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## NEWS

### Continuing to make an impact

**By Jennifer Bacchus**  
**News staff writer**  
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Eight years ago, Dr. Nouredine Zettili of Jacksonville State University's Department of Physical and Earth Sciences realized a dream – a way to ensure high school teachers throughout the state of Alabama had the necessary tools to teach their students physics. The project, Strengthening Physics in Secondary Education, was a success, but the teachers wanted more and asked for help in chemistry as well.

Improving Physics and Chemistry Teaching in Secondary Education is now in its seventh year serving high school teachers and this year's class of 23 teacher-students includes two from Georgia, three pre-service teachers and one from a community college.

It's the fourth time Leslie Wright, who teaches at Munford High School, has been through the program and each year she learns something new and interesting she can pass on to her students.

"The more confident I become, the more confident my students become," said Wright.

For Rick Brown, who teaches at Woodland High School, the funding he gets through the program is crucial to his success in the classroom. Brown taught for 30 years in Georgia before retiring and moving to the Woodland school system.

"One of the differences between Georgia and Alabama schools are the way they fund their classes. They give a science teacher the same amount of money as a social studies teacher. And we're expected to do labs with that and it's impossible. So, this program is a God-send," said Brown.

Hilarie Howard appreciates the funding she gets through the program to outfit her science lab at Jacksonville High School, but finds the interaction she gets through



**Dr. Nouredine Zettili demonstrates the shocking nature of a Tesla coil for the teachers at IMPACTSEED. The physics and chemistry course for teachers is in its seventh year. Photo: Anita Kilgore.**

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IMPACTSEED with other teachers to be invaluable.

“Getting the equipment is wonderful. It adds to what you can do in your classroom. But, it’s also good to be around other teachers and benefit from their experience,” said Howard.

Robin Spoon has been coming to IMPACTSEED for six years and has really enjoyed all the ideas she gets from Zettili and the other instructors. As the class of teachers watches a demonstration on magnetic force, Zettili shows them simple experiments ranging from very inexpensive to very expensive they can show their students.

“It gives you all kinds of ideas of different ways to present concepts to the students to where they can actually see it as opposed to you just talking,” said Spoon, adding that the demonstrations Zettili showed the teachers on how to make the magnetic field lines visible for the students has been particularly beneficial to her classes.

Zettili tells his teacher-students to never underestimate the benefits of hands-on experiments to students.

“When you tell me, I’ll forget. When you show me, especially if you let me do it, I’ll remember it for life,” he told them.

It’s that information retention that got Zettili interested in holding IMPACTSEED. He had noticed for years how little physics knowledge his college-level students had and knew the only way to change the level of knowledge his students had was to change what they learned and what they retained at the high school level.

It’s working. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education has funded the program for eight years, including the year of SPINSEED, and Nancy Lacey of ACHE’s office of institutional effectiveness and planning called it “one of the best programs we have.”

“Dr. Zettili and IMPACTSEED are filling a void that is just critical with chemistry and physics,” said Lacey.

### **About Jennifer Bacchus**

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