Year One Evaluation Report/Impact Study:
Illinois Striving Readers

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RESEARCH

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Illinois Striving Readers

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) competed for and was awarded a four-year grant Striving Readers program from the U.S. Department of Education (USED). The Illinois Striving Readers (ISR) Project had two purposes: (a) implement a supplemental reading intervention for students in ninth grade who were reading below grade level, and (b) study the impact of the intervention on students' performance on standardized assessments using a randomized control trial design.

ISBE selected *Passport Reading Journeys III* (*PRJ III*) as the supplemental reading intervention to be implemented. *PRJ III,* published by Cambium Learning Group, is a highly structured reading program that is organized in 14 Expedition lesson series taught daily in 50-minute periods during one school year. Each Expedition comprises a total of 10 lessons that alternate between whole group and individual practice. Lessons 5 and 10 are dedicated to reviewing, expanding, and assessing. During these two lessons, the teachers can choose a number of strategies in a menu of options offered by the publisher. Depending on the number of options that the teachers decide to use, Lessons 5 or 10 may take two to three days. The materials for the intervention include teacher guidelines, student workbooks, DVDs, and a library of fiction and non-fiction books and magazines that are age-appropriate and have the purpose of engaging the adolescent reader.

ISR involved six high schools in four school districts across Illinois. All schools were Title I-eligible schools that had not made, or were at-risk of not making, adequate yearly progress requirements under the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. Students who scored at the two lowest quartiles on grade 8 EXPLORE ® were eligible for the study. Two exclusion criteria were proposed: (a) students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) that precluded their participation in the study, and (b) students whose parents requested that their children not participate in the study. The evaluators discussed with each school district the requirements of the Federal Policy for Protection of Human Subjects (34 CFR, Part 97). Recommendations were made for the schools to follow their procedures for parental notification using an "opt-out" (rather than "opt-in") option.

After the exclusion criteria were considered, eligible students were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. Students in the treatment group were instructed using *PRJ III*, while students in the control group enrolled in elective classes that did not provide supplemental reading instruction. A total of 855 students participated in the study. The project had two outcomes: (a) at least 50 percent of the treatment group students would demonstrate a gain in reading achievement, at minimum, of one grade level or its equivalent (objective 1.3); and (b) 75 percent of the students in the treatment cohorts would score at or above proficient on the state reading assessment (objective 1.4).

Each school hired a Reading Intervention Teacher (RIT) who was expected to have 80 percent or more of his or her time dedicated to teaching *PRJ III*. All RITs were required to have a valid Illinois teaching license with a reading endorsement, two to three years of teaching experience, an understanding of the Response to Intervention process, and proven classroom management skills. As part of the contract, the RITs were required to attend all of the

professional development activities related to the intervention and to implement *PRJ III* with fidelity. Each RIT was to have three to four classes of no more than 25 students each. Cambium Learning Group was responsible for providing professional development and supports to the RITs.

RMC Research Corporation (RMC) competed for and was awarded the contract to conduct the ISR evaluation. The evaluation comprised an implementation and an impact study. The implementation study answered the question of whether the intervention was implemented with fidelity to the original model. To answer this question, the evaluators conducted monthly phone calls with the RITs and yearly interviews with the project coordinator, local education agencies (LEA) liaisons, and Voyager representatives. Additionally, the evaluators observed *PRJ III* classrooms. The impact study focused on the effects of the intervention on student academic performance, as measured by results in the Grade 9 Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT) 4th edition and Grade 9 EXPLORE.[®]

ISR was planned as a four year study with the first year dedicated to planning followed by three years of implementation. The project would serve three cohorts of grade 9 students (2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013). In April 2010, the USED announced that the Congress had cut funding for the Striving Readers program and the project was to conclude by the end of the first implementation year. This report describes and discusses preliminary findings from this first year of implementation and the one-year impact of the program on treatment students compared to control students. A summary of key findings are presented next.

Implementation Study

- Findings from the first implementation year suggest that all but one school attained adequate implementation of the professional development model, while the fidelity of the classroom model ranged from inadequate to high fidelity.

- Two factors were seen as influencing the fidelity of implementation across the six schools: professional development and supports, and program format, particularly pacing and routine.

- Specific factors that were seen as influencing the schools differently included: classroom management, resulting mostly from the inclusion of students who fit the eligibility definition but resented the intervention; classroom space, which had an impact on the teachers' ability to organize group instruction and manage student behavior; actual time in instruction; and familiarity with the program (or time in implementation).

- Although teachers in all six schools had similar backgrounds (in terms of licensing and reading endorsement), attended similar intervention-related professional development, and received individualized supports, their ability to deal effectively with the factors above varied across schools. Data from the first implementation year suggest that the "specific factors" had moderator roles, either minimizing or exacerbating the impact of

the general factors on the fidelity of implementation. This hypothesis could not be tested due to the abrupt ending of the study.

Impact Study

- Of the 1,985 students across the six high schools a total of 855 students were eligible for the study. These students were randomly assigned to treatment (427 students) and control (428 students) groups.

- Outcome analysis results on both reading measures – the grade 9 ACT EXPLORE® Reading and the grade 9 GMRT® – showed no significant impact of the reading intervention on students' reading achievement.

  o Estimates of between-school variance of the *PRJ III* effects were not statistically significant thus indicating that the impact of *PRJ III* did not vary across schools.

  o Student inclusion in different demographic (gender, ethnicity, special education, free and reduced lunch, and English language proficiency) subgroups yielded no or negligible differences on the reading outcome measures.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a collective effort underway in America to ready students for college and career after high school graduation (President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, 2010). To accomplish this goal, students must be adequately prepared to meet the increased literacy demands they will face in middle and high school. They also must have the necessary supports and strategies in place for overcoming learning barriers to progress in their educational path. In reality, many adolescent readers struggle to master the most basic of literacy skills. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), more than 8 million students in grades 4-12 are struggling readers (USED, 2003). Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that results from the NAEP reading assessment have remained unchanged over time; in 2011, only 34 percent of eighth graders scored at or above proficiency (NCES, 2011). Research indicates that high school students in the lowest 25 percent of their class are 20 times more likely to drop out than their highest performing peers (Carnevale, 2001). Additionally, of those who graduate, approximately 25 percent enroll in literacy remedial courses in postsecondary education (USED, 2003).

The most serious challenges faced by struggling adolescent readers are difficulties with decoding, slow and labored reading, lack of background knowledge, and limited vocabulary (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). Many of the poor and minority students who currently perform below the 30th percentile in reading skills entered school with academic vocabularies already only half the size of their middle-class counterparts (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). Additionally, they have fewer opportunities to acquire the kinds of active reading comprehension strategies that become increasingly important as text increases in size and complexity after third grade (Torgesen, 2005). As a result, these deficits interfere with struggling adolescent readers' ability to develop higher level literacy skills and cause cognitive challenges that may become impossible to overcome.

Research indicates that a crucial component to addressing struggling adolescent readers' needs is improving literacy instruction and intervention practices in schools. This includes providing explicit vocabulary instruction, direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction, opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation, and increasing student motivation and engagement in literacy learning (Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008). In addition, intensive and individualized interventions for those who struggle most must be available and delivered by trained specialists (Kamil et al., 2008). These interventions should target students' instructional needs, occur in small group settings during extended learning periods, happen with increased frequency, and incorporate opportunities to monitor student progress. Alternatively, research suggests that it is important to avoid intervention programs that have insufficient intensity, weak instruction in word study skills, and little or no direct instruction in comprehension strategies, as they have limited effectiveness (Scammacca, Roberts, Vaughn, Edmonds, Wexler, Reutebuch, & Torgesen, 2007). Because interventions for students' still mastering basic reading skills tend to stabilize rather than remediate the relative reading deficiency (Scammacca et al., 2007), careful selection of research-based adolescent reading programs is essential.

Addressing research findings regarding the needs of adolescent who are struggling readers, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) started a Striving Readers program. The program had two main goals: (a) to address the challenges of improving reading skills for middle and high school students who were reading below grade level; and (b) to build a scientific base to identify effective strategies that improve adolescent literacy skills. Striving Readers was geared to Title I eligible schools that had significant percentages of students reading below grade level and/or schools that were not meeting or at-risk of not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB).

The program, which reflected a joint effort from the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), included three key components: (a) supplemental literacy interventions targeted to students who were reading "significantly below grade level;" (b) cross-disciplinary strategies for improving adolescent literacy, including professional development and research-based reading and comprehension strategies; and (c) a required evaluation component using an experimental design (USED, 2008).

The first cohort of Striving Readers grantees was awarded in 2006. In 2009, USED published a Request for Proposal for a second cohort, with some important changes in the scope of work. The first cohort projects were limited to school districts and included two types of intervention: a school-wide model that involved professional development for all teachers in the school and a supplemental reading intervention for struggling readers. The second cohort competition requested that states put together a coalition of schools that crossed school district boundaries and focused solely on the supplemental reading intervention. The four-year awards would fund one planning year to start in school year (SY) 2009-2010, and three implementation years, from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2012-2013. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) applied for and was awarded one of the eight Striving Readers grant funded as part of the second cohort competition.

To prepare for the proposal, ISBE drew a list of Title I eligible high schools and invited them to participate in the project. Among the volunteer schools, ISBE selected six high schools in four school districts. The participating high schools included Danville, Eisenhower, Kankakee, Lanphier, MacArthur, and Springfield Southeast. Danville is the high school for the Danville Community Consolidated School District (DCCSD) #118. Located on the eastern boundary of the state, DCCSD serves about 6,000 students a year. Kankakee is the high school for Kankakee School District (KSD) # 111, located on the northeast part of the state near Chicago, and serving about 5,000 students a year. Decatur School District (DSD) # 61 was represented by its two high schools: Eisenhower and MacArthur. DSD, centrally located, serves about 8,000 students a year. Springfield School District (SSD) # 186, located in the state capital, serves about 14,000 students a year and included two of its three high schools in the project: Lanphier and Springfield Southeast.

ISBE staff also conducted a review of existing research-based supplemental adolescent reading programs, and decided to use *Passport Reading Journeys III* (*PRJ III*). *PRJ* comprises a series of reading interventions for students from grade 6 through 9. *PRJ III* is a supplemental reading intervention that targets ninth grade students who are reading below grade level. The

intervention incorporates whole group, small group, computer-assisted instruction, and individual practice, and offers a series of research-based strategies including: explicit vocabulary instruction, direct and explicit comprehension instruction, opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation, instruction in reading foundational skills, and writing.

The lessons are organized in Expeditions that focus on themes of interest for adolescent readers. The intervention also includes a library of fiction and nonfiction books and DVDs that are intended to improve student motivation and engagement in literacy learning. *PRJ III* provides a standard protocol, easy-to-follow lesson plans, an assessment system, and supporting materials for teachers and students. Differentiated strategies address the needs of a diverse student population, including students with disabilities and English language learners. The intervention is based on findings from reading research, is being implemented in many school districts nationwide, and has been studied through the use of quasi-experimental design (Denton, 2008; Shneyderman, 2006). However, no experimental study had been conducted, particularly with high school students.

The Illinois Striving Readers (ISR) project focused on ninth grade students who scored at the bottom two quartiles on the state assessment (grade 8 EXPLORE[®]). A total of 855 students participated in the project. Of these, 427 students were randomly assigned to the treatment group, with 428 students going to the control group.

This report presents findings from the first year of implementation of the Illinois Striving Readers. The report is divided into three parts. *Part I* describes the intervention as proposed by the developers and the project's logic model. *Part II* discusses findings from the first implementation year. *Part III* presents the analysis of the intervention's impact on student academic performance, as measured by standardized assessments. *Appendix A* includes a summary statistics for the outcome measures, while *Appendix B* includes the forms used for data collection.

PART I: INTERVENTION AND LOGIC MODEL

Description of the intervention model[1]

Classroom Intervention

Passport Reading Journeys (*PRJ*), published by Cambium Learning Group (Cambium), is a supplemental reading intervention that incorporates whole group, small group, computer-aided instruction, and individual instruction to support adolescent struggling readers. Across grade levels, the intervention maintains the same structure but the content and reading level change. The intervention is called *PRJ Beginnings* for sixth graders; *PRJ I* for seventh graders; *PRJ II* for eighth graders, and *PRJ III* for students in ninth grade. *PRJ III* was the intervention implemented in the ISR project.

The intervention encompasses daily, 50-minute lessons that provide explicit, systematic instruction in critical reading skills on a topic related to science or social studies. The lessons are organized in Expeditions for a total of 14 Expeditions that are taught within one school year. Each Expedition is organized in two week, ten-lesson routines to facilitate teacher-led instruction and students' independent practice. Lessons one, three, six, and eight are organized around whole-group instruction in which students are introduced to new vocabulary and a new reading passage. After whole group instruction, students can individually practice vocabulary using the online technology component (*VocabJourney*) and/or select books for independent reading. *VocabJourney* is designed to enhance vocabulary and comprehension skills taught in *PRJ III* while allowing students to progress through activities in a differentiated fashion. Lessons two, four, seven, and nine include whole-group review of the previous day's instruction and the opportunity for students to re-read the passage to build fluency, independently or with a partner. During this period of independent or small-group structured practice, the teachers are expected to work intensively with students who present specific instructional needs. Students spend lessons five and ten of the Expedition on independent or paired practice in a variety of activities intended to review, extend, or assess previous learning. Teachers may do any or all of the activities selected from a menu provided by the publisher. The choice is expected to reflect students' learning needs. Since re-teaching may be necessary, lessons five and ten are intended to extend across multiple days to allow teachers to adequately address individual student needs. Cambium staff, in consultation with the ISR Director, set a two day limit for lessons five and ten to promote implementation consistency across the state. Therefore, for this project, the teachers were expected to complete the ten lessons that comprise each Expedition within twelve days.

Core instructional elements in reading

PRJ III aims at mixing flexibility and intensity. That is, the intervention strives to be flexible enough to meet the needs of older struggling readers, while intense enough to accelerate development of their literacy skills. Therefore, like the earlier programs, *PRJ III* blends reading foundational skills, vocabulary instruction, direct and explicit comprehension strategy

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[1] This section was reviewed by Cambium Learning Group staff for accuracy.

instruction, text meaning and interpretation, and writing. Alternatively, different from the other *PRJ* programs, it has less scripted language and more opportunities to engage students in conversation connected to the Expedition topics. The intervention is based on reading research and research in learning, including works from Baker, Simmons, & Kame'enui (2004), Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002), Biancarosa, & Snow (2006), Deshler, Palincsar, Biancarosa, & Nair (2007), Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker (2001), Graham & Perin (2007), Marzano (2004), Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Graetz (2003), Scammacca, Roberts, Vaughn, Edmonds, Wexler, Reutebuch, and Torgesen (2007), and Schatschneider, Buck, Torgesen, Wagner, Hassler, Hecht, & Powell-Smith (2004).

Explicit vocabulary instruction focuses on words the students must understand in order to comprehend each text segment and make connections between the words. Vocabulary instruction also involves context clues, word parts, including compound words, morphology, dictionary skills, high-frequency words, content-related words, synonyms and antonyms, multiple-meaning words, and homophones. A planned sequence of vocabulary skills and multiple exposures of high-utility words are meshed within the passages, comprehension activities, and text discussions. Affixes and roots are explicitly taught to students in a sequential pattern that is supported by the identified words in the passages. *VocabJourney* provides self-paced practice on vocabulary and comprehension skills, while teaching additional academic vocabulary and providing vocabulary support for English language learners. Students work individually and the software monitors student responses and adapts instruction to meet individual student needs.

Instruction in reading foundational skills is provided through the advanced word study portion of the daily Expedition lessons and the supplemental word study component of the intervention program. The supplemental word study component is geared to offer more individualized support to students who have difficulty with decoding and fluency. The thirty word study lessons comprise phonemic awareness, recognition of high-frequency words and irregular words, as well as sight words, spelling, and phonics. These word study lessons may be provided prior to implementing the first Expedition lesson or on alternate days once the intervention sequence has begun.

Direct and explicit comprehension strategies are woven into instruction to help students develop skills that are traditionally lacking among striving readers, such as making and confirming predictions, reading charts and graphs, identifying or stating main ideas, generating questions, summarizing, and making inferences (Baumann, Font, Edwards, & Boland, 2005). Comprehension skills are taught explicitly and applied to expository passages in both the text and *VocabJourney.* Live Ink, available in *VocabJourney,* allows students to read online passages and anthology passages in shorter chunks. Students also examine organizational text features that serve as frames for information and logical links between ideas. Comprehension strategies are scaffolded in three stages: teacher modeling, teacher assistance with student practice, and student independence. The stages represent a gradual shift in responsibility for learning from the teacher to the students. Direct instruction includes modeling in which the teacher reads aloud to show students how to use the reading strategies. A thinking aloud method is employed to make thought processes more transparent to students. Modeling is

followed with direct, guided practice and self-assessment to enable students to apply the newly learned skills and strategies in a variety of texts that cover varying levels of reading ability.

Opportunities for extended discussion of <u>text meaning and interpretation</u> are elicited through questions posed by the teacher during and after reading. In the first reading of the selection, the teacher asks literal comprehension questions to ensure understanding and to model the metacognitive process of self-monitoring. After students complete their reading, the teacher asks critical thinking questions that reflect the various levels of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). This teacher-directed questioning is integrated with student-generated questions as a key reading comprehension strategy during reading and a way for students to monitor and deepen their understanding of the text.

PRJ III includes a two-fold approach to <u>writing</u>. First, it uses writing in response to reading, which helps students check their understanding, reinforces returning to the text for more information, and sharpens critical thinking skills. Every Expedition integrates writing practice and instruction. Secondly, it offers a writing activity option during lesson five and/or ten of each Expedition that extends the comprehension skills and content into a writing topic. These lessons are designed to help students develop writing proficiency. The writing activity includes practice in pre-writing strategies, elaboration, word choice, sentence fluency, organization, and writing paragraphs.

Motivation and engagement in literacy

To improve student motivation and engagement in literacy learning, *PRJ III* offers a library as part of its instructional materials. The library contains novels and texts that allow for partnered and guided reading. The books are Lexile-leveled, so that students can choose a book at his or her skill level. The fiction and non-fiction texts have been field-tested for high interest with high school students and reach across the curriculum to foster literacy development in social studies and science content areas. Career excerpts are highlighted throughout the anthology. The characters, content, and activities target students who represent diverse cultural and linguistic groups. Examples of topics for the Expeditions include *Music without Instruments, Military Medical Innovations,* and *The Multicultural Search for Beauty*. DVD segments are presented before and after each Expedition to provide background knowledge and create the foundation for understanding of content. Each video segment is hosted by a teen who asks probing questions, highlights essential content-area vocabulary words, makes relevant connections to students' lives, and engages them in thinking about the topics at hand.

Use of technology

Technology is incorporated into *PRJ III* through the *VocabJourney*. In addition, lessons one, six, and nine include video technology in the form of DVD segments. *VocabJourney* is a web-based interactive program that provides teachers with more flexibility to individualize instruction. It is comprised of three main components – Acquire, Achieve, and Connect. In Acquire, students learn new words and practice previously learned works. In Achieve, students deepen word knowledge through word games, flash cards, and exploring multiple word meanings. In Connect, students study words in categories by content or topic. Research

has found that computer-assisted reading instruction helps struggling readers by providing individualized instruction, immediate feedback, a motivating learning environment, a method for monitoring student progress, and a way to maintain student interest (Kim, 2002; Kim, Vaughn, Klingner, Woodrugg, Reutebuch & Kouzekanani, 2006).

Professional Development

Cambium Learning Group offers diverse professional development activities for the teachers that include launch training, online product training, ongoing consultative support, coursework on adolescent literacy, and data analysis meetings. The launch training, the online product training, and the online support are part of the *PRJ III* package, while the other activities depend on separate contracts between the schools or school districts and the developer.

Group professional development

The launch training is traditionally conducted as two eight-hour sessions intended to prepare teachers to implement the intervention with fidelity. Participants learn about the intervention, and are instructed in specific practices, such as administering the assessment measures, grouping students, setting up their classrooms, structuring small and large group instruction, and using intervention materials. The training includes time for practice of lesson delivery and instruction in *VocabJourney,* the technology component of the intervention. Training on the Voyager data management system (VPORT) and classroom management are also included.

During launch training, participants are invited to observe and reflect as the trainer demonstrates a lesson. Following the demonstration, participants have opportunities to practice teaching the lesson. They regroup at the end of the training to debrief and plan next steps. Materials include a DVD showing footage of classroom instruction, illustrations of program features, and the measures to practice administering and scoring the assessments. Tutorial booklets introduce the key features and components of the program, present sample lessons at each grade level, review the assessment component, and provide suggestions for managing time and working with students with special needs.

The online training modules provide instruction in a self-paced, interactive environment that allows teachers to search, annotate, and bookmark information. Each module includes curriculum, assessment, and implementation overviews, and provides links to a library of video segments. The modules also offer suggestions on classroom management and on understanding Lexile levels. At the conclusion of each section, the teachers take a quiz to check knowledge gained. They can redo the modules to improve knowledge, or come back to them later to refresh information.

Coursework on adolescent literacy is delivered through VoyagerU, Cambium's professional development arm. Two 15-hour courses present foundational information about adolescent literacy, define the specific reading skills the students need in order to master each academic subject, and identify the best strategies to help middle school students develop their reading comprehension skills in these subjects. These courses were developed by Deborah Reed, principal investigator and project manager for the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies,

Diane Lapp, Distinguished Professor of Education, San Diego State University and a member of the International Reading Association Hall of Fame, and Douglas Fisher, professor of language and literacy education at San Diego State University and co-director for the Center for the Advancement of Reading at the California State University. VoyagerU courses are not part of the regular *PRJ III* package. Details about the professional development planned for ISR are described in the *Logic Model* section.

Individual supports

Cambium offers individualized supports for teachers who are implementing *PRJ III* through trained experts, the Voyager Implementation Specialist (VIS). The VIS conducts visits to each participating schools to observe how the intervention is being implemented. The frequency of the visits is dictated by teachers' needs and the contract established between Cambium and the school or school district. The VIS reviews student data with the teacher on an ongoing basis to accurately formulate prescriptive technical assistance, which must be geared towards each teacher's needs. At the end of each site visit, the VIS conducts a debriefing section with each observed teacher, the building principal, and other designated parties. As the teachers began to implement the intervention, they are encouraged to contact the assigned VIS whenever needed, either by telephone or e-mail.

Assessments

The assessment system within *PRJ III* includes benchmark assessments, semester exams, end-of-lesson assessments, progress monitoring, and student self-assessments through *VocabJourney*. The Reading Benchmark assessments are based upon Lexiles that allow educators to quickly estimate expected reading comprehension and monitor progress. Lexile, developed by MetaMetrics, Inc., is a measure of the difficulty of comprehension of a text (Stenner, 2001; Stenner & Wright, 2004). The measure, based on calculations of word frequency and sentence length, is presented on a scale that ranges from 0L to 2,000L. Text measures at or below 0L (zero Lexiles), are reported as BR (Beginning Reader).

The *Reading Benchmark* assessments were developed using the Rasch one-parameter item response theory model to relate a reader's ability with the difficulty of the items. The primary sources of validity evidence for Lexiles comes from an examination of the content of the *PRJ* assessments, and the degree to which the assessments measure reading comprehension (Lennon & Burdick, 2004). The *Reading Benchmarks* are expected to be administered in a whole group format three times per school year during specified benchmark assessment periods to assess comprehension (MetaMetrics, 2009). The *Reading Benchmark I* is administered at the beginning of the school year to place students in the appropriate level of reading materials. The *Reading Benchmarks II* and *III,* conducted during the school year, are used to monitor student progress on vocabulary and comprehension.

Formative assessments are also administered at the end of each Expedition. These criterion-referenced tests measure comprehension and vocabulary skills that have been taught during the Expedition lesson series. Additionally, student self-assessments are available through the

VocabJourney reports, which provide students with guided feedback on their responses. The teachers can review the feedback provided to students by logging into VPORT.

Based on student performance on these assessments, the teachers are directed to re-teaching opportunities that are targeted to specific skills where students have demonstrated difficulty. Additionally, criterion-referenced semester exams assess students' ability to apply the vocabulary and comprehension strategies taught through the Expeditions.

Target population

PRJ III is geared to students in grade 9 who are defined as struggling readers by their schools. The intervention incorporates a number of differentiated strategies that are designed to address students with a broad range of reading levels, including students who have limited English proficiency, and students with disabilities who can be served through group instruction.

Desired characteristics of the teachers

PRJ III reflects a highly structured intervention. Each teacher receives a teacher's guide that includes an explanation of the intervention, the goals, and the scope and sequence of each component followed by detailed guidelines on how the lesson must be taught. The teacher is expected to follow the guidelines and maintain the scope and sequence of each lessons' components. Small variations within the lessons are allowed to address differences in class period and students' needs, as explained in *ISR Logic Model*.

Decisions about hiring teachers are left to the local education agencies (LEAs). The intervention's scripted format and the professional development offered are intended to facilitate instruction by experienced and non-experienced teachers alike. For teachers who do not have a reading background, Cambium provides additional training on reading through its professional development branch (VoyagerU).

Desired characteristics of the classrooms

Cambium's requirements for *PRJ III* classrooms include appropriate space for small group instruction and storage and use of material connected to the lessons, including teacher guide books, students' workbooks, and the library. Additionally, the classrooms are required to have a DVD projector and computers. Cambium recommends a maximum of 20 students per classrooms.

Recommended intensity for the students

PRJ III is to be taught daily in a 50-minute period class within one school year. As more schools are adopting the 90 minute block time, the intervention has been adapted to allow for teachers to cover two shortened lessons within the block period. The pacing of the lesson should strike a balance between the expected one lesson per period and students' needs. If the lesson cannot be completed within the allotted period, the teachers are instructed to continue it the following day, starting from the point they stopped the day before. Reducing writing time

is an allowable strategy to accommodate the pacing, but reducing reading time is not recommended. The teachers are not expected to complete all 14 Expeditions within the year, although they should try to cover as many as possible.

Illinois Striving Readers (ISR) Logic Model

Overview

Figure 1 displays a graphic representation of the logic model proposed for the study of the ISR project. The model comprised two components and two outcomes. The components included the professional development model and the classroom instruction model. These two components followed as close as possible to the model proposed by Cambium, with variations that addressed the specific needs of participating schools and ISBE's requirements for the project.

As seen in the graphic, the professional development model contained a total of 14 hours, which included eight hours of launch training and six hours for data training. For the launch training, each RIT met one-on-one with the VIS for one eight-hour intensive training session. The data training, which occurred in March 2011, brought all the RITs together for six hours of data review and discussions on using data to inform instruction. The RITs could also pursue 16 hours of online modules to reinforce or expand the information obtained during the launch training. These were optional hours that depended on the RIT's perceived need. Additionally, ISBE required teachers to attend the three-day annual convention of the International Reading Association (IRA). The second component, the classroom instruction model, focused on the delivery of the intervention and assessments with fidelity.

The personnel resources available to support the project implementation included 11 educators located within the schools, the local education agencies, and the state education agency. Each participant had defined roles and responsibilities within the project and in relation to the study conducted by RMC, as explained below.

At the state level, the grant funded a 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Project Director position to oversee the project. The ISBE Project Director, who worked under direct supervision from the Division Administrator of Curriculum and Instruction, had a number of coordination and monitoring responsibilities, including: communicating and collaborating with the participating school districts, Cambium staff, the external evaluators, and the USED representatives; approving and monitoring the use of grant funds by the participant districts and schools; and providing support to the RITs to ensure that the program was implemented with fidelity.

The grant also funded a LEA Project Coordinator at 0.10 FTE for each school district. At the district, the LEA Coordinators had four main responsibilities: (1) overseeing the hiring procedures for the RITs, (2) coordinating project-related activities with the ISBE Project Director, Cambium, and the evaluators; (3) supervising the day-to-day implementation of the intervention within the district; and (4) providing student-level outcome data to the evaluators for the random assignment and the impact study.

Figure 1. Logic Model for the study of the Illinois Striving Readers

Strategies (Model): *Voyager Passport Journeys III*		Outcomes
Professional Development Model	**Classroom Model (9th grade classrooms]**	

Professional Development Model

Year 2:
❖ Summer 2010: Launch training (8 hours; required)
❖ School year:
  o Online module (16 hrs. optional)
  o In-school coaching (40 hrs. maximum)
  o Assessment training (6 hrs. required)
  o Attendance to the International Reading Association (IRA) Annual Convention (24 hrs. required)

Years 3-4:
❖ New teachers = as above
❖ Returning teachers
  o IRA convention (24 hrs.)
  o In-school coaching (25 hours)
❖ **Attendees:**
  o Teachers= mandatory participation
  o Project leadership = not required

Provider:
❖ 2 *Voyager Implementation Specialist*s (Under guidance of the Vice-President for Implementation Services for the Northeastern Region)

Classroom Model (9th grade classrooms]

Structure
❖ Year-long, daily 50 - minute lessons or every other day, 90-min block
❖ 14 Expeditions; each Expedition divided into ten lessons, as such:
Lessons 1 and 3
  o Introduction to Expedition – day 1 only (discuss probing questions)
  o Before reading (introduce and practice vocabulary)
  o During reading (reading related to the topic)
  o After reading (check comprehension)
  o Independent study= practice vocabulary online; reading independently
  o ELL = extend and practice
Lessons 2 and 4
  o Prepare to reread = review and practice (vocabulary, comprehension)l practice using context clues; build new words using roots
  o Reread = review and practice finding implicit main idea and details; write a paragraph
  o ELL = extend and practice
Lessons 5 and 10
  o Review, extend and assess
Content
❖ Lexile-leveled, focused on adolescent themes related to science, social studies, and careers
Assessment
❖ Reading Benchmarks I - placement (September)
❖ Benchmarks II and III – progress on fluency(January and May)
❖ Comprehension and vocabulary assessment – Expedition days 5 and 10
❖ Semester Exams – middle and end of the year (end of *Expedition* 7 and 14)

Short-term

At least 50% of the treatment students will improve at least one reading level, as measured by standardized assessments.

Long-term

Gains in 9th grade persist as students move to upper grades as measured by standardized assessments

RESOURCESS

Personnel

6 FTE Reading Intervention Teachers ← Principal or Assistant Principal ← 4 LEA Project Coordinators ← ISR Project Director
Classroom *School* *LEA* *ISBE*

Technology and supplies
❖ *Grant-funded*: computers, DVD projectors
❖ *Cambium* : books and magazines in print, audio and e-books, teacher guides; student workbooks; other supporting materials

At each of the six participant schools, a building administrator worked with the LEA Project Coordinator and the evaluators to facilitate and monitor implementation and ensure the fidelity of the random assignment process. Each school hired one full time equivalent RIT who was dedicated to the intervention for at least 80 percent of the time. During the remaining 20 percent of time, the RIT could be assigned to other duties, such as coaching teachers for grades 10-12 on strategies for reading across the curriculum.

The *PRJ* developer, Cambium Learning Group, was responsible for the professional development component of the project. Cambium-designated coaches, or Voyager Intervention Specialists (VISs), worked under the supervision of the Vice-President for Implementation Services for the Northeastern Region. The VISs were responsible for providing professional development and coaching to the RITs; supervising the work of the RITs at each school through the use of Cambium monitoring instruments; and providing feedback to the RITs and building administrators to ensure that the intervention was being implemented with fidelity.

Materials to support the intervention included *PRJ III* instructional materials and a library of DVDs and books, provided by Cambium. Grant funds were used to buy computers and DVD projectors, while the schools' regular library expanded the students' choices of reading material.

The project included a short-term, yearly outcome, and a long-term outcome that would be measured through a growth model design. For the short-term outcome, ISBE expected that 50 percent or more of the students who participated in the intervention would improve at least one grade level as measured by standardized assessments at the end of each intervention year. The long-term outcome was that treatment students would show retention of gains in reading skills when taking the statewide assessment in grade 11.

RMC Research Corporation, the external evaluator for the project, was responsible for developing the instruments for data collection and collecting data for the implementation evaluation through interviews, review of documents, and classroom observations. RMC was also responsible for the random assignment of students and conducting the impact analysis. The interaction between implementation and the ISR study is graphically represented in Figure 2, on the next page.

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Figure 2. Illinois Striving Readers –Implementation and study interaction

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                    │  U.S. Department of     │
                    │  Education              │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Illinois State Board of  │
                    │ Education                │
                    │ Project Director         │
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Implementation of Professional Development *Cambium Learning Group*	Implementation of Reading Intervention *Reading Intervention Teachers*	Random Assignment Implementation and Integrity *LEA Project Coordinators*

RMC Principal Investigator

Abt Technical Assistance

Random Assignment Conducting and Monitoring	Implementation Analysis and Reporting	Impact Analysis and Reporting

Implementation Data for Monitoring Purpose:
Professional Development
Classroom instruction
Other data on teachers and students for monitoring purposes only
Cambium Learning Group
ISBE Project Director

Student Achievement Data from District for Summative Evaluation
LEA Project Coordinators

Data for Summative Evaluation

Implementation Data Collected by Evaluator
--Professional development
--Classroom instruction

Student Data from District
-- School and student characteristics
-- Student test data: ACT's EXPLORE grade 9; GMRT 4th edition

ISR professional development model

Table 1 summarizes the initial professional development activities planned for the RITs and key project participants. Between August 2010 and the spring of 2011, the RITs were to receive 14 hours of required *PRJ*-related professional development. Additionally, the RITs were expected to attend the IRA Annual Convention, which occurred on May 8-11, 2011 at the Orange County Convention Center, in Orlando, Florida. Grant funds paid for airplane tickets, lodging, per diem, and conference fees for all six RITs. RITs also received a one-year IRA membership that would be renewed throughout the grant period.

Table 1. Professional development activities related to the Illinois Striving Readers (summer 2010 – spring 2011)

Structure	Trainer	Content	Attendees	Hours
Individual	Cambium Learning Group (VIS)	Introduction to the program; assessments, technology, classroom management.	RITs	8
Individual	Cambium Learning Group (VIS)	One-day meeting for training on administering, analyzing and using assessments for instruction.	RITs	6
Whole group	International Reading Association (IRA)	Grant support for attendance to the annual IRA convention	RITs ISBE Project Director	24
Required hours				38
Self-paced, online, optional	Cambium Learning Group	*PRJ* modules supplement launch training Topics: curriculum, assessment, implementation, classroom management, understanding Lexile levels, and other topics.	RITs	16
Individual support (coach)	Voyager Implementation Specialists	On-site support includes classroom observations and feedback, lesson modeling and use of data for instruction.	RITs	25
	ISR Director	Community of Practice	RITs	12

RITs to be hired in implementation years 2 and 3 would receive similar training, but teachers that remained in the project would be offered the online modules, if needed, and a maximum of 25 hours of individualized coaching provided by the VIS. The ISBE Project Director, the LEA Project Coordinators, and the school administrators were not required to participate in any of the ISR-sponsored professional development activities.

Two VIS were contracted to provide a maximum of five days a year of on-site coaching for the RITs for a total of 25 hours. The VIS worked under the supervision of Cambium's Vice President for Implementation Services in the Northeast Region. Coaching activities included modeling lessons, observing lessons and providing feedback, discussing student data and using data to plan the lessons, asking clarifying questions, and supporting the RITs as they

implemented the intervention with their students. The VISs were also available to address questions and concerns as needed via conference call and e-mail.

The topic of the individual on-site coaching support was tailored to the teachers' needs, but the coaching model followed a similar format in all participant schools. First, the VIS observed a lesson taught by the interventionist. The VIS would then model a lesson, followed by a debriefing session during which the VIS discussed the observation with the interventionist and made recommendations for improvement. The VIS observed the interventionist teaching another lesson on a different day to see if he or she was incorporating the recommendations. During the coaching visits, the VIS used Cambium's Index of Fidelity of Implementation (IFI) to assess how close the intervention implemented in the classroom was to the model intervention. The IFI was used as the foundation for the classroom observation instrument developed by the evaluators.

The ISBE Project Director also maintained monthly conference calls with the RITs using a Communities of Practice model, whereby the RITs exchanged information about their work and discussed a journal article assigned by the Project Director, with a focus on the classroom application of the article. Additionally, as part of their supervisory responsibilities, principals conducted regular in-class visits in conjunction with the VIS visits. Also, the LEA Project Coordinators visited the classrooms as needed to observe the implementation of the project. In-class visits and support from school principals, LEA coordinators, and the ISBE Project Director had the purpose of monitoring and supporting the RITs.

Planned classroom instruction

Adaptations to the classroom model

The planned classroom model followed the developer's model, as described above (see *Description of the intervention model*). Teachers in schools with 90-minute block scheduling were recommended to present two lessons in one day, thus modifying the 50 minute lessons to 45 minutes each. The total number of instructional hours remained the same. Adaptations were discussed during the planning year to address the different class periods at the participating schools. For instance, Cambium suggested the RITs eliminate some of the writing exercises within each task in the Expedition to maintain the pacing of the lessons, placing the focus on the reading process rather than the writing material. Another suggestion was to use at least one of the extra days in lessons 5 and 10 to initiate a new lesson or start a new Expedition if students were showing strong results in the lesson-specific assessments.

Experiences for control group students

PRJ III instruction was provided in periods that coincided with time reserved for electives to ensure that students participating in the study could attend the core content area classes offered to all students in the same grade level. Students not attending the intervention had the option to enroll in electives that were not related to reading instruction.

Remediation classes

Illinois grade 9 students do not participate in statewide assessments used for purposes of determine AYP. Content area teachers, including English teachers, may individualize instruction during their regular classroom time through differentiated instruction strategies, such as small group instruction. These strategies, when available, are provided to all students in the classroom according to their needs. Therefore, no additional instruction was being provided to one group in the study (e.g. control group) at the exclusion of the other group (e.g. treatment students). More importantly, no reading instruction outside *PRJ III* was being provided at the ISR schools.

Teachers characteristics

By the summer of 2010, a total of six Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Reading Intervention Teachers (RITs) had been hired to provide instruction in *PRJ III*, one per school. The hiring of the RITs followed the process used by the school districts to hire their regular teaching staff. The position was announced in local newspapers, and the applicants were interviewed by a panel that included the school principals, who made the final decision. The RITs were required to have a valid Illinois teaching license with a reading endorsement, two to three years of teaching experience, an understanding of the Response to Intervention process, and proven classroom management skills. As part of the contract, the RITs were required to dedicate at least 80 percent of their time to the intervention, attend all of the professional development activities related to the intervention, and implement *PRJ III* with fidelity.

Classroom characteristics

The teachers were assigned permanent classrooms that were expected to have enough space to conduct whole group and small group instruction. Computers and DVD projectors were available for instruction. ISBE staff held a discussion regarding the maximum number of students per classroom during the planning year, and made the decision to allow up to 25 students per classrooms.

Assessments

Table 2, on the next page, lists the assessments used for the ISR project. As described in *Part I, Description of the Intervention Model*, *PRJ III* uses a variety of assessments to identify students' needs and inform instruction. During the launch training, the teachers were instructed in how to administer the assessments, analyze data, and use the information to individualize instruction. The assessments used in the ISR project included:

- *Reading Benchmark I,* administered at the beginning of the year to place students with the appropriate level of reading materials*;*
- *Reading Benchmarks II* and *III,* administered in January and May and used for monitoring and informing instruction;
- *Comprehension and vocabulary assessments,* administered during lessons 5 and 10 of each Expedition to measure comprehension and vocabulary skills;

- *Semester exams,* criterion-referenced assessments that focus on mastery of skills and content taught, and are administered online at the end of Expeditions 7 and 14; and
- *Online vocabulary technology self-assessments,* used by students to track progress on vocabulary, comprehension and content-specific text.

Table 2. Illinois Striving Readers – List of assessments

Purpose	Name	Timeline	Application
Instruction			
Placement and Monitoring	Reading Benchmark I Placement	September	Place students at appropriate reading levels
	Reading Benchmarks II and III	January and May	Monitor student progress on vocabulary and comprehension
	Semester Exams	End of Expeditions 7 and 14	Monitor student progress
Impact study			
Eligibility	Grade 8 EXPLORE®	Spring previous school year	Determine eligibility to the study
Outcomes	Grade 9 EXPLORE®	May of the school year being studied	Impact study
	Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT) 4th Edition – grade 9	Early fall and late spring of each implementation year	

Two assessments were used to measure student performance: The Gates MacGinitie (GMRT®) 4th edition for grade 9, and the Grade 9 EXPLORE.® GMRT,® from Riverside Publishing, is a nationally-normed reading assessment that has well-established psychometric qualities, as documented in the 2002 technical manual (MacGinitie, MacGinitie & Dryer, 2002). Approximately 3,600 students in grade 9 participated in the standardization. Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (K-R-20) internal reliability coefficients were 0.92 and 0.93 for the raw scores for the ninth grade students who took the Level 7/9 test (Form S) in the fall and spring, respectively. The test was re-normed during SY 2005-2006 (Maria & Hughes, 2008). For the ISR project, grade 9 GMRT® was to be applied twice a year, early in the fall and in late spring of each implementation year.

Grade 9 EXPLORE® is a component of the ACT testing system, published by ACT, Inc. This criterion-referenced test measures academic achievement in English, mathematics, reading and science using a multiple choice format. Details about the test development and psychometrics are found in the technical manual (ACT, 2011).

ISR eligible students

Students eligible for the project were defined as those who scored at the two lowest quartiles in the grade 8 EXPLORE® reading assessment. These students were distributed across six high schools located in four school districts in Illinois. Table 3 displays the number of students

enrolled in the participant schools at the end of SY 2008-2009, the percentage of minority and low income students, the mobility rate, and the number of students who scored in the two lowest quartiles and were to be enrolled in the participant schools the following school year. For the rest of this report, the schools will be named by randomly attributed numbers to maintain their privacy.

Table 3. Illinois Striving Readers schools (SY 2008-2009)

School District	High Schools	Enrollment (N)	Minority (%)	Low Income (%)	Mobility rate	Struggling Readers (N)*
Danville Community Consolidated	Danville	1,606	47.6	53.5	29.8	99
Decatur	Eisenhower	1,149	53.4	52.7	37.7	188
	MacArthur	1,112	51.1	45.2	25.3	
Kankakee	Kankakee	1,185	80.1	72.5	22.0	129
Springfield	Lanphier	1,220	40.9	66.1	35.2	314
	Springfield Southeast	1,296	53.5	57.4	35.7	

*Number of 8th graders who scored in the two lowest quartiles in the SY 2008-09 statewide assessment and were expected in the Striving Readers schools
Source: Illinois State Board of Education

As displayed in the table, in SY 2008-2009, before the beginning of the intervention, these six schools served a total of 7,568 students in grades 9 through 12. On average, students defined as low income comprised about 58 percent of the schools' population. Mobility rates varied from 30 to 38 percent. Students scoring 12 or below on the reading component of the grade 8 EXPLORE® were eligible to participate in the project. The last column on the table displays the numbers of potential struggling readers that expected in the participant schools during SY 2009-2010. Two exclusion criteria were adopted: students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that precluded their participation in group instruction, and students whose parents requested their children be exempt from the study. *Part III: Impact Study* details the process used to determine eligibility and conduct the random assignment.

Expected student outcomes

ISBE proposed two goals and seven objectives in its application to USED. The goals and objectives included:

Goal 1: Foster reading improvement in grade 9 striving readers
- Objective 1.1: By the end of Project Year I, project staff and the external evaluator, in consultation with the U.S. Department of Education, will have developed implementation and evaluation plans for the Illinois Striving Readers project.
- Objective 1.2: By the end of Project Year 4, provide *Passport Journeys III* supplemental reading intervention classes to 1,350 grade 9 striving readers in six participating high schools.

- Objective 1.3: By the end of each school year during Project Years 2-4, 50 percent of students in the intervention cohorts will demonstrate a gain in reading achievement, at a minimum, of one grade level or its equivalent.
- Objective 1.4: By the end of Project Year 4, 75 percent of students in the *Passport Reading Journeys III* cohorts will score at or above proficient on the state reading assessment.

Goal 2: Contribute to the scientific research base for identifying and replicating supplemental reading programs that are effective in improving adolescent literacy.
- Objective 2.1: By the end of Project Year 4, the external evaluator will conduct a project evaluation that assesses the effectiveness of the implementation of *Journeys III* in the six participating high schools.
- Objective 2.2: By the end of Project Year 4, the external evaluator will conduct a project evaluation that assesses the effectiveness of *Passport Journeys III* in raising the literacy levels of grade 9 striving readers in the six participating high schools.
- Objective 2.3: By the end of Project Year 4, disseminate research findings on the effectiveness of the intervention in raising the literacy levels of grade 9 striving readers.

Planning Year (2009-2010)

After the USED award was confirmed, ISBE issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the evaluation of their Striving Readers project. RMC Research Corporation (RMC) applied for and was awarded the contract in March 2010. The evaluators used the remainder of the planning year to finalize the evaluation design and visit the participating schools. The evaluators' visits had three main purposes: (a) to become familiar with the schools' procedures; (b) to understand how the project was to be implemented within each school; and (c) to explain the design (particularly the random assignment process) to school administrators and LEA representatives. Discussions related to how to explain the study to parents were also conducted and it was decided that the schools would follow their existing procedures for parental consent, with support from the evaluators (if needed). Each school nominated a staff member – either an assistant principal or the school scheduler – to be the liaison to evaluators for the random assignment, while the LEA Project Coordinators assumed the responsibility for providing the evaluators with assessment data to be used in the impact study.

PART II: IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

Study Design

Overview

The evaluation of the ISR implementation aimed to assess how close the implemented intervention was to the *PRJ III* model. The implementation study was to be used as a descriptive tool to further the understanding of the findings from the impact study. The intervention's structure provided the framework upon which the research questions and the development of instruments for data collection were built. As discussed in *Part I*, *PRJ III* is a highly-structured intervention in which the RITs are expected to attend all of the required professional development activities and to follow a scripted guide that details what, how, and when they will teach. Diversions from the model are not expected or welcomed, except for minor adaptations to adjust the expected pacing within allocated classroom time.

The evaluation strived to be as unobtrusive as possible to reduce the possibility of a "Hawthorne effect" (Gillespie, 1991). The evaluators had no direct contact with the students involved in the project, except for silent classroom observations to which students are accustomed as a part of regular administrative visits.

Research questions

The implementation evaluation focused on fidelity to the intervention model proposed by the developers and incorporated in the ISR Logic Model. The implementation study was guided by one broad question:

- To what extent did the implementation of *PRJ III* in the Illinois Striving Reader project schools reproduce the developer's model?

This broad question was then divided into three sub-sets of questions:
- Professional development:
  - What types and how many hours of professional development were offered to the RITs?
  - What types and how many hours of professional development did the RITs attend?
  - How many hours of coaching support did the RIT receive?
- Classroom instruction:
  - How many hours of classroom instruction were planned?
  - How many hours were provided?
  - To what extent did the RITs follow the model guidelines?
- Influencing factors:
  - What factors facilitated the implementation?
  - What factors created barriers to the implementation?

Data Collection Plan

To collect information on the professional development and classroom models, data were collected from the following sources:

- *Voyager Implementation Specialists* – Cambium maintains logs with the types and hours of professional development offered, who attended, and what was covered during the activities. These data are accessed through VPORT. The evaluators also interviewed the VISs to obtain information regarding the coaching services provided and their perceptions about the *PRJ III* implementation in the different schools, including the barriers and the facilitators encountered.
- *Reading Implementation Teachers* – The evaluators scheduled monthly "check-ins" with the RITs to obtain their perspectives on project implementation. Due to difficulties in contacting all of the RITs by telephone on a monthly basis, beginning in early 2011, they could choose between telephone and online check-ins. Between September 2010 and May 2011, a total of eight check-ins were completed for each interventionist.
- *ISBE Project Director* – An interview was conducted with the ISBE Project Director regarding the supports provided to the RITs and perceived barriers and facilitators to the implementation.
- *Classroom visits* – Two evaluation teams were assigned to observe *PRJ III* classrooms, with each school being visited by one team. Each team was comprised of an evaluator with a reading background, who had been trained on the intervention, and an evaluator with a methods background. The evaluation plan included four one-day visits to each school, at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. For each of the visits, the evaluators would conduct alternating half-day observations at each school (e.g. on day one, school A will be observed during the morning and school B will be observed during the afternoon; the following day, school A will be observed during the afternoon and school B will be observed during the morning, and so on). This process allowed for observing instruction at different times of the day and on different days of the week to cover the ten lessons routine that characterizes each Expedition.

The evaluators took extensive notes during the interviews and used categorizing and connecting process for the analysis (Maxwell & Miller, 2008). Data were coded thematically to reflect the *PRJ III* components highlighted by the developer in its Index of Fidelity of Implementation (IFI). These components included: amount of instruction, quality of instruction, classroom management, use of assessment, and differentiation. Information from the interviews was used to foster understanding of the process of implementation in the different schools from the different actors' perspectives, as well as to provide information regarding the barriers and facilitators to implementation. The check-in questionnaires, classroom observation rubrics, and interview protocols are included in *Appendix B*.

Although the evaluators wanted to make unannounced visits, the complex reality of school scheduling made that impossible. To organize the visits, the evaluators obtained schedules from each school highlighting the weeks when the schools would be occupied with statewide tests, spring break, and/or other events that disrupt regular classroom instruction. Coordination with the RITs was also needed to avoid visits on days when class time was used for assessments. The

evaluators visited each of the participant schools twice during SY 2010-2011, one time in October 2010 and the other in February 2011 for a total of 27 observations. Two other visits were planned for Mid-March and May 2011. However, with the cancellation of the Striving Readers grant, and the need to maintain funding for the data analysis, the two final visits were cancelled. Table 4 lists the data sources and data collection processes used in the implementation evaluation.

Table 4. Implementation evaluation – data sources and data collection processes

Source	Process	When	Purpose
Reading teacher (RIT)	Close-ended check-in	Once a month	Obtain information about implementation
	Open-ended interview	January/May	Triangulate perspectives regarding the implementation
Voyager implementation specialist	Open-ended interview	January/May	
LEA Project Coordinator	Open-ended interview	May (cancelled)	
ISBE Project Director	Open-ended interview	May	
Classroom Observation	Scaled rubric	Oct, Feb – completed March, May - cancelled	
VPORT	Excel spreadsheet	January/March/June	Enrollment; benchmark scores

Defining fidelity of implementation

Professional development model

Attendance to launch training and data meeting were required from all RITs. To reduce grant costs and RITs' travel time, the VIS provided the training to each RIT independently and on-site. This process allowed for a reduction of the traditional 16 hours of launch training to no more than eight training hours. Statements on the quality of the training were deemed unnecessary due to Cambium's quality control measures. The face-to-face PD activities were conducted by the developers' trained experts and the online modules were created by reading experts and maintained by Cambium's research division.

The other required intervention-related training was the data meeting, which occurred in March 2011. This statewide meeting focused on how to analyze assessment data and use it to individualize instruction. Additionally, RITs were required per contract to attend the annual convention of the International Reading Association (IRA), an activity that was not directly related to *PRJ III* implementation, but was part of the ISR model. Required PD hours added to 38 hours, with 14 hours directly related to the intervention and 24 hours focused on reading research and practice.

The RITs also had available a maximum of 25 hours of coaching and 16 hours of online modules. Usage of these hours depended on the willingness and need of the interventionist; therefore, these hours were included as extra hours for the fidelity index. Additionally, the ISBE Project Director offered a forum for discussion and exchange of information that were included in the extra hours count.

The score for the fidelity of implementation of the professional development model was calculated as the number of hours attended relative to the 38 hours required in the logic model. The index was computed by school, since each school had one interventionist. The evaluators established a score of 1.00 or above as adequate fidelity to the professional development model, while scores below 1.00 were considered inadequate.

The ISBE Project Coordinator, LEA Project Coordinators, and school principals were not required to attend the professional development activities. Considering the focused nature of the intervention, participation in professional development for non-teaching staff was not considered a part of the fidelity of professional development model.

Classroom model

The evaluators worked closely with Cambium's research department to ensure that the site visit rubric reflected the conceptual framework and format of *PRJ III*. The rubric included four components. The first component, Section A: classroom environment, provided a descriptive overview of classroom size, desk arrangements, technology elements, and materials required for the intervention. Although not directly related to the IFI, the elements in Section A reflected the evaluators' experience with implementation of educational programs. Sections B through D reflected the IFI. Section B and Section C focused on the quality and amount of instruction and use of differentiation strategies. Section B provided an overview of the lesson's structure, while Section C was lesson-specific, thus the template changed according to the lesson number within the Expedition. Section D had elements of the classroom management component found in the IFI. Since the observers would not be present during assessment time, all information from the assessments was obtained through VPORT. Table 5 displays the alignment between Cambium's IFI and the rubric developed for the site visits (see *Appendix B* for a copy of the rubric).

Table 5. Alignment between IFI and evaluator observation rubric

Voyager Index of Fidelity of Implementation (IFI)	RMC Classroom Observation Rubric
	A. Classroom environment
Quality of instruction	B. Lesson planning and delivery – Overview
Amount of instruction	C. Lesson planning and delivery - Lesson-specific
Differentiation	
Classroom management	D. Classroom behavior/management
Use of assessments	Obtained through VPORT

During each school visit, two evaluators observed the interventionist during an entire class period and each observer completed the observation rubric independently. Following each observation, the evaluators met to discuss their ratings. After the first round of observations (approximately 5 classroom observations), the evaluators met to discuss any needed changes to the observation rubric and to address questions regarding the observation process and ratings. The discrepancies in observer ratings were minimal and did not indicate any problems with the overall scoring process.

The process to calculate the fidelity score for the classroom model was as follows: (1) all observation rubrics completed by every member of the evaluation team were entered into the observation database; (2) the different observations for each evaluation team were combined to get an average score across all observers for each lesson; and (3) the scores for both rounds of observations were then combined to get an average score for each interventionist. Because each school had only one teacher, the teacher score equals the school score. Table 6 displays the final model for calculating the index of fidelity of classroom implementation. Based on feedback from Cambium, the evaluators established the following fidelity levels: scores below 0.70 were defined as inadequate or low implementation, scores between 0.70 and 0.89 reflected medium fidelity; scores of 0.90 or above were considered high fidelity.

Table 6. Calculating the classroom implementation fidelity score

Section	Weight		Section Score	Total Possible Weighted Score
A	.20		$X_A/6$	.20
B	.30	x	$X_B/(12 - \text{number of N/A})$	.30
C	.30		$X_C/8$	.30
D	.20		$X_D/(\text{total time intervals} - \text{number of N/A})$	.20
Total possible score				1.00
Levels:	0.0 – 0.69 = low		0.70 – 0.89 medium	0.90 – 1.0 = high

It is important to note that the fidelity of implementation score was not used in the impact study. Since the score had solely a descriptive purpose, the evaluators decided to keep the two scores (professional development model and classroom model) independently, rather than creating one score that would be less descriptive. The next section presents the outcomes of the first year of *ISR* project implementation.

Implementation Year 1 (2010-2011)

Context of *RPJ* implementation

Reading Implementation Teachers

Six full time RITs were hired by the ISR project, one per school, following the procedures established at the outset (*Part I, ISR Logic Model*). Each RIT taught 3 to 5 *PRJ III* classes daily and all remained with their classes for the duration of the school year.

Classroom space

Table 7, on the next page, presents the student enrollment information for the different schools and grade levels for the beginning of the SY 2010-2011, as collected in VPORT. During the first implementation year, *PRJ III classes* varied in size from 7 to 16 students, with an average of 12.7 students per class. This information reflects the number of students that were actually entered into the system as attending the *PRJ III* classes, and not the number of students who took the outcome assessments. The input of students' names and results of assessments into VPORT was the RTIs' responsibility. Considering that 427 students had been randomly assigned to the treatment group during the summer of 2010, it appears that 29 percent of the assigned students never started the intervention. Information obtained on these students indicated that they either left the schools before classes began or were retained in eighth grade.

Table 7. Student Enrollment in Passport Reading Journeys III

School	Total Students	Periods taught	Average Students/ Class
1	43	3	14.3
2	42	3	14.0
3	36	5	7.2
4	59	5	11.8
5	62	4	15.5
6	62	4	15.5
Total	**304**	**24**	**12.7**

Source: VPORT enrollment records

All teachers had "permanent" classrooms, that is, they had regularly scheduled space to conduct the intervention. During the site visits, the evaluators deemed that only one school had a class that was too small to accommodate small group instruction. All other classrooms were deemed adequate in terms of space for instruction.

Professional development model implementation

Required professional development

The two VIS assigned to the project provided the RITs with eight hours of individualized launch training onsite before the beginning of the school year. The training focused on how to implement the intervention with fidelity, the assessment system, and classroom management. The VIS conducted a second day of individualized professional development in January 2011 to clarify questions. The RITs also had available to them 16 hours of online modules in VPORT for further clarification of the topics covered in the launch training. These hours were optional. Additionally, the RITs were required to attend the IRA annual convention in May 2011. Table 8 displays the hours of professional development completed for each RIT. As the table indicates, all RITs completed their hours of required professional development, and five RITs completed different portions of the online modules to exceed the required hours.

Table 8. Hours of professional development

Activities	Schools					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Launch training	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
Data meeting	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Online PD (optional)	8.0	16.0	16.0	2.0	0.0	16.0
IRA Convention	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0
Total PD Hours	47.0	56.0	54.0	44.0	38.0	60.0

Individual Supports

The VIS were contracted to provide a maximum of 25 hours of on-site coaching to each RITs (5 visits per teacher; 5 hours per visit). All RITs reported receiving visits from the VIS and highlighted three topics as the most frequently discussed during the coaching sessions: analyzing data, sharing resources, and modeling instruction. During the monthly check-ins, the RITs also reported maintaining regular attendance at the conference calls with the ISBE Project Director. They mentioned the articles they had to read for the call and the support received from the Project Director and from each other.

Table 9 includes information related to the individualized supports received under the ISR project. As seen in the table, the RITs indicated receiving more hours of individualized support from both the VIS and the ISBE Project Director than initially planned. Only one RIT indicated having fewer support hours than planned. Despite attempts to triangulate the information from the RITs with that from the support providers, conflicts remained regarding the amount of individualized supports. A partial explanation for the discrepancies was that some RITs included in their report the supports provided via e-mail or telephone, while others reported only the supports provided in person or by conference call.

Table 9. Hours of individualized supports

Activities	Schools					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Months reported	8	8	8	8	8	8
Expected hours coaching and supports	37.0	37.0	37.0	37.0	37.0	37.0
Actual hours VIS coaching	41.0	35.0	11.0	29.0	30.0	32.5
Hours of coaching from ISBE Project Director	20.5	10.0	9.0	14.0	7.0	16.3
Total hours of individualized supports	61.5	45.0	20.0	43.0	37.0	48.8

Index of fidelity of implementation: professional development model

Based on the required professional development hours, all interventionists received an index of 1.0 or above, which was defined as the adequate implementation level for the IRS professional development model. Across schools, the index of fidelity of professional development ranged from 1.0 (school 5) to 1.6 (school 6). Table 10, on the next page, summarizes the information on the professional development and individualized supports provided to the RITs during the first implementation year.

During the monthly check-ins, the RITs were also asked to rate the individual supports received in three characteristics: relevance, sufficiency, and alignment between the two support providers. RITs were asked to use a rating scale from 1 (irrelevant/insufficient/ not aligned) to 5 (highly relevant/sufficient/aligned). The highest average score across schools was for the alignment between the supports received from VIS and ISBE Project director (4.34); the average score for the two other scales (relevance and sufficiency) was 4.24 (relevance) and 4.21 (sufficient). Table 10 summarizes scores per school.

Table 10. Index of fidelity of implementation – professional development model

Activities		Schools					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Hours individualized supports[1]	VIS	41.0	35.0	11.0	29.0	30.0	32.5
	ISBE Project Director	20.5	10.0	9.0	14.0	7.0	16.3
Hours of PD and Convention attendance		47.0	56.0	54.0	44.0	38.0	60.0
Total hours PD and supports		108.5	101.0	74.0	87.0	75.0	108.8
Index Fidelity of implementation - PD model[2]		1.24	1.47	1.42	1.16	1.00	1.58
Individualized supports (perception)	Relevance	5.0	5.0	3.4	3.0	4.8	3.3
	Sufficiency	4.7	5.0	3.4	3.2	4.8	3.3
	Alignment	5.0	4.8	4.0	3.5	5.0	4.0

[1]Not included in the index calculation
[2]Required PD = 38 hours

Implementation of the classroom model

As previously discussed, *PRJ III* is formatted as a series of lessons, or Expeditions, each comprised of ten lessons. The RITs were expected to cover one lesson during a 50-minute period or two shortened lessons if using 90-minute block scheduling. Lessons 5 and 10 of each Expedition, used to re-teach or expand the information provided in the previous lessons, could take two days. Each Expedition was thus intended to be completed in 12 days. Cambium provided suggestions on how to modify the lessons to fit the classroom period.

The evaluators conducted two visits to each of the participant schools to monitor classroom instruction for a total of 27 observations. The first visit occurred in October 2010, at the end of the first month of implementation, and the second visit occurred in February 2011, as the implementation entered its sixth month. Two other visits were scheduled – one for mid-March and the other for the end of May – but the visits were cancelled to address cut in grant funds. Data from the observations were analyzed with two foci: intensity of the intervention and fidelity to the developers' model.

Actual intensity of intervention

The actual intensity of the intervention the students received was influenced by three elements: (a) actual instruction time; (b) actual days of instruction; and (c) student attendance (or the need to re-teach for absent students).

Actual versus allotted classroom time: When considering instruction time, two measures must be considered – allotted time vs. actual time in instruction. All six schools used a 90-minute period for the intervention. However, classes that happened during the first period tended to be curtailed by announcements, and those in the last period could be shortened for early class dismissal, assemblies, or meetings. Interruptions due to student behavior would further deplete from the allotted instruction time and may explain the difficultly that some RITs had in complete one lesson per day. Table 11 displays information on the number of lessons observed during the visits and the number of lessons completed during the observation. During the two site visits, the evaluators were able to observe four lessons in schools 1, 3 and 4; five lessons in school 5; and six lessons in school 2. Two of the RITs were able to complete the expected number of lessons during the observation, while the others had varied success in completing their lessons.

Table 11. Lessons completed during class time

Activities	Schools					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Number of lessons observed	4	6	4	4	4	5
Lesson completed in class	2	6	4	3	2	0

Days of instruction: During the monthly check-ins, the evaluators asked interventionists to report the number of days the school was closed as well as the number of classes that were cancelled during the time period covered by the check-in. Table 12 presents information on school closures and class cancellations as reported by the teachers.

Table 12. School closures and class cancellations

Number of Days	Schools					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
School closures	22.0	31.0	29.0	31.0	24.5	27.0
Cancelled classes	4.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	9.0	4.0
Total missed classes	26.0	31.0	29.0	34.5	33.5	31.0

The list of closures included holidays, teacher working days, and inclement weather. Reasons for class cancellations included professional development days, testing, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) award ceremonies. Overall, in the nine-month period of implementation data collection, students missed close to one month of instruction. It is important to observe that, although school closures appear to be high, many of those days were already part of the regular school calendar.[2] More importantly, the numbers of class cancellations were quite low, varying from 0 to 9 within September 2010 through May 2011.

Student attendance: Students' presence in the classroom was the final element considered to influence the dosage of the intervention. The evaluators had initially planned to request student attendance records from the participating schools at the end of the school year. Once the Striving Readers grant funding was cancelled, the evaluators chose not to place this additional burden on the schools and to focus resources on obtaining the student achievement data. Nevertheless, during the monthly check-ins, the evaluators asked interventionists to report on

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[2] Illinois require a minimum of 176 days of teacher/student contact; school districts can exceed these required days.

student attendance during the month covered by the check-in. Table 13 displays the percentage of "yes" responses to the question of "almost all students attended" *PRJ III* instruction within the month in check. For school 1, for instance, the RIT responded "yes" to the first option in 5 out of 8 check-in times. The main reason for sporadic attendance was student behavior. For instance, within the period of a month, one of the RITs had seven students suspended for a total of 20 days of missed classes, while another RIT had suspensions for a total of 34 missing days.

Table 13. Student reported attendance

Responses (%)	Schools					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Almost all students attended *PRJ III* class that month	62.5	75.0	100.0	87.5	100.0	87.5

Expeditions completed: The actual intensity of the intervention may be assessed by the number of Expeditions completed during the school year. Cambium establishes a pacing calendar for the interventionists to ensure that all Expeditions are covered within the school year. However, as discussed above, a number of factors intervened with the planned calendar. Table 14 displays the percentage of check-ins when the interventionists reported being on or off schedule regarding the pacing calendar.

Table 14. Pacing of instruction

Responses (%)[1]	Schools					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
On schedule	12.5	62.5	75.0	62.5	25.0	0.0
Ahead of schedule	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Behind schedule	87.5	37.5	25.0	37.5	75.0	100.0
Expedition completed[2]	4	9	10	11	11	7

[1] Percent of responses during the check-ins
[2] Information retrieved from VPORT on November 2011

As seen in the table, the majority of time, the interventionists were behind the schedule. VPORT includes information on the assessments conducted in the final lesson of each Expedition (lesson 10) with the number of Expedition. This information is displayed in the last row of the table. Of the 14 Expeditions that form the *PRJ III* curriculum, completion rates varied from 29 percent (4 Expeditions) to 78 percent (11 (Expeditions). However, the information must be viewed with caution, since it refers to assessments administered and entered into the system by the RITs. If the RIT was not up-to-date with the data input into the system, the information will be misleading.

All RITs had sufficient allotted class time to complete a full PRJ lesson per day, according to Cambium's parameters (50 minutes daily or 90 minutes every other day). However, actual instruction time varied from allotted time and classes could be curtailed for morning announcements or early dismissals. Additionally, classes could be cancelled or students would be missing for days, two events that disrupted the RITs' pacing. In fact, during the check-ins with interventionists, the issue of pacing was one of the most frequently cited concerns. Also,

RITs were concerned about striking a balance between maintaining the brisk pace while ensuring that all students were learning.

During the interviews, the VIS confirmed that pacing was a major issue. *"How do I get through this material in the amount of time and cover it with fidelity?"* was a frequently heard question, according to one of the two VIS assigned to the project. To address the RITs' concerns, the VISs suggested strategies to keep the lesson moving, while making sure that students were learning, and using the extra days in lessons 5 and 10 to maximize their efforts. Another recommendation was to let the students who scored on the higher Lexiles do more independent and challenging work to keep them engaged, while leaving the RITs with more class time to concentrate on the students with the lower Lexiles. The two VIS were discussing the possibility of extending lessons 5 and 10 to three days to allow for more re-teaching or catching-up, a change that was to be instituted the following implementation year.

Actual student use of technology

The ISR budget included money for the purchase of hardware to ensure that all classrooms had the needed equipment for the intervention, specifically computers and DVD projectors. The main technology component of the *PRJ III* is the *VocabJourney,* an interactive online game designed to help students with vocabulary practice tailored to their individual needs. Students could access *VocabJourney* at any time from any computer. The RITs reported that some students were very excited by the game and played it quite frequently (even at home) in order to earn as many points as possible. Alternatively, other students appeared totally disinterested in the game.

During the site visits, the evaluators noted that interventionists often asked students to play *VocabJourney* during any "down time" in instruction; for example when finished with an assessment or waiting for other students to complete their work. It is of note that Cambium does not recommend this practice. Instead, Cambium recommends that the teacher monitors student learning on *VocabJourney* and immediately intervene with individualized support as needed. The observers also noted, and interventionists reported, multiple problems with accessing *VocabJourney* during class time. RITs mentioned frequent computer "freezes," difficulty accessing the online portal, and problems with internet connectivity, among others. They also reported difficulty with the DVDs provided with the *PRJ*. Evaluators observed them struggling to find the correct location on the DVD that corresponded with a particular lesson or having problems with the DVD not loading correctly. Cambium was responsive to interventionists' requests for assistance, and it is the evaluators' understanding that Cambium even made some changes to the DVDs based on the RITs' feedback. RITs in all four school districts were using interactive whiteboards to provide more opportunities for students to actively participate in the lessons and Cambium experts were adapting lessons for use on the interactive platforms.

Student assessment procedures actually carried out

As detailed in *Part I, ISR Logic Model,* the *PRJ III* assessment system includes measures of text fluency and comprehension, end-of-lesson assessments, progress monitoring, and student self-assessments. The assessments were administered as planned and each RIT had a calendar with

the dates or times for the three Reading Benchmark tests, the Semester assessments, and the ongoing comprehension and vocabulary tests. Students' performances in the different assessments were recorded on VPORT and RITs used the information to individualize instruction according to information provided in the monthly check-ins. The school divisions also administered the GMRT® and Explore® assessments used for the impact study, as discussed in *Part III.*

VPORT displays results from the *PRJ III* assessments by school, class, and individual students. Table 15 displays a summary of class results on the three benchmark assessments administered during SY 2010-2011 as an example of the information provided. In the table, the results are displayed in Lexiles.

Table 15. Example of reporting on the benchmark assessments

School	Scores (Lexiles)[1]			
	B 1	B 2	B 3	Gain[2]
1	629.5	699.2	794.1	164.6
2	649.8	738.9	726.0	76.2
3	715.3	751.9	813.5	98.2
4	737.0	773.3	849.4	112.4
5	850.8	824.5	917.2	66.4
6	783.8	799.2	808.1	24.3

[1] Lexiles measured from 0L – 1500L
[2] Gain= B3-B1

Calculating fidelity of implementation

The classroom observation rubric comprised four sections. Sections A (context) and B (general lesson plan and delivery) were scored on a two-point scale whereby scores of 2 reflected adequacy, while scores below 2 reflected inadequacy. Section C (specific lesson plan and delivery) used a three-point score for C1 and C2 and two-point score for C3. Section D (classroom behavior and management) reflected percent of time where the specific behaviors were observed during the evaluators' visits. Each section received a weight that addressed the importance of the section within the overall classroom implementation model, as adapted from Cambium's IFI.

Table 16, on the next page, displays the scoring for each component in the four sections of the rubric. Based solely on the adequacy of delivery observed during the site visits, two of the six interventionists would have been classified as attaining high fidelity of implementation (score at or above 0.90), three would attain medium fidelity (scores between 0.70 and 0.89, and one would be classified as low fidelity (score below 0.70).

Table 16: Scoring for the classroom observation rubric

Components	Schools					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Number of classes observed	4	6	4	4	4	5
Classroom time observed (minutes)	46	47	50	59	49	47
Section A: Classroom Environment						
A1 - Sufficient space	2.00	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.40
A2 - Instructional areas	2.00	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.80
A3 - Teacher resources	2.00	1.80	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
A4 - Student materials	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Section score: $X_A/8$	1.00	0.85	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.65
Section B: Lesson Plan (General)						
B1 - Follows curriculum guide	2.00	0.50	1.00	2.00	1.50	0.60
B2 - Brisk pace	1.50	1.50	1.80	2.00	2.00	0.10
B3 - Skills modeled	2.00	1.30	2.00	2.00	1.90	0.80
B4 - Correction procedures	2.00	0.70	1.70	2.00	2.00	0.00
B5 - Students in groups	2.00	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
B6 - Differentiation	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	n/o
Section score: $X_B/(12 - \text{number of n/o})$	0.96	0.63	0.87	1.00	0.95	0.35
Section C: Lesson Plan (Specific)						
C1 – Components delivered in order	1.60	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.70	1.70
C2 – Steps delivered in order	0.90	1.10	0.00	2.00	1.30	0.70
C3 - Completed within suggested timeframe	0.00	2.00	n/o	2.00	n/o	0.00
Section score: $X_C/(6-\text{number of n/o})$	0.41	0.85	0.50	1.00	0.75	0.41
Section D: Classroom Management						
D1 - % time students pay attention	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.80
D2 - % time students respond to prompts	0.80	0.70	1.00	0.90	0.80	0.70
D3 - % time students actively participate	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.70
D6 - % time students follow expectations	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.90
D4 - % time teacher addresses behavior (x2)	1.60	1.70	2.00	1.80	2.00	1.60
D5 - % time teacher engaging students (x2)	2.00	1.10	1.70	1.70	2.00	1.90
Section score: $X_D/(\text{total time intervals} - N/A)$	0.90	0.81	0.96	0.91	0.97	0.83

Weighted scores							
Sections	**Weight**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
A	.20	0.20	0.17	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.13
B	.30	0.29	0.19	0.26	0.30	0.28	0.11
C	.30	0.12	0.26	0.15	0.30	0.23	0.12
D	.20	0.18	0.16	0.19	0.18	0.19	0.17
Classroom Fidelity Index		0.79	0.78	0.80	0.98	0.90	0.53

Table 17 displays the scores for the fidelity of implementation of both models (professional development and classroom implementation). According to these indices, all schools attained adequate implementation of the professional development model, while the fidelity of the classroom model ranged from inadequate to high fidelity.

Table 17. Fidelity scores per school

Model	Scores						Overall
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	
PD	1.24	1.47	1.42	1.16	1.00	1.58	1.31
Classroom	0.79	0.78	0.80	0.98	0.90	0.53	0.80
	Levels						
PD	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Classroom	M	M	M	H	H	I	M

Legend: I= Inadequate; M = Medium (Adequate); H= High;

Factors influencing the implementation

The initial framework which was proposed for the analysis of the *PRJIII* implementation included the two components of the logic model – professional development model and classroom instruction model. A third component was added to include elements that was not directly connected to the reading supplemental program, but which the evaluators considered relevant from their experience with the evaluation of education programs and initiatives. This component, called context, comprised two elements: physical resources and time in instruction, which included actual length of daily instruction (allocated time – time used for activities unrelated to instruction, such as announcements or classroom management) and days dedicated to instruction.

Two hypotheses were discussed on how to incorporate this third component into the framework. The first hypothesis considered context as a moderator of the classroom implementation, strengthening or weakening the implementation of the classroom instruction model. The second hypothesis considered context as an independent component, with similar weight as PD and classroom instruction. A provisional decision was made to incorporate context into the classroom instruction model for year one and, using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), "ask questions" to the first year data in order to fine-tune the model and the data collection process for year two.

During the planning year, the implementers made an effort to promote consistency across the schools. Teachers had similar background in terms of licensure and reading endorsements and received similar general professional development and individualized supports that addressed their particular needs, while the ISBE Project Director worked closely with the district liaisons to support the implementation within each school. Yet, levels of fidelity of the classroom implementation varied across schools. One school received a below adequate score, three scored within the medium implementation range, and two attained high level of implementation scores.

The analysis of implementation data revealed two main factors that worked as general contributors, either facilitating or hindering the implementation in all the schools, and four factors that varied across schools. A discussion of these factors follows.

General factors

Professional development and supports: Within the two components of the logic model, professional development and supports seemed to have worked as a "general" factor that facilitated the fidelity of *PRJIII* implementation at all participating schools. During the interviews, the VIS commented on the overall supports they and the RITs were receiving from the ISBE Project Director, the LEAs Project Coordinators, and the school principals. *"Principals have been very supportive, reshuffling classes to minimize behavior problems, and rearranging classrooms to make them more welcoming,"* observed a VIS. The LEA coordinators were described as very supportive and involved in the process, acting on feedbacks from the VIS and helping the RITs with needed resources. VIS and RITs alike commented on the benefits of the community of practice (CoP) organized by the ISBE Project Director. Regarding the CoP, the RITs particularly appreciated the opportunity to have a forum where they could exchange experiences and ideas and support each other.

Intervention format: For the second component of the logic model, classroom instruction, findings were more complex. The format of the program seemed to have worked as a "general" challenging factor for the implementation. Pacing and routine were the two characteristics of the intervention that received the most comments during the RITs' check-ins and site visits. As described in *Part I, Description of the intervention model*, *PRJ III* blends a repetitive approach of tightly structured daily lesson components with some flexibility to address the needs of an older student population. This includes more independent and paired student work than in the *PRJ* programs for lower grades (*Beginnings, I and II*). To allow for flexibility, Cambium does not establish the timeframes for each daily lesson component in *PRJ III*, as it does with the lower grade *PRJ* programs. However, in the interest of promoting implementation consistency across sites for the ISR project, Cambium, in consultation with the ISBE Project Director, developed suggested timeframes for each daily lesson component.

Interview and observation data indicate that RITs were struggling (with different levels of success) to attain the balance between the apparently conflicting requirements of keeping a brisk pace and completing the required lesson components in sequence while providing students with some flexibility and independence. The RITs also observed that students complained about the "sameness" of the lesson formats and attributed some of the observed student behavior to boredom. During the check-ins, the RITs recognized that Cambium was making changes in the program to address their concerns. However, as a VIS commented, establishing the routine was essential. When the implementation progressed successfully, commented the VIS, "you *can tell that a routine is established, because the [students] know what to expect."*

Specific factors

The analysis of the first year data suggests that neither of the two above factors influenced the implementation process by itself, but it was through a complex interaction with four elements

that are being called here "specific factors." For instance, although all RITs received the same type and amount of professional development related to the program, some showed greater ease in handling the program's challenges, including pacing and routine, while others struggled with them. Likewise, although the program format was the same across school, some RITs were dealing with issues of space that were not common to all schools and that appeared to have influenced how the program was implemented. The specific factors highlighted in the analysis of the first implementation year included: classroom management, defined as the teacher's ability to maintain student engagement throughout class time; classroom space; actual time in instruction; and implementation time. These elements appeared to behave not as factors in themselves, but as moderators of the two major components of the implementation. The role of these four elements would merit further exploration in year two if the grant had continued.

Classroom management: During the site visits, the evaluators observed a number of students disengaged from instruction and the RITs' sometimes unsuccessful efforts to engage them. It is of note that disruptive behavior was not commonly observed during the site visits, and the RITs or VIS did not comment that such behavior was a concern. The evaluators observed mostly off-task chattering, occasional "back talk," and students not responding to teachers' questions. As commented above, student "boredom" of the program routine was suggested by the RITs as a major reason for this off-task behavior. However, it was also clear that response to the "boredom" was different across the schools. Some RITs resorted to creative strategies to motivate students and increase participation, such as having students toss a ball to one another to respond to questions. Another said, "*I ended up typing the discussion questions ahead of time to give to students, because it's hard to get them to discuss in the group; they just don't feel like talking.*" Other RITs were less successful in their attempts to engage their students in the tasks at hand, which resulted in incomplete student assignments and/or inability to gauge student understanding of content taught. Likewise, although pacing was a common challenge across all schools, the ISBE Project Director commented that, "*the more effective teachers in the group are figuring out how to deal*" [with pacing], while others were clearly struggling and unable to finish their lessons within the allotted time, as detailed in Table 14 (p. 36). A major part of this "figuring out" was related to the teachers' ability to keep students on-task and minimize disruption to instruction. It is important to highlight that classroom management should not be interpreted as teachers' sole responsibility or ability. As discussed above (professional development and supports), school administrators had an important role in facilitating classroom management by "reshuffling classes" to minimize disruptive student behavior and rearranging classrooms to make them more welcoming.

Classroom space: Within context, classroom space was one component that differed at least in one of the schools.[3] It is of note that the only school where classroom space was a challenge also scored low on other measures, including overall lesson plan and classroom management, and the overall fidelity level was below adequate. The actual impact of space (or lack thereof) on instruction was not clear, particularly as the classroom observations were cut short due to the termination of the grant. Within the limited available data, lack of space was seen as influencing the teacher's ability to organize the room for effective group work, an integral part of the lesson

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[3] As a side note, inadequate space as a barrier to fidelity of implementation was also a finding in another Striving Readers project evaluated by RMC.

plan, and to maintain students engaged in the lesson, as the physical proximity between students facilitated off-task conversation.

Actual time in instruction: Also under context, actual time in instruction was another factor that influenced the implementation of the classroom model. Time in instruction is here defined as allotted class time (minutes allocated in each period) minus time dedicated to activities unrelated to instruction, such as morning announcements, administrative tasks, or time spent repeating lessons for chronically absent students.   Time off instruction due to other school-related activities affected mostly the first period classes through the morning announcements. Yet, RITs did not appear affected by this element, and most of the comments during check-ins were related to the "*chronically absent students.*"

Students were absent either for being suspended or simply avoiding attending the class. This reflected not only on missing days (that is, dosage of instruction), but also on time in instruction as teachers had to repeat information previously covered when the absent students returned to class. The study format was the reason for this factor. RITs commented that some students had been assigned to the treatment due to a low score in the grade 8 assessments (the eligibility criterion), but scored high in the *PRJ III* benchmark assessments. These were probably good readers who simply did not take tests "*too seriously,*" explained one RIT. The perception from the teachers was that the students were resistant to the intervention, because they did not need it and resented being labeled struggling readers. They simply would not come to class. However, the RITs were constrained to keep the students in class to maintain the fidelity of the random assignment. The data did not clarify how many schools were affected by this conflict between low grade 8 EXPLORE® score but high *PRJIII* benchmark score. At least one of the schools showed a clear impact of these students in the overall level of implementation. Had the study continued a second year, the data collection protocol would be changed to identify the number of students under this category and their attendance patterns.

Implementation time: Interviews with teachers and VIS suggested that the influence of classroom management and program format on classroom implementation was inversely related to familiarity with the program. As teachers progressed with the *PRJIII* implementation, and started feeling more comfortable with the program, they felt that student behavior and, concomitantly, classroom management became less of a problem. Likewise, pacing became less of a challenge. A comment from one RIT summarizes the impact of time on implementation familiarity,

> *Since October, discipline is a lot better. [The students] are maturing a bit. A bit more understanding of why we're here doing this. They know the routine so we can do it faster. We're able to do some writing now. Now I know we can make some modifications.*

Factors influencing the impact analysis

Regarding the impact analysis, two factors should be highlighted. The first factor was the variation in implementation across the schools, which resulted in a score of middle implementation for the overall project. The second factor, highlighted by the RITs, was that the outcome assessments were administered before the teachers had the opportunity to cover the curriculum. Students were still making progress but had already been assessed for impact. It is not clear how much another month of class would have changed the results of the reading assessments. Yet, since none of the teachers were able to finish the "regime," using a medical metaphor (none went beyond Expedition 11), studies where the "regime" is allowed to be completed may bring a better understanding of the impact of a supplemental program on adolescent struggling readers.

PART III: IMPACT STUDY

Study Design

The evaluation design proposed by RMC Research Corporation (RMC) to investigate the impact of the *Illinois Striving Readers* (*ISR*) project on student academic performance was to be guided by three major research questions: one exploratory and two non-experimental questions. The main (exploratory) question pertains to treatment (*PRJ III*) effects directly targeted with the experimental design of the *ISR*. *The two non-experimental* questions were intended to capture reading achievement of students before, during, and after their experimental exposure to *PRJ III*. With the abrupt cancellation of the study, only the main impact question was addressed.

- **RQ1 [Main Impact Question]:** What is the experimental (pretest-posttest) effect of the *PRJ III* supplemental literacy intervention on reading achievement of grade 9 students at the end of the first implementation year (SY 2010/11)?

RQ1 is addressed by using a two-level Hierarchical Lineal Modeling (HLM) model that takes into account the multilevel structure of the data defined by nesting students within schools. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests® (GMRT) 4th Edition and the reading component for the Grade 9 EXPLORE® were used to measure the reading achievement of treatment and control students.

Sample selection

As described in the *Introduction*, six high schools in four school districts in Illinois participated in the study. All of the schools were eligible to receive funds under Title I, Part A, pursuant to ESEA section 1113. The percentage of low-income students in these schools during SY 2008-09 ranged from 44 to 66 percent and the grade 9 enrollment ranged between 390 and 587 students per school.

Students enrolled in grade 9 at the six participating high schools who had records of taking the grade 8 EXPLORE® in the spring were considered for Striving Readers eligibility. Data on results from the ACT's assessment for the first project year were provided to the evaluator by the LEA Project Coordinator from the four participating districts during May and June 2010. This early date was important for the schools to ensure a smooth transition of students from grades 8 to 9 and allow for careful scheduling of all the students.

The total number of incoming ninth graders across the six schools was 1,985 in the first program year. Students who scored above 12 on the reading component of the EXPLORE® were determined to be ineligible for the study. The cutoff score of 12 was determined based on the following criteria:

- The cutoff score of 12 is approximately the 27th percentile of students, which is the recommended cutoff for the low performance category with normally distributed assessment data (Kelley, 1939). Preliminary data analyses revealed that the distribution of EXPLORE® reading data was normal.

- This cutoff score allowed for obtaining an adequate sample of eligible students that satisfies the minimum number of student participants required by the USED.
- The cutoff score matched previous school practices and teacher experiences in identifying struggling readers.

All students scoring at or below this criterion score were included in the list of eligible students returned to the schools so they could apply exclusions before the random assignment. The exclusions included students who had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifically forbidding their participation in a program like Striving Readers, and students whose parents requested that they be excluded from the study. Additionally, students who were retained in grade 8 were also excluded from the list.

Documenting attrition

After students were randomly assigned to the treatment and control groups, students who transferred to another participating school during the school year would continue their assignment as treatment or control group students. Only one school district had a high school that was not involved in the project. Therefore, for this LEA, data would be requested for the students who transferred to a non-participant school, as they would continue to be part of the impact analysis based on Grade 9 -EXPLORE® testing results but not on GMRT® results (GMRT® is not administered to students in schools outside of the Striving Readers project). The only students expected to be missing from the impact analyses would be those who missed the spring administration of the two outcome measures and those who transferred or otherwise stopped attending schools in the participating school districts. ISBE had indicated that a 10 percent annual attrition rate was to be expected. As a precaution, planning was made to study differential attrition by determining if there was a significant interaction between attrition status and experimental condition on baseline outcome measures.

Random assignment

The random assignment of students to intervention and control groups was conducted after obtaining the lists of eligible students with exclusions applied from the schools. A total of 855 students were included in this final list. The process for the random assignment included three steps. First the eligible students were assigned to pairs, with the students in each pair matched on relevant characteristics: EXPLORE® reading score, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), free and reduced meals (FARM) eligibility, special education status (SPED), gender, and ethnicity. Students were matched on as many criteria as possible. Then the students from each pair were randomly assigned to two different groups using a Bernoulli distribution function with $p = 0.5$. The process was completed by randomly assigning the two groups to the two treatment conditions (intervention or control). The resulting intent-to-treat (ITT) group, comprised of 855 students, represented 43 percent of the total enrollment across the six schools.

As soon as the random assignment was conducted, the evaluators provided the school representatives with the lists of students assigned to treatment and control group. Open communication between the evaluators, the LEAs, and the schools ensured that the transfer of these lists was efficiently handled and questions and concerns were addressed. The random

assignment results were provided to the districts between 5/10/10 and 6/30/10, depending on when the reviewed eligible lists were returned to the evaluator. Each school scheduler initiated the process of assigning students to their respective classes, with treatment students attending *PRJ III* while control students were to enroll in electives unrelated to reading supplemental intervention. Table 18 presents ITT group breakdowns by school.

Table 18. ITT breakdowns by school

School District	School	Treatment Group	Control Group	Non-Eligible	Total Enrollment
Danville	Danville	87	88	240	415
Decatur	Eisenhower	54	54	187	295
	MacArthur	62	62	161	285
Springfield	Lanphier	63	64	173	300
	Springfield Southeast	84	85	206	375
Kankakee	Kankakee	77	75	163	315
Total		**427**	**428**	**1,130**	**1,985**

Demographics of ITT group

The demographic makeup of the ITT group was primarily African American (58%). White students constitute 30 percent of the ITT group, while other races (American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, mixed, and other) represent 12 percent. The ITT group contained slightly more males than females, and the majority of students (85%) qualified for free and reduced lunch, which is used as the proxy for low socioeconomic status. Table 19 displays the demographic breakdowns for the ITT group. The matching procedure used in the random assignment process ensured that the demographic percentages were equally distributed between the treatment and control groups.

Table 19. Demographic breakdown of ITT group

Subgroups		Percentage
Race/ Ethnicity	African American	58.0
	Hispanic	5.0
	White	30.0
	Other	7.0
Gender	Male	56.7
	Female	43.3
Free and Reduced Lunch		84.7
Special Education		17.6
Total (N)		**855**

Random assignment monitoring

To monitor the integrity of the random assignment process the evaluator accessed VPORT, which allowed for inspection of which students were receiving the treatment. Also, the evaluator exchanged information with LEAs to confirm the status of ITT students assigned to control. The first monitoring review took place in December 2010. Information on attrition was gathered

from the LEAs to document the reasons why students were missing from their respective ITT group. Common reasons were: exiting the school; not being in the ninth grade (that is, retained in grade 8 after the random assignment had been completed); excluded after the random assignment process due to special education requirements; and not having available test data. Figure 3 displays the consort diagram showing the ITT group attrition in regards to EXPLORE, [®] while Figure 4, on the next page, displays the attrition in regards to GMRT[®].

Figure 3. Consort diagram – ITT group attrition in regards to EXPLORE[®]
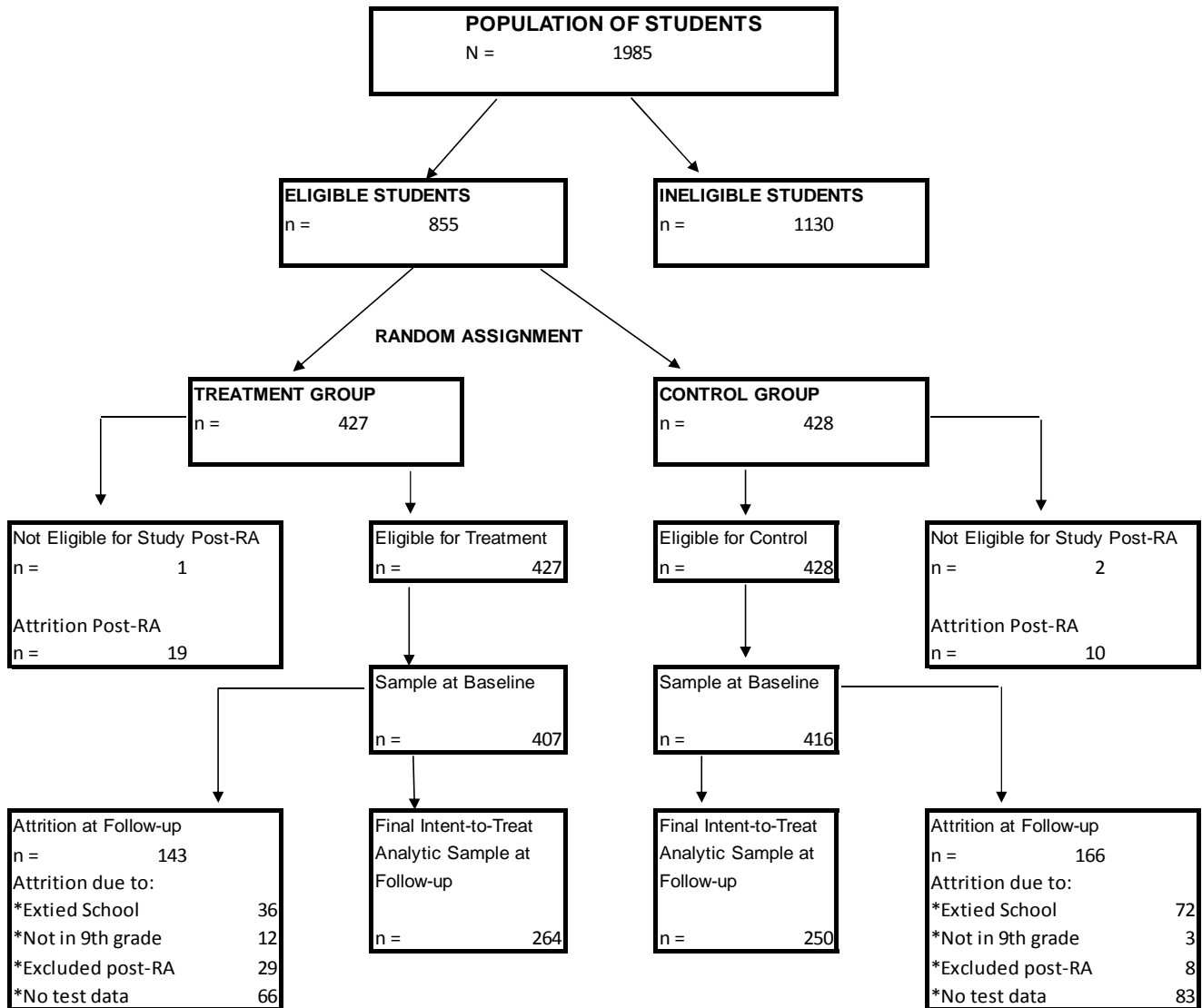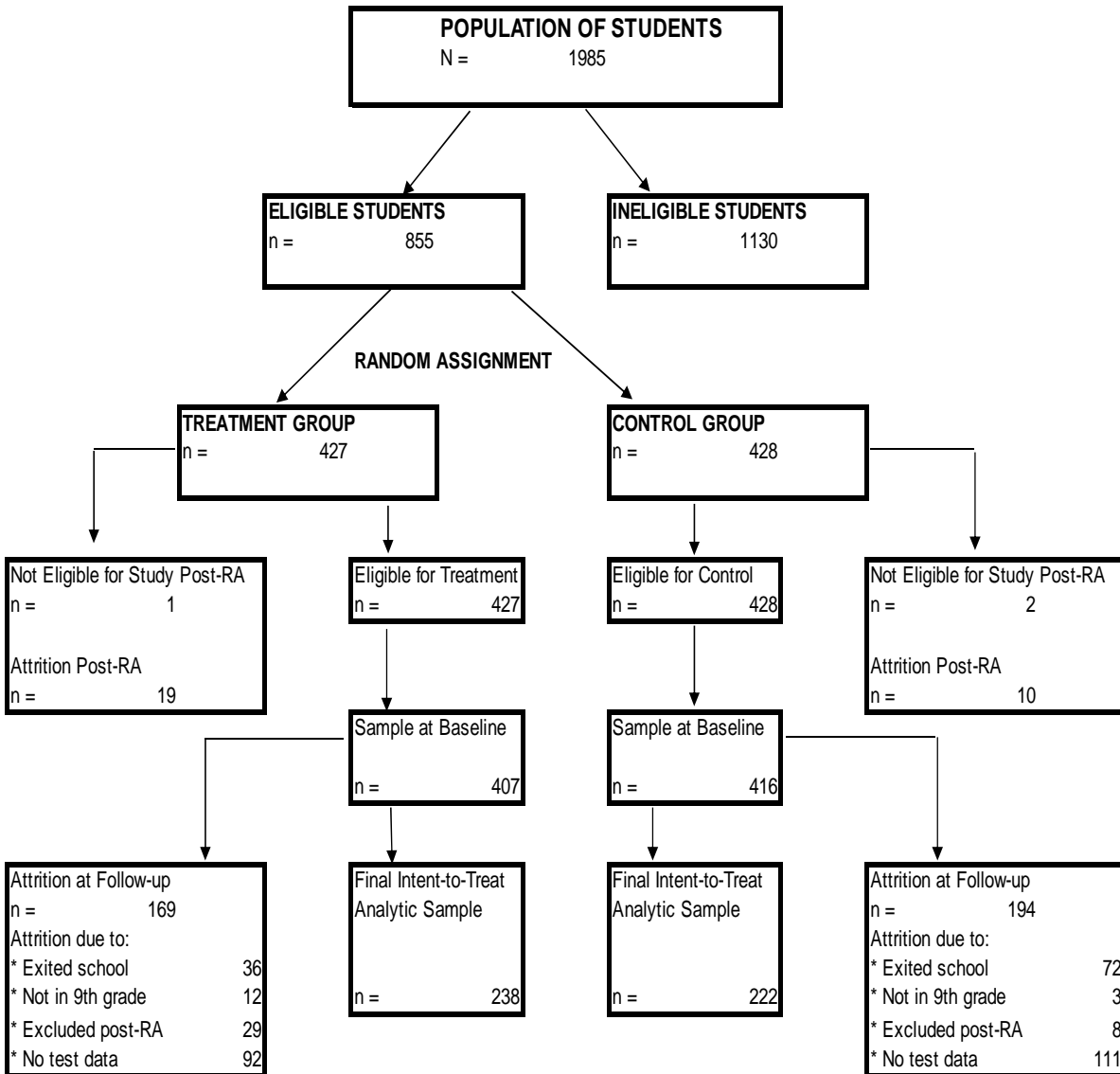
Figure 4. Consort diagram – ITT group attrition in regards to GMRT®

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                        POPULATION OF STUDENTS
                        N =           1985


        ELIGIBLE STUDENTS                    INELIGIBLE STUDENTS
        n =          855                     n =          1130


                        RANDOM ASSIGNMENT

        TREATMENT GROUP                      CONTROL GROUP
        n =          427                     n =          428


Not Eligible for Study Post-RA   Eligible for Treatment   Eligible for Control   Not Eligible for Study Post-RA
n =                  1           n =          427         n =          428       n =                  2

Attrition Post-RA                                                                Attrition Post-RA
n =                 19                                                           n =                 10


                        Sample at Baseline       Sample at Baseline
                        n =          407         n =          416


Attrition at Follow-up          Final Intent-to-Treat    Final Intent-to-Treat   Attrition at Follow-up
n =                169          Analytic Sample          Analytic Sample         n =                194
Attrition due to:                                                                Attrition due to:
* Exited school        36                                                        * Exited school        72
* Not in 9th grade     12       n =          238         n =          222        * Not in 9th grade      3
* Excluded post-RA     29                                                        * Excluded post-RA      8
* No test data         92                                                        * No test data        111
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Of the 363 treatment and control students who exited the study after the baseline: 108 (30%) exited the school, 15 (4%) were not in grade 9, and 37 (10%) were excluded after the random assignment process. The most common reason for attrition was a lack of test data, which accounted for 203 of the 363 (56%) of the students who exited the study after the baseline. The value for no test data in the "Attrition at Follow-up" box represents the number of students for whom test data was not available and the evaluator was not able to verify the cause for these missing data specific to the students. School and district staff indicated that these students had either exited the system or were absent on the testing day. They also mentioned that after the termination of the Striving Readers funds, RITs were reluctant to pursue testing for students with missing data, particularly with a testing instrument that was used specifically as an evaluation

tool for the grant. Thus, the number of students for whom test data were not available at the end of the year was high.

Final numbers for student attrition are based on the number of ITT students for whom the evaluator was able to gather post-test data. Of the 855 ITT students, 460 (53.8%) had data for GMRT pre- and post-tests. A dummy variable adjustment procedure was used to account for missing data in 17 instances, where the students had a GMRT post-test score from the spring, but no GMRT pre-test. For EXPLORE®, of the 855 ITT students, 514 (60.1%) had data for pre- and post-tests. A dummy variable adjustment procedure was used to account for missing data in 8 instances, where the students had an EXPLORE® post-test score from the spring, but no pre-test.

Data Collection

The following data were collected for the impact study:

- *Assessment data:*
    - *Diagnostic* (selecting striving readers) – Illinois' schools use EXPLORE, ® an assessment developed by ACT, Inc., with the grade 8 students to assess their ability to understand written materials from different school subjects. Results on the test were used to compile the list of students eligible for the study, as explained above.
    - *Impact* (assessing performance) – Two assessments were used to evaluate changes in student performance between the treatment and the control group students: the Gates MacGinitie (GMRT®) 4th edition, from Riverside Publishing, and the Grade 9 EXPLORE®, from ACT, Inc.

- *Demographic data:* student lists included information on gender, race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, special education status, and eligibility to free and reduced lunch. The data were used as covariates in the analysis model.

Table 20 displays a list of independent variables, the level of analysis where the variables were used, when they were to be collected and who provided the variables to the evaluators.

Table 20. List of independent variables used with the experimental design model

Variable	Level	Provided by	Notes on Data
Treatment Condition (Intervention vs. Control)	Student	School	Fall assignment
Grade 9 GRMT® [pretest]	Student	School	Annually– Fall (grade 9 only)
LEP	Student	School	Annually – test administration date
SPED	Student	School	Annually – test administration date
FARM eligibility	Student	School	Annually – test administration date
Gender	Student	School	Annually – test administration date
Ethnicity	Student	School	Annually – test administration date

Data Analysis

The main impact question—What is the immediate (pretest-posttest) effect of the *PRJ III* supplemental literacy intervention on reading achievement of grade 9 students for the 2010-2011 implementation year?—was addressed by using a two-level HLM model that takes into account the multilevel structure of the data defined by nesting students within schools.

Level 1 (within-school) part:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(PRJ_{ij} - \overline{PRJ}_{.j}) + \beta_{2j}(PRE_{ij} - \overline{PRE}_{.j}) + \varepsilon_{ij}, \qquad (1)$$

where:

Y_{ij} = the posttest score of student i in school j on the Grade 9 GMRT®;

PRJ_{ij} = a treatment indicator variable, with $PRJ_{ij} = 1$ indicating that student i in school j participates in *PRJ III*, and $PRJ_{ij} = 0$ otherwise;

PRE_{ij} = pretest score of student i in school j [on the Grade 9 GMRT®];

$(PRJ_{ij} - \overline{PRJ}_{.j})$ and $(PRE_{ij} - \overline{PRE}_{.j})$ indicate that PRJ_{ij} and PRE_{ij}, respectively, are centered around their school means [*group centering*, Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002];

β_{0j} = the mean of school j on the Grade 9 GMRT®; (by virtue of the group centering);

β_{1j} = the treatment (PRJ) effect for school j, holding constant pretest performance;

β_{2j} = the pretest/posttest *slope* for school j, holding constant *PRJ* (1 or 0);

ε_{ij} = errors; $\varepsilon_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$.

Level 2 (between-schools) part:

$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + U_{0j}; \ U_{0j} \sim N(0, \tau_{00})$,

$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + U_{1j}; \ U_{1j} \sim N(0, \tau_{11})$,

$\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20} + U_{2j}; \ U_{2j} \sim N(0, \tau_{22})$, $\qquad (2)$

where:

γ_{00} = the grand mean [on posttest Grade 9 GMRT® scores];

γ_{10} = the overall average VPRJ effect;

γ_{20} = the average pretest/posttest slope;

τ_{00} = between-school variance of mean scores;

τ_{11} = between-school variance of VPRJ effects;

τ_{22} = between-school variance of pretest/posttest slopes.

Note. A single estimate of the impact of *PRJ III* on reading outcomes (9 GMRT® scores) is provided by the HLM estimate of γ_{10}; (the precision of this estimate is provided by the HLM value of τ_{11}).

The dependent variable in the impact model defined by equations (1) and (2) is the posttest score of students on the Grade 9 GMRT®. Alternatively, the analysis under the same model was conducted with the dependent variable being the posttest scores of the students on the Grade 9 EXPLORE® (the findings from all analyses did not differ across these two dependent variables).

Impact on Students at the End of Year One

Impact on student reading proficiency

The computations for the estimation of parameters under the HLM model defined by Equations 1 and 2 were conducted by using the computer program for statistical analysis with latent variables in the framework of structural equation modeling Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2008). The analytic notations used in Equations 1 and 2, however, are consistent with the HLM notations adopted in Raudenbush and Bryk (2002) to facilitate the interpretation. The computer program Mplus was used for its efficiency in handling HLM missing data under the approach of multiple imputations adopted in this study (Allison, 2001; Asparouhov & Muthén, 2010a, 2010b; Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Multiple imputations were used to handle missing post-test data, whereas the missing pre-test data were replaced using a dummy variable adjustment, as mentioned above.

The examination of the results in Table 21 shows that the overall *PRJ III* effect ($\gamma_{10} = 0.39$) is *not* statistically significant ($p = .720$). In addition, the estimate of the between-school variance of the *PRJ III* effects ($\tau_{11} = 3.38$) is *not* statistically significant either ($p = .234$) thus indicating that the GMRT® performance of *PRJ III* students relative to the comparison group students does not depend on school membership. An additional support of this finding is that the estimate of overall *PRJ III* effect under the two-level HLM ($\gamma_{10} = 0.39$, $p = .720$) is practically equal to its counterpart obtained under the conventional OLS regression model defined by Equation 3 ($\beta_1 = 0.35$, $p = .666$). Note that the OLS regression model is for the entire sample students ignoring their school membership.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PRJ_i + \beta_2 PRE_i + \varepsilon_i \qquad (3)$$

where

$\varepsilon_i \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$ is the residual associated with Y_i—the posttest score of student i on the Grade 9 GMRT®.

Table 21. A two-level Hierarchical Linear analysis under the model defined by equations 1 and 2

Fixed Effects	Estimate	Standard Error	p-value
Grand mean (γ_{00})	**516.61**	1.92	$< .001$
Overall PRJ effect (γ_{10})	0.39	1.08	.720
Average within-school pretest/posttest slope (γ_{20})	**0.86**	0.03	$< .001$
Variance Components			
Between school			
Variance in site mean on GRMT scores (τ_{00})	20.96	12.44	.092
Variance in site PRJ effects (τ_{11})	3.38	2.84	.234
Variance in pretest/posttest slopes (τ_{22})	0.01	0.01	.167
Within school			
Residual variance (σ^2)	**128.92**	14.72	$< .001$

Note. The parameter estimates in bold are statistically significant ($p < .001$).

The examination of the results in Table 21 shows also that none of the between-school estimates of variance components (τ_{00}, τ_{11}, and τ_{22}) is statistically significant. In fact, this result is not a surprise given the relative similarity of schools (Title-I eligible schools not making AYP) and students scoring at the lowest quartile on the dependent variable measure (ACT's EXPLORE®). Therefore, without danger to validity of the results and their interpretation, we used a conventional OLS regression analysis for the total sample of students in all six schools to examine the (pretest-posttest) effect of the *PRJ III* supplemental literacy intervention on reading achievement of grade 9 students for the year 2010-2011. Under the OLS, we also investigated for possible effects of the within-school covariates gender, ethnicity, special education status, free and reduced lunch, and limited English proficiency using the analytic model in Equation 4. Given the dominating sample size for African-American students in all schools (see Table 19, p.38), the covariate for ethnicity was designed to examine the effect of African-American students versus all other students.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1(PRJ_i) + \beta_2(PRE_i) + \beta_3(GEN_i) + \beta_4(AA_i) + \beta_6(SED_i) + \beta_6(FRL_i) + \beta_7(LEP_i) + \varepsilon_i, \quad (4)$$

where
  GEN_i stands for gender ($GEN_i = 0$ if female, $GEN_i = 1$ if male),
  AA_i stands for African-American ($AA_i = 1$ if African-American, $AA_i = 0$ if Other),
  SED_i stands for special education ($SED_i = 1$ if 'yes', $SED_i = 0$ if 'no'),
  FRL_i stands for free and reduced lunch ($FRL_i = 1$ if 'yes', $FRL_i = 0$ if 'no'),
  LEP_i stands for limited English proficiency ($LEP_i = 1$ if 'yes', $LEP_i = $ if 'no'), and
  $\varepsilon_i \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$ is the residual for Y_i—the posttest score of student i on the grade 9 GMRT®.

The results in Table 22 indicate that, except for the regression coefficient of pretest scores, none of the regression coefficients associated with the other six covariates is statistically significant. As a side note, the same holds when each of these six covariates is taken separately in combination of the treatment variable, *PRJ* (the results are not shown here).

Table 22. OSL regression for the prediction of posttest scores on the Grade 9 GMRT®

Variable	B	SE(B)	p-value
Constant	71.852	10.997	< .001
Treatment *(PRJ)*	0.374	0.811	.644
Pretest	0.869	0.021	< .001
Gender	-0.332	0.824	.687
African-American	-0.104	0.841	.902
Special education	0.769	1.083	.478
Free and reduced lunch	-1.394	1.060	.189
Limited English proficiency	-0.533	5.888	.928

The analysis under the HLM model defined by Equations 1 and 2 was conducted again by using the student performance on the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® (instead of Grade 9 GMRT®) as the dependent variable. The results are summarized in Table 23. The comparison of the results in Table 21 and Table 23 shows that the findings described earlier for the HLM model with the Grade 9 GMRT® as an outcome variable are identical to their counterparts under the same HLM

model, but with the Grade 9 EXPLORE® as the outcome variable. The differences in the corresponding parameter estimates in the two tables are due to different scales for the Grade 9 GMRT® and Grade 9 EXPLORE®, respectively, but this is irrelevant to the (identical) HLM findings under these two scenarios.

Table 23. Two-level Hierarchical Linear analysis under the model defined in equations 1 and 2, with the Grade 9 EXPLORE® scores as the outcome variable

Fixed Effects	Estimate	Standard Error	p-value
Grand mean (γ_{00})	12.10	0.14	< .001
Overall VPRJ effect (γ_{10})	-0.26	0.19	.168
Average within-school pretest/posttest slope (γ_{20})	**0.37**	0.07	< .001
Variance Components			
Between school			
Variance in site mean on ACT scores (τ_{00})	0.08	0.05	.106
Variance in site VPRJ effects (τ_{11})	0.07	0.07	. 369
Variance in pretest/posttest slopes (τ_{22})	0.01	0.03	. 952
Within school			
Residual variance (σ^2)	**5.390**	0.845	< .001

Note. The parameter estimates in bold are statistically significant ($p < .001$)

Thus, under Grade 9 EXPLORE® as an outcome variable, the overall PRJ effect is *not* statistically significant ((γ_{10} = -0.26, p = .168) and the variation of the PRJ effects among schools is *not* statistically significant either (τ_{11} = 0.07, p = .369). Therefore, it was appropriate here again to run the conventional OLS regression model defined by Equation 4, with the outcome variable being the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® scores of the students regardless of their school membership that is

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1(PRJ_i) + \beta_2(PRE_i) + \beta_3(GEN_i) + \beta_4(AA_i) + \beta_5(SED_i) + \beta_6(FRL_i) + \beta_7(LEP_i) + \varepsilon_i , \quad (5)$$

where Y_i is now the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® score and PRE_i is the pretest Grade 9 EXPLORE® of student i.

The results are summarized in Table 24, on the next page. The findings based on these results for the prediction of the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® scores are similar to those based on the results in Table 22 for the prediction of the posttest Grade 9 GMRT® scores for the same set of predictors, with the exception that the regression coefficient for special education in Table 24 is statistically significant ($\beta_5 = 0.778$, $p < .001$). The positive sign of this regression coefficient indicates that the predicted posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® score for special education students is less than one point (0.778) higher than that for non-special education students when controlling for all other predictors under the model in Equation 5. One may argue that, despite its statistical significance, the unique contribution of the special education variable to the prediction of the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® scores (in favor of special education students) is practically negligible.

Table 24. *OSL regression for the prediction of posttest scores on the Grade 9 EXPLORE*

Variable	B	SE(B)	p-value
Constant	9.195	0.721	< .000
Treatment *(PRJ)*	-0.269	0.161	.095
Pretest	0.326	0.063	< .001
Gender	-0.199	0.164	.226
African-American	-0.154	0.166	.353
Special education	0.778	0.213	< .001
Free and reduced lunch	-0.039	0.210	.852
Limited English proficiency	0.011	1.170	.992

Additional Analyses

Experimental analyses

Subgroup analyses were also conducted to investigate for possible interactions between the treatment condition, *PRJ III*, and each of the five student-related variables used in this study: gender, ethnicity, special education, FARM, and LEP, while controlling for pretest scores on the Grade 9 GMRT®. Specifically, a two-factor analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed five times, with the posttest scores on the grade 9 GMRT® as a dependent variable, the pretest scores on the grade 9 GMRT® as a covariate, and the factors being the treatment condition (1 = *PRJ*, 0 = Control) and each the five student-related variables, respectively. In all five ANCOVA analyses, the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variances, and homogeneity of regression slopes were met. The only statistically significant effect in all five ANCOVAs was related to the interaction between treatment condition and gender, $F (1, 827) = 4.43$, $p = .005$, $p\eta^2 = 0.005$. At the same time, however, the partial eta squared value ($p\eta^2 = 0.005$) indicates that the effect size for the interaction effect is negligible as only 0.5% of the variance in the dependent variable is accounted for by the interaction effect between the two factors (*PRJ* and gender) while controlling for their main effects. With this in mind, the results showed that this interaction is of disordinal type, with the *PRJ* males scoring slightly higher than the control group males and, conversely, the *PRJ* females scoring slightly lower than the control group females. The descriptive statistics (ANCOVA adjusted means and standard deviations) are given in Table 25. Note that sample sizes reflect the analytical groups that contain imputed data.

Table 25. *Adjusted means and their standard deviations on the posttest Grade 9 GMRT® by treatment condition and gender*

Group	n	M	SD
Treatment (*PRJ*)			
Male	239	518.84	20.61
Female	182	516.31	20.28
Control			
Male	238	516.05	19.68
Female	181	517.32	22.78

The five ANCOVA analyses were conducted again but, instead of the posttest Grade 9 GMRT® scores, this time the dependent variable was the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® scores. The only statistically significant effect now happens to be the interaction between treatment condition and ethnicity (1 = African-America, 0 = Other), $F(1, 827) = 5.03$, $p = .025$, $p\eta^2 = 0.006$. The descriptive statistics (ANCOVA adjusted means and standard deviations) are given in Table 26. Clearly, despite the statistical significance of this interaction, the difference between the adjusted posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® scores for African-American and other students are practically negligible.

Table 26. Adjusted means and standard deviations on the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® by treatment condition and ethnicity[1]

Group	n	M	SD
Treatment (*PRJ*)			
African American	243	12.09	0.15
Other	178	11.86	0.18
Control			
African American	243	12.05	0.15
Other	176	12.54	0.18

[1]*African American = 1; Other = 0*

The overall finding from the ANCOVA analyses, in consistency with the regression analyses for the same variables on the same data, is that there are no main effects for treatment condition and student-related variables (gender, ethnicity, special education, FARM, and LEP) for any of the two dependent variables used in this study—the posttest Grade 9 GMRT® scores and the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® scores of the students. There are no interactions between the treatment condition and the student-related variables, with the exception of negligible interaction effects between treatment condition and gender for the posttest Grade 9 GMRT® scores and between treatment condition and ethnicity (1 = African-American, 0 = Other) for the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® scores as the dependent variable.

CONCLUSION

Illinois Striving Readers was a complex project that required schools to implement a randomized assignment of adolescent struggling reader students to treatment and control classrooms. It also required teachers to learn and implement a new reading program to some but not all of those struggling students while being observed. Randomization is not a common procedure in public schools, nor is learning a new program as part of a rigorous study that involves so much scrutiny. Despite these challenges, the project had a successful first year, with the classroom implementation attaining middle to high levels of implementation in five of the participating schools, and the randomization process maintaining its integrity in all six schools.

The planning year USED incorporated into the grant should be highlighted as a major contributor for this success. From the perspective of the implementation, the planning year provided time for the representatives from the state, local education agencies, and schools to familiarize themselves with each other, ask questions and solve concerns. The developers had time to address the questions brought by the school personnel before the actual instruction started, and propose adaptations to the intervention to address the uniqueness of each school. At the start of the implementation year, all participants had a clear idea of their roles, responsibilities, and expectations. They also had become familiar with the intervention, and when challenges started to appear as the implementation progressed, implementers and developers were able to work closely together to address the challenges.

From the perspective of the study, the planning year was essential for the evaluators to build trust with the implementers, learn about the different policies and regulations that could affect the study in each of the participant school districts, while addressing questions and assuaging fears from school administrators and school division representatives regarding the random assignment. Furthermore, the planning year provided the evaluators with enough time to become familiar with the intervention and to develop and test data collection instruments that better reflected the intervention model.

In April 2010, Striving Readers grantees and evaluators were notified that funds for the Striving Readers program had been cut by Congress and the project was to end as the first implementation year came to a close. In talking to the project participants, the announcement appeared to have caused no clear disruption in the implementation process. Four of the six RITs had tenure at their school districts and knew they would be assured a job, while the two recently hired RITs were also confident they would find jobs. The main comments regarding the process was the lack of time for the RITs to learn the intervention and work out potential challenges before the impact study was completed. As one VIS observed, *"The first year there are always kinks. Next year will be better because they'll know the procedures and will know about how to get started."* Likewise, one of the RITs commented,

> *The first year of a new curriculum . . . is always challenging. After we all got used to the routine, the students began to move forward... I am disappointed that the grant has ended, but I am thankful that my administration feels [PRJ] is an important part of the high school and decided to keep me here.*

At least two of the school districts decided to continue the intervention after the grant expired. The RITs in these two school districts expressed feeling happier that they would continue with the intervention without the constraints of the study. According to a RIT in one of these districts,

> *I will be having this same position for the 2011-2012 school year. We will select students based on need and attendance. A student will stay in the program only if their behavior allows others in the class to learn. I will be doing a small group rotation for the structure of the program. This allows students more of a variety throughout the lesson and will give me a chance to work with small groups of students on or close to their [reading] levels. I will still introduce the story as whole group but then move into small groups. I look forward to next years' experience.*

From the study's perspective, the sudden reduction in funds led the evaluators to curtail the evaluation activities related to implementation in order to conserve resources for the impact study and reporting, following USED recommendations. Plans to collect attendance data or further explore some of the preliminary findings had to be cancelled and the implementation study came to an abrupt halt. The school personnel also mentioned that after the termination of the Striving Readers funds, school staff was reluctant to pursue testing with the control group students, particularly with a testing instrument that was used specifically as an evaluation tool for the grant. This reluctance was reflected in the number of control group students without testing data.

Two lessons can be learned from this "rise and fall" of the second cohort of Striving Readers studies. The first lesson is that, for any study requiring schools to go outside their routines and incorporate randomized controlled trials, a planning year will certainly facilitate the understanding of the process, the buy-in, and therefore, the integrity of the randomization. The planning year also allows for building trust among the different players, including implementers, program developers and evaluators. This trust is essential to ensure open channels of communication, particularly when obstacles arise during the implementation. The second lesson is that a rigorous study should be given time to be completed in order to avoid the risk of presenting only provisional results that must be taken with caution. More importantly, such an abrupt end of a study that required so much initial commitment and preparation from implementers also risk leaving participants afraid of engaging in similar projects in the future. In the end, education research suffers.

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APPENDIX A: Summary Statistics for Outcome Measures

Unadjusted means and standard deviations on the posttest Grade 9 EXPLORE® by treatment condition

	Mean	SD	n
Treatment	11.99	2.824	264
Control	12.34	2.889	250

Unadjusted means and standard deviations on the posttest Grade 9 GMRT by treatment condition

	Mean	SD	n
Treatment	517.10	23.650	232
Control	517.16	25.824	216

*Note that the n's in this table add up to 448, which is 12 fewer than the final analytical sample presented in the consort diagram (Figure 4). This is due to 12 students – 6 in the treatment and 6 in control – having post-test data for only one component of the GMRT, and thus having no total GMRT score

APPENDIX B: Implementation study protocols

Illinois Striving Readers
Classroom Observation Rubric

Instructions to observer

1. Observers should stay for the whole class; if you need to leave the room before the end of the class, please check here and explain the reason in the back of this page
_____

2. Before starting the observation,

   a. Ask the teacher the number of the Expedition you will observe (from 1 to 10 in the Expeditions sequence).
   b. Within the Expedition, ask the teacher the number of the word study lesson she is teaching that day.

3. If you answer partially or no to any item in your observation forms, please use the back of the page to explain your answer.

4. In the classroom behavior/management table, if the behavior is not applicable during part of the observation time, write n/a and deduct that period from the score (e.g. instead of dividing by 5, divide by 4 or what is applicable).

5. Use back of the observation page to enter comments. You don't need to comment in every aspect of your observation but make short comments about behaviors or events that catch your attention and can be relevant to a better understanding of why the lesson occurred the way it did.

Note

Illinois has two days for lesson 5 and two days for lesson 10. Each expedition takes a total of 12 days

OVERVIEW

School: _____   Grade _____   Teacher Name: _____

Observer: _____   Observation Date: _____   Observation Time: _____

Lesson Number: _____   Expedition Number: _____   No. of students: _____

Was the entire lesson completed in the class period?   Yes_____ No _____

In addition to the teacher, is there another adult in the room?   Yes _____No _____

Who? (circle)   Special education teacher   Special education aide   Voyager coach

School administrator School district staff   Illinois Project Director   Other_____

A. **Classroom Environment** (complete at beginning of lesson)	Yes	Partially	No
1. Teachers have sufficient space to conduct individual and/or group work			
2. Instructional areas are clearly identified (i.e. whole group, independent small group, word study)			
3. Teacher resources for the daily lesson are readily available			
4. All students have readily available materials, as needed			

B. **Lesson Planning and Delivery – overview** (complete at the end of lesson)	Yes	Partially	No	Not observed
5. Teacher closely follows the curriculum guide during instruction				
6. Pace is brisk and business-like, yet personal				
7. Skills are modeled correctly				
8. The steps of the correction procedures are followed as needed				
9. Teacher puts students into groups as indicated by the lesson				
10. Teacher uses built-in differentiated instruction strategies as needed : re-teach lesson word study lesson English Language Learner strategies challenge questions Paired reading				

Lesson 1 Form

C. *Lesson Planning and Delivery-lesson specific* (Check the box next to each activity you observe)	Components delivered in order? (Y/N)	Steps delivered in order? (Y/N)	Components delivered within allotted time? (Y/N)
WHOLE GROUP 　Introduce the Expedition (10-15 min.) 　　Discuss probing questions 　　Start time_____ End time_____			
Before Reading (15 min.) 　　Introduce vocabulary 　　Start time_____ End time_____ 　　Introduce the target skill 　　Start time_____ End time_____ 　　Introduce the passage 　　Start time_____ End time_____			
During Reading (10-15 min.) 　　Students read text 　　Start time_____ End time_____			
After Reading (5-10 min.) 　　Check comprehension 　　Start time_____ End time_____			
INDEPENDENT 　　Students' practice vocabulary using the online technology component 　　Start time_____ End time_____ 　　Students' select books for independent reading 　　Start time_____ End time_____			

D. *Classroom Behavior/Management*	Minutes					Total
	10	10	10	10	10	
1. Half or more of the students are paying attention to teacher or following teacher instructions						
2. Half or more of the students are responding to teacher questions or prompts						
3. Half or more of the students are **actively** participating in the activities assigned by the teacher (group or individually)						
4. Teacher addresses student behavior promptly to minimize disruption in the classroom						
5. Teacher makes an effort to involve students who appear disengaged						
6. Students follow expectations for working in groups						

D. Classroom Behavior/Management Scale:　　1 Not At All   2 Occasionally   3 Frequently

Lesson 2/Lesson 4/Lesson 7/Lesson 9 Form

C. Lesson Planning and Delivery-lesson specific (Check the box next to each activity you observe)	Components delivered in order (Y/N)	Steps delivered in order (Y/N)	Components delivered within allotted time (Y/N)

WHOLE GROUP
   Prepare to Reread (15 min.)
       Introduce the lesson
       Start time_____ End time_____
       Practice vocabulary
       Start time_____ End time_____			

Reread (25-30 min.)
       Apply the target skill
       Start time_____ End time_____
       Write in response to reading
       Start time_____ End time_____			

Expedition Organizer (5-10 min.) This is meant to be a quick activity. There shouldn't be a lot of thought needed to fill in Parts A & B. It is spread out over several lessons, so all parts do not need to be finished immediately.			
Build Background DVD (5-10 min.) *Lesson 9 ONLY*			
While the larger group of students is independent reading, a small group of students may be involved in teacher-directed Word Study.			

D. Classroom Behavior/Management	Minutes					Total
	10	10	10	10	10	
1. Half or more of the students are paying attention to teacher or following teacher instructions						
2. Half or more of the students are responding to teacher questions or prompts						
3. Half or more of the students are **actively** participating in the activities assigned by the teacher (group or individually)						
4. Teacher addresses student behavior promptly to minimize disruption in the classroom						
5. Teacher makes an effort to involve students who appear disengaged						
6. Students follow expectations for working in groups						

D. Classroom Behavior/Management Scale: 1 Not At All 2 Occasionally   3 Frequently

Lesson 3/Lesson 6/ Lesson 8 Form

C. *Lesson Planning and Delivery-lesson specific* (Check the box next to each activity you observe)	Components delivered in order (Y/N)	Steps delivered in order (Y/N)	Components delivered within allotted time (Y/N)

WHOLE GROUP
    Before Reading (15-20 min.)
        Introduce vocabulary
        Start time_____ End time_____
        Introduce the target skill
        Start time_____ End time_____
        Introduce the passage
        Start time_____ End time_____			

During Reading (20-25 min.)
        Students read text
        Start time_____ End time_____			

After Reading (5-10 min.)
        Check comprehension
        Start time_____ End time_____			

INDEPENDENT
        Students practice vocabulary using the online technology component
        Start time_____ End time_____
        Students select books for independent reading
        Start time_____ End time_____			

D. *Classroom Behavior/Management*	Minutes					Total
	10	10	10	10	10	
1. Half or more of the students are paying attention to teacher or following teacher instructions						
2. Half or more of the students are responding to teacher questions or prompts						
3. Half or more of the students are **actively** participating in the activities assigned by the teacher (group or individually)						
4. Teacher addresses student behavior promptly to minimize disruption in the classroom						
5. Teacher makes an effort to involve students who appear disengaged						
6. Students follow expectations for working in groups						

D. Classroom Behavior/Management Scale: 1 Not At All   2 Occasionally   3 Frequently

Lesson 5/10 Forms

C. Lesson Planning and Delivery*-lesson specific (Check the box next to each activity you observe) *lesson 5 and 10 are conducted over two days each	**Major components delivered in order (Y/N)**	**Steps delivered in order (Y/N)**	**Major components delivered within allotted time (Y/N)**
WHOLE GROUP – teacher selects any or all options 　　Review, Extend, Assess 　　　　Review vocabulary 　　　　Extend vocabulary 　　　　Assess Comprehension and Vocabulary 　　　　Reteach 　　　　Passport Reading Journeys Library 　　　　Technology 　　　　Expedition Project 　　　　Writing Process			
While the larger group of students is independent reading, a small group of students may be involved in teacher-directed Word Study.			

D. Classroom Behavior/Management	**Minutes**					**Total**
	10	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	
1.　Half or more of the students are paying attention to teacher or following teacher instructions						
2.　Half or more of the students are responding to teacher questions or prompts						
3.　Half or more of the students are **actively** participating in the activities assigned by the teacher (group or individually)						
4.　Teacher addresses student behavior promptly to minimize disruption in the classroom						
5.　Teacher makes an effort to involve students who appear disengaged						
6.　Students follow expectations for working in groups						

D. Classroom Behavior/Management Scale:　　1 Not At All　2 Occasionally　　3 Frequently

ILLINOIS STRIVING READERS
READING SPECIALIST CHECK-IN PROTOCOL

School
(Check the school where the interventionist you are calling works)

Springfield		Decatur		Kankakee
	Lanphier		Eisenhower	
	Springfield Southeast		MacArthur Douglas	**Danville**

Date of Call
(Please write the day in the corresponding month of the call)

2010		2011	
	September		January
	October		February
	November		March
	December		April
			May

Note: Long interview with interventionists in June

Caller: _____

Professional Development

1. What professional development (PD) have you attended this month?

    ☐ None
    ☐ Voyager-related PD for _____ hours topic: _____
    ☐ School-based PD for _____ hours topic: _____
    ☐ Other: number of hours_____   topic: _____

2. If the answer to question 1 is no, why?

    ☐ No PD was offered this month

    ☐ Lack of time

    ☐ Lack of interest

    ☐ Other reasons (specify)_____

Coaching/Mentoring Support

3. Did you receive coaching/mentoring support this month from

☐
☐
☐
☐

    The Voyager Implementation Specialist

    School staff (assistant principal, other)

    Illinois Board of Education

    Other reasons (specify)_____

4. How many hours of coaching/mentoring support did you receive this month? _____

5. What was the focus of the meeting?

6. If you did not receive any coaching or mentoring support this month, why not?

    I will be receiving support next month

    I don't know if I will be receiving coaching or mentoring support

    I have been too busy

    Other (specify)_____

7. How would you rate the coaching or mentoring support you received this month?

    Not relevant   Very relevant

       1   2   3   4   5

    Insufficient   Sufficient

       1   2   3   4   5

8. How aligned is the training and support you received from the coach, the project director, the liaison, and any other Voyager staff?

    Conflicting   Very aligned

       1   2   3   4   5

Instruction

9. How was attendance in your classes this month?

    Almost all students attended

    ___ Number of students chronically absent (more than once a week)

<div style="border: 1px solid;">___ Students were suspended (OSS) for _____ days</div>
<div style="border: 1px solid;">___ Students were suspended (ISS) for _____ days</div>
<div style="border: 1px solid;">The school was closed for _____ days</div>
<div style="border: 1px solid;">I had _____ class days cancelled due to _____</div>

_____

_____

_____

10. What Expedition and Lesson are you on in each of your classes?

Expedition _____ lesson ____

11. In relation to the pacing guide, how far are you from where you should be at this time of the year?

I am ahead by _____ lessons in ___ classes (number of classes)

I am behind by _____ lessons in ____ classes

I am on schedule in _____ classes

12. What activities did you choose for the 5th and 10th days of the Expedition?

_____

_____

_____

13. Why did you make these choices?

_____

_____

_____

Use of time

14. Can you say that at least 80% of your time this month has been dedicated to teaching Voyager?

Yes _____   No _____

15. If not, what other duties have you been asked to do? _____

_____

16. Do you have scheduled time to plan your classes during the school day?

Yes _____   No _____

Conclusion

17. Is there anything you would like to share with us at this time about the implementation of

the program?

Interview Protocol - coaches
Date
Site

1. How frequently do you meet with the teachers?

2. What is the main focus of her work with the teachers?

3. What issues the teachers are encountering?

4. How much support are they receiving from principals?

5. What factors do you feel influence the implementation of the intervention?

6. Other comments?