

Greetings from IUPUI

November 2007

On October 15, IUPUI officially launched TRIP (Translating Research into Practice), the first of many lectures, panel discussions, and symposia to promote translational research. Translational research is a distinctive characteristic of IUPUI, rooted in practice-based education (e.g., studio art and clinical practice in medicine, nursing, and social work).

What is translational research?

1. Translational research is characterized by researchers/scholars who both generate knowledge and utilize the evidence to develop meaningful practices that address problems or issues in everyday life.
2. Translational research is characterized by knowledge generating researchers/scholars who collaborate or form partnerships with knowledge utilizers to successfully translate the researcher's evidence into meaningful practices.
3. Translational research is characterized by scholars specializing in knowledge utilization who translate evidence generated by others into practices.

As we launch the TRIP initiative, there is great interest. Already, more than 200 faculty have identified themselves as translational scholars. The October TRIP event, sponsored by the Chancellor's Circle at IUPUI, attracted more than 100 people.

The initiative is led by Professor Sandra Petronio, a translational scholar in communication and privacy issues, and supported by the IUPUI Faculty Council's Metropolitan Affairs Committee. After Sandra and I described the project and introduced the panel, we heard five fascinating accounts of how IUPUI faculty became involved in research that has had, and will continue to have, profound societal benefit.

Professor of Engineering and Technology **Ali Jafari**, founder of CyberLab, spent his childhood "automating stuff around the house." Now, he involves students working in his lab on creating collaborative web environments for e-learning. His latest invention, EPSILEN, claims the New York Times as an early investor in the professional networking software. He also developed ANGEL, one of the nation's top commercial course management systems.

Associate Professor of Liberal Arts **Elizabeth (Elee) Wood** credits Fred Rogers, host of the children's television show "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," with helping her view museums as tools for children's learning. She shares her research with curators at the Children's Museum as they make exhibits both fun and educational. A current exhibit, "The Power of Children Making a Difference," featuring the stories of Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Ryan White, is an example of her work.

Associate Professor of Medicine **Glenda Westmoreland** was 16 years old when her mother was hired as a caretaker for a woman with dementia. She saw first-hand how difficult it is to know how best to cope with falls, depression, incontinence, and other conditions which commonly diminish the quality of life for older adults. As founder of the Geriatrics Education Network of Indiana (GENI), using the latest research, she now educates physicians on how to successfully support their elderly patients.

Associate Professor of Public and Environmental Affairs **Roger Jarjoura**, founder of Aftercare for Indiana through Mentoring (AIM), identified a problem—the likelihood that juvenile offenders would eventually be returned to prison—and set out on his “12-year quest” to find interventions that work and make them models for practice. Using college students and community volunteers, he matches juveniles with mentors who help them develop and implement a plan for community re-entry, including advice and coaching on jobs, social skills, education, and money management.

Professor of Nursing **Joan Haase** is married to a 40-year survivor of Hodgkin’s disease. Early on, she admired his ability to deal positively with the deadly disease at a young age. She began to study the process of coping and to focus on interventions that increase a person’s adaptability. The result is the Adolescent Resilience Model (ARM), which is used to help teens with cancer build protective factors into their lives, whether through spirituality or music therapy, that increase their resiliency.

In the Q&A that followed, all panelists talked about the impact of translational research on teaching, noting that some things just don’t come across as well in a lecture as in a real problem-solving experience. The involvement of students in data gathering and analysis shows them how to conduct research and apply it to solutions.

So, as Professor Jarjoura said at the end of his presentation: “The quest goes on.”

Charles R. Bantz
Chancellor

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