



# Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### *Content*

- word recognition skills
- vocabulary
- comprehension
- study skills
- spelling
- proofreading
- literature
- creative and expository writing
- penmanship
- informal reading assessment

**E**xemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI) focuses on helping teachers learn strategies to teach word recognition skills, vocabulary, comprehension, study skills, spelling, proofreading, creative and expository writing, penmanship, and literature through direct instruction. The program's goal is to improve elementary and secondary students' abilities to read and communicate effectively.

**T**eachers learn to use specific, scripted instructional materials that provide them strategies such as eliciting accurate and rapid overt responses from students during instruction; maintaining on-task-behavior; diagnosing student errors; reinforcing correct responses; integrating the language arts; modeling and prompting during instruction; and evaluating toward mastery of skills. It is an instructional approach that focuses on individualized instruction, positive reinforcement, and high expectations for students. ECRI allows teachers to continue using their existing reading and/or content materials, yet helps them become more efficient and effective instructionally. In addition to staff development, ECRI includes curricular materials for students, instructional resource materials, and criterion-referenced mastery tests.

The ECRI program was originally developed in 1972 and received National Diffusion Network certification in 1974, 1985, 1990, and 1996.

### *Context*

- rural, suburban, and urban schools
- students of varied ability levels
- high- and low-poverty schools
- both high and low percentages of minority students

## PROGRAM CONTEXT

The ECRI program has been implemented in school and district sites that range from urban to rural and suburban, with remedial, Title I, bilingual, gifted, learning disabled, and regular education students. The districts in which the program is used range from small to large districts with varied student populations. Some districts have predominantly Caucasian students, while others have over 60 percent minority students (predominantly African American and Hispanic).

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



The Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction program provides a five-day training on teaching reading and language skills, using the ECRI instructional approach. Training includes lecture, practice sessions, preparation of materials for classroom use, and teaching students in a simulated setting.

During the training, teachers observe demonstrations and engage in micro-teaching. The training curriculum includes reading strategies, assessment techniques, setting high mastery expectations, giving positive reinforcement, and the ECRI philosophy of reading instruction. Instructional and curriculum materials support the implementation of the new skills in the classroom.

Teachers learn to schedule class time efficiently, track student progress, and select an instructional schedule that fits within the existing time frame for instruction in their schools. They learn to administer informal reading inventories to place students in reading materials at the appropriate instructional level and also how to set high expectations for student performance.

Other training is provided by ECRI trainers in workshops that range from two to five days. In addition to the Basic Reading Seminar, the following seminars are offered: Intermediate Reading; Advanced Reading; Integrating Literature, Comprehension, and Study Skills; Integrating Comprehension, Composition, and Literature; and Secondary Education (content-area reading). Phone support, instructional materials, and site visits are also provided.

### *Process*

- training
- practice
- demonstration
- modeling

### *Intended Audience*

- entire school
- entire department
- entire grade

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Students whose teachers received training in ECRI and used ECRI instructional strategies and materials scored significantly better on reading sub-tests and the total reading battery of standardized achievement tests. These results hold across various ability groups and in a wide variety of educational settings.

## EVIDENCE OF INCREASED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



### *Success Indicators*

- norm-referenced reading assessments



Program effectiveness was demonstrated with (1) comparison group students receiving their regular reading instruction and (2) expectancies derived from national normative data. Results are reported for several sub-populations of students (4,000 total) in multiple district (200 schools) and school contexts ranging from rural to urban. The increase in achievement has been consistent for all studies (1974, 1985, 1990, and 1996). Gifted, regular education, special needs, and special education students performed significantly better ( $p < .005$ ) on the reading subscales and total reading composite scores on standardized achievement tests than (1) comparison group students receiving their regular reading instruction and (2) expectancies derived from national normative data. For example, in 1996, 1,099 students in grades 7-10 in Lamar County, Alabama, demonstrated three years of statistically significant growth ( $p < .01$ ) on the comprehension section of the Stanford Achievement Test. Students tested over a one-year period had a median gain of 9.5 NCEs. Students tested over two years demonstrated a median gain of 8.1 NCEs. Students tested over three years demonstrated a 7.85 median gain.

Results were consistent in three diverse sites for grades 5-8. Regular education students in grades 5-8 gained between 4.13 and 12.15 NCE with a statistically significant difference of  $p < .01$ . Special needs students in grades 5-7 gained between 6.41 and 19.78 NCEs with a statistical significance of  $p < .05$ . Special education students in grades 5-8 gained between 7.30 and 23.93 with a statistical significance of  $p < .05$ .

### THE BOTTOM LINE



The Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI) program combines intensive skills training and scripted instructional materials to improve students' reading skills and language skills. Data indicate that ECRI works with students of all ability levels in a wide variety of school contexts. Many of the implementation sites are in low socio-economic or poor-performing schools. Results are also shown with special education, Title I, bilingual, and gifted students. ECRI is best implemented with other language arts staff development programs to provide a comprehensive language arts course of study.

## SAMPLE SITES



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## DOCUMENTATION

Reid, E.(1996). *Program Evaluation Panel Report*. Salt Lake City:Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction.

