

NEW YORK, NY, November 17, 2014 /24-7PressRelease/ -- [IT'S ABOUT TIME](#) (IAT), in partnership with the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), will develop and study an innovative new model for teaching science to young people who are incarcerated in juvenile corrections facilities.

[The National Science Foundation](#) (NSF) awarded nearly \$3 million to the partners for the project, which will be led by Principal Investigator Michael P. Krezmien, Ph.D., Director of UMASS-Amherst's Center for Youth Engagement. IAT Director of Product Development, Barbara Zahm, Ph.D., and CAST Research Scientist Joanne Karger, Ed.D., J.D., are among the Co-Principal Investigators on the project.

The project, called "*Reclaiming Access to Inquiry-based Science Education (RAISE) for Incarcerated Students*," will apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to an IAT biology curriculum in order to make it more accessible, engaging, and effective for diverse learners.

Building on IAT's project-based Active Biology curriculum, the new curriculum will aim to increase mastery of science content and critical-thinking skills for students as they apply the knowledge to solve real-world problems. "*IAT is very excited to bring our many years of experience in developing and implementing innovative project-based science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curricula to this underrepresented population of young people*," says Barbara Zahm.

Principal investigator Krezmien says RAISE is "*unique because our response to this situation is to create a virtual science world that incarcerated youth can engage in. For instance, since these students cannot participate in typical laboratory experiences, we will be using technology to create virtual labs that they will be able to access with iPads and other technologies*."

This project will also develop adapted texts and assessments, digital supports and scaffolds, and teacher professional-development materials for the implementation of this high school biology curriculum. The implications of this program extend beyond the scope of juvenile corrections settings as well, because the fully developed program can be generalized to any segregated, alternative education program that serves students with disabilities, mental health problems, and/or disordered behavior.

Written by Australian Business

RAISE will address an essential need of incarcerated youth, says CAST's researcher Karger: "*These students are typically underserved by their schools and seldom re-engage in school after leaving the juvenile justice system. UDL and project-based learning can help counteract the negativity that these students often associate with traditional learning that takes place in static classrooms relying heavily on printed material.*"

"*We believe that RAISE will give us the data and experience to improve education settings for some of our most vulnerable learners*," says IAT's Barbara Zahm.

For more information on recent, NSF-funded project-based learning research read "[Can Project-Based Learning Close Gaps in Science Education?](#)"

ABOUT IAT

Founded in 1996, IT'S ABOUT TIME is the global leader in research-based Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) curricula for K-12 and college students. Modeled on the way practicing scientists, engineers and mathematicians work, the IT'S ABOUT TIME project-based STEM solutions give educators tools to create a meaningful and joyful learning environment that deepens student engagement and problem-solving skills. This year, IAT's authentic STEM solutions have empowered over 14,000 teachers and 2 million students.

ABOUT CYE

The Center for Youth Engagement (CYE), located in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, is an interdisciplinary effort dedicated to the advancement of successful school and post-school outcomes for underserved and at-risk youth. The Center is the lead agency on the RAISE project. Go [tohttp://www.umass.edu/education/research/centers/center-for-youth-engagement](http://www.umass.edu/education/research/centers/center-for-youth-engagement) for more information.

ABOUT CAST

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The Center for Applied Special Technology is an education nonprofit research and development organization that works to improve learning for all through Universal Design for Learning, a framework for developing accessible and effective curriculum. CAST--Until Learning Has No Limits . Go to <http://www.cast.org> for more information.

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