

U.S. Department of Education

Samples of current and previous projects evaluated by PEER

Dual Language Support through Technology Enhanced Programs and Strategies (Dual Language STEPS) (\$2,691,313, 2017–2022):

Dual Language STEPS seeks to improve English learners' (ELs) academic achievement by fostering dual language programs across the Greater Orlando and Tampa Bay areas. The U.S. Department of Education awarded over \$2.6 million in funding through its Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) to the UCF College of Community Innovation and Education in collaboration with the UCF College of Arts and Humanities to prepare 100 highly qualified dual language K–12 teachers through a technology enhanced dual language education graduate certificate. In addition to developing a certificate program in Dual Language, the project also has a community component focusing on improving parental, family, and community engagement in dual language.

- Principal Investigator: Dr. Joyce Nutta, UCF College of Community Innovation and Education

Micro-credentialing of English Learners Teaching Skills (MELTS) (\$2,441,766, 2016–2021):

The MELTS project is a U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), National Professional Development Program (NPD) funded project at the University of Central Florida (UCF). UCF will partner with Pinellas County Schools (PCS) in Florida to meet OELA's priorities for the NPD grant using the TESOL WIDA Proficiency Standards and prior data collected on UCF preservice teachers (PSTs), the MEL TS project team will develop 10 key instructional micro-skill performance tasks for 3 different English Learner (EL) proficiency levels to be demonstrated by PCS in-service teachers, videotaped, and modeled with UCF preservice teachers through their courses of study. PSTs will then practice and demonstrate these skills either through (a) peer micro-teaching or in the (b) TeachLive elementary classroom simulator at UCF for evaluation by trained observers. PSTs who demonstrate attainment of these skills will receive microcredentialing Digital Badges to validate their expertise. The Micro-credentialing activities meet the criteria for strong and moderate evidence of effectiveness based on the What Works Clearinghouse evidentiary reports.

- Principal Investigator: Dr. Joyce Nutta, UCF College of Community Innovation and Education

Project ASD: Special Educator Preparation in Autism Spectrum Disorders (\$1,200,000, 2011– 2015):

The goals of this U.S. Department of Education (ED) Professional Development Program funded grant were to (a) increase the number of certified special education teachers highly qualified to implement evidence-based practices for comprehensive programming for students with ASD; (b) enhance the University of Central Florida's (UCF) current teacher preparation programming in ASD to include transition planning and interdisciplinary teaming to support increased inclusion of individuals with ASD in school and community settings; and (c) expand UCF's current mentorship/demonstration site program to include opportunities for high quality practicum experiences in a variety of settings with increased emphasis on high poverty schools and exemplary transition programs.

- Principal Investigator: Dr. Wilfred Wienke, UCF College of Community Innovation and Education

College Bound Project (\$748,284, 2010–2013):

Trident Technical College (TTC), in Charleston, SC, received funding through the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) program. The primary objective of the College Bound project was to increase the effectiveness of teachers, thereby increasing the number of students attending TTC; decreasing the percentage of students requiring developmental reading; and increasing the persistence, completion, and four-year college transfer rates of the cohort. It was intended that the College Bound proactive approach would be replicable in community colleges nationwide.

- Project Director: Randy Howell, Trident Technical College, Charleston, SC

MILMI - International Masters in Laser Materials and Interactions or Trans-Atlantic Graduate School in Laser Materials and Interactions (2009–2012):

MILMI was sponsored by the European Union-United States Atlantis Program, which was jointly administered and funded by the U.S. Department of Education's CED Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC). It involved students from four partnering institutions including University of Central Florida, Clemson University, University of Bordeaux in France, and Friedrich Schiller University of Jena in Germany. Students involved in this program, if successful, obtained two graduate degrees, one from their home institution and one from another overseas. This process takes about two years, where they study for one year at their home institution and one year abroad.

- Principal Investigator: Dr. Martin Richardson, Professor, UCF College of Optics and Photonics

Improving the Use of Postsecondary Data (\$89,000, 2010–2011):

The purpose of this investigation was to provide evaluation services to help Osceola Public Schools meet their ED Sponsored Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) Grant objectives for improving the use of post-secondary data. The Smaller Learning Communities program awards discretionary grants to local educational agencies (LEA) to support the implementation of SLC and activities to improve student academic achievement in large public high schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more students. SLC include structures such as freshman academies, multi-grade academies organized around career interests or other themes, "houses" in which small groups of students remain together throughout high school, and autonomous schools-within-a-school, as well as personalization strategies, such as student advisories, family advocate systems, and mentoring programs. This formative evaluation report focused on survey results from senior exit exams administered at one of the two Osceola high schools, Poinciana High School. PEER assisted with survey development and analyzed data from senior exit surveys.

- Lead Institution: School District of Osceola County