Grand Rapids Community College Foundation
Instructional Improvement and Professional Development (IIPD) Grant
Report Form

IIPD guidelines require that any individual who receives an IIPD grant must submit a report on their activities within 60 days of completion of the activities. This report must be received by the GRCC Grants and Resource Development Officer in order to be considered eligible for an IIPD grant in a subsequent year. Submit your report to the Grants and Resource Development Officer, mezzanine level, College Park Plaza Building.

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Date of IIPD Award (insert year award was received):

October, 2008 March, 200_

Purpose of Grant:
To attend the World Forum on Early Care and Education, Belfast 2009

Please respond to the following questions related to the activity for which you received grant funding and attach your report to this form.

1. Describe the new avenues of instruction, including changes in curriculum, teaching strategies or other changes that are resulting from your grant-funded activity.

   The full-time faculty in this department attended the World Forum Conference for several key reasons. Most importantly we were able to broaden our understanding and recognition of the diversity that exists in all aspects of education, in particular, early childhood education. This conference draws professionals from around the world to network and discuss how early childhood and related issues are viewed in their respective countries and regions. Within the workshops and at keynote presentations, we have gained a better understanding of the trends and activities that are taking place in many countries with regard to universal pre-kindergarten, preparing and maintaining an educated workforce, communities’ capacity for supporting children in crisis, institutionalized children, recognizing and measuring quality in early childhood programs and cultural competence for teaching professionals, to name a few.

   We are evaluating our classroom teaching to make sure that our Child Development and Education students are aware of the range of families and cultures coming into their classrooms and how to deal most effectively with those diverse families. Activities around cultural and gender awareness, ethical responsibilities and enhancing academic success for all children are being integrated into the CD and ED classes: CD 105, CD 210, CD 215, CD 260, and ED 200.

   The goal is to better offer our students who will be working in our community classrooms a world perspective and better skills to be able to work more effectively in a diverse, global workforce.

   We are enhancing the content of our classes (CD 119, CD 210, CD 270, CD 285, and ED 200) to integrate information about assessment and measuring children’s progress to better reflect the current expectations in the field. This continues to be an area that is receiving much

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attention as early childhood programs are being expected to be accountable for children's learning and building appropriate curriculum based on assessment. Being integrated into the above classes are topics such as types of assessment, appropriate assessment and using assessment data to build effective curriculum.

2. How will the grant-funded activity result in an impact on student learning and enhancements to student success?

In CD 260-Emergent Literacy-students focus on various lessons regarding expanding student's cultural awareness through literacy. A few of the seminars attended stressed the importance of educators being aware of global cultural issues. Books purchased about other countries and different cultures will help students get a broader view of families and different cultures they may encounter when working with students. The class will discuss how to incorporate literature into a classroom setting to help meet the needs of all children. This will allow our students to enter the workforce more knowledgeable and prepared to meet the needs of every students in future classrooms that they will be working in.

In the CD 270 course- Leadership in Early Childhood Education- the students are being prepared to move into positions in programs and the community with the goal of providing leadership in the field of Early Childhood. The resources that were provided (written materials, websites, online models etc.) around environments, quality programming, cultural competence, sustainability, teacher education, children and families at risk and funding for early childhood are being integrated into the activities and readings to better inform these students and support their advocacy projects.

In CD 210- Infant/Toddler Development, I will be sharing information about the Pikler Institute, a program based in Budapest, Hungary that trains caregivers in specific techniques and approaches that build warm and supportive relationships between those caregivers and orphaned children. This training has been show to have very positive outcomes for young children in terms of overall development. That information and those techniques can be studied and used by all professionals in infant classrooms where the focus is to build relationships.

In ED 200, one of the goals focused on is to help college students become more compassionate and understanding of the needs of children. The importance of meeting the needs of all students in a classroom setting is stressed. A session was attended which emphasized the importance of compassion and socio-emotional development and another which emphasized resiliency and children in the classroom. The class also participates in role play scenarios to demonstrate ways to best support children and help them become more resilient in the classroom setting. These techniques will help our students realize the importance of focusing on student needs and they also encourage our students to use self-reflection as they move into the workforce.

In CD 215, Adult/Child Interaction, one of the concerns for students is their inability to look at children and families from a global perspective. Instruction for this class focuses on connecting student’s understanding of the numerous stressors and vulnerabilities that families and children face around the world, seeing the “big picture.” Through class discussion and group work that looks at solving interaction scenarios, students will address these issues and discuss appropriate parent/teacher/child interactions that they may encounter in the classroom.

CD 105 Foundations in Early Childhood Education explores the different types of early childhood programs. As various types of early childhood programs are reviewed during lectures, information will be shared with students about the various types of programs that were visited.
during the conference by department staff as well as the knowledge gained about other programs while networking with the international delegation in attendance at the conference.

The CD 119 class includes a unit on multicultural awareness and anti-bias curriculum. Many of the sessions at the World Forum provided riveting examples of how other countries deal with these issues within their own cultural context. One day of the forum involved visiting preschool and childcare sites throughout Northern Ireland. The challenges related to diversity are very evident in Northern Ireland with the relatively short span of peace and the current existence of a wall still separating segments of Belfast. Photos I took of the peace wall and even projects in the preschool classroom we visited depicting how this impacts both the community and the classroom will be incorporated in the anti-bias unit of this class.

3. What steps are you taking to assess the impact of this activity on student learning?

In CD 285, the students are required to organize a professional portfolio based on the NAEYC standards for Professional Preparation, which is also the basis for our department accreditation. Within those standards is a section related to Building Family and Community Relationships that describes evidence of student growth as the ability to respond appropriately to families of diverse cultures. I will evaluate student responses to related scenarios and journal reflections included in the portfolio. Over time, this indicator will give us a clear picture of how effective our efforts to integrate diversity throughout the curriculum are.

I will also look at ways to help students better understand and participate in leadership in early childhood and learn better and more effective ways to advocate. I will do so by evaluating the student designed advocacy project in CD 270.

Students in CD 215 will assessed in their understanding of the diverse families’ perspective and the vulnerabilities of the children they service through group work discussions and later providing best practice in the early childhood field. In CD 105 students will by assessed on their knowledge about the different types of early childhood programs through testing and class discussion.

In CD 119 this component is assessed within the framework of the students’ curriculum unit plan.

In ED 200, students are assigned presentations on how to best use compassion to handle many different situations. I will evaluate their ability to integrate information gained in class into a presentation for others on responding compassionally.

4. How are you engaging others in the learning process and disseminating activity results with the wider campus community? NOTE: If shared learning activities have not yet taken place, an addendum to this report must be filed with the Grants Office describing shared learning activities prior to applying for another IIPD grant, as required by IIPD Guidelines.

During our first regular staff meeting of the year (9/14) we began to plan strategies for organizing and sharing the information we gained with three main groups here on campus: the adjunct CD instructors, lab preschool instructors and staff, and the stakeholder of our ERF grant as some of the components of our learning are applicable to the teachers in this program as they serve urban at-risk families. We will share information related to this once we have completed this process.

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5. Describe how the grant-funded activity is supporting the objectives of your department and your existing job responsibilities.

This conference supports our program goals of continued professional development by offering many learning experiences related to the standards set out by the NAEYC Associate Degree Program Accreditation that accredits our program. Each year we choose specific key assessments and standards to focus our continued growth on. Diversity issues continue to be at the top of the department’s list as it is a complex issue that requires continual reflection.

6. How has this grant helped in fostering your professional development goals?

Rebecca Brinks – On my FGIP form last fall I identified the following goal for professional development: “Continued focus on Early Literacy with further exploration into strategies for English Language Learners.” Many of the sessions I attended focused on programs where children were multilingual and presenters shared their practices and ideas. This provided food for thought both in terms of practices being used and possible resources to follow up on. Interestingly, one less formal aspect of this conference related to this goal came from attending sessions that included people who spoke many different languages and experiencing what it is like to have to struggle to understand what is going on as well as observe others and how they face this challenge.

Diane Sparks- On my FGIP form I set a goal around having students explore more thoroughly the range of cultural and individual diversity in children and families in CD 210. The Pikler pre-conference presentation on the Dangers and Possibilities in Caring for Institutionalized Children Birth to Three focused on the needs of children, especially those that are institutionalized, and how we can best meet those individual needs. The information from this session will help me to increase student’s awareness about the need for attentiveness to context in a child’s life and the skills they will need to bring to those situations.

Tricia Siegel and Deb Vilmont- On both of our FGIP forms is the goal of increasing an awareness of the diversity in early childhood classrooms and helping students to be more cognizant of and work more effectively with that diversity. Many of the workshops attended were both multi-cultural in presentation as well as in content and provided us with new insights into culture and its influence on the learning process.