect with culturally diverse learner(s). As mentioned earlier in this document, we had Cohort 1 pre-service teachers as well as in-service teachers from each of the four partner districts attend the March 21 PD event focused on CRT. The data collected and analyses completed to date are described below.

Instrument/Data Sources for March 21, 2019 CRT PD

Culturally Responsive Teaching PD Pre-Questionnaire: The research team developed a questionnaire designed to capture participants' perceptions of (a) the importance of CRT (b) their familiarity with CRT and (c) their definition of CRT prior to the PD.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE): We used a modified version of the CRTSE. The CRTSE scale was constructed using the Culturally Responsive Teaching Competencies (Siwatu, 2007) and Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy construct. The scale elicits information from teachers regarding their efficacy to execute specific teaching practices and tasks that are associated with teachers who have adopted a culturally responsive pedagogy. The original scale consists of 40 Likert-type items in which participants are asked to rate how confident they are in their ability to engage in specific culturally responsive teaching practices (e.g., "I am able to identify the diverse needs of my students") by indicating a degree of confidence ranging from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident). Participants' responses to each of the 40 items are summed to generate a total score. Participants who have higher scores on the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy scale are more confident in their ability compared to those who were less confident in their abilities. We kept the content of the items from the original scale and added one question "I am able to teach students about their cultures' contributions to society" (item 41 in our scale). We also modified the response categories to a simpler scale with response options ranging from 1 *No Confidence* to 9 *Completely Confident*. According to Siwatu (2007) the CRTSE has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient reported of .96. In the current study, the CRTSE Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .97 for both pre- and post-test.

Culturally Responsive Teaching PD Exit Ticket: The research team developed a questionnaire designed to capture participants' perceptions of (a) the importance of CRT (b) their familiarity with CRT and (c) their definition of CRT after attending the PD session. In addition, this form included the following prompts: *One thing I'm excited about after today's session is...;* *One thing I've learned that I'm going to put into practice is...;* and, *One lingering question I have is....* We also asked participants to indicate how well-planned and facilitated the PD was, and what could be changed to make the session more beneficial.

Results/Conclusions from March 21, 2019 PD:

CRTSE results: As displayed in Table 1, there are statistically significant differences in pretest to posttest scores for CRTSE. Results show that self-efficacy scores increased after participation in the PD. Please note: We included only those participants with complete CRTSE responses in the analyses.

Table 1

Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for CRTSE Pre- and Post-test

CRTSE	Pretest		Posttest		n	95% CI for Mean Difference	r	t	df
	M	SD	M	SD					
	259.84	49.93	395.13	46.28	32	22.45, 48.11	.73	5.61*	31

*p < .000 (one-tailed)

Qualitative feedback from the researcher-developed pre- and post-questionnaires: The following codes were used to analyze the qualitative feedback provided by participants:

Code	How this code maps onto PD content
WHY	central focus of the PD and a key element to CRT in practice
GTS	the importance of getting to know your students to make CRT effective
HEX	high expectations are an important factor in CRT

Our rationale for this code structure is based on the PD focus and activities participants engaged in during the training day. First, our choice to use **WHY** stems from the fact that a central focus of the professional development was about helping participants explore and understand their personal “why” and how being aware of our personal values can help us understand our decisions. The focus on the “why” resonated with the participants as a driving force for change. Participants cited the “why” work as something they were excited to focus on to support CRT work. A few examples of the types of feedback participants gave:

- *The opportunity to reflect and think about my “why” and how it affects my classroom/teaching/professionalism*
- *Refocusing on the “why”! I’m frustrated by trying to figure out how to move [CRT] work forward. I think this helps*
- *To lead my students with their why*

Participants also saw this “why” as a way to put into practice what they have learned as both a leadership role and as a way to help students learn (practice quotes).

- *Knowing myself and my bias as having an open mind in order to understand and help my students learn*
- *Find my why, so my what will follow- personal mission statement*
- *Learning to lead with the “why”*

Another major emphasis throughout the training day involved asking participants to “get to know your students” thus; the **GTS** code is an important component in making sense of participants’ responses. In order to support changes in teachers’ instructional practices, the PD focused on reminding participants how critical it is to get to know students, the students’ cultural backgrounds, as well as explore any bias teachers might carry. This focus informed the way participants defined CRT for practice. Some illustrative examples of participant feedback:

- *Using the knowledge about myself to better understand what I need to further understand my students to teach culturally responsively*
- *I am excited to implement new ways to be culturally responsive. I have learned new strategies and about new perspectives that will enhance my teaching*
- *Thinking about the bias that I have and thinking about all of the students and where they come from. Getting to know the students is the most important*
- *The opportunity to learn from my students and then incorporate their experiences, backgrounds, thoughts into the lessons I design and implement*
- *Culturally responsive pedagogy is making lessons more engaging by including students’ culture and interests. Also, valuing all students where they come from*
- *When your background knowledge, prior experiences, and the cultural background of your students are taking into consideration for lesson planning in order to impact students learning outcomes positively*

Given that students’ academic success is a core tenet of the CRT framework, it is not surprising that participants’ experiences in learning about CRT led to reflections that clearly demonstrate a focus on high expectations for all students. The following statements from participants are representative of this code (**HEX**):

- *To focus more on liberation rather than on equity or equality and to tear down “walls” for students so that all students can reach the high standards set for them (academically)*
- *Culturally responsive lesson plans. Hold all students to a high standard*
- *Teaching to all students no matter who they are at a high level. All students desire someone to challenge and support them*
- *Teaching practices that involve community assets and cultures in the classroom community*
- *From today- that high academic standards, mixed with an understanding of culture and hard work= student achievement*

Finally, participants indicated in their exit ticket responses that the primary ways the PD could have been more useful for them would involve:

1. the ability to learn more strategies for use in their classrooms, and
2. more time spent learning about CRT
3. specific focus on CRT in different content areas

With regard to their thoughts on how well the PD met their needs, though, participants’ responses were overwhelmingly positive. Most participants (n = 23) did not indicate that there would be any modifications needed to improve the PD experience.

APPENDIX A ADVISORY BOARD GROUP NORMS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Developed Group Norms

Best way to communicate:

- email info.
- Google
- not a new thing - stick w/ tools we know

Ways to facilitate brainstorming:

- send out beforehand (lead time)
- google docs - everyone adds ideas (interpretation) - educational jargon

New idea to bring to group?

- PD ideas in docs or links
- formal time to add to new ideas
- one thing at a time

New initiative fatigue → be open to new ideas
Being sensitive to time

BE PRESENT ("I'M IN")

STAYING ENGAGED

FOCUS ON OUR STRENGTHS

FREEDOM TO CHALLENGE/JUDGEMENT FREE

"12TH VOICE"

OPEN TO NEW IDEAS/TRY NEW THINGS

PERSISTENCE / FREEDOM TO FAIL

GROWTH MINDSET

THINK "OUTSIDE THE BOX" → INNOVATE

BGSU BELONG. STAND OUT. GO FAR.
CHANGING LIVES FOR THE WORLD.



IRB Approval Letter



BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Compliance

DATE: March 5, 2019

TO: Kristina LaVenía

FROM: Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [1368984-2] Project IMPACT

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED APPROVAL DATE:

February 28, 2019

EXPIRATION DATE: January 22, 2020

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category #7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the IRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on January 22, 2020. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.