Perspectives from Two IES-Funded Goal 2 Preschool Grant Teams: Making the Most of Development Projects

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Agenda

- IES funding Overview
- Elements of IES Goal 2 Projects
- Project Overview: CSS+
- Project Overview: Foundations
- Challenges/benefits/facilitators: CSS+
- Challenges/benefits/facilitators: Foundations
- Cross-site collaboration: What & So What?
- Group Discussion
Research arm of the U.S. Department of Education

Directed by John Q. Easton, Ph.D. (appointment 2009 through 2015)

Goal - Connect Research, Policy, and Practice.

IES Mission – “to provide rigorous and relevant evidence on which to ground education practice and policy and share this information broadly”.
The work of IES is carried out through 4 Centers:

- National Center for Education Research
- National Center for Education Statistics
- National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance
- National Center for Special Education Research**

** The unit that funds our two projects
IES informs the public...

What Works Clearinghouse


February 2012

What is this study about?

The study examined the effect of an early childhood education program on educational attainment by age 28.

The study analyzed data from 900 individuals who completed the Child-Parent Center Education Program for preschool and kindergarten and 486 individuals from similar backgrounds who completed alternative kindergarten programs through the Chicago Effective Schools Project. Both groups completed kindergarten in 1988.

Educational attainment outcomes were measured using surveys and administrative records. Outcomes studied were highest grade completed, high school completion, on-time high school graduation, any college attendance, attendance at a four-year college, and receipt of a college degree.

Program effects were estimated by comparing the

Features of the Child-Parent Center Education Program

The Child-Parent Center Education Program provides education and family support services for children ages 3 to 9 (preschool to third grade). It focuses on developing basic skills in language and math using varied instructional formats.

All teachers have bachelor’s degrees and are certified in early childhood education.

Classes are small (17 in preschool; 25 in kindergarten to third grade) and offer three hours of instruction five days a week in preschool and either full- or half-day instruction in kindergarten.

The program also features an intensive family outreach component intended to draw in disadvantaged families. Examples of this outreach include parenting education, home visitation, health services, and parent volunteering.
Goal 1 – Exploration
Goal 2 - Development and Innovation
Goal 3- Efficacy and Replication
Goal 4 – Scale-up Evaluation
Goal 5- Measurement

Note: The guidelines within these categories may be slightly altered in new guidelines for 2013 available in early March 2012.
Taking a Closer Look at Goal 2 Development Projects
Iterative Process

The Iterative Process is a design methodology that uses a cyclical process which includes repeatedly moving the product through:

- prototyping
- testing
- analyzing
- refining

Based on the results of testing the most recent iteration, changes and refinements are made.

The process is intended to ultimately improve the quality and functionality of a design.”

*Adapted from: [http://konigi.com/wiki/iterative-process](http://konigi.com/wiki/iterative-process)
Theory of Change

A fully developed and well articulated Theory of Change:

- Defines all building blocks needed to bring about the planned outcomes
- Specifies all underlying beliefs and ideas needed to achieve the planned outcome.
- Outlines early and intermediate changes that accomplish the more long-term outcome and changes.

Goal Two Project’s Aims

Anticipated outcomes is a Theory of Change that is well-specified and documented through:

- A Fully-developed Intervention including all materials and products necessary for implementation
- Fidelity Measures for Key Aspects of Intervention
- Outcome Measures addressing direct (e.g. impact on children) and indirect outcomes (e.g., changes in teaching)
- Clear Documentation of Feasibility Assessment
- Pilot data addressing the promise of the intervention for generating beneficial outcomes.
Ultimately Goal 2 Projects:

- Should lead to a Goal 3 application for which you need:
  - a fully developed intervention
  - evidence of feasibility with a focus on implementation with fidelity
  - data to support the promise that the intervention has impact on child outcomes.

- Thus, think about what is needed for a Goal 3 when planning and writing a Goal 2 application, so that when you finish your project you will have what you need to move on to an efficacy application (Goal 3).
Introducing Children’s School Success +
Children’s School Success+

- Funded 2010-2013, now in Year 2 of 3 years.
- Purpose – Enhance CSS research curriculum to promote all children’s learning within the general curriculum
- Collaboration between researchers and teachers across three sites: Maryland, Indiana, and Kansas.
CSS+

Team Members
Children’s School Success +

- Curriculum activities integrate content related to science, literacy, math, and social-emotional skills.

- Each activity includes: 1) universal design features, 2) instructional individualization, and 3) strategies for linking state early learning standards and ECO.

- Ongoing work to link curriculum activities to families.
Theory of Change CSS+

CSS research curriculum + Universal Design, instructional individualization & progress monitoring = CSS+ for Better Child Outcomes & Teacher Implementation

CSS*: a high quality UDL curriculum with embedded instructional individualization and curriculum linked progress monitoring

Teachers revise and help adjust CSS* to ensure feasibility of implementation & build capacity for use.

Teachers effectively use CSS* to instruct classrooms. Children with disabilities gain skills and progress in the general curriculum.

The number of settings and communities supporting children with disabilities meaningful access and progress in the general curriculum expands.

Establish Elements → Review & Revise → Iterative Process → Evaluate & Revise → Measure Child Outcomes & Teacher Satisfaction

Involvement of Expert Panel & Classroom Teachers
CSS + Goal 2 Design

- Three Phases to the CSS+ project:
  - Year 1 – Development and refinement of curriculum activities.
  - Year 2 – Feasibility of curriculum activities is currently being assessed by classroom use and teacher feedback.
  - Year 3 – Teachers will implement curriculum activities and we will measure impact on a sample of children with disabilities.
Goal 2
Challenges and Facilitators
Goal 2 Challenges

- Teachers might not be used to planning in advance
- Teachers not used to using small groups as structure for teaching
- Understanding Universal Design for Learning as a means for ALL students to learn
- Curriculum structure and content vary from what teachers do in their classrooms
Goal 2 Facilitators

- Meet as a group with teachers and discuss.
- Refinement of CSS+ as year proceeds.
- Iterative process driven by research partners in schools (our teachers and administrators) and our integrated team of researchers who are participant observers in classrooms.
Foundations
Grant
Foundations

- Funded 2009-2012, in Year 3 of 3 years.
- Purpose - To develop tools to enable families and practitioners to encourage the skills in preschool aged children with disabilities that are the developmental foundations of later self-determination in older children.
- Family-professional partnerships are the vehicle for noticing and changing environments at home and school.
Foundations Theory of Change

- Coordinated home-school interventions
- Enhanced collaboration and satisfaction
- Meaningful student and family participation
- Partnership

- Discover Child and Family Characteristics
- Adult Facilitation
- Environmental Access
- Intervention Activities
- Short-term Outcomes
- Intermediate Outcomes
- Long-Term Outcomes

- Child Responses
  - Choice-making
  - Engagement
  - Self-Regulation & Control

- Increased Learning Capacity
- Projected adolescent outcomes within cultural and community contexts
  - Self-Determination
  - Academic and Quality of Life Outcomes
Foundations Goal 2 Design

**Phase 1 - Design** included approximately 200 family members and 150 preschool practitioners who participated in interviews and surveys to identify attitudes, preferences, and strategies about choice-making, self-regulation, and engagement.

**Phase 2 - Development** - 9 dyads family-practitioner partners participated in development of intervention.

**Phase 3 – Pilot** - Recruiting 48 dyads or 96 partners for pilot test of the intervention, measuring child outcomes, fidelity of implementation, and social validity for all stakeholders.
Foundations Intervention

- Examine the routines and needs of the child

- Select an intervention based on assessment

- How did it work?
- What is next?

- Try it out - see how it works
Cross-Site Work
Cross-Site Facilitators: Team

- Team members share similar vision for project’s theory and key ideas.
- Team members show mutual positive regard and a history of working together on smaller projects, papers, or committees.
Phone or Direct Contact

- Schedule face-to-face meetings at least once/year, depending on your budget.
- Use regularly scheduled phone conferences, with planned agenda to assure progress, share ideas, discuss roadblocks to achievement.
- Phone calls also drive accountability of completion of interim work tasks – it’s better to complete the task than to have to apologize to your colleagues!
- Include ALL who are working on project in calls (project coordinators, grad students participating in the research) to assure effective communication about milestones, procedural changes, and other important topics.
Other Cross-Site Suggestions

- Write detailed call reports/notes that are archived on a shared drive for future reference, and to use in writing project reports and articles.
- Share files on an accessible, but security protected, drive to make the work tasks easier to share, edit, and update.
- Research a way to share video that is secure, since some footage is confidential to your project – not to appear on You-Tube.
Team Members Reported Specific Cross-Site Collaboration Benefits

- Support and collaboration for modifications across sites
- New appreciation for skills and voices of grad students
- Group problem solving with team that has worked well together in past
- Using expertise that individuals bring, both related to their site and other sites in project.
Why Write a Development Grant?
Goal 2 Benefits

- Flexibility with intervention
- Able to incorporate ideas from participants and fellow researchers
- Iterative process allows improvement and creativity
- Shared ownership of ideas and procedures
- Increased collaboration
- More empowered teachers and families through capacity and competence building
Other Goal 2 Benefits

- Design research – the iterative process of developing, testing, and refining enable models to be developed in “real world” settings.

- Development grant provides opportunity for exploration, including a pilot study, which can be useful in developing plans for larger-scale efficacy study.
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