



a division of Social Studies School Service

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Interact Scientific Research Results Summary –Ball State University 2008

Project CLUE, Clustering Learners Unlocks Equity, a partnership between the Center for Gifted Studies and Talent Development at Ball State University and the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), was developed to provide comprehensive services to gifted and talented students. The project was active from 2002 until 2008.

During the project the following goals were attained: The project team (1) developed and defined a set of instruments that would identify gifted minority students, English as a Second Language (ESL) students, and other under-represented students bringing their representation in gifted programs at IPS to levels that reflect the diversity of the population in the school corporation; (2) provided professional development to teachers in the content areas of mathematics, and language arts, as well as differentiated instruction; (3) restructured the current gifted services plan to include cluster grouping in each of 52 elementary schools; and (4) brought parents, school, and community together to help these students reach their full potential.

In addition, the project funded summer academies that provided social and emotional support, as well as academic growth for these students.

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Project CLUE also provided teachers with new techniques to use with diverse populations so that all students are nurtured; developed a set of curriculum units that extend existing materials on differentiating curriculum, tailored to meet these diverse needs both academically as well as socially/emotionally; and disseminated the information through various technologies as well as print materials.



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Schools were assigned to either receive the curriculum or not and students were either clustered into classrooms or not. Thus there were four groups in the study: Cluster plus curriculum; cluster, no curriculum; no cluster, curriculum; and no cluster, no curriculum.

Into the Unknown, a mathematics unit developed by Interact, was used as one unit in grade 3 to address Goal 2. Because of the nature of the unit, i.e. it is already tiered, the unit was taught to the entire class. Both NWEA and classroom test data were analyzed. For mathematics, the repeated measures ANOVA produced a significant repeated effect (both curriculum groups enjoyed positive growth), a significant main effect of gifted status (the gifted students outperformed their peers overall), and a significant interaction effect [the rate of growth for the 113 gifted students over the 3rd grade year was greater than for the non-identified students, $F(1, 2356) = 8.05, p < .005$].

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The RIT score comparisons indicated instructional levels associated with their performances on the NWEA MAP tests were +1 Grade Level for the gifted students and one testing cycle behind for the non-identified students.

For mathematics in Grade 3, the evidence clearly demonstrated that implementing the curricula led to marked gains in the pretest-posttest design that were not enjoyed by participants in classrooms where the curricula were not delivered appropriately. In those classrooms that were classified as non-implementers there were no statistical gains over the 9-week instructional period. This was not surprising given the off-grade focus of several topics, but confirms that those students in the curriculum classrooms enjoyed significant math gains.

Examining the effect of being in a cluster classroom in the 3rd grade math conditions revealed a steady and positive pattern. The repeated finding was that teachers instructing their gifted students in a cluster classroom setting saw greater math gains over



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time than those teachers without a cluster setting (either too many or too few gifted students to meet the requirement for cluster). The result was pervasive, and also demonstrated that the academic achievement gains were not restricted to the gifted students. That is, the 3rd grade students in cluster classrooms ($n = 57$) had steady and consistent gains in their math achievement regardless of gifted status—although the overall scores for the gifted students were still higher than the non-identified peers.