EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ASSOCIATION

A Midwest Association of TRIO and College Access
and Success Professionals (EOA)

History of the EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse:

A model to identify, validate, and disseminate education practices

By

David Arendale, Clearinghouse House Manager and Associate Professor Emeritus, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Deltha Q. Colvin, Associate Vice President for Special Programs, Division of Academic Affairs, Wichita State University (KS)

2022

The Education Opportunity Association (EOA) and the University of Minnesota sponsor the EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse.

EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse, David R. Arendale, Manager
Department of Curriculum & Instruction, College of Education and Human Development
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Email: edpractices@eoa.org
Phone: (612) 812-0032
EOA Center Website: https://besteducationpractices.org

Recommended APA citation:
Arendale, D. R. & Colvin, D. Q. (2022). *History of the EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse: A model to identify, validate, and disseminate education*. Colleagues of Color for Social Justice. https://hdl.handle.net/11299/250107

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse is focused on the needs of Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and TRIO students who are economically disadvantaged, first-generation college attendees, and historically underrepresented in education. No other open-access clearinghouse in the nation is focused on this marginalized student population. Solutions developed for privileged students with social capital often do not meet the needs of these students. We represent the GEAR UP and TRIO community and are the first group of federally-funded programs to create their own best practices clearinghouse. Rather than relying on practices developed by others, we created an online program manual of what works with our TRIO and GEAR UP students. Our administrative and educational practices have been evaluated by an external panel of education experts rather than relying solely on data studies from the institution hosting the practice. Another difference is that the EOA Clearinghouse identifies “why a practice works” and “what are the critical components and procedures” that must to be followed to achieve similar positive results. This article explores the need for a clearinghouse, definitions for a best education practice, key people involved with the clearinghouse, the history of events in the life of the clearinghouse, and finally, lessons learned from the clearinghouse that could be helpful to others who wanted to create their own clearinghouse, and an appendix with information on processes of the clearinghouse to evaluate submissions. While programs in the field may all do essentially the same thing, they often do it differently to meet the unique needs of their students and the education setting. The EOA Clearinghouse honors that ingenuity and shares it with others.

Keywords: best practices, TRIO, GEAR UP, Educational Opportunity Association, knowledge dissemination, change management

Introduction

Words Make a Difference

It seems everyone is talking about best practices today. The business world has talked about them for decades. From the business perspective, an accepted definition of best business practice is what the businesses in the top five percent of their industry (generally defined by profitability) are doing throughout their company. Commonly, there is no discernment of which individual practices within the collection of everything the company does that makes the difference. Educators have recently used *evidence-based* and *high-impact* to describe *best practices*. But, even among these educators, there are wide differences of opinion on the definitions.

Before implementing a best education practice, we must agree on how to define them. In education, the phrase *best education practice* is used for a wide variety of activities and approaches that may or may not have been rigorously evaluated. Due to frequent use, the term is practically meaningless unless a clear definition accompanies it. A 2022 Google search for *best education practice* identified over 1.6 billion web pages. Adding the word *definition* to the previous search phrase helped slightly; Google identified 630 million web pages.

Need for Equity Program Best Practices

Equity programs encompass a wide array of comprehensive programs that increase student secondary and postsecondary education student graduation rates of these programs are funded by private foundations, secondary or postsecondary institutions, community organizations, or sponsored and funded by the federal government. Examples of equity programs funded by the federal government include Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GU or GEAR UP) and TRIO. A short history of these two programs is provided in Appendix A. This article is focused on these two federal programs and the search for best practices to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and higher outcomes for their student participants. These students are generally economically disadvantaged, historically underrepresented, and often the first in their families to attend college. As a result, GU/TRIO students commonly lack the social capital that could help them be more academically successful than privileged students from the general student population.

One of the regional GU/TRIO organizations took on responsibility for identifying, validating, and disseminating educational practices developed by the educators working in the programs. The name of this organization is the Educational Opportunity Association (EOA, https://eoa.org) and the website that contains these practices is the EOA Best Practices Clearinghouse (https://besteducationpractices.org). The history of this effort by EOA provides a model that can be replicated by other organizations to create their own best practice clearinghouse to serve their practitioners in education, business, or other areas.

EOA, along with the other regional GU/TRIO organizations, and their parent association, Council for Opportunity in Education (COE, https://coenet.org/), advocate on behalf of GU/TRIO and produce evidence of its effectiveness with students. The EOA Clearinghouse contains validated GU/TRIO best practices through an *External Expert Panel* (Appendix B) that ensures through their rigorous review process that the practices contain evidence of effectiveness. Some educators use the term *evidence-based practices* or *high-impact practices* (Hatch, Crisp, & Wesley, 2016) rather than *best education practices*. Hatch and Bohling (2016) urge caution about labels for education practices. The key is examining the practices whether there is evidence supporting their effectiveness claims and if there is specific information on how to implement the practice.

Adopting validated practices help increase student success. GU/TRIO is an incubator of effective practices to improve college access and completion for economically-disadvantaged, first-generation college attenders from their families and historically-underrepresented populations. In addition to meeting the needs of these student populations, these practices could likely be effective for the general student populations as well.

The pages of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, popular press, advocacy organizations, and the web are filled with the next breakthrough *best practice* to solve educational problems. Why is change so slow if breakthrough answers have been found? Why do we waste time and money rediscovering what has already been learned? The private foundations and the government promote *best practices*, but often are short of specifics on how to implement them. It is one thing to tell policymakers what to do with the big picture, and quite another to help educators in the classroom and student development unit implement the specifics. Higher education lacks a sophisticated knowledge dissemination system for best practices to help GU/TRIO students and others of their demographic backgrounds to persist and academically succeed.

Where is the Needed Information for Equity Programs?

Looking to the U.S. Department of Education (DoEd). The primary focus of DoEd at the postsecondary level is student financial aid administration, not identifying best practices. While DoEd collects reports annually from GU/TRIO programs and many other sources, they lack an effective system for disseminating effective practices described inside of them. Instead, the reports are secured in storage. There was one exception. In 2012, DoEd collected strategies for promising and practical strategies to increase postsecondary success, transfer, and college graduation. There was little required for effectiveness evidence for these practices to be listed on a DoEd website that was shut down a few years later. DoEd has not replicated this effort.

The federally-funded *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC, https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/WWC) is a great source of rigorously-evaluation educational practices. The challenge is that nearly all of them are at the elementary or secondary level. Postsecondary education is nearly absent from their database. Practices focused on first-generation college, economically-disadvantaged, and historically underrepresented are challenging to find.

Private foundations are not much different than DoEd in providing an effective knowledge dissemination system outside of their direct grantees. Often these agencies or foundations advocate for focused, single interventions. Systematic change is necessary to overcome systems of deprivation and oppression that have haunted education and the students since the beginning. The human behavior researcher, Michel Hersen (1981), reported how complex problems require complex solutions. Hersen's research has been replicated by many others. Simple solutions seldom can overcome complex problems. This is why a thoughtfully-selected collection of best practices are required to improve student success among the most marginalized members of our society.

Looking to the Internet. The current systems for distributing education information via the web are inadequate. With over thirty trillion web pages indexed worldwide, Google has the needed information buried in its search results. The average person only reads a few pages of the first pages of search results. Too often, educators spend more time researching their next car purchase than a new student retention program that works for the specific demographics of students attending a particular school or college. Following is a 2022 search of Google for various phrases related to student success approaches**.**

Search phrase	**Google web pages**
"historically underrepresented college students"	3.7 million
"economically disadvantaged college student"	35.2 million
"first-generation college student"	540 million
"new student orientation"	529 million
"academic bridge programs"	194 million
"high-impact education practices"	1.2 billion
"evidence-based education practices"	737 million
"best education practices"	1.6 billion
"GEAR UP Program"	878 million
"TRIO Program"	423 million

Looking to conferences and professional journals. Local and national conferences seldom provide the substantial information needed to implement and sustain an educational practice. Often, the practices are woefully oversimplified. Training and technical support are lacking. Besides, conferences have become an inefficient system for disseminating information. With brief descriptions and catchy titles of concurrent presentations, it is like playing academic roulette trying to locate the most useful session to attend among the many choices. While administrators are more likely to have discretionary time and travel funds, faculty and staff members lack both. Conferences stratify knowledge for affluent and privileged institutions and de facto deny it for the majority, the very institutions that need the information most to meet the needs of their students. Journal articles seldom provide detailed implementation information, and publications may be delayed for years.

We ask the wrong questions. Which federally-funded or private foundation sponsored initiative is better? The better question is, *what specific education practice promotes higher student outcomes?* The next and more important question is, "*how do I* *specifically implement and sustain this education practice?*" For example, an education practice could be a customized mentoring program created by a college. Most colleges have one or more mentoring programs. However, they vary greatly among institutions nationally and not surprisingly, have very different outcomes.

So far in this publication, there has been a general discussion of best practices. The use of the term has been sloppy without strong agreement. The next section of this document identifies the best practice definitions used to guide the EOA Best Practices Clearinghouse.

Definition of a “Best Education Practice”

Before we even can focus on implementing of education practices, an agreement is needed for what is a *best education practice*. In the education world, the phrase *best education practice* is used for various activities. As reported earlier in this article, the phrase occurs 1.6 billion times. Adding the word definition to the Google search only slightly reduces the number to more than 900 million web pages. Precise definitions are needed to give the words meaning. Growing consensus is displayed by the frequency that searches through Google repeatedly identify the same web page. Of the 1.6 billion web pages, the number one ranked definition of best education practice is authored by David Arendale (Arendale, 2010). For over four decades, Arendale has been a prolific author, researcher, and conference speaker on best practices to improve student success. Among his innovative programs, at two different colleges he has been recognized twice by the Noel-Levitz Student Retention Organization as creating an award-winning innovative approach to student retention. At the University of Missouri-Kansas City, he supervised the growth of the internationally-known Supplemental Instruction student retention model by managing a dissemination grant funded by DoEd. Arendale’s experiences led him to create the following definitions which guided development of the EOA Clearinghouse.

Arendale defined "*best education practice*" as the wide range of individual activities, policies, and programmatic approaches to achieving positive changes in student attitudes or academic behaviors. This umbrella term encompasses the following three specific terms differing on their level of success evidence: *promising, validated*, and *exemplary*.

- *Promising education practice*: Contains detailed information describing the practice with its theoretical basis and how to implement it. Data collection is in process, but has not yet completed rigorous evaluation.
- *Validated education practice*: A promising education practice that has undergone rigorous evaluation documenting positive student outcomes in one education setting. The evaluation design could be experimental or quasi-experimental quantitative, qualitative, or mixed design.
- *Exemplary education practice*: A validated education practice that has been successfully replicated at multiple education settings with similar positive student outcomes. A similar term used to describe this type of practice by DoEd is “scale-up” since the practice has high potential for wide successful implementation.

Whether at the *promising, validated*, or *exemplary* level, the practices should contain detailed information to implement it: (a) detailed description; (b) critical elements for implementation; (c) relevant educational theories; (d) essential resources, both personnel and budgeted; and (e) process used to gather impact data for rigorous evaluation of the practice.

Some might say, why not skip the *promising practices* until they prove themselves? Our response is to let educators decide which practices to investigate. *Promising practices* can be modified, improved, and implemented by other colleges. Besides, every validated and exemplary practice was at a promising level initially. Why wait when others can experiment with them now?

Difference between a Best Education Activity and a Best Education Program.

Within these three levels of practice above, there are different levels of complexity. Some practices are small, discrete activities or policy decisions. Other practices are programmatic approaches that include a carefully selected bundle of activities or policy decisions. The following definitions differentiate these levels.

Best education practice activities: These activities are behaviors or policies by faculty, staff, and administrators that result in positive changes in student attitudes or academic behaviors. Examples include mandatory assessment of students for proper advisement and placement of students in their classes, training student tutors before they begin their work, active learning activities within the classroom, and classroom assessment techniques to provide nongraded feedback resulting in changed student learning behaviors.

Best education practice programs: These programs are composed of a carefully coordinated collection of individual best practice activities (Appendix D). Examples of exemplary education practice programs from the area of academic support include Supplemental Instruction, Peer-led Team Learning, Emerging Scholars Program, and Structured Learning Assistance. For example, the Supplemental Instruction program is composed of many validated best education practice activities such as active learning, classroom assessment techniques, cooperative learning activities, and Universal Instructional Design, to name a few.

Best administrative practices: The criteria for an *administrative best practice* are slightly different from an *education best practice* (Appendix E). Administrative practices cannot be evaluated easily regarding their impact on student attitudes and behavior changes. For that reason, the criteria are different and no attempt is made to determine different levels of evidence for their effectiveness. An administrative practice might be used within an individual program or an entire organization. Examples include scholarship programs, professional staff training programs, and program evaluation systems.

Best Administrative Practices include a wide range of individual activities, policies, and procedures to achieve positive results that benefit a student, program, or organization. The practices should contain detailed information to implement it: (a) detailed description; (b) innovation of the practice; (c) critical elements for implementation; (d) relevant research; (e) essential resources, both personnel and budget; and (f) claims of effectiveness.

While definitions can help provide guidance, detailed procedures and standards are needed to provide actionable guidance for educators to effectively implement in their classroom, grant program, or student service activity. A review of the professional literature provides clues to general principles and specific actions to disseminate knowledge to others so that they can take action.

Literature Review of Knowledge Dissemination Systems

A review of the professional literature identifies case studies, guiding principles, and specific actions that support effective knowledge dissemination (KD). Before exploring the development of the EOA Clearinghouse, it is important to see how previous KD models influenced its development and not implementing some limited its effectiveness.

Research Studies on Effective KD Systems

Foertsch, Millar, Squire, and Gunter (1997) conducted a large study on effective ways to disseminate new educational practices to faculty members. Their findings showed effectiveness was highest when catching faculty members at the right time with the right KD approach. While this may be a common-sense conclusion, understanding how to catch the attention of the faculty was more complex. Personal contact between the faculty member and the education reformer increased the chances of using the practice. The practice must be readily accessible, convenient, and contain evidence of effectiveness. The faculty member must have a *felt need* (Peterson, & Peterson, 2008) to change and dissatisfaction with their current education choices (Lewin, 1947, 1951).

The study by Foertsch et al. (1997) employed four KD methods. First, unsolicited postal mailings of specific educational practices. Second, a website where educational practices could be requested by mail. Third, a one-hour presentation by the education practice creator with time for interaction with the faculty participants. Following that, supplemental information was mailed to the seminar attendees. Fourth, hands-on mini-courses of several hours were given by the education practice creator who distributed the supplemental information to implement the practice during this workshop.

Not surprisingly, each succeeding KD method was more effective than the previous. In the first method, if they did not have a *felt need* at the moment for this innovation, they likely discarded it. During the second KD method, the faculty member was more likely to read the information since they had requested it from the website. The third KD action of conducting a one-hour presentation brought the faculty into personal contact with the education creator so they could interact and ask questions. This led to a higher likelihood of implementing the practice. Personal interaction was stronger in the fourth KD through the hands-on workshop that lasted several hours. The faculty left the room with all the information needed to implement the practice.

Foertsch et al. (1997) identified the following ecosystem for others who planned a KD effort. First, educators must be aware of the availability of education practices and evidence for increasing student success (Examples: sending periodic messages and informal conversations with the practice creator or others using the practice). Second, educators need a personal, engaging connection with the innovator of the education practice (Examples: connect informally at a conference, listen to the innovator speak, and attend an extended workshop. Providing time for question and answer among the innovator and the participants is key. Third, educators need to be taught how to implement the practice. Some educators in the study who were highly motivated simply read about the innovation and were able to implement the practice. Depending on the complexity of the innovation, for others, a one-hour session would be sufficient or a multi-hour workshop might be required. A key for these educators is that they leave the session after a hands-on experience and possess all materials needed to implement the practice. “Effective dissemination is often a process of catching users at the right time with the right dissemination approach, one that is neither too detailed nor too abstract for the user’s current level of interest and understanding” (Foertsch, et al., 1997. p. 11).

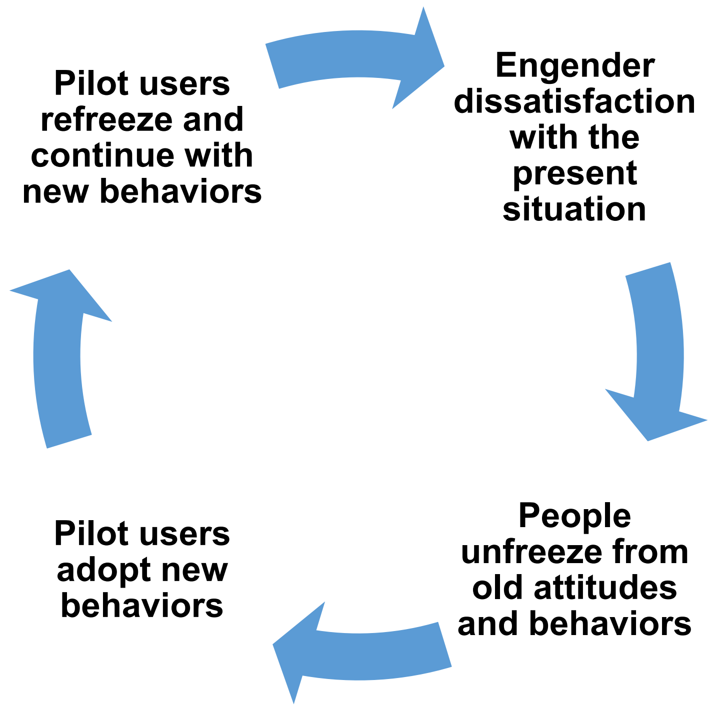
Many other research studies have been conducted on knowledge dissemination (KD). Hatch, Crisp, and Wesley (2016) explain in their study that educators were more likely to implement new practices if they had the following information about the practice: (a) purposes and goals of the practice; (b) specific activities and components; (c) when and for how long the practice should last (Example: new student bridge programs occur two weeks before beginning of the fall academic term); (d) roles and responsibilities of the educator and anyone else; (e) the learning climate needed for the education practice to thrive; and (f) expected outcomes for the students involved with the education practice.

Beck, Mahdad, Beukel, and Poetz (2019) examined through a study of teachers their motivations for sharing what they have learned with others. They use the term *captured value* to describe the motivations of these science teachers. Their study identified that the primary instinct of the teachers was to gain tenure for continued employment, high marks for their annual appraisal, and consequently receive a larger salary. The secondary desire by the teachers was social recognition. Engaging in KD was more likely if there was public recognition of sharing their knowledge with others other than publishing another article. Some teachers went beyond this personal recognition by understanding it was important to share if major problems were to be solved. The *Open Science* perspective says knowledge gained from experiences and research needs to be made publicly available so others can use it so they can produce improved practices that can be more effective. This cycle continues with each succeeding teacher making improvements. The fear of sharing with others is overcome.

The final collection of KD studies comes from the recent COVID-19 Pandemic. The findings were common across almost all of them. Zhou et al. (2022) studied how health information for surviving the pandemic was transmitted in. The quickest and most efficient means for transmission were all forms of social media. While the researchers warned of possibly inaccurate information transmitted by social media, the benefits outweighed the possible negative results. Ownership of a cell phone with WI-FI connectivity is nearly universal worldwide. More than two-thirds of all websites are visited through cell phone web browsers. Text messaging for many has replaced email.

Kurt Lewin Organizational Change Model

A classic model for organizational and personal change is provided by Kurt Lewin. Professor Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) was one of early leaders in social psychology and focused his research heavily on organizational dynamics. Lewin’s *Force Field Analysis* (1947, 1951) provides a model for understanding the forces that either foster or hinder change. He described a multi-stage process.



The first stage requires the early leaders of the innovation to help engender dissatisfaction with the present system. Lewin argued that people would not even consider change unless the status quo was demonstrated to be seriously lacking. Applying this principle to higher education, this activity might include reports about the number of students with disabilities enrolled on campus, drop-out rates for students, student satisfaction survey data, and so on.

The second stage occurs when people "unfreeze" from customary behaviors and implement new ones. Activities at this stage might include a few people at the institution experimenting with several practices as a pilot-test. Data are is collected from this pilot test, such as student survey data, changes in grade performance, and increase in utilization by students.

The next stage builds upon the pilot stage by the campus change agents, in this case senior student affairs administrators, presenting a comprehensive model for implementing UID. This stage requires not only advocacy from the administrators for change, but sustained attention and resources such as training.

The final stage, according to Lewin, is the most important and also the most challenging. "Refreezing" occurs when people have deeply adopted the new behavior and feel as comfortable with it as they were with the previous behaviors before the change model began. It requires continued support and rewards for people to continue the new behaviors. He argued that this stage is the one where well intentioned pilot programs sometimes are not continued. Applying this principle to postsecondary education, practices would include supplemental pay for additional work outside of the normal job scope or work-week, recognition of performing the new practices through the annual performance review system, and so on, etc. The new practices must not only be advocated, but ‘valued’ in a practical way from the perspective of the front- line implementers of the practice.

This comprehensive model of change requires not just advocating for the adoption of the new practices. The entire cycle of change, especially the final stage of supporting ongoing implementation, is essential for systemic and sustained change. The four stages are arranged in a circle since change within an organization or for an individual is continuous. After reaching stage four of the process, the organization or individual needs to carefully reflect on their current performance indicators, engender dissatisfaction with the status quo and engage in another round of quality improvement.

Supplemental Instruction KD Model

In the 1990s, David Arendale served as director of the National Center for Supplemental (SI) hosted at the University of Missouri-Kansas. The SI Center followed the DoEd rules regarding disseminating the SI model in the U.S. and more than 35 countries. More about the DoEd is described in an upcoming section of this article. The following were coordinated activities that the SI Center used to spread the SI model to more than 1,000 colleges in the U.S. and abroad. All SI staff positions were paid through university funds, DoEd grant, or workshop training fees.

a. Awareness information about the SI model (Examples: conference presentations, conference exhibit booths, research publications, YouTube Videos, information posted to a SI email listserv, periodic SI newsletter, and gathering contact information from attendees of conference sessions or talking with a SI staff member at the conference exhibit booth). Educators were encouraged to attend the fee-based training workshops to learn how to implement a SI program.

b. Multi-day training workshops were held in Kansas City and other locations. These events required registration fees to help support the additional staff for the SI Center to provide these and other related activities. During these three-day events, participants received training materials for the person who would manage the program and a manual for the SI student leaders of the study groups. Individual conferences were scheduled with all workshop participants so they had personal interactions with the experienced SI staff. The training workshop included a large group (limited to 30 participants) and small groups of six or seven. In addition to relationships with the SI staff, the workshops also develop relationships among participants.

c. Ongoing technical support was provided by the SI staff. They were available for personal email exchanges and telephone conversations. The SI newsletter was sent to all former workshop attendees and provided additional SI program information. Supplemental training materials were available for purchase from the SI Center.

d. To extend the training capability of the SI Center, regional Certified SI Trainers were established across the U.S. to make them more geographically accessible for training workshops they conducted. There was an intentional mix of public/private and four-year/two-year trainers since they provide contextual information for implementation.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all training workshops were shifted to online only. It was an extraordinary effort by the SI staff to move so quickly to this format. They also adapted their training curriculum to assist colleges in offering SI online rather than the traditional in-person mode. At this time, the SI Center is offering both modes of training since some institutions due to budget constraints can access the online version more easily than the costs to fly to Kansas City and stay at a hotel during the in-person workshops.

This review of the professional literature creates a context for the choices made in creating the EOA Clearinghouse. The UMKC National Center for SI was a major influence on the creation of the EOA Clearinghouse. This reliance upon the UMKC model will also lead to some of the model’s shortcomings due to a lack of staff.

A System to Identify, Validate, and Disseminate Best GU/TRIO Practices

The Old DoEd Model

A precedent for a national information dissemination program of effective educational activities existed for several decades in DoEd's *Office of Educational Research and Improvement* (OERI). Within OERI was the *Program Effectiveness Panel* (PEP). PEP reviewed educational practices submitted by educators. PEP is an external expert panel that evaluates submissions of education practices for designation as *exemplary*, *validated*, or *promising*. The regulations are intended to provide quality assurance that education practices designated by the PEP as *exemplary, validated*, or *promising* have met criteria that allow educators, professional organizations, and others to use these programs with confidence (Ralph & Dwyer, 1988).

As stated in the *Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002*, "The term *dissemination* means the communication and transfer of the results of scientifically valid research, statistics, and evaluations, in forms that are understandable, easily accessible, and usable, or adaptable for use in, the improvement of educational practice by teachers, administrators, librarians, other practitioners, researchers, parents, policymakers, and the public, through technical assistance, publications, electronic transfer, and other means. These procedures are based on previous DoEd regulations that governed review of grant applications, contracts, and also submissions to the original PEP of the *National Diffusion Network* (NDN). These regulations include Department of Education 34 Part 700 (Federal Register September 14, 1995): Department of Education 34 Part 701 (Federal Register November 17, 1997); and Department of Education 34 Part 702 (Federal Register October 27, 1998).

Through a rigorous evaluation process, some practices were *validated*. These validated practices were disseminated to education. OERI's NDN (Wikipedia, 2022b) provided grants to a small number of PEP-certified programs for national dissemination. The NDN focused mostly on curriculum and pedagogy at the elementary and secondary levels. There was no focus on first-generation and historically underrepresented students meeting eligibility guidelines for admission to GU/TRIO programs. In the 1990s, due to federal budget cuts, both PEP and NDN were eliminated.

The Supplemental Instruction (SI) Model developed at the University of Missouri-Kansas City was awarded exemplary status through PEP and then received more than a dozen years of funding by the NDN to support national dissemination of the student achievement and persistence model. SI was one of only two postsecondary programs recognized by PEP as having rigorous studies that attested to their claim statements. As mentioned in his profile later in this article, David Arendale managed the national dissemination of SI through the UMKC National SI Center. These experiences with PEP, OERI, and NDN were major influences upon Arendale's views about best practices and influenced the definitions that he crafted. The old DoEd model was influential for creating the EOA Best Practice Clearinghouse.

The New EOA Model

The EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse used the PEP model for identifying, validating, and disseminating best practices identified by GU/TRIO educators for use in GU/TRIO programs. The GU/TRIO administrative and educational practices were sorted into the *promising*, *validated*, and *exemplary* categories based on rigorous evaluation of the evidence provided by the submitter. A description of the External Expert Panel is found in Appendix B. The procedures for submitting a practice to the EOA Clearinghouse is in Appendix C (educational practice) and Appendix D (administrative practice).

"*As Is*" Practices. It became clear that some practices could not meet the minimum standards for designation as *promising*. GU/TRIO members requested a new category be added to the Clearinghouse. These shorter items were designated "*As Is*". No evaluation was made regarding evidence. The items were simply shared with readers of the annual directory of practices and visitors to the Clearinghouse website. An example of this new category of shared items occurred during the COVID-19 Pandemic. They focused on the rapid movement of GU/TRIO programs to online engagement since in-person activities were temporarily discontinued. Practices were submitted by GU/TRIO programs from across the nation and were viewed thousands of times. However, these shared items were clearly designated *As Is*. Separately, submissions were received that were approved at the *promising*, *validated*, or *exemplary* level. However, the inclusion of the *As Is* materials has generated some confusion. Even though these materials are clearly marked and an advisory note included that they have not been evaluated, some web site visitors are confused with their inclusion since the website is named the EOA Best Practices Clearinghouse. The committee that oversees the website is studying how to reorganize the website to make it explicitly clear to visitors which practices have undergone the rigorous review and which items are simply contributed by a GU/TRIO member who found that they were helpful for their programs and their students.

Multiple Channels of Information. The EOA model for disseminating administrative and educational practices involves several information channels. The first is the website of the EOA Clearinghouse (https://besteducationpractices.org). The website is hosted through SquareSpace.com and uses the Bedford template for organizing the website content. The documents are stored on the EOA Google Drive folder designated for the Clearinghouse. The website main menu divides the information into categories: Administrative and Educational Practices, Hot Topics, Shared with You, Share, EOA, and About Us. Within the first category, the practices are sorted by over a dozen topics such as Going Online with the Program, Academic Advising, Academic Support, and a dozen more. The sharing items ("*As Is*") now have their own menu tab, Shared with You. They too are divided in the same topics as the Administrative and Educational Practices menu tab.

The *Hot Topics* category was created to contain sharing items on topics of high interest to GU/TRIO professionals such as Federal Funding Priorities (socio-emotional learning and making community connections), Antiracism Resources, and more. It is hoped that these topics will spur submissions of both more *As Is* items as well as evidence-based strategies developed by members of the GU/TRIO community. The next information category is *First-Generation College Students*. As with the *Hot Topics* category, this space provides numerous resources with the hope that members of the GU/TRIO community submit evidence-based practices to the Clearinghouse. The next menu tab, *Share*, includes information on how to submit to the Clearinghouse. Any GU/TRIO educator is welcome to submit a practice whether they be a member of EOA or the nationwide community. This area on the website provides a template for submitting an education practice and an offer by the EOA Clearinghouse staff to assist the person with their submission. As stated earlier in the article, the EOA Clearinghouse serves the GU/TRIO community through practices that have been successfully used for supporting that particular student population. The next tab on the main menu bar provides a link to the main webpage of EOA. The following tab, *About Us*, provides background information about the EOA Clearinghouse staff and the external expert panel evaluates formal submissions to the EOA Clearinghouse. The final menu tab, *Take Action*, encourages the viewer to download the annual directory of best practices or to share an educational practice through the website.

Another channel for dissemination is the annual directory of practices published by EOA (Arendale, 2020a, 2020b). This document contains all previously accepted educational practices, and also the *As Is* shared items. This directory is published annually. Occasionally, individual research studies are published about educational practices accepted by the Clearinghouse (Schelske, Schelske, & Arendale, 2022). The document is posted on the EOA Clearinghouse website, uploaded to several online document depositories such as Academia.edu and ResearchGate.org, and DoEd's ERIC, and links posted through the EOA social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

Occasional conference workshops and presentations are made at state, regional, and the annual EOA conference. On-demand webinars have been conducted at the request of an institution to assist them with submitting educational practices. Several times the EOA Board has participated in one-day webinars. As a result, several submissions were received and later approved as a *Promising* or *Validated* best practice. The EOA social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) have been used to share about the availability of resources on the website and new education practices. Emails are sent to EOA members and to the wider GU/TRIO family through the national TRIO email listserv to solicit contributions of *As Is* items, submissions of education practices, and encouragement for educators to visit the Clearinghouse website. On average, 700 people visit the website each month. During a calendar year, the website receives visitors from more than 70 countries.

All people involved with the EOA Clearinghouse are unpaid volunteers. The only budget needed to run the operation is the modest annual subscription for the website and the award plaques for those awarded a *Promising, Validated*, or *Exemplary* practice. Most volunteers not only are fulltime employees with a GU/TRIO grant, they are often also leaders in the state or regional EOA organization. Involvement with the Clearinghouse is on top of these other obligations in addition to their personal lives. Long-term success of the Clearinghouse is dependent upon expanding the number of volunteers. An idea under consideration is recruiting GU/TRIO students to serve as unpaid interns with using EOA social media channels to share links with practices on the website, collecting quality information to add to the *Hot Topics* and *First-Generation College* sections of the website, and assisting authors of best practice submissions. This services could be a valuable item for addition to their resume and enhance their credentials for application to graduate school or scholarship programs.

As illustrated above, the EOA Clearinghouse is dependent upon volunteers. The long-term longevity of the operation is dependent upon annual recruitment of new volunteers. The following section identifies some of the people who have been important to the EOA Clearinghouse from the past and present.

Key Individuals Involved with the EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse

No change can occur without the support of many individuals. This is a short list of the essential educators involved with birth, encouragement, and support. The EOA Executive Boards have been warmly supportive of the Clearinghouse since its inception. It was EOA President Sidney Childs who championed the Clearinghouse proposal and gained the support of the EOA Board in 2011. More about his role is detailed in the history section that comes next. The EOA Clearinghouse advisory board was critical for providing feedback about the formation of the operation as well as ongoing operation. This board is composed of Trent Ball, Clark Chipman, Bruce Schelske, and Sharyn Schelske. In addition, the EOA Board appointed rotating members to the Clearinghouse committee to provide feedback and assist with its operation. Committee members from 2022 were Mollie Kingma and Shawn Perkins with support provided by the EOA Board through Cindy Virta. Cindy Virta previously submitted an education practice that was approved by the External Expert Panel for inclusion in the EOA Clearinghouse.

There would be no Clearinghouse if there were no administrative and educational practices. Many thanks to these educators for sharing approved practices and *As Is* content. The largest contributor of these practices was the GU/TRIO programs from Wichita State University (MO) under the leadership of Deltha Q. Colvin. Contributors also included some of the current and former EOA Board members. Appreciation is extended to the EOA Clearinghouse External Expert Panel members who carefully reviewed the submissions of best practices. (See Appendix B). They provided the credibility of a rigorous review process so that others could have confidence that the practices were worthy of consideration. Each of them possessed terminal degrees with expertise in program evaluation. The panel included in recent years Karen Agee, Deema DeSilva, Clara Fitzpatrick, Johnston Hegeman, Darrin Sorrelis, and Linda Thompson.

There were three key individuals in the birth and development of the Clearinghouse. It is somewhat awkward to talk about two of them since they are coauthors of this article. But these three are who most EOA leaders would designate as responsible for the birth and growth of the Clearinghouse. Their names have been mentioned earlier in this article and they will play prominent roles in the history section that follows. Following are biographical sketches for each of them.

Dr. David Arendale is an Associate Professor Emeritus in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UMN). His research investigates the history of college access and academic interventions supporting achievement and college completion. Arendale has published extensively on student persistence and served through frequent conference keynotes. He has served TRIO programs at UMN and other institutions in the Twin Cities areas through workshops for tutors and families on strategies for higher academic success of students. Arendale was the leader of a grant project funded by the aforementioned NDN of DoEd to disseminate Supplemental Instruction (SI) nationally and internationally. It was in this setting that he gained his expertise with the procedures of the NDN for identification, validation, and dissemination of best education practices. While at UMKC, Arendale trained faculty and staff from 400 colleges in the U.S. and abroad through technical consultations, multi-day training workshops, and other support materials to implement the SI program. At UMKC Arendale was director of the center that housed the institution’s Upward Bound and GEAR-UP programs.

Clark Chipman joined the U.S. Office of Education (then Department of Health, Education, & Welfare) in 1966 as a program officer in the new Higher Education Act enacted the previous year. In 1972 Chipman was appointed regional Senior Program Officer for TRIO programs which included funding and over-site responsibilities. During the 1970s, each state or region created their own TRIO association including the Midwest Association for Equal Opportunity Program Personnel (which would eventually be renamed EOA). Throughout his long career, Chipman has strongly advocated for best practices. After four decades, Chipman retired in 2004 from the U.S. Department of Education (DoEd) and continues his work advocating for the needs of first-generation, poor, and underrepresented children and adolescents. Throughout the history of the TRIO programs, Chipman has provided technical assistance and leadership. He was a champion of the previous efforts by DoEd for the identification, validation, and dissemination of evidence-based practices. Chipman’s work has been recognized by DoEd with many awards including the Superior Service Award for lifetime service and achievements, Council on Opportunity in Education’s prestigious Walter O. Mason Award for lifetime exemplary contributions, and other awards from EOA.

For nearly two decades before the birth of the EOA Clearinghouse, Dr. Arendale and Clark Chipman have worked together regarding promoting best practices for interventions and pedagogies to increase success for first-generation and historically underrepresented students. They developed proposals for the creation of best practice centers which were submitted to several government and private organizations. While there was an agreement with the need for a center, funding was not awarded. This influenced Arendale and Chipman’s decision to create the next best practices center that would depend nearly solely upon volunteers for its operation. While they had a concept for a center, they needed someone who could deliver the content that others would want to access. That brings us to the third essential person.

Deltha Q. Colvin is the Associate Vice President for Special Programs, Academic Affairs at Wichita State University (KS). Colvin has been involved with GU/TRIO Programs for over 45 years. Her responsibilities include Communication Upward Bound, Upward Bound Empowerment, Upward Bound Wichita Prep, Upward Bound Math-Science Center, Student Support Services, Disability Support Services, Talent Search, Talent Search South, the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program, Veterans Upward Bound, and Educational Opportunity Centers programs, and Wichita State University’s Office of Disability Services, the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) statewide grant (Kansas Kids@GEAR UP), Haysville GEAR UP, North Wichita GEAR UP and South Wichita GEAR UP Partnership Grants.

Colvin has been president of the Mid-America Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MAEOPP, later renamed EOA) and the MO-KAN-NE Chapter of MAEOPP, serving on the national, regional and chapter TRIO board of directors. During her tenure, she has chaired the regional and national conferences and served on numerous committees. As a member of the US Department of Education's national TRIO ThinkQuest (TTQ) Advisory Committee and University of Washington Training, she has assisted in the implementation of web page design competitions for TRIO participants and promoting the importance of model curriculums. Her programs have been a part of the Microsoft TRIO Partnership since 1994, receiving software to assist TRIO students in their educational pursuits. She is a national advocate, trainer and consultant in the development of proposals, program management and operations, and TRIO program reviews. Colvin has been a trainer for new directors and model programs for the Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel, SAEOPP Training Center, and Compliance Assistance Training for new directors with the Northwest Association of Special Programs (NASP). Currently she is a trainer with Sonoma State University TRIO Training Program. She served as the eighth and first female president and the secretary of the Mid-America Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MAEOPP) [the previous name of EOA], serving on the board of directors of the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations (NCEOA) representing federal regions V and VII. Deltha Q. Colvin has dedicated her professional career to working toward the success of GU/TRIO Programs with a focus on low-income and first-generation students, and students in foster care to assist students and adults in gaining equal educational opportunity.

Thus far, we have reviewed the history of developing the best practice concept. Then we profiled key individuals involved with the birth and continuation of the Clearinghouse. It is time to deeply explore the key events in the Clearinghouse's history.

Key Events in the EOA National Best Practice Clearinghouse History

The BP Clearinghouse has a long history with EOA. This history is provided to give an idea to others of the complex nature of the people and events that came together to create the Clearinghouse. Considering that the Clearinghouse is operated by all volunteers who often serve for relatively short periods. It reminds others of the need for sustained support from the sponsoring organization, in this case EOA, to ensure the continued operation and expansion for service to its members.

In 2009, EOA President-Elect Dr. Sidney Childs invited David Arendale and Greg Darneidder as keynote speakers at the fall EOA conference. Mr. Darneidder was appointed in 2009 by Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan as Senior Advisor to the Secretary on the Secretary's Initiative on College Access and the Success Initiatives at the U.S. Department of Education. Darneidder's keynote talk emphasized the need for evidence-based education practices to improve outcomes for historically-underrepresented students. David Arendale's keynote talk defined best education practices and their need within TRIO and the wider education community. He stated that no external agency has validated TRIO practices through rigorous evaluation. Arendale cited DoEd's *National Diffusion Network* and the *Program Effectiveness Panel* as models to use within the GU/TRIO community to validate and disseminate best education practices. He said that TRIO could be the first group of federally-funded programs to create our own best practices clearinghouse. Rather than relying on practices developed by others, EOA could create an online program manual of what works with TRIO and GEAR UP students. Arendale ended his remarks by stating that GU/TRIO would be recognized as the national incubator and disseminator of best practices within TRIO and the larger education community if they rigorously validated its practices.

At the fall 2009 EOA conference, Clark Chipman and David Arendale lobbied the EOA leadership for creation of a clearinghouse devoted to the identification, validation, and dissemination of best practices for historically underrepresented students. Dialogue by Chipman and Arendale was begun with leaders within the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE), the parent organization for EOA, to consider creating their own national Clearinghouse for best practices from all of the regional TRIO associations. This conversation continued for several years until it was clear that COE was focusing its attention upon the *Pell Institute* (http://pellinstitute.org/) which conducts and disseminates research and policy analysis to encourage policymakers, educators, and the public to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for low-income, first-generation, and disabled college students. COE also conducts numerous conferences and webinars on best practices for GU/TRIO programs (https://coenet.org/professional-development/).

In spring of 2010, several EOA leaders along with David Arendale and Clark Chipman continued dialogue for a pilot EOA best practices center. They were about to submit a proposal to the EOA Board when the Secretary of Education's office asked for a pause. Belatedly, DoEd pursued efforts in this area and wanted to be part of the conversation. A new voice was added to the dialogue by Dr. Ed Pacchetti, Special Assistant to Greg

Darneidder. During that year, much work occurred through phone calls, email messages, and a trip by Arendale to Washington for conversations with Pacchetti and Darneidder for potential plans by DoEd to launch a sustained best practices initiative. These conversations continued for several years until it became clear that DoEd was satisfied with the online *What Works Clearinghouse* as its primary platform to highlight best practices. During this time, Arendale and others engaged in dialogues with legislative aides of several congressional members in the House and Senate on the issue of prompting legislation to develop a federally-funded best practices clearinghouse focused on the GU/TRIO student demographics mandated by DoEd regulations. A letter-writing campaign to key legislative leaders of education-related committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate also occurred. The result of all this information advocacy was for naught. It became clear that new ideas were only receptive if they fit into the immediate priority areas for the Secretary of Education and the congressional leaders. As this door shut for federal involvement, the door opened with EOA to support the best practice clearinghouse concept.

In August 2011, under the leadership of EOA President Sidney Childs, the EOA Executive Board approved the creation of the EOA Best Practices Clearinghouse and appointed David Arendale as its Project Manager. The advisory board for the Clearinghouse was composed of Clark Chipman, Bruce and Sharyn Schelske (two distinguished TRIO project directors for many decades who managed multiple programs), and a rotating position of a previous EOA president. The website was soon created for the Clearinghouse, https://besteducationpractices.org

2012 was another pivotal year for the Clearinghouse. First, in June EOA President Janet Tauer surveyed the membership of what they needed from the new EOA Clearinghouse. This critical information would help the Clearinghouse staff focus recruitment for these topics in communications sent to EOA members and posted to the national TRIO email listserv. The survey respondents represented each program category of TRIO and GEAR UP. Following are the desired topics requested by at least half of the survey respondents, arranged by their priority ranking:

1. Financial literacy curriculum and activities
2. Strategies for raising retention rates of students within the program
3. Leadership development
4. Study Skills-building workshops or courses
5. Methods of assessing students for academic advisement
6. Improved attitudes toward learning
7. Improved student confidence
8. Effective methods for tracking students after program completion
9. Career exploration activities and classes
10. Holistic assessments of students (example uses could be for program admission, academic advisement, or other program purposes)
11. Job shadowing activities
12. Career interest assessments and activities

The second set of critical activities were the conference presentations and webinars that both built awareness of the new Clearinghouse and encouraged submissions. A preconference workshop before the fall 2012 EOA conference attracted TRIO staff from seven institutions to begin writing draft submissions for the Clearinghouse. Four webinars were conducted for EOA members to learn more about the Clearinghouse and how to write a submission. These occurred through invitations sent through email to each EOA member and several were in conjunction with state or regional EOA chapters. At this point, the fledgling Clearinghouse website was attracting 150 visitors each month.

Over the years there had been discussions with Clark Chipman and David Arendale about ways to share the successes of the TRIO and GEAR UP programs. Arendale approached Ms. Deltha Q. Colvin with an idea to help. The idea was to document and share program best practices and activities considered exceptional.

This conversation led to the third major event of 2012. It occurred in November, a strategic planning meeting with Deltha Q. Colvin (director of one of the largest collections of TRIO and GEAR UP programs in the nation that was hosted at Wichita State University and former EOA President, and founder of the ELI leadership institute for future EOA leaders), Clark Chipman, David Arendale, Paula Stevens (TRIO program director and publisher of a resource newsletter for TRIO professionals), and Deema DeSilva (Student Support Services director at Wichita State University).

At first. Colvin was concerned because it would not be the kind of writing needed by the GU/TRIO staff or what the staff were used to doing. The reality was many of the staff were not trained to do the kind of writing expected. Each GU/TRIO program was requested to submit a best practice. The work of the staff would be reviewed by others to make sure it met professional writing standards.

The WSU Model for Submissions. After some thought and discussion with the staff, Colvin agreed it would be a good professional development activity and all programs would be involved. The key was getting David Arendale to agree to conduct a workshop and other meetings that would put the staff at ease and help them to realize the writing was something they could do. Colvin agreed to help directors decide what services or activities offered in their programs were exceptional. Everyone had to think through if the activity or service could be put in an explanation format that would be clearly understood by others. Colvin further agreed to review all submissions prior to submission and add any suggestions needed.

In January 2013, Arendale conducted a webinar for all the Wichita State University program staff on how to structure their submission. The webinar was divided between Arendale's overview and time for each writing team to work on draft paragraphs. Throughout the year, Arendale reviewed draft documents by each of the writing teams and offered his suggestions for improvement. Eventually, templates were developed to assist writers who were submitting educational practices (Appendix D) and administrative practices (Appendix E).

The staff were aware the submissions would be reviewed by team identified by Dr. Arendale. The drafts would be sent back and forth to the directors several times until corrections were acceptable. The staff were assured there was no pressure and encouraged to relax. The staff were told it was an opportunity to tell their story. Many of the staff had been in their positions for some time and would be able to go outside of Wichita and Kansas to share their efforts. Staff were instructed to take a serious look at what they were doing, how they were implementing the activity, who was the focus, when was the activity conducted, and where did the activities take place. These were all areas important for evaluation and would need to be evaluated in the best practice.

The process helped the programs look realistically at their recordkeeping, who was involved, and the reality of explaining the activity. Further, it helped the staff to improve all areas of program operations and activities along with strengthen other areas they believed to be best practices. The term “best practices” was assessed with the reality of what it really meant. While it may have been a best practice in their mind, others would have to be convinced. Staff had to decide did the students like the activity, did the activity help the program, was it a requirement because of the grant/Department, or what they liked. Further, what was the group targeted: adults, veterans, middle/high school, or postsecondary individuals? A series of questions were analyzed with and by the directors to help them break down the task and make them feel more comfortable with the task. A series of meetings were held after Arendale met with the group. Staff were encouraged to set a timeline to complete each area of effort and work on the task on a regular basis and if possible, involve all staff.

Colvin and Arendale regularly talked about the progress and success in completing projects. The accomplishment of the goal was important. When asked by the staff, they indicated how they felt about doing the project, they were initially nervous/reluctant about the requirement, finding the time was an issue, were not sure they had a best practice, it would allow them to assess and determine the strength of their program and share with others, some felt it seemed like a lot of time needed to be devoted to the project, and it was a good measuring stick, and satisfying to be acknowledged. All staff felt that Dr. Arendale provided quality answers to questions and gave really good suggestions on improving submissions, provided insight on how to write the articles, provided constructive feedback, was encouraging, provided clarity and gave great suggestions. The staff were not expecting to be recognized in a ceremony. However, the staff were pleased to be honored/recognized by the Mid-America Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MAEOPP, eventually renamed EOA) for their efforts.

In summer and early fall 2013, the submissions were given to the EOA Clearinghouse *External Expert Panel* (Appendix B) for review. A few submissions were returned for additional narrative to explain answers to questions by the panelists. By the end of 2013, all of the submissions from Wichita State University (KS) were approved. The writing teams were recognized at the 2013 EOA fall conference during an awards ceremony. This process of submissions, review by the external panel, and the annual awards ceremony have been repeated.

In 2013, EOA President Trent officiated at the first awards ceremony for approved education practices to the Clearinghouse at the fall EOA conference. This first class of award recipients were all from Wichita State University:

1. Educational Talent Search:
    a. *Summer Enrichment Program Curriculum*, Larry Ramos
2. Upward Bound:
    a. *Academic Advising Management System*, V. Kaye Monk-Morgan & Karen Rogers
    b. *Planning Effective College Tours*, Ashley Cervantes
    c. Podcasting Academic & Career Counseling for Post 9/11 Veterans, Lawrence Britton & Talal Agha
    d. *Structured Study Hall Days on College Campus*, Wilma Moore-Black
3. Educational Opportunity Centers:
    a. *Right Start to College Seminar for Adult Learners*, Vic Chavez
    b. *Post Assessment Evaluation Tool for EOC Programs*, Alan Dsouza
4. Disability Services:
    a. *Access College Today Program*, Grady Landrum
5. Student Support Services:
    a. *Tutoring for Students with Disabilities*, Kimberlee Cook
    b. *Tutor Training and Professional Development*, Vanessa Souriya-Mnirajd
6. Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement:
    a. *McWrite: Developing Scholarly Writing Skills Seminar*, LaWanda Holt-Fields & Shukura Bakari-Cozart

Reluctance by Others with Submitting Practices. After this initial success with the large collection of submissions by Wichita State University, the number of annual submissions became much smaller. It would take several years of individual conversations with TRIO staff members regarding their likelihood of submitting an education practice to understand this reluctance. A common theme was that many of them were uncomfortable with submitting an education practice if it also required either a plan for gathering evidence of effectiveness or had quantitative or qualitative evidence of effectiveness. Many of them shared how they did not have a background in program evaluation. For many of the TRIO programs, they outsourced research studies on effectiveness required for initial or continuing grant submissions to support their programs. They explained being comfortable with completing the detailed submissions (Appendix C and Appendix D) up until the final section devoted to an evaluation study of effectiveness. Another element that slowed submissions was that a director to whom the GU/TRIO programs reported did not make the same level of commitment and provision of time resources as afforded to the WSU programs.

While many educators were comfortable sharing about their programs, they were reluctant or unable to produce rigorous evaluation studies. The leaders of the Clearinghouse then created a new category of submissions, "*As Is*". These contributions can simply be curriculum, procedures, handbooks, and activities that the submitter validated as useful with their GU/TRIO program. When informally surveying EOA members, they were enthusiastic with these new contributions to the website. They explained being comfortable deciding themselves whether the shared item was a good fit with their program. *As Is* materials would not need to be reformatted to fit the pattern displayed in Appendix D and E. PDF or Word versions of the documents could be simply shared with the Clearinghouse for posting to the appropriate topic. Each topic in the website is separated between items that underwent the rigorous evaluation process and those items that were contributed *As Is*.

In 2014, EOA President Annette Horvat began her term of office. The website averaged 900 visitors each month. Through frequent blog postings and increased use of the EOA website, it appears high in searches of keywords. For example, of the 1.6 billion web pages identified by Google with the keyword combination of "*best*", "*education*", and "*practice*", the EOA Clearinghouse appeared number five on the list. Adding "clearinghouse" to the previous keyword combination, the EOA Clearinghouse appears in second place out of 3.3 million web pages. DoEd appeared in first place.

In the years following 2014, the Clearinghouse website averaged 750 visitors each month. A "*News*" blog was added to the website that included the latest college-readiness news, research, commentaries, and reports to dig deeper into issues relevant to the GU/TRIO community. A Twitter feed was created to convey links to the same items in the blog. These existed for several years until volunteers associated with them went on to other projects.

In the years from 2015 until 2019, the Clearinghouse faced declining submissions of best practices. The initial enthusiasm for the operation waned as professionals cycled through the EOA organization. It was difficult to gain a sufficient base of volunteers to complete all the essential tasks. It was not unusual for GU/TRIO staff to have work weeks that exceeded 45 to 50 hours. On top of their regular work responsibilities, involvement with volunteer EOA roles at the state, regional, and national levels required more time. It was important to reintroduce the website to the EOA membership since there was a constant influx of new members unfamiliar with the resource.

In 2019 and 2020, the Clearinghouse shifted emphasis to identifying practices for GU/TRIO to take their programs online as the COVID-19 Pandemic shut down schools and forced overnight for educators to move their programs to online distance learning operations. Days after the pandemic became nationwide and schools shut down, the TRIO email listserv was filled with urgent messages requesting ideas about going online. When someone posted their strategy and perhaps a print document, repetitive messages were posted to request copies of the documents. By April 2020, the Clearinghouse posted messages on the TRIO listserv requesting contributions *As Is*. Nearly fifty contributions were received within weeks. These items were categorized and posted in a special section within the Clearinghouse website that was clearly marked for online operations. Thousands of educators accessed the website during the ensuing months. Many webinars were hosted by EOA and other organizations on taking programs online. Links to those webinars were also included in this special section within the website. A special edition of the directory of practices was issued that contained these contributions (Arendale, 2020b).

In 2021, the annual best practices directory was paused since there were no submissions to the Clearinghouse. The focus was instead placed on soliciting contributions for the website that identified successful practices for online programs. During the initial period of the COVID-19 Pandemic, visitors to the Clearinghouse website exceeded 2,000 monthly since many were searching for strategies to take their programs online.

This history of the EOA Clearinghouse enjoyed a number of successes with submissions and number of educators visiting the Clearinghouse website to download documents or watch recorded webinars. However, it did not achieve all the lofty goals originally envisioned. The following section identifies lessons learned and plans for change in the upcoming years.

Lessons Learned from the EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse

1. Follow best practices of other knowledge dissemination programs.
While there is no explicit manual for creating an all-volunteer best education practices clearinghouse, there were other models that were overlooked (Beck et al., 2019; Foertsch et al., 1997; Hatch et al., 2016; and Zhou et al., 2022). Overreliance was placed on replicating efforts by DoEd and the National Center for SI with the initial design of the EOA Clearinghouse without implementing all of the practices that made them effective. While some elements were impossible due to not having full-time paid staff members or volunteers, other activities could have been routinely implemented. Some of these will be listed in upcoming lessons learned.

Best practices for knowledge dissemination followed by the EOA Clearinghouse:

a. Be sure educators had all the information needed to implement a practice (Foertsch et al., 1997; Hatch et al., 2016). This was true except for a few approved practices which were very complex.
b. Approved best practices had evidence of effectiveness (Foertsch et al., 1997). EOA Clearinghouse clearly labeled practices as *promising, validated*, or *exemplary*.
c. Accessible information through a website (Foertsch et al., 1997).
d. Catch educators at the right time with the right knowledge dissemination method (Foertsch et al., 1997). This occurred during the COVID-19 Pandemic through the posted contributions of *As Is* materials on taking GU/TRIO programs online along with recorded webinars on the same topic. Postings to the national TRIO listserv and EOA social media channels were used extensively during this period.
e. Social and public recognition of educators who shared education practices (Beck et al., 2019). Annually those that had best practices approved by the External Expert Panel were recognized at the EOA fall conference through an awards ceremony where they received a recognition plaque and appreciation by the EOA members in attendance at the event.

Best practices for knowledge dissemination were followed occasionally by the EOA Clearinghouse:

a. Social media was seldom used to communicate with GU/TRIO members (Foertsch et al., 1997; Zhou et al., 2022). An exception occurred during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Clearinghouse used the EOA social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube), EOA email to members, and the national TRIO email listserv to alert educators of approved practices and shared items available through the Clearinghouse website. However, these channels were only used occasionally due to a lack of volunteers.
    - Future action steps are detailed in the upcoming lessons learned on messaging.
b. Messaging about resources within the EOA Clearinghouse website was occasional with the GU/TRIO members (Foertsch et al., 1997; Zhou et al., 2022).
    - For more detail on future action steps see upcoming lessons learned on messaging.

Best practices for knowledge dissemination that were not followed by the EOA Clearinghouse.

a. Personal contact between the best practice creators and the GU/TRIO members that provided time for question and answer did not occur (Foertsch et al., 1997).
    - Action step is to work with authors of current and future best practices to conduct a webinar of 25 minutes focused on their practice. The author would present for ten minutes with 15 minutes for discussion. The sessions would be recorded and made available through the EOA Clearinghouse website. Longer webinars could be scheduled depending upon the complexity of the education practice. The complete description of the education practice would already be on the Clearinghouse website.
    - More encouragement could be provided for the authors to conduct concurrent sessions at their EOA chapter or the fall EOA conference.
b. An awareness presentation of the education practice with supplemental information provided afterward (Foertsch et al., 1997). Only a few approved best practice authors gave conference presentations at their state or the fall EOA conference.
    - An action step could be have to have each author to participate in a brief video where they present their practice. The video recording would be disseminated through EOA social media channels and a link posted next to their practice description on the Clearinghouse website afterward.
c. Extended hands-on training workshops were not offered for each practice (Foertsch et al., 1997). These could have occurred in conjunction with the state or fall EOA conference.
    - Am action step could have been offered through an interactive webinar with a video recording available through the website or a pre or post-conference workshop at the fall EOA conference.

Most organizations operating something similar to the EOA Clearinghouse have a national office with a director, staff members, and volunteers who are highly skilled in writing, website management, social media messaging, and research. The EOA Clearinghouse developed organically. Except for an ill-fated attempt to seek federal government creation of a best practices clearinghouse, leaders of the Clearinghouse made a strategic decision not to seek private or public grants to fund paid staff positions. The reason was that reliance upon such funding almost always leads to the center closure when the funding ends in a few years. Instead, reliance was placed upon the volunteers to complete the work. As mentioned in a later lesson learned, not enough effort was placed on recruiting the volunteers needed for the effort.

2. It takes a long time to develop.

As the EOA history identified previously, it took a long time to develop an awareness of the need for a clearinghouse and a consensus for its creation. A classic model for organizational and personal change is provided by Kurt Lewin. Professor Lewin (1890-1947) was one of the early leaders in social psychology and focused his research heavily on organizational dynamics. Lewin's *Force Field Analysis* (1947, 1951) provides a model for understanding the forces that either foster or hinder change. He described a multi-stage process. The first stage requires the early leaders of the innovation to help engender dissatisfaction with the present system. In our case with the Clearinghouse, it was constant messaging about the lack of education practices developed by GU/TRIO programs that were demonstrated to be effective for their students.

The second stage occurs when people "*unfreeze*" from customary behaviors and implement new ones. Activities at this stage included consulting the Clearinghouse website for GU/TRIO administrative and educational practices developed by colleagues at other institutions. It also includes *As Is* contributions or complete best practice submissions. The next stage builds upon the "*unfreeze*" stage by the campus change agents, in this case, senior GU/TRIO program administrators encouraging change by accessing the Clearinghouse resources and contributing to it.

Examples of this include the *Wichita State Model* led by Deltha Q. Colvin of having all program staff participate in a webinar on how to make a submission presented by David Arendale, providing time each month for program staff to work on the submission, access to Arendale to review and provide feedback about draft submissions, and the encouragement to see this as a professional development activity to enhance their confidence in themselves through external recognition of their work. An alternative to this model was attending a webinar or preconference workshop on submission preparation. These one-time activities yielded a low number of submissions. The best estimate for the low number of submissions is that without regular writing time allocated each month, the pressure of the regular work responsibilities along with volunteer work with other organizations squeezes out the time and energy to complete the writing task. This is another reason that the emphasis on submitting education practices for evaluation could have been better balanced by early recruitment of "*As Is*" practices that could be easily shared.

The final stage, according to Lewin, is the most important and also the most challenging. "*Refreezing*" occurs when people have deeply adopted the new behavior and feel as comfortable with it as they were with the previous behaviors before the change model began. It requires continued support and rewards for people to continue the new behaviors. Lewin argued that this stage is where well-intentioned pilot programs are sometimes not continued. Applying this principle to postsecondary education, practices would include supplemental pay for additional work outside of the normal job scope or work-week, recognition of performing the new practices through the annual performance review system, and so on, etc. The new practices must not only be advocated but *valued* in a practical way from the perspective of the front-line implementers of the practice.

As with Lewin's stage three described above, the Clearinghouse has not created a systemic change within EOA. This is not the fault of the EOA leadership which has made frequent messages to promote the Clearinghouse and some who made submissions. It is not the fault of the EOA members who in addition to long work weeks exceeding 45 or 50 hours plus their volunteer work in a host of community groups and organizations including EOA. Receiving a plaque at the annual award ceremony at the EOA conference is not enough to promote the work needed by most people. Is this an excuse to cancel the Clearinghouse? No, it is simply a recognition that change is hard.

We celebrate those that visit the Clearinghouse website, use the practices contained within, submit "*As Is*" resources, and are inspired to improve their programs.

3. Trust the practitioners to make wise choices.
The Clearinghouse creators did not trust that GU/TRIO members could make decisions regarding the merits of a particular administrative or education practice. A common theme from these members wanted a curated collection of "*good ideas*". They wanted a collection of ideas that others in the field of GU/TRIO have found useful. This error led to initially focusing only on practices with a rigorous evaluation study. The Clearinghouse library could have been much larger and rapid as a result. The later introduction of *As Is* practices helped to correct this error through providing administrative and educational practices that other GU/TRIO staff found effective.

4. Focus on being your best self rather than competing with others.
Attempting to create a clearinghouse that would be recognized as a peer by organizations like the Gates Foundation, Lumina, or the DoEd and in particular, the *What Works Clearinghouse* was unreasonable. It is not in the financial interest of other organizations to recognize upstart operations like our Clearinghouse. The competition for funding and prestige is too fierce to lose potential resources to a new group. Along with this error was thinking we could create a clearinghouse with the same academic rigor as the *What Works Clearinghouse*. Previously discussed in this article was the reluctance by many GU/TRIO members to consider submitting an evidence-based best practice submission since they lacked the academic preparation or the time necessary to conduct a rigorous quantitative or qualitative research study.

5. Create a Clearinghouse of validated and shared practices.
As noted in an earlier lesson learned, it was an error to wait so long before creating the "*As Is*" category of knowledge sharing. As stated earlier, many educators crave a curated collection of good ideas. The validation of this need was demonstrated during the COVID-19 Pandemic when GU/TRIO programs were forced overnight to shift to virtual distance learning operations. The posting of the *As Is* information was the most popular content accessed through the website in its short history. Inspired by this interest, later the Clearinghouse added two new categories of shared information: *Hot Topics* and *First-Generation College*. Both contain content that is currently of high interest to EOA members.

6. Spend more time helping educators to use the existing information.
Reflecting on the energy expended during conference presentations, webinars, and emails sent to EOA members, too much time was spent on encouraging best practice submissions and not enough on how EOA members could effectively use the information already available on the Clearinghouse website. The Clearinghouse staff did not understand that it was essential to reintroduce the Clearinghouse to the EOA membership each year through periodic messaging. Action steps to address this include the following:

a. Create a three to five-minute overview of each approved practice. Provides links to those through EOA social media channels.

b. Create several short videos that overview the Clearinghouse and the website. Those would be made available to the EOA chapters to play during their conference and also the Clearinghouse website.
c. Update handouts and PowerPoint presentations that could be used during the EOA chapter meetings.
d. Encourage former best practice authors to serve as ambassadors of the Clearinghouse with their EOA chapters through brief announcements at the chapter meetings, conducting an overview of the Clearinghouse as a concurrent session, and presenting on their approved education practice and encouraging session attendees to survey the Clearinghouse website and its resources.

7. Develop a strategy for periodic messages to the EOA members.
Many new members join EOA as others depart. Those who heard the message about the Clearinghouse in earlier years may have forgotten about it during the constant pressure of the job. When exposed to early messages about the Clearinghouse, they may not have an immediate *felt need* (Peterson, & Peterson, 2008). A *felt need* is a conscious recognition of the need for something they have been exposed to. While previous Clearinghouse messages may have been ignored since there was not a perceived need for a new practice by the GU/TRIO staff member, at a future date they may have a conscious need for a new practice. Action steps to address this need.

a. Send monthly messages posted to the EOA email list, national TRIO email listserv, and more. The messages could differ based on recent additions to the Clearinghouse, upcoming webinars, and more.
b. Regularly use the EOA social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) since they are often more effective in reaching people than email (Zhou et al., 2022). Other social media channels need to be experimented with.
c. Messages should be not generic, but specific examples of available practices. Rotate the messages throughout the year. Interest by staff is more likely to be triggered by the availability of specific administrative and educational practices that they now perceive a need of rather than just the promotion of the generic holdings of the website or of the directory of best practices.
d. Appendix C contains the new strategic plan for the Clearinghouse with a calendar of actions for the volunteers to act upon.

8. Invest more time in recruiting the Clearinghouse volunteers.
Not enough effort was spent in recruiting volunteers and providing encouragement for them to continue in their roles. It should be anticipated that the recruitment process will be an annual event for the Clearinghouse leaders and the EOA Executive Board. As mentioned elsewhere in this article, the creation of volunteer unpaid student interns could present a meaningful professional development opportunity as well as provide the Clearinghouse with potentially tech and social media-savvy people to help promote the Clearinghouse and create meaningful social media content. Action steps to take:

a. Recruit previously approved best practice authors to serve for a year as a volunteer.
b. Recruit TRIO graduate students to serve as a volunteer intern with a role such as use of social media channels or assist potential authors of educational practices.
c. As part of the regular messaging of the Clearinghouse, include invitations for others to serve as volunteers.

9. To start the Clearinghouse, recruit people to make a considerable investment. As described earlier in this article, the involvement of David Arendale, Clark Chipman, and Deltha Q. Colvin with her GU/TRIO staff were essential for the start-up and continued operation of the Clearinghouse. It is difficult to by objective with that statement since two of those three people are coauthors of this article. It was the leadership of Deltha Q. Colvin and her staff that was critical in fostering the submission of a dozen education practices from their institution. If not for that early infusion of WSU practices, David Arendale and Clark Chipman believe that the Clearinghouse would have closed within a few years of its birth.

10. Set realistic expectations for creating a best practice clearinghouse. This is a summary of several of the above "*lessons learned*". Understanding the limitations posed by a volunteer effort is important to reduce frustration with the new clearinghouse for not gaining recognition from other national centers that are well-funded. It is the GU/TRIO community that needs to be the focus, not other agencies or organizations. A slogan that appears on the EOA Clearinghouse is "*We are the first group of federally-funded programs to create our own best practices clearinghouse. Rather than relying on practices developed by others, we created an online program manual of what works with our TRIO and GEAR UP students*." Being a go-to resource for the GU/TRIO staff who are doing the work of meeting student needs should be the focus. That community is looking for "*good ideas*" that they can experiment with, adapt for their student population, and use to help meet student needs.

Conclusion

The EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse presents a model that other organizations could adapt for use in creating their own best practices center. Reliance upon well-intentioned efforts by those outside the work area is dangerous. The practices that they propose were generally based on the majority students at an institution who possess privilege and social capital that the marginalized do not possess. This is not the same demographic as the field of GU/TRIO: economically-disadvantaged, first-generation college attender, and historically-underrepresented in education. The solutions for these students do not solely reside among those who work in Washington, D.C. or research universities. The answers reside among those who work daily with the students. We need to empower these educators to share what they know works with their students served by GU/TRIO programs in other community agencies, school districts, and colleges. The answer lies within. We need to develop a system for effectively sharing that knowledge and wisdom with others. GU/TRIO are incubators of effective practices for not only their students, but students in any education setting. We need to harness that information to help increase the academic success of all students. That is the purpose and history of the EOA Best Practices Clearinghouse.

References

Arendale, D. R. (2010). *What is a best education practice?* Unpublished manuscript. Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Minnesota, https://doi.10.13140/RG.2.2.24683.49442

Arendale, D. R. (Ed.). (2020a). *EOA best practices clearinghouse directory 2020* (6th ed.). Educational Opportunity Association and University of Minnesota, College of Education and Human Development, Department of Curriculum and Instruction. ERIC database. (ED608811). doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.31805.82405 University of Minnesota Digital Conversancy hdl.handle.net/11299/211415 and z.umn.edu/eoabp202

Arendale, D. R. (Ed.). (2020b). *Taking GEAR UP and TRIO Online during 2020*. Educational Opportunity Association and the University of Minnesota, College of Education and Human Development, Curriculum & Instruction Department. ERIC database. (ED608845). https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.24658.17607 University of Minnesota Digital Conversancy https://hdl.handle.net/11299/217462

Beck, S., Mahdad, M., Beukel, K., & Poetz, M. (2019). The value of scientific knowledge dissemination for scientists-A value capture perspective. *Publications, 7*(3) 54. 1-23. https://doi.org/10.3390/publications7030054 https://www.mdpi.com/2304-6775/7/3/54

Department of Education. (2014). *Federal TRIO Programs website*. Author. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/

Foertsch, J., Millar, S. B., Squire, L., & Gunter, R. (1997). *Persuading professors: A study of the dissemination of educational reform in research institutions*. National Science Foundation's Directorate of Education and Human Resources, Division of Research, Evaluation, and Communication, Learning Through Evaluation, Adaptation, and Dissemination Center. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228382964_Persuading_Professors_A_Study_of_the_Dissemination_of_Educational_Reform_in_Research_Institutions

Hatch, D. K., & Bohlig, E. M. (2016). An empirical typology of the latent programmatic structure of promising practices at community colleges. *Research in Higher Education, 57*(1), 72-98. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-015-9379-6

Hatch, D. K., Crisp, G., & Wesley, K. (2016). What's in a name? The challenge and utility of defining promising and high-impact practices. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, no. 175. (pp. 9-17). Wiley Periodicals. https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20208

Hersen, M. (1981). Complex problems require complex solutions. *The Journal of Behavior Therapy, 12*(1), 15-29.

Lewin, K. (1947). Group decision and social change. In T. M. Newcomb & E. L. Hartley (Eds.), *Readings in social psychology* (pp. 459-473). Holt.

Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. Harper & Row.

McElroy, E. J., & Armesto, M. (1998). TRIO and Upward Bound: History, programs, and issues--past, present, and future. *The Journal of Negro Education, 67*(4), 373-380. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2668137 https://hdl.handle.net/11299/204509.

Ralph, J., & Dwyer, M. C. (1988). *Making the case: Evidence of program effectiveness in schools and classrooms. Criteria and guidelines for the U.S. Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel*. Office of Educational Research and

Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. ERIC database. (ED306706). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED306706.pdf

Schelske, B., Schelske, S., & Arendale, D. R. (2022). *History of the Integrated Learning Course: Creation, conflict, and survival.* Colleagues of Color for Social Justice. https://www.socialjustice.work University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy https://hdl.handle.net/11299/241236

Wikipedia. (2022a). *Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs*. Author. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaining_Early_Awareness_and_Readiness_for_Undergraduate_Programs

Wikipedia. (2022b). *National Diffusion Network*. Author. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Diffusion_Network

Zhou, W., He, L. Nie, X., Wurl, T., Piao, J., Chen, D., Gao, H., Liu, J., Tubden, K., He, M., & He, J. (2022). Accuracy and timeliness of knowledge dissemination on COVID-19 among people in rural and remote regions of China at the early stage of outbreak. *Frontiers in Public Health*. *9*:554038. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.554038 https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.554038/full

Appendix A
History of GEAR UP and TRIO Federally Funded Programs

History of TRIO

One of the priorities of the Civil Rights Movement and President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty was reducing barriers to education for historically underrepresented students. These students were defined as low-income. Later this definition grew to include students who were both low-income and the first-generation in their family to complete a college degree. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 created the *Upward Bound* (UB) Program, which focused on high school students. The following year, *Talent Search* (TS) was created through the Higher Education Act (HEA) to provide outreach services to middle and high school students. In 1968, *Student Support Services* (SSS, originally named *Special Services for Disadvantaged Students*) was created through an amendment of the HEA to serve college students. These three federally-funded programs were known collectively as "TRIO."

With reauthorization of the HEA in 1972, the current and subsequent TRIO programs were consolidated within the Office of Higher Education Programs. The original programs were expanded to provide more services to youth 6th grade through college: *Educational Opportunity Centers* (EOC, 1972), *Upward Bound Veterans Program* (UBV, 1972), *Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs* (1976), Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program (1986), and *Upward Bound Math/Science* program (1990). EOC, UBV, and McNair serve students who are not necessarily considered youth. More than 750,000 students, 6th grade through college, from disadvantaged backgrounds are currently served by nearly 2,800 programs nationally. While differences in emphasis guide TRIO program categories, these programs are committed to providing academic enrichment, tutoring, counseling, mentoring, financial training, cultural experiences, and other supports (McElroy & Armesto, 1998; USDOED, 2014).

History of GEAR UP

The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness For Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program was created in 1998 as part of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965. This discretionary grant program is designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP provides six-year or seven years grants to states and partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. GEAR UP grantees serve an entire cohort of students beginning no later than the seventh grade and follow the cohort through high school. GEAR UP funds are also used to provide college scholarships to low-income students.

> This program provides a guarantee of financial aid to low-income students who have obtained a secondary diploma or its equivalent. The program was also designed to aid students in elementary and high school to be aware of the benefits of higher education, and to reach the educational

> level necessary to attend an institute of higher education. Institutions eligible for grant money include states, partnerships between middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities, and community organizations and businesses. The grant also stipulates that at least 50% of the participants must be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, or are at or below 150% of the Federal poverty level. Each entity devises its own plan, submits the plan to the Secretary of Education, and evaluates the plan on a biennial basis. The submitted plan must describe the activities to be implemented and provide the necessary assurances that the grant money will be matched by the entity; other existing programs will not be undermined by the new plan or any of the conclusive evaluation results. Eligible entities must implement the plan so it impacts students for the first time no later than their seventh grade year, therefore many programs are initiated in middle schools and extended to the associated high school. Entities receiving grant money are given a fair amount of autonomy. Each plan is devised and implemented independent of other entities. However, each plan must include comprehensive mentoring, counseling, outreach, and supportive services, including financial aid counseling, providing information and activities regarding college admissions, achievement tests, and application procedures, and improving parental involvement. Funds can support identification of at-risk children, after school and summer tutoring, assistance in obtaining summer jobs, academic counseling, volunteer and parent involvement, providing former or current scholarship recipients as mentor or peer counselors, skills assessment, providing access to rigorous core courses that reflect challenging academic standards, personal counseling, family counseling and home visits, staff development, programs for students of limited English proficiency, and summer programs for remedial, developmental or supportive purposes. (Wikipedia, 2022a, para. 2-3).

As mandated by the legislation, GEAR UP grantees seek to increase postsecondary access and completion by promoting the following:

- Information to students and parents (e.g., appropriate information on college preparatory courses, cost of college attendance, financial assistance and different programs of study).
- Individualized academic and social support to students.
- Parent involvement in education.
- Educational excellence.
- School reform.
- Student participation in rigorous courses.

To further these objectives, GEAR UP grantees are charged with establishing strong and lasting partnerships among school districts, colleges and other entities to operate the projects.

Appendix B
External Expert Panel for EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse

External Expert Panel. Following the example from the U.S. Department of Education, the EOA *External Expert Panel* is a team of TRIO experts along with other education evaluation experts. Each has a terminal education degree (Ed.D. or Ph.D.), expertise with quantitative, qualitative, or mixed design evaluation skills, and familiarity with TRIO programs. Many of the reviewers are current or former TRIO program directors with others coming from leadership positions in other fields of education.

An individual may serve as a peer reviewer for purposes of reviewing and evaluating submissions to the Clearinghouse if the individual possesses the following qualifications:

1. Demonstrated expertise, including training and experience, in programs serving historically-underrepresented students (middle school through college);
2. In-depth knowledge of policy or practice in the field of education; or
3. In-depth knowledge of theoretical perspectives or methodological approaches in serving historically underrepresented and first-generation college students.

Limitations for service as a peer reviewer include the following criteria to ensure an unbiased review of submissions:

1. DoEds not have a conflict of interest with review of a submission;
2. Best Practices Clearinghouse staff may not serve as peer reviewers except in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Clearinghouse Manager;
3. The majority of reviewers may be persons not employed by the Clearinghouse; and
4. To the extent feasible, the Clearinghouse Manager selects peer reviewers who represent a broad range of perspectives.

Appendix C
EOA National Best Practices Clearinghouse Strategic Plan Events

Strategic Plan Principles:
1. It is an annual priority to reacquaint EOA members with the BP Clearinghouse and how to use it.
2. Increase invitations to EOA members and the wider GU/TRIO community to submit "as is" and best practice submissions.
3. Update BP Clearinghouse resource folder to promote materials that can be used at chapter meetings; listserv announcements; and national conferences such as COE, EOA, and others. https://z.umn.edu/promote
4. Encourage past BP award authors and chapter officers to promote the BP Clearinghouse using their own stories and resources available at https://z.umn.edu/promote
5. Continue to grow content on the BP website through more relevant information through the Hot Topics and First-Generation College sections.
6. Make it easy for colleagues to submit a best administrative or education practice by asking them to start by sending a one-paragraph summary to begin the process that will be supported by the BP staff, edpractices@eoa.org
7. Serve as a repository for professional development Zoom meeting recordings and other video developed by EOA committees also posted to EOA YouTube channel.
8. Ask EOA chapter presidents to promote applications by students in their chapters to be unpaid interns for important BP Clearinghouse tasks such as social media, research for BP content on Hot Topics and First-Gen college students.
9. Increase efforts for recruitment for more members of the BP committee.

<u>December</u>
1. Complete editing of the annual directory of best practices.
2. Post the revised BP directory on the EOA BP website when completed.
3. Provide BP information to BP committee to use for the quarterly EOA Board Report.
4. Make annual budget request to the EOA Board.

<u>January</u>
1. Zoom meeting of the BP committee to talk about the BP clearinghouse.
2. Provide access for BP committee to the EOA BP Google Drive file folder.
3. Place messages on email listservs to encourage others to download the BP directory. (EOA membership email, national TRIO listserv, First-Year Experience listserv, learning assistance national listserv, and others).
4. Submit BP directory to the DoEd ERIC Online Database and other online depositories to make it widely available through Internet search engines.
5. Invite best practice authors, clearinghouse advisory board, and others to present at their spring EOA chapter meeting about using the BP website.

February
1. Email EOA chapter presidents and president-elects with information they could use during spring EOA chapter conferences and through their chapter newsletter and website about the BP clearinghouse.
2. Contact the EOA Professional Development committee and offer to present a webinar on use of the BP Clearinghouse website.
3. Invite TRIO colleagues to share “as is” resources through the BP website and the annual directory. Use EOA email and the national TRIO listserv.

March
1. Prepare a quarterly report for EOA Executive Board.
2. Place messages on email listservs to encourage others to share “as is” and best practices through the BP clearinghouse. Encourage calling clearinghouse manager as a first step. Include links for the BP directory through EOA email and TRIO listserv.

April
1. Make revisions on the BP website as needed throughout the year.
2. Zoom meeting of the BP committee.
3. Renew Godaddy.com URL for BP website on April 8 each year.

May
1. Invite TRIO colleagues to share “as is” resources through the BP website and the annual directory through the EOA email service and the national TRIO listserv.

June
1. Invite past best practice recipients, clearinghouse advisory board, and others to present at fall national EOA conference to use BP website and contribute content.
2. Place messages on email listservs to encourage sharing best practices through the BP clearinghouse. Encourage them to call the clearinghouse manager as first step.

July
1. Provide BP update information for the quarterly EOA Board Report.
2. Invite TRIO colleagues to share “as is” resources through the BP website and the annual directory through the EOA email and national TRIO listserv.
3. Zoom meeting of the BP committee.

August
1. Email EOA chapter presidents and presidents-elect with information they could use during fall EOA chapter conferences and through their chapter newsletter and website.
2. Place messages on email listservs to encourage others to share “as is” and best practices. Encourage calling the clearinghouse manager as first step.

September
1. Place messages on email listservs to encourage others to share best practices through the BP clearinghouse. Encourage calling the clearinghouse manager as a first step.
2. On September 2, renew BP website through SquareSpace web hosting service.
3. Zoom meeting of the BP committee.

October

1. Prepare for EOA National Conference: revise award booklet, print award booklet, obtain plaques for BP recipients, write award ceremony speech, and other duties.
2. Provide BP update information for the quarterly EOA Board Report.
3. Make revisions on the BP website as needed.
4. Invite TRIO colleagues to share “as is” resources through the BP website and the annual directory through EOA email service and national TRIO listserv.

November

1. EOA National Conference Activities: conduct BP awards ceremony; make concurrent presentation on use of the BP website, encourage submission of “as is” resources, and provide help for submission of new practices.

Appendix D
Steps for Submission of an Education Practice

Step One: Submit a one-page overview of the education practice with the following:

1. Name of the education practice being submitted;
2. Name, position title, and contact information of the person submitting this education practice (address, telephone, and email address);
3. Indicate which category the submitter wants this education practice to be reviewed: *promising, validated*, or *exemplary*; and
4. Abstract of 350 words or less summarizing the education practice.

Submit this document through the EOA Clearinghouse website as described in Section #3 above. The EOA Clearinghouse staff evaluates this one-page document and notifies the submitter of their feedback and whether it is ready for Step Two (described below).

Step Two: Submissions approved by the EOA Clearinghouse staff during Step One previously described result in invitations to complete a full description of the education practice for review. To assist with completing the full submission, a former McNair Scholar student may be assigned by the EOA Clearinghouse to help write the document, gather data, and conduct data analysis. The education practice description has five parts:

1. Needs Addressed by this Education Practice (one-half to one page).
    a. What was the need for this education practice? What were the obstacles to increased student success that needed to be overcome?
    b. What were the objectives for this education activity?
    c. Who were the intended participants for this education practice and their demographics (examples include: ethnic, gender, level within school, rural/suburban/urban)?

2. Uniqueness of the Education Practice
While programs in the field may all do essentially the same thing, but they often do it slightly differently to meet the unique needs of students and education setting. The EOA Clearinghouse honors ingenuity and seeks to share it with others (one or two paragraphs).
    a. Explain how your education practice is different from what other programs do. For example, how common is it for other programs to do the same thing?
    b. What did you do to customize this education practice for use with your students? For example, perhaps it was being used with a different demographic population of students than the original developer. Or, it was developed for use with Student Support Services program with college students and you are using it in your Upward Bound program.
    c. If you have taken an education practice developed by someone else, give credit to the original developer. If you cannot remember the name of the developer, share where you learned about it such as a particular conference or something you read.

3. Educational Theories and Research

Effective practices are guided by the previous work of others. What inspires, leads, and guides the practice? Include references for these theories at the end of this document (one paragraph to one-half page). Look at previous approved practices for examples they cited.

a. Describe the education theories guiding this education practice?
b. What research has been published that supports the approach of your practice?

4. Description

Describe how this education practice operates (two to five pages). If items below do not apply, type “not applicable”. The basic question to answer is “*How do you do what you do?*”

a. Scope (What was the grade level of the participants?)
b. Objectives (What learning objectives desired as result of this practice?)
c. Curriculum and instructional approach (How are education activities organized?)
d. Learner activities in this education practice. (What do the students do? How do you get students to use the service?)
e. Learning materials used (Describe the materials and where you obtained them).
f. Work responsibilities of the staff involved with this activity.
g. What were the key skills or traits you were looking for when selecting staff members to work with this activity?
h. If additional professional development and training was provided to the staff for this education practice, please describe it.
i. If this education practice required supervision and coaching by staff, please describe.
j. Estimated cost per student participant.

5. Resources Needed

What are the annual financial and personnel resources needed for this education practice? (one-half to one page). Below are examples. Add others as necessary.

a. Staffing requirements (instructors, staff, and student paraprofessionals)
b. Equipment and furniture
c. Training costs
d. Materials and supplies

6. Process used to gather impact data for rigorous evaluation of the practice

Describe the evaluation plan for measuring whether the education practice meets its learning outcomes. Evidence might be surveys, interviews, focus groups, persistence rates, grades, or other assessment measures (one paragraph to one-half page).

a. For a “*promising*” practice submission, the minimum expectation is an evaluation plan is gathering data.
b. The evaluation plan and the data being gathered could be used to measure whether the previously stated learning outcomes for this practice have been attained.
c. Providing samples of surveys, interview questions, and other measurements are helpful.

For a “*promising*” category submission, the process is complete. Submit your education practice to the EOA Clearinghouse as described in Section #3 above. For “*validated*” or “*exemplary*” categories, complete the following steps.

Step Three: Describe the evaluation design (required only for a *validated* or *exemplary* category submission. Limit to one or two pages).

1. What were the measurable objectives the education practice sought to achieve? (One sentence for each objective).
2. Describe the method used to evaluate the success for achieving these objectives. Examples could include: surveys, focus groups, interviews, comparing student achievement gains with pre and posttests, examining high school or college reenrollment or completion rates. These methods might be those already listed in the grant application and the Annual Performance Report.

Step Four: Describe the evaluation results (required only for a *validated* or *exemplary* category submission. (One to several pages in length).

1. Describe evidence collected through the evaluation plan described above. Evidence might have already been collected through the Annual Performance Report and other internal reports. Why do you think this practice works for you and your students?
2. Describe how this collected evidence links this education practice with achieving objectives listed in the previous section.

For a “*validated*” category submission, the process is complete. Submit your education practice to the EOA Clearinghouse as described in Section #3 above. For the “*exemplary*” category, complete the following step.

Step Five: Describe the supplemental evaluation results from other locations that used the education practice (required only for an *exemplary* category submission. One to several pages in length). “*Exemplary*” is the most rigorous of the three best practice categories. It recognizes education practices that have collected evidence from other sites where it has been successful.

1. What is the evidence this education practice has been successful elsewhere?
2. How do these results compare with other education practices that seek to achieve the same objectives? Is this practice more effective and efficient than other ones? If the answer is yes, please describe.

For an “*exemplary*” category submission, the process is complete. Submit your education practice to the EOA Clearinghouse as described in Section #3 above.

Appendix E
Steps for Submission of a Best Administrative Practice

The criteria for an "*administrative best practice*" are slightly different from an "*education best practice*". Administrative practices cannot be evaluated easily regarding impact on student attitudes and behavior changes. For that reason, the criteria are different and no attempt is made to determine different levels of evidence for their effectiveness. An administrative practice might be used within an individual program or an entire organization. Examples include: scholarship programs, professional staff training programs, and program evaluation systems.

The steps for evaluating an *administrative practice* are similar to those for an education practice with important exceptions.

Step One: Submit a one-page overview of the administrative practice with the following:
1. Name of the education practice being submitted;
2. Name, position title, and contact information of the person submitting this education practice (address, telephone, and email address); and
3. Abstract of 350 words or less summarizing the administrative practice.

Submit this document through the EOA Clearinghouse website as described in Section #3 above. The EOA Clearinghouse staff evaluates this one-page document and notifies the submitter of their feedback and whether it is ready for Step Two (described below).

Step Two: Submissions approved by the EOA Clearinghouse staff during Step One previously described result in invitations to complete a full description of the administrative practice for review. The practice description has five parts:

1. Needs Addressed by this Administrative Practice (one-half to one page).
   a. What was the need for this practice? What were the obstacles that needed to be overcome?
   b. What were the objectives for this activity?
   c. Who were the intended participants for this practice and their demographics (examples include: ethnic, gender, level within school, rural/suburban/urban)?

2. Uniqueness of the Administrative Practice

While programs in the field may all do essentially the same thing, but they often do it slightly differently to meet the unique needs of students and education setting. The EOA Clearinghouse honors ingenuity and seeks to share it with others (one or two paragraphs).
   a. Explain how your practice is different from what other programs or organizations do. For example, how common is it for others to do the same thing?
   b. What did you do to customize this practice for use?
   c. If you have taken a practice developed by someone else, give credit to the original developer. If you cannot remember the name of the developer, share where you learned about it such as a particular conference or something you read.

3. Description

Describe how this practice operates (two to five pages). If items below do not apply, type “not applicable”. The basic question to answer is “How do you do what you do?”

a. Scope (What was the grade level of the participants?)
b. Objectives (What learning objectives desired as result of this practice?)
c. Curriculum and instructional approach (How are activities organized?)
d. Learner activities in this education practice. (What do the participants do? How do you get participants to use the service?)
e. Learning materials used (Describe the materials and where you obtained them).
f. Work responsibilities of the staff involved with this activity.
g. What were the key skills or traits you were looking for when selecting staff members to work with this activity?
h. If additional professional development and training was provided to the staff for this education practice, please describe it.
i. If this practice required supervision and coaching by staff, please describe.
j. Estimated cost per participant.

4. Resources Needed

What are the annual financial and personnel resources needed for this practice? (one-half to one page). Below are examples. Add others as necessary.

a. Staffing requirements (instructors, staff, and student paraprofessionals)
b. Equipment and furniture
c. Training costs
d. Materials and supplies

5. Achievement of Stated Benefits for this Administrative Practice

Describe the stated benefits for this administrative practice. Why do you believe the outcomes were achieved by this practice? With the wide diversity of potential submissions under this category of administrative practice, the submissions will vary. Evidence might be surveys, interviews, focus groups, cost savings, greater efficiencies, or other assessment measures (one paragraph to one-half page).