

REVIEW OF THE MARY AND JEAN BORG CENTER FOR READING AND LITERACY

Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 90.1313

Research and Service Center: Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Subject Areas

OVERVIEW

The Center for Reading and Literacy at Illinois State University was approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education as a state-recognized research and service center on October 2, 2001. In 2008 Jean Borg endowed the center, which was subsequently renamed the Mary and Jean Borg Center for Reading and Literacy in honor of Jean Borg's mother and Jean Borg's gifts to the Illinois State University Foundation. Jean Borg graduated from Illinois State Normal University in 1950 and subsequently taught junior high school science, served as a school counselor, and served as a faculty member in curriculum and instruction at the University of South Florida. The Borg Center is housed in the School of Teaching and Learning within the College of Education. This is the third review of the center.

The Mary and Jean Borg Center for Reading and Literacy (hereinafter "the "Borg Center") has four primary objectives or goals: to provide services to policymakers in the areas of reading and literacy, to provide services to the state of Illinois in the areas of reading and literacy, to provide services to professional educators in the areas of reading and literacy, and to support research among university faculty, university students, and members of the wider research community to broaden the understanding of reading, literacy, and literacy education. These objectives align with the mission of Illinois State in that they provide opportunities to serve university students, children in central Illinois who struggle with reading, and educators who desire to improve their instruction in reading and literacy.

There are two other IBHE recognized research and service centers concerned with literacy and/or reading in the state of Illinois; the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. While the Borg Center is not identical to the Center for Literacy or the Center for the Study of Reading in its mission, goals, and objectives, a review of each of these enduring centers revealed projects and processes to which the Borg Center can aspire. For example, the Center for Literacy at UIC thrives through its community, state, and national partnerships and the Center for the Study of Reading demonstrates success through external funding for research. These are two major long-term goals for the Borg Center moving forward.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT

Introduction and overview

The self-study process for the Borg Center was comprised of five components: review of center documents and processes, a review of the communication structures between the center, the School, the College, and Illinois State University, a review of research lab activities, and analysis of data for new and ongoing projects, and an analysis of progress made towards the recommendations from the last review and strategic planning goals.

The Director of the Borg Center, Dr. Deborah MacPhee, is an associate professor in the School of Teaching and Learning with expertise in research and teaching in the fields of reading and literacy education. She served as interim director for two years before being named permanent director in May 2019. Faculty colleagues are School of Teaching and Learning faculty who engage in the work of the Borg Center. Faculty contribute to the center in various ways: providing professional learning opportunities, working on grant projects, and conducting research that reflects the goals and objectives of the center. The Borg Center supports the work of faculty colleagues with additional compensation, reassigned time, resources and materials, and research and writing groups. Major initiatives, past and present, undertaken by center faculty and faculty associates are briefly described below.

Accomplishments since the prior program review

A focus of the new leadership has been to establish/re-establish programs/initiatives in the Borg Center that reflect the four primary goals of the research and service unit. Following is a list of Borg Center Accomplishments since summer 2017.

Eye Movement and Miscue Analysis Lab (EMMA). In the summer and fall of 2017, the Borg director in collaboration with Linda Haling, the director of Teaching and Learning at the time, and with funding from the School of Teaching and Learning acquired eye-tracking equipment and established an EMMA lab. The lab is the tenth of its kind in the world where researchers bring two research traditions together to study how perception relates to comprehension in reading. The Borg director spent a sabbatical in spring 2018 studying with EMMA researchers at Towson University and launched an independent research agenda in the Borg Center lab in summer 2018. Additionally, the director developed a clinical course for graduate students interested in studying the reading process.

Community Services. The Borg Center offers low-cost tutoring and literacy assessment services to community members. These services are offered in conjunction with the EMMA research lab. Families who register for the services are invited to participate in research and to authorize the use student data for teaching purposes. Participation in research or consent to use data for teaching purposes is not required to access these services. Data that is authorized for use will be organized in a database that faculty can access for their undergraduate and graduate teaching. The Borg director manages the services and supervises graduate students who work in the lab or enroll in the clinical course associated with the lab. Revenue from these services is used to purchase assessment and tutoring materials which become part of the Borg resource library.

Borg Physical Space. The Borg Center's physical space on the third floor of DeGarmo houses resources for ISU students and faculty. The space has been reorganized to be more inviting to students, faculty, and community members. A reception desk, a small workspace for students and/or faculty, and a display of faculty research have been added to the space. All resources have been barcoded and added to Libib, an application for cataloging materials for easy checkout. Course instructors are informed about the space as a resource for them and their students. During the fall and spring semesters, a graduate assistant manages the resources and supports patrons. Traffic in the center and circulation of materials has increased as a result of these changes.

Professional Learning.

Workshops for teachers. On campus, in fall 2017, the director offered a workshop for teachers titled *The Eyes, the Brain, and the Reading Process*. The workshop was designed to support teachers' understanding of reading as a complex process, to offer instructional strategies to support readers' developing processes and to introduce the EMMA lab to local teachers. The workshop was offered twice during the semester. Teachers earned two professional learning hours through the Cecilia J. Lauby Teacher Education Center. Revenue from the workshops paid the processing fee for professional learning hours and supported Borg Center operations.

School-based professional learning. The Borg Center offers site-based professional learning to educational institutions in Illinois in areas for which our faculty colleagues have expertise. The Borg Center has provided professional learning to two Illinois School Districts: Morton School District and Urbana School District 116. Two faculty colleagues provided monthly support during the 2018-2019 school year for instructional coaches and administrators in Morton, as they began an instructional coaching initiative. The Center also conducted an outside evaluation of the initiative at the end of year one. The evaluation included a professional learning culture survey for teachers and follow-up focus group interviews. In Urbana School District, one faculty colleague provided two half-day workshops on African American Language in the Classroom.

America Reads partnership. The Borg Center continues to partner with Lyn Morris, Director of America Reads to provide professional learning in literacy education to Illinois State students who serve as America Reads tutors in local schools and community organizations. Each fall and spring semester, tutors attend mandatory literacy professional learning sessions. The tutors are divided into three small groups and a faculty colleague from the Center conducts three one-hour workshops on a topic in literacy education. The Center offers new content each semester based on feedback from the America Reads director. America Reads tutors work with children in grade K-12.

Non-tenure track faculty. In summer 2019, the center began a partnership with the School of Teaching and Learning to provide professional learning sequences for non-tenure track faculty in the school. A needs assessment was conducted to identify the professional learning needs of non-tenure track faculty. The structure for professional learning sequences included one three-hour workshop before each semester begins and three follow-up conversations during the semester for ongoing support. Borg faculty colleagues were surveyed to establish their expertise and desire to prepare and facilitate professional learning sequences for NTT faculty.

Workshops for ISU students. In fall 2017, the Borg Center in collaboration with the Visor Center offered a series of workshops to support academic literacy among ISU students. The series of four workshops was grounded in an apprenticeship frame and drew upon four dimensions to guide metacognitive conversations: social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge-building. The purpose of the workshops was to help students become more active, strategic and independent readers by supporting students' discovery of their own reasons to read and ways of reading, modeling disciplinary ways of reading in different subject areas and genres, an guiding students to explore, strengthen, and assess their own reading.

Policy Connections. The Borg Center is becoming more involved with policy as it relates to literacy teaching and learning in Illinois.

ISBE committee. During the summer and fall of 2017, the interim director of the Borg Center chaired an Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) committee convened to discuss Reading Teacher and Reading Specialist endorsements in Illinois and provide recommendations to the state board. The committee was made up of a diverse group of individuals from school, university, and community organizations.

IL representative visits Borg. In December 2018, the Borg Center director hosted Illinois representative Keith Sommer in the center to discuss reading in general and to provide recommendations regarding teacher education.

Multi-tiered systems of support partnership. In a collaboration with faculty from special education and psychology, the Borg Center director, faculty colleague Kyle Miller, and Jill Donnel, the assistant director of undergraduate programs in the School of Teaching and Learning, represent Illinois State University through an Illinois Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) partnership with the Illinois RtI Network, a State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) project of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). contribute to the work. The overarching goal of Illinois' SPDG project is to:

Scale up implementation of a coordinated, statewide system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to establish and use a multi-tiered model of scientific, research-based instruction, intervention, and assessment to improve the progress and performance of all students, including those with disabilities.

As representatives of Illinois State University, our work in this project involves working with local schools to develop and assess multi-tiered systems of support and to review our undergraduate teacher education programs to assess how teacher candidates are being prepared to enter schools with such systems in place.

Grant Writing Activities. One priority of the Borg Center is to seek external funding to support its projects and practices. With goals of supporting existing projects and initiating new projects, the director of the Center has focused on research grant opportunities and partnering with faculty colleagues and other research institutions to develop proposals that reflect the mission and goals of the Center.

Cross Disciplinary Work. The director of the Borg Center serves as a literacy expert on a committee of the Multidisciplinary Psychoeducational Assessment Service (MPAS). The MPAS is a service offered at the Psychological Services Center (PSC) through the Department of Psychology that provides diagnostic psychoeducational assessments for children and adolescents who are exhibiting more than one functional area of concern. The Multidisciplinary Committee (MDC) includes experts from school psychology, social work, special education, curriculum and instruction, speech and language, and audiology who collaborate to support school psychology doctoral students who are case managers for families that access the service. The committee discusses results from assessments that are administered across disciplines and collaboratively develops recommendations for clients.

Faculty Writing and Research Groups. The Borg Center supports faculty research by organizing writing and research groups that bring interested faculty together to share and receive feedback on academic writing and discuss

research methods and processes. In fall 2018, the Center hosted a writing group of seven faculty members from the School of Teaching and Learning. The group met in the Center one-two times per month. Each member of the group maintained a written record of writing goals and time spent writing each week. During each meeting, members shared a portion of a manuscript and received feedback from other members. In summer 2019, the Borg Center purchased books for faculty interested in discussing mixed-methods research. Eight faculty members met two times over the summer to engage in research group discussions. This group continued meeting in fall 2019 semester.

Assessment

Assessment Strategies and Methods

A systematic process to annually assess the work of the Borg Center has been developed. The process involves accessing data from programs and initiatives and feedback from stakeholders to identify specific yearly assessment targets that move the Center toward achieving the long-term goals and objectives set forth in its strategic plan (see Appendix B).

Assessment Targets

Targets set to assess the Borg Center's success include the following:

- Increase student involvement in research and service in the Center by developing a clinical experience for reading master's students.
- Continue to expand the work of the Borg Center as a professional learning resource for schools and districts throughout Illinois.
- Engage literacy faculty from across the state in collaboratively producing research-based documents that address issues of literacy teaching and learning in Illinois.
- Develop research projects/partnerships that result in peer-reviewed publications that have a national impact on the field of literacy education.
- Continue to pursue external funding to support research and service projects in the Borg Center with the goal of becoming a self-sustaining unit.

Resources

The School of Teaching and Learning supports the Borg Center by providing the director a two-course reduced teaching load in the fall and spring semesters and six weeks of additional salary in the summer, as well as a full-time graduate assistant who works twenty hours per week during the academic year managing resources in the Borg Center and supporting research in the EMMA lab. The director oversees an operational budget that is housed in the School of Teaching and Learning and managed by the School's accountant. With revenue from the reading assessment, tutoring, and professional learning services, this budget supports the day-to-day operations of the Center. Expenses include additional salary for faculty who provide professional learning services, resources for the Borg library and tutoring program, promotional materials, parking for Borg Center patrons, and miscellaneous office supplies. Since summer 2019, four faculty colleagues have been hired to provide professional learning services and a non-tenure track instructor was hired as a tutor for the 2019 summer tutor program.

The Borg Center also has an endowment budget that is housed in the College of Education and managed by the COE accountant. In September 2018, expendable funds from this endowment account were released by the college to the director of the Center to support projects that will have a lasting impact on the Borg Center. To access this budget, the director makes a request to the School's director. To date, funds from this budget have been used to acquire training for the Borg Center director and a faculty colleague on an instructional program designed to support readers who have been diagnosed with dyslexia, and to extend the Borg Fellowship program started by the previous director. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Borg Center will support a reduced teaching load for two faculty colleagues (one in the fall semester and one in the spring semester) who will each launch a new project/ initiative that reflects the Center's strategic plan.

Response to previous program review recommendations

The 2012-2013 program review resulted in four recommendations.

(1) Develop and implement an assessment plan.

An assessment plan has been developed which includes the development of an advisory board and an annual review of goals and actions taken to support the sustainability of the Center.

(2) Continue to support student learning at the university through professional practice opportunities.

A research lab has been established. The lab supports student learning in various ways and will inform the field of reading and literacy through the dissemination of findings at national and international conferences and through peer-reviewed publications.

(3) Seek external funding for ongoing and new initiatives.

Four external grant proposals have been submitted (IES, Spencer Foundation, Dollar General Literacy Foundation). Two proposals were rejected and two are currently under review.

(4) Support reading and literacy across a K-16 grade span.

A series of workshops for Illinois State students on academic reading was developed and implemented by a School of Teaching and Learning doctoral student. Despite collaborating with the Visor Center, the workshops were poorly attended and have not been offered again. The Center also provides professional learning in literacy education for Illinois State students who tutor in the community through the America Reads grant.

Major findings of this self-study

The major findings of the self-study are:

- The Borg Center established an EMMA lab through which it offers literacy tutoring and assessment services to the community. Families who access these services can elect to participate in research that will inform the field of reading education.
- The Borg Center has increased its support of ISU students with the reading research lab that provides undergraduate and graduate students opportunities to observe, work, and learn from research-based tutoring and assessment services and the reorganization of the Center's physical space that makes resources more accessible to students.
- Faculty involvement in the work of the Center has increased. Faculty colleagues have been hired by the Center to provide professional learning in K-12 schools and on campus to non-tenure faculty and America Reads tutors. Faculty have participated in research and writing groups hosted by the Center and beginning fall 2019, the Center is providing reassigned time to one faculty member per semester to work on a project that contributes to the mission of the Center.
- An assessment plan for the Center has been developed that includes an annual review of program data and feedback from stakeholders on short-term goals. This plan is intended to keep the Center moving forward toward accomplishing goals set forth in the strategic plan.

Initiatives for the next program review cycle

Based on the findings from this self-study, the Borg Center will focus on the following initiatives over the next four years:

- Continue to support ISU student learning in the EMMA lab and submit at least one manuscript per year to peer-reviewed journals.
- Submit at least two external funding proposals per year to support projects that reflect the mission and goals of the Borg Center.
- Launch a peer-reviewed multi-media publication that addresses relevant literacy topics for teacher educators.
- Continue to initiate and foster research and service partnerships with schools and community organizations.
 - Redesign the Center's website to increase the visibility of the Center on campus and in the community.
 - Organize and/or sponsor at least one public event per year to address literacy policy issues in the state of Illinois.

PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Review Outcome: The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the Mary and Jean Borg Center for Reading and Literacy to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee thanks the Mary and Jean Borg Center for Reading and Literacy ('the Borg Center') faculty and staff for a thorough, well-organized, and critical self-study report that evidences careful consideration of and reflection on center goals and targets from stakeholders and a wide variety of data sources.

The Center for Reading and Literacy was established in 2001. In 2008, Ms. Jean Borg endowed the center, which then was renamed the Mary and Jean Borg Center for Reading and Literacy in honor of Jean Borg's gift and her wish to honor her mother, Mary. The Borg Center's mission is to promote the effective use of language in the community broadly defined as Illinois State University, Bloomington/Normal, regional communities, and the state of Illinois. Two important components of the center are its literacy assessment and tutoring programs for students who struggle with reading and its professional development for educators who desire to improve their instruction. This centrality is also demonstrated by support of the center for service and research through grant submissions, policy connections, and faculty writing and research groups. The Borg Center is administratively affiliated with the College of Education and is housed within the School of Teaching and Learning within the college.

The committee commends the center on its efforts to strengthen connections to Illinois State and the wider community. We applaud the development of the Eye Movement and Miscue Analysis Lab (EMMA) and its use to support the broad range of the Borg Center's activities, including service, scholarship, and teaching opportunities. The committee recognizes the center leadership, faculty, and staff for reorganizational efforts that have resulted in recent increases in community services, use of resources, and participation in student and faculty workshops. These efforts also have helped the Borg Center to continue its strong partnership with *America Reads*, a program that provides professional learning in literacy education to Illinois State students who serve as tutors in local schools and community organizations. The committee commends the center for continuing to provide professional practice opportunities in reading and literacy for pre-service teachers at the University and opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to collaborate with faculty on reading and literacy research. The committee also commends Borg Center faculty and staff not only for their local community engagement, but also for their efforts to impact the broader community through their activities to inform state policy. We note their participation with Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) projects, committees, and the relationships that center faculty and staff affiliated with the center have developed with state policy makers.

The committee commends the center's faculty and staff for the actions that they have undertaken to move towards becoming fiscally sustainable. We note that the Borg Center continues to seek external funds for its ongoing reading and literacy initiatives such as tutoring, consultations with school districts, and research. The committee notes that since 2017, the center faculty and staff have submitted one internal grant proposal and four external grant proposals [Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Spencer Foundation, and Dollar General Literacy Foundation]. In addition to these external funding sources, the Borg Center also has an endowment budget that is housed in the College of Education and receives further support from the School of Teaching and Learning (in the form of summer salary, reduced teaching load, and a full-time graduate assistant). The committee commends the Borg Center's support (through reduced teaching loads) of two faculty members to launch a new project that supports the center's strategic plan.

The committee recognizes that the center faculty and staff have made strides towards reflecting the diversity of the audiences that it serves. The committee commends the Borg Center's actions to support faculty and students of color through providing diverse content in the center, reorganizing the center's physical space to be welcoming to all students and faculty, and developing projects that both support underserved K-12 student populations and provide opportunities for Illinois State students to work with these students. We also note that this inclusivity and accessibility extends to the Borg Center's community engagement activities, such as the professional learning that addresses issues of diversity and equity in school districts (e.g., African American Language in the Classroom).

The committee commends the center's faculty and staff for the development and use of a center assessment plan. The plan includes feedback from a broad spectrum of stakeholders (including an advisory board) regarding specific assessment targets and clear mechanisms for the use of that feedback. The committee also recognizes that center faculty and staff have conducted analyses of other Illinois centers with similar missions (i.e., Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois, Chicago) to guide the development of strategic directions for the Borg Center.

Recommendations.

The Academic Planning Committee thanks the faculty and staff of the Mary and Jean Borg Center for Reading and Literacy for the opportunity to provide input regarding the center's objectives and outcomes, contributions to student learning, and fiscal sustainability at Illinois State University through consideration of the submitted self-study report. The following committee recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle are provided in a spirit of collaboration with Borg Center faculty and staff. In the next center review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2023, the committee asks the center to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

Continue to contribute to the academic mission of the University. The committee encourages the center faculty and staff to continue to pursue new, innovative research and services to foster connections with Illinois State University through effective use of Borg Center faculty and staff experience and the involvement of students. We also recommend that the center work with the Graduate School to identify ways to increase opportunities for graduate student involvement in the center. Finally, the committee recommends that Borg Center faculty and staff continue to explore opportunities to identify and partner with other campus units on civic engagement (e.g., the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning), sustainability programming, and outreach activities.

Continue to develop and offer workshops for Illinois State faculty and students. The committee recommends that the center revisit their professional development opportunities with students, particularly graduate students, and develop additional ways to connect with students through targeted partnerships with other units on campus, including the Graduate School, to advertise their programming. We also recommend that the Borg Center consider expanding their non-tenure track faculty workshops to include doctoral students. Finally, we recommend that the center continue to assess their offerings to ensure that they are reaching diverse populations and providing inclusive settings.

Expand beyond Illinois to national programs for aspiration and comparison. The committee recognized the Borg Center's analyses of similar centers within the state of Illinois and consideration of those centers' projects and processes to which the Borg Center can aspire, such as enhancing the center's community, state, and national partnerships. We recommend that the center also expand the scope of their aspirations through analyses of national comparator programs to assist in developing additional initiatives and considering new partnerships.

Continue to focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity. As indicated in the self-study report, the committee encourages the center to pursue its goals related to further developing a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment that effectively supports students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.

Continue implementing and refining the outcomes assessment plan. One of the recommendations of the prior center review was to develop and implement a center assessment plan, and the self-study report evidences success by the Borg Center in establishing such a plan. Center faculty and staff have formalized a systematic process that involves accessing data from center programs and initiatives, gathering feedback from stakeholders, and identifying annual assessment targets that assist in meeting the Borg Center's strategic goals. The committee encourages the center to use its new assessment plan to determine the progress made toward its goals during the next review cycle, to use assessment findings to modify Borg Center operations and initiatives as needed, and to identify any modifications to the plan that center faculty and staff may deem necessary.

Continue to achieve center financial self-sustainability. The committee supports renewed efforts by the Borg Center to obtain external funding for center initiatives. External grant funds will likely contribute to the development of new programs or research initiatives that add to the understanding of teaching and learning and/or have the potential to impact institutional or public policy. The committee recommends that the center continue to explore

collaborations with other initiatives in the College of Education that might involve the Borg Center serving as a sub-grantee on grant-funded projects.