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ABSTRACT

Initiated in the fall of 1965 in an effort to raise the reading and language levels of skill-deficient students in grades two through six, the Hartford, Connecticut, Intensive Reading Instructional Team (IRIT) program has proven its effectiveness, and has been expanded through Title I funding. Each year, three groups of 45 students are selected to participate'in the program and are assigned to one of seven teams. The students are further divided into groups of 15 and are rotated through each of three instructional areas: reading, vocabulary comprehension development, and decoding. The children receive IRIT instruction in the morning and return to their regular classrooms in the afternoon. An extensive evaluation of the expanded program showed significant reading gains for all teams involved in the program, except one. At least 75% of the children reported reading more than eight books during their participation in the program, and at least 75% could write sentences at or above their independent level at the end of the program. Student, parent, and referring teacher ratings generally indicated that the children enjoyed their IRIT experiences and that their attitudes toward reading as well as their skill levels had improved. (FL)

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LANGUAGE ARTS REMEDIATION: THE INTENSIVE READING INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM



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REPORT 81-10

ARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

249 HIGH STREET - HARTFORD - CONNECTICUT 06103

LANGUAGE ARTS REMEDIATION: THE INTENSIVE READING INSTRUCTIONAL TEAMS REPORT 81-10

Evaluation, Research, & Testing Office Hartford Public Schools 249 High Street Hartford, Connecticut 06103

July 1981 ·

HARSFORD'S INTENSIVE READING INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM PROGRAM: AN EVALUATION REPORT - 1980-1981 Compensatory Program Evaluation -

Description

Initiated in the fall of 1965 as a program which was designed to raise the reading and language levels of skill-deficient intermediate-grade pupils, Hartford's Intensive Reading Instructional Team (IRIT) program is an exemplor of teamed efforts in action. Each year, three groups of 45 students are selected to participate in one of the three cycles, operated by each team. These students are further divided into smaller classes of about 15 pupils each. Each day, for approximately 10 weeks, these youngsters rotate from teacher to teacher so as to receive daily instruction in individualized reading, vocabulary and comprehension, and in the core skill area of decoding. Since the younsters attend an IRIT, which they affectionately call "The Reading School," for about three hours each morning, they receive about 150 hours of intensive instruction per cycle. In the afternoons youngsters return to their sending school for instruction in other subject areas. IRIT teachers work with the student during the entire morning

and spend their afternoons preparing lessons and updating records, developing new instructional materials which are based on student needs, meeting with teachers and parents from the sending school, participating in professional development and training sessions, and providing in-service training to other classroom teachers. It was reported that afternoons were also used to coordinate IRIT services with classroom instruction.

Program Accomplishments

Several accomplishments were reported. The newly formed Hooker team reported that the Hartford Design and the Ginn Study Skills materials together with regular homework assignments, weekly compositions, and opportunities for students to use machines and games for skill reeinforcement were incorporated in the two cycles run during the year. It was reported that team members met

with each sending teacher on two formal occasions as well as in informal conferences, that a pass system was developed to allow students to return for after-school activities, and that the personalized pick-up and classroom return of youngsters by team members provided continual opportunities for communication with the classroom teacher. It was also reported that the team stressed vocabulary expansion and specific comprehension skills, that basals were employed to counter pressures placed on classroom teachers to move students along in reading levels, and that book clubs were used by 28 IRIT and 4 non-IRIT students. Purchased books, a visit from librarian and story teller Gertrude Blanks, and the development of helpful pamphlets for parents which included "Ten Suggestions to Help Your Child Read Better," "Discipline Tips for Parents," and "How to Confer Successfully with Your Child's Teacher" were also cited.

At the Kinsella IRIT, it was reported that small group instruction, organizing independent time to develop good work habits, and the use of educational incentives such as the use of audio-visual equipment when certain goals were met, certificates of achievement, progress charts, and books and stickers as prizes, produced positive changes in attitudes towards reading progress. Homework was closely monitored while perfect attendance and outstanding behavior were encouraged. The participation of youngsters in a book club, a book describing center activities, and the closing cycle program which was held for parents, students, teachers, and Board of Education members were also cited.

The Martin Luther King team reported communications with parents stopping in to meet teachers before the open house, phone contacts to assist parents and given them additional information. ITIT teachers attending the school's open house to contact parents, tie-ins between school and IRIT conferences, and visits to the Albany Avenue Library to become familiar with the branch and take out a library card as being effective. Newspapers and reading during holiday seasons were used to help youngsters perform before a group and develop good listening skills while pictures of the

students were taken and presented at the closing exercises. At Wish, successful parental communications using an IRIT Newsletter and weekly newspapers were reported. Visitors at three open houses and at the closing exercises included 16 parents, 4 guests, 42 teachers, and 9 administrators. Wish served as the 3 month training center for the three new IRIT teams which were established during the 1980-81 school year and also provided a workshop for the bilingual IRIT. It was reported that the team leader helped to extend the IRIT program to Concord, New Hampshire as part of Hartford's Dissemination Diffusion project.

The Clark team reported that although most of the parents worked, 35 parents and 11 others visited the center during the . three cycles. Monthly newspapers containing children's work and activities which were developed for each child, cyclic open houses for parents and teachers, and other activities. The use of motivational prizes to include books and tennis balls, and the participation of the IRIT on a Channel 30 news special on Title I . programs, and visits by 88 individuals were also cited as salutary activities.

The Kinsella Annex team noted library visits, a visit by Mrs. Blanks, a newspaper written by the children, group booklets made by teachers, the closing exercises with stories and poems, and the ability to control teaching practices and not get so involved with school problems since the center was not a part of a large school as features which contributed to program success.

No specific accomplishments were cited by the SAND team. Problem Areas

Of the seven IRIT teams, only the Kinsella Annex team reported problems or concerns. The team noted that it was difficult to get qualified substitutes. Evaluation

The evaluation was designed to provide answers to two questions.

1. Were services provided in accord with the funding

proposal?

2. To what extent were the project objectives met? Question 1: Were services provided in accord with the funding

proposal?

In general, it appeared that IRIT services were provided in accord with the funding proposal. While a review of pre test MAT scores showed that a number of students had tested slightly above the 23% and particularly when these students had been tested at the end of second grade, the project director reported that all youngsters who had tested above the 23% ie had needs substantiated by other objective test data or through the use of an individual reading assessment which was administered before or upon admittance to the program. These data were not reviewed by the evaluator.

Question 2: To what extent were the project objectives met?

The funded proposal contained three objectives:

- V. "Students will on the average make educationally significant gains of at least 7 NCE points in reading."
- 2. "75% of the students will read at least 8 books during the cycle."
- 3. "75% of the students will write simple sentences at their independent level."

Objective 1: "Student's will on the average make educationally significant gains of at least. 7 NCE points in reading."

The objective was assessed in several ways. To look at short term cyclic gains, pre to post cycle California Achievement Test (CAT) standard scores were analyzed by team, program, and by grade using a t-test of related measures at the .05 level of significance. This statistical test was used to determine whether 10-week mean cycle gains were in all probability real ones in 95 out of 100 cases. The analysis of mean pre to post cycle reading standard scores is reported by team and for the total program in Table 1, and by grade in Table 2. Note that gains which reached the .01 significance level were in all probability real in 99, rather than 95 cases out of 100.

Table 1

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Analysis of Mean Pre to Post Cycle Reading Standard Score Changes by Team, School Year 1980 - 1981

Team	N	Subtest	Pre Te SS [,] ;	st SD	Post To SS	est SD	Dif	. t	Sig
Clark	123 125 126	Vocab Comp Total	331.2 340.9 320.1	33.6 42.1 36.6	353.6 369.3 351.1	57.1 59.4	- <u>22.4</u> 28.4 31.0	-10-6 6.2 . 6.9	.01 .01 .01
King	129 128 129	Vocab Comp Total	335.0 352.9 328.4	31.7 39.2 44.5	371.8 400.7 368.8	41.0 49.1 45.7	36.8 47.8 40.4	13.6* 1040 18.7	.01 .01 .01
Wish	129 129 129	Vocab Comp Total	373.6 ^{**} 469.1 140.7	190.7 270.9 130.5	437.1 499.7 162.9	228.5 249.6 157.6	63.5 530.6 22.2	2.6 .9 4.3	.01 NS .01
Kinsella	129 129 129	Vocab Comp Total	326.9 ³ 326.3 311.8	35.6 60'.8 46.2	350.8 368.8 345.2	42.2 61.9 52.1	23.9 42.5 33.4	10.0 10.4 13.8	.01 .01 .01
Kinsella Annex	43	Total	366.1	42.0	384.6	0.1	18.5	5.1	`. _. 01
SAND	81 81 81	. Vocab/ Comp Total	335.4 341.3 324.5	37.8 43.5 40.4	356.9 370.7 350.1	42.6 74.0 57.2	21-5 29.4 25.6	6.2 4.4 5.7	.01 .01 .01
Hooker	· 83	Total	326.9	_46.6	372.0	49.8	45.1	13.4	.01
Total	681 683 811	Vocab Comp Total	341.6 369.4 298.5	90.4 135.7 • 95.4	374.3 405.4 329.7	109.7 130.2 107.0	32.7 36.0 31.2	6.7 ^5.4 21.7	.01 .01 .01

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Table 2

Analysis of Mean Pre to Post Cycle Reading Standard Score Changes by Grade, School Year 1980 - 1981

			•. •						
Grade	N	Subtest	Pre SS	Test SD ·	Post SS	Test SD	Dif	t,,	Sig
2	42	Vocab	305.1	26.0	330.9	23.7	25.8	7.0	.01
	42	Comp	312.9	31.2	336.5	33.9	•23.6	4.2	:01
	43	Total	289.3	33.5	317.8	27.6	28.5	6.6	.01
· 3	248	Vocab	328.2	90.8	352.6	91.5	24.4	3.5	.01
	250	Comp	338.1	125.7	375.6	119.5	37.5	3.9	.01
	285	Total	280.1	83.7	311.0	98.9	35.9	11.4	.01
, 4, -	245	Vocab	351	100.8	358.2	100.1	7.1	3.4	.01
	244	Comp	376.7	125.3	424.2	126.1	47.5	5.0	.01
	280	Total	304.1	'92.9	337.7	106.5	33.6	16.7	.01
.5	103	Vocab	367.6	66.1	412.9	119:8	· 45.3	3.8	.01
	103	-Comp	438.4	155.3	439.7	139.7	1.3	.0	NS
	142	Total	326.6	107.4	357.9	115.5	31.3	8.3	.01
6 ,	39 39 55	Vocab Comp Total	339.0 414.2 296.2	99.1 177.8 140.1	435.1 476.5 319.9	209.7 168.0 y146.3	91.1 62.3 23.7	2.4 1.4 3.7	.05 NS .01

While all gains, with the exception of the Wish youngsters on the Reading Comprehension subtest, made highly significant gains thus exceeding the 95% criterion level, there were some problems with the data. Although Wish scores seemed reasonable ones, standard deviations were somewhat high and were not in keeping with the other scores reported. Further, since these scores were also reflected in program and in grade level totals, these could also be at variance. Since data were miscoded, and despite the fact that the problems were probably corrected in the computer run, the pre to post Wish cycle data and data for the cited totals should be read with some degree of caution. Note also that only total scores were reported by Kinsella

Despite the fact that all gains except one were highly significant, scores were also analyzed by team and by grade. These grade level analyse produced fifth and sixth grade gain patterns

which were slightly lower. Fifth and sixth grade pre to post cycle comprehension gains were non-significant, while the sixth grade vocabulary score reached only the stated significance level (.05). Again, miscoding which may also have produced some of the higher standard deviations which were reported, and missing subtest scores may have been reflected in the various totals. For all teams, and with the possible exception of Wish, the objective appeared to have been attained and the standard bettered.

Because pre to post cycle CAT gains represent short term changes, an assessment of longer term gains was in order. To determine whether gain's were greater than might ordinarily be expected without the addition of the supplementary IRIT services, and to meet the requirements inherent in the Title I reporting plan, city-wide spring to spring Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT), standard score changes were examined. Since the 1980 testing had used the 1970 edition of the MAT, and the 1981 testin used the newer 1978 edition, a test of related measures could not Instead, the mean standard scores were be applied to the data. converted to percentiles using the publisher's norm tables on the assumption that if the supplementary services had an effect upon pupil growth, then the relative percentile placement position would improve. In addition, percentiles were also converted to Normal Curve Equivalents (NCE). NCEs, like standard scores, represent an equal distribution of scores which are equated to points on the percentile scale. Unlike percentiles, NCE's can be aggregated so as to show an overall gain. In Table 3, the MAT spring 1980 and spring 1981 standard scores have been converted to 1978 standard scores and are reported by grade.

The same table contains an analysis of percentiles and NCE changes and in comparison with the 7 NCE project standard. Note that while provisions have been made to collect current city-wide testing make-up data, again the absence of pre test data and of matched data resulted in an analysis of about 29% of the youngsters who had been served.

	An Re	alysis ading {	of Beg Scores J	inning by Gra	to End of de, Spring	Year 1980	Mean Sta - Spring	ndard 1981 / 🔆	
Grade	N	SS*	Pre Test %ile	E NCE	Post SS	Test %ile	NCE	Diffe %ile	rence NCE
3,4	9 111 127	495 510. 568	2 1 2 [:]	•6.7 1.0 6.7	601.6 599.0 603.4	20 8 3 4	32.5 20.4 13.1	18 7 • 2	25.8 19.4 6.4
Weighte Total	d 247	e				•	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		13.0

Table 3

Converted to MAT '.78 scale. `

Data in Table 3 provided mixed reviews to the project. In terms of good news, the weighted NCE gain of 13.0 far exceeded the 7 NCE standard which had been established by the project and indicated that educationally significant gains had been made. . Since the examined represented a limited segment of the population, whether funding could be generalized to the entire program was not determined. A minimal number of matched scores and the fact that 54 scores had to be deleted because of improper coding further added to the problem. While the problem of test attrition is being addressed by the district testing office, the absence of MAT scores must also be addressed by the project as a whole. Recommendations to correct this problem will be made in a section of the narrative which follows.

Objective 2: "75% of the students will read at least 8 books during the cycle."

Each of the IRIT cycles stressed the reading of books obtained at home, from the classroom, and from the library for value and for enjoyment. Charts and other motivational devices were used to stimulate this reading and here the number of books read was graphically recorded with accomplishments rewarded by the team: To assess the objective, numbers of books read were recorded on data coding sheets with means and distributions calculated by

team. Here number of books read ranged from 1 for three individuals to a recorded high of 120 for two. Means and ranges are reported by team in Table 4 which follows. Note that since inaccurate coding and less precise keypunching may have affected the accuracy of the presentation, five of the team statistics were redone by hand.

Table 4

Numbers of Books Read by Team, School Year 1980-1981

Team	N	Mean	•	C	Range ·
Clark A	, 132	14.6		.~	3 - 27
King .	133	.9.3			3 - 21
Wish	· · · 133	18. 0		0	1 - 42
Kinsella	. 85	14.1			4 - 37
Kinsella Annex	• . 133, .	10.6		,	4 - 32
SAND	• . 87	.17.0	•	٠	3 _ 207
Hooker .	. 1. 87	· 15.8	•	ł	1 - 35
Total ·	, 790	14.2	-	•	1 - 207

Despite the problems which were encountered while reanalyzing numbers of books read data, when the distributions of books read were compared with the 75% criterion, only 90 youngsters, or about 11% of the total for which scores were available had not read at least 8 books during their cycle. When figures were further examined by team, at King 39 youngsters, or about 29% of the team's enrollment had read less than 8 books. For each of the teams with the exception of King, and for the program as a whole, the objective had been met.

<u>Objective 3</u>: "75% of the students will write simple sentences at their independent level."

Teachers were asked to rate student written simple sentences at the end of each cycle h as being "at", "below", or "above" their independent level. Ratings were coded by teachers and these were aggregated and converted to percentages by team and for the program as a whole. While some miscoding and miskeypunching

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resulted in "othen" category ratings which could not be ascertained, each of the teams and the program as a whole could demonstrate that at least 75% of the youngsters had written simple sentences at the independent level as judged by their team teachers. The objective was attained.

^{*}Table 5

Rated Student Ability to Write Simple Sentences by Team, School Year 1980-1981

Team	N	Above N	Level	, At N	Level Z	Below N	Level	Ot: N	her ~ %
Clark	130	17 ·	- 13	.80.	.62	· ´31	24	2	• 1 [′]
King	132	10	8	115	• 87 [.]	7.	5	-	. –
Wish	128	`74	58	32	25	2,2	17	. '	•
Kinsella	128	17	13	85	67	26	20		
Kinsella		1		•	•	•			
Annex	45	. 0	3	42	94	2	4	-1	[.] 2
SAND	.83	^ 9	<u>i</u> 11	· 57	- 69	16	19	1	1
Hooker	· + 87	ļ1	13	70	. 80	. 6	. 6	•	~
Total	823	150	- 18	550	67	129	15	÷ 4 ¹	-

···· . .

Because the IRIT teams have been concerned about their various clienteles, each team attempted to obtain parent, teacher, and student reactions to the program through the use of questionnaires. Questionnaires were distributed toward the end of each cycle, tallied at the team level, and submitted to the reading department for transmission to the evaluation office. While the actual count of forms distributed were not reported, numbers of student and parent responses were far less than the numbers reported last year. Representativeness could not be determined. From the 856 students who had received IRIT services, 115 student and 253 parent questionnaires were tallied. These figures represent about 13 and 30 percent of the enrollment, respectively.

The parent questionnaire was in the form of a letter and was sent home to IRIT parents at the end of each cycle. In the questionnaire, parents were asked how the program had benefited

their child. Responses were tallied by percentage with the number responding to each question shown under N Note that while responses were very positive, numbers were somewhat less than those reported last year (253 vs. 385).

Table 6 🔍

Analysis of Parent End of Cycle Questionnaire Responses, by Number and Percentage, School Year 1980-1981

				Som		Neve	er
Question	N _	N N	%	N .	~	N	- %
How much did your child enjoy IRIT?	253	203	80	, _ 36.	14	. 4	`2
Has your child's atti- tude toward reading changed?	251	151	60	90	36	lÒ	4
Has the reading program affected your child's attitude toward school in general?	245	· . 112	46	64、	26	69	28
Do you feel your child's reading has improved since attending IRIT?	258	170	66	83	32	5.	2
Since attending IRIT, does your child find reading more enjoyable?	252	190	75	• 56	22	• 6	2

Student reactions to the IRIT program were also assessed through the use of IRIT student evaluation forms. Both forms had been used by the program in previous years and apparently the second form was distributed at the end of the cycles by one center. Responses from 79 students were tallied and converted to percentages from one form and are shown in the following table while 36 responses from a second form are shown in Table 8. Once again, response patterns were generally salutary and in support of the program.

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		•		Table	7				
-	Ana	alysis of Studen	nt End- Schoo	of-Cycle 1 Year 1	Quest 980-19	ions 81	and . Per	centage	S,
		Question		· ·	N	· Ye N	es %	N NC	~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
-	Did to ·	you like going class?	from c	lass ` • 1	13	103	91.	14	· . 12
•	Did tea	you like havin chérs?	g three	1	15	.111	97	<u> </u>	
, ,	Has rea	IRIT helped yo ding?	u,in'´	· : 1	17, '	117	100	0 /	s
• •	ls the	your family hap work you did a	py with t IRIT?	_ 1	17	117	100	0	
*,	Do j rea	you want to go ding school aga	to a in?	- 1	05,	97	92.	20'	19
•	,			. Table	8 ` ·		<i>.</i>		. /
•	1.	Are you a boy	or a gi	.rl?	Boys	17	, ,	Girls	s - 1
•	2.	-		2			•		
		What grade are 3rd 2	4th 4+	· · ·	147 24 24 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 1	5th 19	•		6t] 11
•		What grade are 3rd 2	4th 4-	ry Much	Some	5th 19 Not	at all	Don't	6tl 11 Know
•	3.	What grade are 3rd 2 How much did y like changing classes?	you in 4th 4 · <u>Ve</u> ou	ery Much	Some 21.6	5th 19 Not	at all 3.1	Don't	6t1 11 Knov
	.4.	What grade are 3rd 2 How much did y like changing classes? How much did y like having th teachers?	you in 4th 4 · <u>Ve</u> ou ree	67.6	Some 21.6 30.6	5th 19 Not 8	.1	<u>Don't</u> , 2.	6t1 11 Knov
	3. 4. 5.	What grade are 3rd 2 How much did y like changing classes? How much did y like having th teachers? How much do yo feel reading s has helped you	you in 4th 4 · <u>Ve</u> ou ree u chool	67.6 58.3	Some 21.6 30.6	5th 19 Not 8	.1	<u>Don't</u> , 2.	6t1 11 Knov 7
	3 . 4 .	What grade are 3rd 2 How much did y like changing classes? How much did y like having th teachers? How much do yo feel reading s has helped you reading?	you in 4th 4 . <u>Ve</u> ou .ree u chool	ery Much 67.6 58.3 83.3	Some 21.6 30.6 16.7	5th 19 Not 11	at all 3.1 1	<u>Don't</u> , 2	6t1 11 Knov
	3 . 4 . 5 .	What grade are 3rd 2 How much did y like changing classes? How much did y like having th teachers? How much do yo feel reading s has helped you reading? How hard was t work in readin school for you	you in 4th 4 ve ou ve chool r e he g	ery Much 67.6 58.3 83.3 11.4	Some 21.6 30.6 16.7	5th 19 Not	at all 1 1	<u>Don't</u> , 2. 	6t1 11 Knov 7

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	· ·	Very Much	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	Don't Know
7.	How happy are your parents with the work you did in this school?	77 . -2	11.4	···· 5.7	5.7
8.	Would you want to go to reading school again?	66.7	19.4	13.9 、	
9.	Are there some things about reading school you did not like?	48.6	51.4	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	` ` ``
10.	Are there some things about reading school you liked very much?	84.8	. 6.1	9.1	• \ ^{\$\circ} .
11.	Do you think it is a good idea for boys and girls to go to the reading	.			•
	school if they need help in reading?	97.0		3.0	

Response patterns and the highly favorable comments were comparable to those reported in previous years (1978-79, 1979-80) where students generally reported program satisfaction and enjoyment.

Classroom teachers who sent students to the IRIT teachers were also asked to react to the program services on an IRITdeveloped Teacher Evaluation Form. 64 teacher forms were tallied with responses representing 372 IRIT-served children. Note that since some teachers did not rate the question dealing with an improvement in student attitude, the overall percentages will not add up to 100. While not immediately noticeable from the data, numbers of teachers attending an IRIT open house increased by about 13%, while those who were able to visit at other times increased by 9% over the previous year. Open-ended comments and suggestions were not tallied but were reported to the department, per se. About one-third of the teachers provided suggestions.

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• Table 9	
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Analysis of Teacher End of Cycle Responses by Number and Percentage, School Year 1980-1981

Question	N	N	%	N .	~ %
Have you noticed improvement in skills of the children attending the IRIT?	, <u>5</u> 8	. 49	85	9	15
Have your children developed a better attitude toward reading?	61	57	93 .	4	7
Have you noticed any favor- able behavioral changes in your students?	, 6Ò	31	52	29	48
Were you able to attend the IRIT open house?	. 64	⁻ 36	. 56	28	44
Were you able to visit the IRIT program at any other time?) 64	20	31 ′	44	69 [°]

In addition to the objective items, teachers were asked how many pupils remained in their classroom when youngsters were attending the IRIT. Of the teachers who responded, numbers ranged from 6 to 26, with a mean of 19 pupils remaining reported. <u>Conclusions and Recommendations</u>

At the end of the 1978-79 school year, the IRIT evaluation identified substantial gaps in available test data and suggested ways by which these could be filled. During the 1979-80 school year, corrective actions were taken and recommendations were implemented to the point that problems were generally corrected. Using a powerful Title I B-2 reporting model analysis, it was also possible to produce even more persuasive evidence of IRIT success. This year, akt objectives were met by the program yet since there were discrepancies in the data, recommendations are indicated once again.

1. While the analyses of pre to post cycle reading scores produced a number of highly significant gain patterns, in some cases subtests were not recorded. There were also some problems with the data. Some were caused by miscoding, and particularly at the Wish center, while others were caused by errors made by the outside keypunching services. While it may be possible to reduce errors by obtaining city-wide MAT data from Hartford's computer storage thus eliminating the necessity to copy scores on coding sheets, the fact remains that cycle test, questionnaire, books read, and levels of sentences writing will still have to be entered manually on data input sheets. While all sheets are subject to human error, some improvements in accuracy can be made. For example:

- Sheets can be pre-lined to indicate name, ID number, school, and grade level fields thus cutting down on the probability that these data will appear in an improper column.
- The project director can carefully monitor sheets to insure that they are kept up on an on-going basis, that data are coded properly, and that all entries are clear and legibly made.
- Finally, all data should be checked at the project level before submission to the evaluation office.
 While this checking may appear to be repetitious, it seems to be the only way that the data can be made as good as the program.
- Happily, the joint efforts of the various federal projects and of the testing office have helped to reduce the test attrition which was reported last year. This spring, a substantially larger number of MAT test scores was available. / For the IRIT, however, the end of year (1980) test scores were still missing. While a recommendation had been made to consider the possibility of pre-testing all first cycle IRIT youngsters with the MAT and as close to the October norming point as was possible, this was not done. Thus, spring to spring MAT test scores were only available for about one-third of the enrollment. Although

problems are not expected in the fall, team leaders should take no chances. Enrollment records should be carefully scrutinized and if pre test MAT data are not available, several actions should be taken. First, sending schools and the testing office should be contacted to determine if MATs have been given to enrolled youngsters. Those available are simply recorded. If tests are not available, and in substantial numbers, arrangements should be made by the project coordinator to pre test the first cycle youngsters. If these arrangements cannot be made, the evaluation office should be notified so that other actions can be taken.

- 3. In the preceding year's evaluation (Report 80-13) it was noted that questionnaires provide valuable program services by helping to motivate program constituencies, keeping them involved in the program, facilitating school communications, and obtaining some information for possible program change. It appeared that fewer parent and student forms than usual were submitted, and that two kinds of student forms were used. It is again recommended that a consistent series of questionnaires be used, and that the project coordinator monitor this process.
- 4. Once again it is suggested that only essential project information be collected at the end of the school year. In the 1979-80 evaluation, it was noted that while a system for writing a comprehensive report which included information from each of the IRIT teams had been developed by the coordinator during the previous school year, this system was not used in either the present or previous years. While the department may ask to have individual data collection sheets submitted, it is not necessary from an evaluative standpoint, to ask teams to restate and assess project objectives or to report data which will be picked up by the evaluation itself. It is more important to gather information which is not normally obtained through evaluation efforts and information which

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Robert J. Nearine Evaluation, Research & Testing Hartford Public Schools 249 High Street

Hartford, Connecticut 06103

may have changed during the course of the year.



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Résults and Recommendations

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- 1. Students will on the average make educationally significant gains of at least 7 NCE points in reading.
- 2. 75% of the students will read at least 8 books during the cycle.
- 3. .75% of the students will write simple sentences at their independent level.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Pre to post cycle CAT standard scores, when analyzed by team, program, and grade produced gains reaching the .01 significance level for all teams except one. The Wish team produced a nonsignificant mean gain in Comprehension. Subtest data were not provided by the Kinsella Annex or the Höcker teams. Because of data errors, Wish school gains, program totals, and grade level totals, should be viewed with caution.

Spring to spring MAT standard score data were, converted to mean grade level percentiles and NCEs, and produced a weighted NCE gaim of 13.0 which exceeded the 7 NCE project standard. For all teams except King, and for the program as a whole at least 75% of the youngsters read more than 8 books and could write sentences at or above their independent. level.

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PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

See page 14.