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Archived: Catalog of School Reform Models
Reading/Language Arts Models

Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (K - 12)

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Type of Model	reading/language arts
Founder	Ethna R. Reid
Current Service Provider	Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction
Year Established	1974
# of Schools Served (6/1/2002)	3,436
Level	K - 12 (with primary focus on K-8)
Primary Goal	teach students to read, write, listen, and speak so they can communicate effectively and achieve at significantly higher levels
Main Features	• mastery learning approach to language arts instruction • individualized instruction • emphasis on expressive skills (writing and speaking) as well as receptive skills (reading and listening) • applications to other content areas
Impact on Instruction	teachers learn to identify students' learning styles and adjust instruction accordingly
Impact on Organization/Staffing	program is facilitated though grade-level planning, coaching, mentor teachers, and an on-site staff facilitator (recommended)
Impact on Instruction	three daily instructional components: skills, practice, and backup skills; considerable time devoted to small group and individualized instruction; multi-day schedules are used when time is limited
Impact on Organization/Staffing	educators evaluate possible re-deployment of current staff; key persons serve as site facilitator and certified trainer(s)
Impact on Schedule	educators evaluate current schedules and use of time
Subject-Area Programs Provided by Developer	yes

Parental Involvement	ECRI materials address parent involvement
Technology	no new technology required
Materials	22 teacher texts required; teaching materials and mastery tests that correspond to student textbooks are provided

Origin/Scope

The Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI) has been teaching teachers since 1966 when Granite School District in Salt Lake City received a Title III grant. Ethna R. Reid has been its director since that time. Teachers from thousands of schools (mostly elementary and middle schools) in all 50 states have received ECRI training. Developers estimate that 1,850 elementary and 509 secondary schools have adopted ECRI as a schoolwide reading program.

General Approach

ECRI is a highly structured, teacher directed, mastery learning approach to instruction in language arts. Increased time on task, high expectations, individualized instruction, positive reinforcement, use of overt responses from students, and integrated instruction are all hallmarks of this approach.

Using reading materials currently in place at the school, ECRI-trained teachers follow dialogues, or scripts, as they move students through three daily instructional components: skills, practice, and backup skills. During skills time, teachers use a three-step process to introduce new material: modeling, prompting, and practice. Students sometimes respond in unison and sometimes individually to teacher prompts. ECRI teachers deploy a variety of instructional methods as they teach vocabulary, comprehension, literature, creative and expository writing, and study skills.

Practice time, when students learn to use the skills introduced in skills instruction, is devoted to three primary tasks: small group discussions, individual conferences with students, and individually administered mastery tests (oral or written performance-based tests). Teachers learn to develop mastery tests based on the curriculum and materials in place at the school. Students progress at their own pace as they demonstrate mastery of skills. Students also learn to keep records, diagnose problems, and judge when they are ready for mastery tests.

Backup skills time is reserved for instruction in penmanship, spelling, dictation, and proofreading. Throughout all components of instruction, ECRI stresses that expressive skills (writing and speaking) are more important than receptive skills (reading and listening). Therefore, ECRI students write and discuss daily.

Although the ECRI approach was designed for language arts instruction, it can be used in other content areas as well.

Content teachers are given units that pre-assess; teach key vocabulary, comprehension and study skills; provide hands-on experiences, and stimulate discussion.

Results

A series of evaluations conducted from 1986 to 1990 demonstrated a significant positive impact of ECRI on student reading achievement. In Morgan County, Tennessee, for example, four schools implemented ECRI (1988-89) as their regular reading program in grades 2 through 7; one school retained its existing commercial reading program and acted as a comparison. All students were pre-tested in spring 1988 using the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), then post-tested in spring 1989 after a full year of instruction. All ECRI grades recorded significant mean gains in reading comprehension and vocabulary, averaging 10.0 NCEs for comprehension and 8.8 NCEs for vocabulary. All comparison group gains, with the single exception of sixth-grade vocabulary, were nonsignificant or negative.

Overall, the studies involved 2,274 students in 11 public schools in grades 1-10 in regular education, special education, remedial education, bilingual education, and Chapter I classes from coast to coast. Regular education students (n=1,733) gained an average of over 8 NCEs in total reading scores. Children with special needs (bilingual, Chapter I, and remedial) showed an average gain of 14 NCEs. Special education students showed an average gain exceeding 19 NCEs. All of these gains were statistically significant when compared with control and normative expectations.

Another series of evaluations conducted from 1990 to 1996 covered grades 1-11 in 6 sites, in five states, involving 1,986 children. In one of the sites, a Chapter I school served as a comparison for two ECRI schools. At all six sites, ECRI students demonstrated significant gains on reading subtests of various standardized achievement tests. Average gains per class across all schools and groups ranged from 5.4 NCEs to over 26 NCEs.

At multiple sites not included in the studies described above (most of them elementary and middle schools), similar results have been demonstrated on a variety of standardized tests over the past 20 years.

Implementation Assistance

- **Project Capacity:** In addition to five full time trainers, ECRI has 58 certified trainers available to offer awareness sessions and seminars throughout the country and to assist teachers as they implement the program. As ECRI staff members work with schools/districts, they encourage educators to develop trainers onsite. ECRI holds an annual Invitational Conference for Teachers of Teachers.
- **Faculty Buy-In:** ECRI sends awareness materials (such as videotapes of ECRI classrooms) and/or offers awareness sessions onsite to interested educators. Names of schools/districts that are implementing ECRI are also provided. Visits to these sites are encouraged. No formal buy-in is required.
- **Initial Training:** A five-day initial seminar with one ECRI staff person for 35-40 teachers is desirable, followed by intermediate and advanced seminars. The seminars include lecture, practice sessions, and demonstrations with students. ECRI also offers seminars for principals and other district administrators and encourages them to attend the seminars teachers are attending.
- **Follow-Up Coaching:** Periodic visits by ECRI staff to teachers' classrooms to demonstrate, model, and monitor are encouraged. After-school workshops and personal consultations are offered. Teachers also can videotape their teaching and evaluate their proficiency with ECRI-designed proficiency checklists. Local ECRI facilitators and certified trainers are taught to offer these services.
- **Networking:** Through its conferences, newsletter, toll free telephone number, and Web site, ECRI provides information, answers questions, and encourages educators throughout the country to collaborate. ECRI teachers share materials they have developed, schedule visits to each other's sites, and participate in special events at Reid School and Reid Ranch in Salt Lake City.

- **Implementation Review:** During the initial seminar, teachers establish goals and benchmarks and outline steps to achieve them. They are introduced to observation checklists and proficiency evaluations that can be used as they videotape their classrooms. Ninety days following the seminar, teachers complete a self-assessment checklist. Administrators who attend the seminars are provided strategies for assisting teachers and monitoring student progress. Teachers move through four levels of proficiency, depending upon the seminar they have attended: Initial Level, Introductory, Intermediate, and Proficient. The specificity of the ECRI training makes it easy to analyze its implementation.

Costs

Each teacher in the initial seminar uses a set of ECRI texts that cost $268. A second set is required for the next level of training. For the seminar and additional follow-up days, the school/district pays an honorarium of $750 per day plus expenses for one ECRI trainer for up to 40 trainees. Schools/districts may also have to cover stipends or release time for teachers during training.

Existing district reading and content materials may be used. Supplies for teachers and students are those usually found in schools. No special staffing or facilities are required to implement ECRI. Awareness materials and a catalogue are available at no cost.

State Standards and Accountability

(*We soon will be providing information on the model's support for schools' efforts to meet standards.*)

Student Populations

ECRI has been implemented and evaluated in rural, suburban, urban, and Title I schools across the country. Evidence demonstrates the program's positive impact on regular, special needs, bilingual, and special education students.

Special Considerations

There are no special considerations in adopting ECRI except those common to creating change within a school.

Selected Evaluations

Developer/Implementer
ECRI Project. (1996). *ECRI validation reports.* Salt Lake City, UT: Reid Foundation.

Independent Researchers

Ferguson, C. L., Mangum, J., & Coffey, K. (1998). The South Louisiana Study. *Mastery Learning and the Teaching of Reading, 16*(1), 1, 3, 7.

Reid, E. R. (1986). Practicing effective instruction: The Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction approach. *Exceptional Children, 52*(6), 510-519.

Reid, E. R. (1997). Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI). *Behavior and Social Issues, 7*(1), 19-24.

(The latter two articles report evaluation data compiled by independent researchers.)

Sample Sites

School/Contact	Size	Locale	Race/Ethnicity					Free Lunch	ELL	Stud. with Dis.
			Afr. Amer.	Am. Indian	Asian Amer.	Hisp.	White			
David City School District (stats for grade 7-12 school) 750 "D" Street David City, NE 68632 402-367-3187 Contact: Jerry Phillips, Superintendent	320	small town	0%	0%	1%	4%	95%	33%	0%	7%
Sto-Rox Middle School 298 Ewing Road McKees Rocks, PA 412-287-1416 Contact: Janell Logue-Belden	386	urban fringe of large city	37%	0%	0%	1%	62%	71%	6%	24%
St. Peter's Academy 4250 38th Avenue Vero Beach, FL 32967 772-562-1963 Contact: Ruth Jefferson	103	urban fringe of mid-size city	94%	0%	0%	2%	4%	18%	100%	12%
Reid School 2965 East 3435 South Salt Lake City, UT 84109 801-466-4214 Contact: Dr. Ethna R. Reid	205	urban fringe of mid-size city	0%	0%	2%	1%	96%	0%	2%	14%
Figures for school size, locale, race/ethnicity, and free lunch eligibility are taken from the National Center for Education Statistics										
electronic database (1997-98 figures). Figures for English language learners and students with disabilities were obtained from each school for the 1999-2000 school year. M = Missing Data										

For more information, contact

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