

THE IRIS CENTER FOR TRAINING ENHANCEMENTS

3+2 BRIEFING BOOK



IRIS-WEST

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING
CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY
(866) 626-IRIS
IRIS@CGU.EDU

IRIS-CENTRAL

MODULES AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
(800) 831-6134
IRIS@VANDERBILT.EDU

IRIS-EAST

PARTNERSHIPS AND CONSUMER INPUT
WASHINGTON, DC, METROPOLITAN OFFICE
(703) 239-1557
JUDYS@COX.NET

PROJECT OFFICERS: ANNE SMITH, SHEDEH HAJGHASSEMALI · PROJECT # H325FO60003



SECTION 1: PROJECT OVERVIEW

The IRIS Center for Training Enhancements (IRIS II) is the successor to the IRIS Center for Faculty Enhancement (IRIS I). It is our belief that a knowledge of the efforts of IRIS I will enhance the Review Team’s understanding of our current work, and so a brief history of both projects follows.

Among the many projects funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the IRIS agenda is unique. The IRIS Center makes available to college and university faculty and professional development (PD) providers instructional resources and services related to the education of students with disabilities in inclusive settings. These resources—designed to supplement college courses or inservice training—are accessible, without restriction or cost, via the Internet. In one sense, the Center’s target audiences are those preparing these future and present professionals: college and university faculty and PD providers. In another, the Center’s target audiences are college and university students preparing for careers as education professionals—that is to say, general and special education teachers, school leaders, or related services providers—and all practicing education professionals. In addition to creating, producing, validating, and disseminating a wide array of instructional materials and resources, the Center offers technical assistance and outreach services to those who use IRIS resources in their courses or in training activities. No other OSEP-funded center has this mission.

In 2001 the IRIS Center for Faculty Enhancement (IRIS I) was created to address an entrenched national concern over general educators’ unpreparedness to assume increased responsibility for the education of students with disabilities. Since the passage of IDEA in 1975, more and more students with disabilities had begun to attend their neighborhood schools and to receive their education alongside classmates without disabilities. Accountability for the education of students with disabilities no longer rested solely—or even mostly—with special educators. Naturally, such a shift in educational responsibility did not take place over night. Indeed, it took many decades. Nevertheless, it is still all too common for teachers, administrators, and other school personnel to indicate that they feel ill-prepared to meet the academic and behavioral needs of these students. And, despite the fact that induction and professional development activities help improve skills and knowledge related to effective instructional and behavioral techniques, newly graduated professionals likewise voice apprehension about working with students with disabilities. Why might this be so?

One answer lies in the content of colleges courses for future educators, which has simply not adjusted to the increased participation of students with disabilities in general education settings. Many of the textbooks used in teacher education courses lack content about special education students, and college faculty often lack confidence in their knowledge or experiences regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities. To answer these challenges, IRIS I, housed at Vanderbilt University, was funded by the federal government’s OSEP to create and disseminate instructional resources concerning students with disabilities to non-special education college and university faculty.

Response to IRIS I was overwhelmingly positive. The reasons for this, we believe, are multifarious. For one, IRIS I followed the guidance of professionals with experience in adult learning and distance delivery to develop an effective system for infusing knowledge and skills about working with students with disabilities into pre-service preparation programs for education professionals. Meanwhile, advances in Web-based technology made it possible to disseminate information broadly and to offer course enhancement materials and modules inexpensively to almost every faculty member in the country. Because the IRIS I resources were freely available online, word quickly spread to those who were not necessarily part of the approved constituent groups; professionals from state education agencies (SEAs), for example, or professional development providers and special education faculty. Although IRIS I was not funded to serve these groups, they were welcome to access the available materials. However, when

said groups contacted the IRIS Center with requests for additional training or support, the Center was unable to comply.

Such increased interest and expanding constituencies did not long escape the attention of OSEP, which, when it released the application package for a second five-year cycle, expanded the work of the center to encompass all education professionals: general and special educators, school leaders, and related services providers. OSEP also expanded the Center's work to include a significant dissemination, scaling-up, and outreach component. The IRIS team, in response to that RFA, developed a proposal and was awarded funding in October 2006. Under the direction of Naomi Tyler, IRIS-Central remained at Vanderbilt University, the Center's fiscal agent and host to much of IRIS's original team. Following the successful arrangement for representation in the Washington, DC, area and having developed partnership connections during IRIS I, Judy Smith-Davis continued to lead these activities. Meanwhile, Deb Smith established an office at Claremont Graduate University (CGU) from which to coordinate the Center's training, outreach, and national scaling-up efforts. The overarching purpose of IRIS II remains the same as that of IRIS I: to improve the knowledge and skills of the professionals who work in inclusive settings, thereby increasing the education outcomes of students with disabilities.

Goal and Objectives

Detailed below is the overall goal for IRIS II, as well as the project's objectives and their overarching activities. These components make up the core of the Center's work and are referenced throughout the remainder of the Briefing Book.

Overall IRIS II Goal: To create and implement a comprehensive national resource for faculty teaching pre-service courses in education, and for those conducting professional development activities, that will result in new graduates and practicing professionals who can better meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Objective 1: Identify needs and existing resources.

Overarching Activities: inform the work through consumer focus groups, reviews of texts and literature, surveys of constituents, and continuous feedback loops through meetings of consumers and stakeholders

Objective 2: Establish a group of advisors to guide the project.

Overarching Activities: establish and meet with the three advisory board groups, consult with technical advisors

Objective 3: Conduct focus groups and structured interviews.

Overarching Activities: identify the needs of relevant groups, including faculty, practitioners, pre-service trainees (i.e., college students preparing to be educators), professional development providers, parents, and other stakeholders

Objective 4: Develop modules and materials.

Overarching Activities: identify, create, and revise an array of enhancement materials, tied to SPP indicators when appropriate; translate content into Web-based interactive modules via the *STAR Legacy* model

Objective 5: Disseminate modules and materials; deliver technical assistance to encourage use and ensure fidelity.

Overarching Activities: deliver modules and materials via the Web site, develop a menu of dissemina-

tion vehicles, provide consumers with technical assistance delivered through a variety of formats to ensure use of materials and fidelity to the *STAR Legacy* model

Objective 6: Conduct a comprehensive evaluation.

Overarching Activities: field test and pilot materials, modules, and services; survey users to assess materials’ effectiveness; assess learner outcomes; determine viability of various outcome measures; evaluate impact through Web site usage; evaluate partnerships

Objective 7: Manage the project effectively and efficiently.

Overarching Activities: ensure cost effectiveness, collaborate with OSEP, coordinate work between sites, maintain timeline, ensure delivery of proposed products

It is important to understand that the specifics of the IRIS Center’s scope of work is shaped through a comprehensive consumer-input process. The IRIS endeavor is fluid, one informed continually by consumers (graduates, faculty, practitioners, parents, and students), stakeholders, and OSEP. The result, as expected, is an evolving set of activities that deepens through the input, needs, and feedback of its consumers, constituents, and the federal government. And though such input has predictably necessitated certain adjustments to the project’s activities, the integrity of the Center’s goals and their supporting objectives remain intact. A detailed discussion of the Center’s activities, refinements to those activities, outcomes, and accomplishments can be found in Section 2 of the Briefing Book.

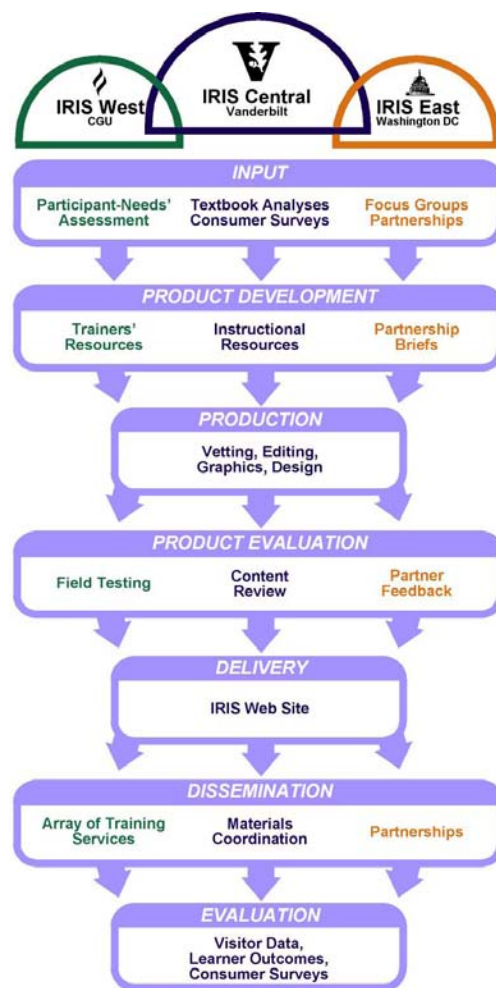
Figure 1.1. IRIS Organization

Organizational Chart

The charts included in this section illustrate the method of collaboration and collective input employed by IRIS staff to develop partnerships and create resources that are not only forward-looking and research-based but are also interesting, engaging, interactive, and presented through accessible platforms and disseminated across multiple venues. The chart to the right illustrates the IRIS Center’s organizational structure, exemplifying the shared responsibility and creativity used to efficiently and effectively meet the Center’s goals and objectives.

As noted above, the IRIS Center has offices across the country. IRIS-Central, based at Vanderbilt University, serves as the heart of the organization. There, the development of IRIS resources is coordinated, and the *STAR Legacy* Modules, case studies, and other resources produced and posted on the Center’s barrier-free Web site. IRIS-West, based in California at Claremont Graduate University, coordinates the Center’s training, technical assistance, outreach, and national scaling-up activities. IRIS-West is supported through a subcontract with Vanderbilt University.

The office in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area (IRIS-East) is funded through Vanderbilt and IRIS-Central: Expenses for all activities are paid directly by Central, for which IRIS-East’s director is technically a consultant. Regardless, this of-



Office provides liaison services to OSEP, DC-based partners, funded projects, and other organizations and agencies. IRIS-East also conducts and coordinates the Center’s focus group input activities.

Personnel

Over the past two years, the IRIS Center has seen a number of staff changes. The most significant—those having to do with key personnel or affecting change in the budgeting process—are detailed below.

IRIS-Central:

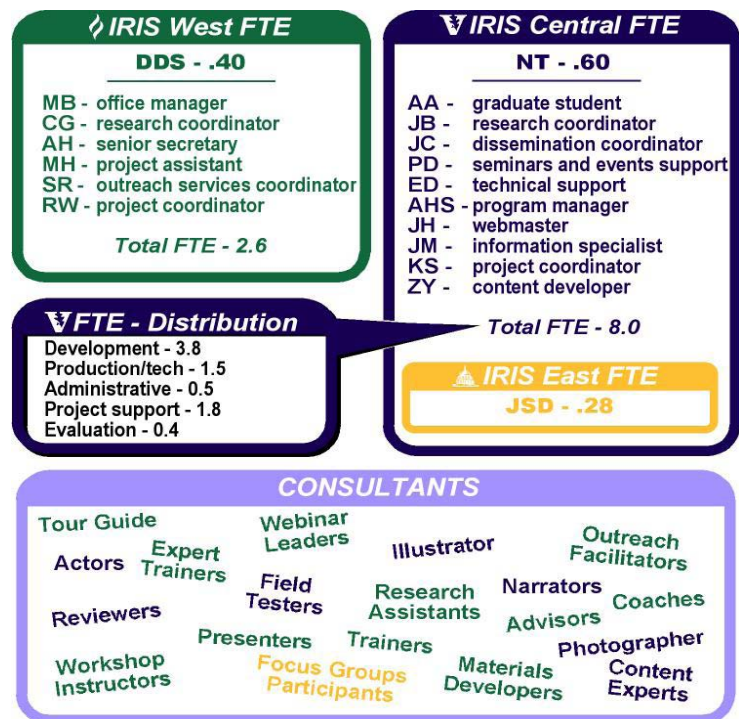
- Before the initiation of IRIS’s second cycle, Dr. Georgine Pion indicated that she would not continue as the Center’s evaluator, a role she had fulfilled for IRIS I. Dr. Janice Brown, already part of the IRIS team, increased her time commitment to the Center and assumed overall evaluation responsibilities.
- The Center’s fiscal manager position was eliminated when Vanderbilt administrators determined that those responsibilities (and the costs of that position) should be borne by the university rather than by the IRIS Center. The administrative officer for the special education department now serves as the Center’s fiscal manager at no cost to the project.

IRIS-West:

- Before the project’s initial start date, Roxanne Watson replaced Dr. Jeanne Fryer as project coordinator. The original plans were for Dr. Fryer to share time between IRIS and the CGU Teacher Education Program, where she is the Special Education Coordinator. However, due to the popularity of that program and increased enrollment, the CGU position required much more of her time than she had anticipated. Therefore, Ms. Watson was hired to coordinate the work undertaken at IRIS-West.

IRIS Staffing. The co-Principal Investigators for the IRIS Center are Drs. Naomi Chowdhuri Tyler and Deborah Deutsch Smith. Each directs one of the IRIS offices. Dr. Judy Smith-Davis directs all activities in regards to partnerships, organization and agency liaison, and focus groups for the Center’s needs-assessments and feedback loops. Her work and that of IRIS-East is carried out under the auspices of IRIS-Central at Vanderbilt. It is important to understand that all of the work conducted by IRIS is considered a joint venture. For example, though IRIS-West has primary coordination responsibilities for training and outreach services, such activities are conducted by all members of the IRIS Team. Although modules are developed through IRIS-Central, the staff of West provides considerable input. When the Web site was undergoing redesign and the

Figure 1.2. IRIS Staff Interaction



Resource Locator was being conceptualized, weekly Web-based teleconferencing involved members from all three IRIS offices. In addition, IRIS maintains a large consultant bank so that all of its services can be developed and delivered in a timely fashion. Figure 1.2 above illustrates how the Center’s staff works together to carry out IRIS’s ambitious activities.

Timeline of Project Activities

The timeline below is taken from the IRIS II proposal and indicates the schedule of delivery for the activities under implementation. Objectives and activities marked with an asterisk (*) have been altered as a result of consumer input and no longer match those in the original proposal. These changes are detailed in Section 2.

Table 1.1. Timeline of Project Activities

	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Yr. 5
<i>Objective 1: Identify needs and existing resources</i>					
1-1. Summary of challenges and needs					
1-2. Summary of current and existing resources					
1-3. Collaboration with OSEP and funded centers					
1-4. Inform work through needs assessment/feedback process					
<i>Objective 2: Establish a group of advisors</i>					
2-1. Use input from Steering Comm.					
2-2. Use input from Ex. Comm. of Partners					
2-3. Use input from Ex. Comm. of Related Services Providers					
2-4. Use input from Technical Advisors					
<i>Objective 3: Conduct focus groups and interviews*</i>					
3-1. Identify needs of faculty					
3-2. Identify needs of practitioners					
3-3. Identify needs of pre-service trainees					
3-4. Identify needs of PD providers					
3-5. Identify needs of parents					
3-6. Identify needs of other stakeholders					
<i>Objective 4: Develop modules and materials</i>					
4-1. Distribute extant resources online					
4-2. Develop categorized list of needed materials					
4-3. a) Revise older modules and (b) develop new modules	4	2 4	2 3	2 4	1 3
4-4. Develop additional resources: a) activities b) case studies		5 2	5 2	5	5
4-5. Link modules and materials to state standards*					

Table 1.1. Timeline of Project Activities (Cont.)

<i>Objective 5: Disseminate and provide assistance</i>					
5-1. Provide free online materials through Web site					
5-2. Promote IRIS materials in textbooks and supplements					
5-3. Provide dissemination, training, and technical assistance					
5-4. Implement Training-of-Experts approach					
5-5. Develop flexible approaches for scaling up					
5-6. Enable participants to conduct research for publication					
<i>Objective 6: Conduct project evaluation</i>					
6-1. Field-test and pilot modules and materials					
6-2. Survey faculty and PD about materials' effectiveness					
6-3. Assess learner outcomes					
6-4. Determine viability of different outcome measures					
6-5. Evaluate Web site usage					
6-6. Evaluate promotion through textbooks, etc.					
<i>Objective 7: Manage the project effectively</i>					
7-1. Ensure cost-effectiveness					
7-2. Collaborate with OSEP					
7-3. Coordinate work between IRIS sites					
7-4. Maintain schedule of activities					
7-5. Ensure delivery of promised products					

Budget

The budget supporting the IRIS Center for Training Enhancements was developed two years ago as the IRIS staff eagerly looked forward to continuing the innovative and creative work of IRIS I as well as to assuming the new challenges of increased dissemination, training, and scaling-up components. Since that time, we have learned—and continue to learn—about the costs associated with this work. As those efforts have unfolded, shifts have occurred in allocations due to underestimates of the costs for some activities, personnel changes, and unanticipated cost categories.

Unexpended funds from Year 1 remain protected in Year 2. Some \$660,000 was unexpended in the Year 1 budget due to an overlap between IRIS I and IRIS II, a highly involved and work-intensive Web site revision, the need to develop an array of supporting training materials, and continuing work on two smaller related projects. IRIS II launched while IRIS I still had 10 months remaining in a no-cost extension. A major portion of IRIS Central staff salaries and fringe benefits were charged to the no-cost year of IRIS I and the other two grants, reducing considerably the personnel and fringe line items for Year 1. (Note: The IRIS I extension was granted due to the coordinated efforts of two OSEP project officers who—knowing the national demand for quality materials on RTI—supported a concentrated endeavor to prepare that module series through the Tennessee State Improvement Grant [TN SIG]. In order to expedite the production of the RTI series, the Center effectively held in abeyance the IRIS I workscope for approximately 18 months, thus necessitating the aforementioned no-cost extension.)

Though, because of its complexity and comprehensiveness, the Center's focus group work was concluded in Year 2, most of the other work originally proposed for Year 1 was, in fact, completed on schedule. For example, other aspects of the needs assessment-process—textbook analyses, Web surveys, use-data analyses—were seen to completion during Year 1. And, although it took much longer than was anticipated and was clearly a more complex task than we'd at first conceived, the revision of the IRIS Web site, too, was seen to its conclusion on time and, we believe, more than justifying the additional effort.

Much of the unexpended funds from Year I (\$390,000)—now being spent to deliver training services—are associated with IRIS West's-training activities and delivery of faculty seminars. These were delayed in Year 1 for three reasons:

1) They could not be held until the Web site revision was complete, and the revision was considerably more complicated and time-consuming than originally anticipated (this is discussed further in Section 2).

2) The demand and need for different types of training services became clearer through consumer input and feedback. Whereas conference and meeting presentations along with 1½-day regional seminars were the originally projected array of services, the scope of the Center's services had expanded to now include Web tours, Webinars, workshops, and other venues described in the next section of this briefing book.

3) The team of trainers advised (correctly) that a considerable array of materials needed to be developed for their use in training activities. Also several pilot seminars were required to train and vet IRIS Experts who are now able to independently conduct training events. This process is ongoing.

Because full-scale training, outreach and national dissemination activities were held in abeyance, the Center saved considerable funds during Year 1. However, in Year 2, events originally scheduled for Year 1 are being conducted—as are, of course, those originally planned for Year 2—to the effect that the aforementioned savings will be expended on training and outreach services.

Two additional sources of funding supported the Center during its first two years: A Steppingstones research grant, which funded an examination of the learning outcomes of college students who use *STAR Legacy Modules* in their courses, and a subcontract to the TN SIG/ Department of Education to develop a series of modules on RTI. The Steppingstones grant is in a no-cost extension that will end on December 31, 2008; the TN SIG grant ended on June 30, 2008.

The full budget detail for the Center comprises 80 pages, making its inclusion in this document impractical. However, the line-item budget for all five years is included on the following page.

Table 1.2. IRIS Line-Item Budget

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Personnel	\$335,808	\$405,105	420,178	\$446,821	\$462,169
Fringe	\$80,296	\$97,222	\$100,886	\$107,513	111,968
Supplies & Materials	\$49,652	\$16,179	\$28,673	\$17,972	\$21,582
Travel	\$41,909	\$28,954	\$22,651	\$22,001	19,981
Other	\$289,131	\$239,520	\$214,935	\$204,340	\$175,169
Direct Costs Subtotal	\$796,796	\$786,980	\$787,322	\$798,648	\$790,869
CGU Subaward	\$487,461	\$487,462	\$487,461	\$487,461	\$487,461
IDC	\$65,744	\$62,958	\$62,986	\$63,892	\$63,270
Student Support		\$12,600	\$12,231		
Total	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,349,999

SECTION 2: ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This section of the Briefing Book contains information about product development and dissemination to the IRIS Center’s two constituent groups: college and university faculty and professional development providers. The Center’s activities and notable accomplishments are highlighted, and an inventory of products and resources is included. Finally, the various barriers and challenges faced and overcome by the Center are considered in detail.

Target Audiences: Faculty and Professional Development Providers

Funded by OSEP, the IRIS Center creates training enhancements for three categories of college faculty—general education, educational leadership, and special education—as well as for professional development (PD) providers who specialize in enhancing the skills and knowledge of practicing school professionals. Though many non-special education faculty are engaged in the preparation of the next generation of school personnel, most of these faculty members have themselves received little training having to do with students with disabilities, validated methods for differentiating instruction, the provision of accommodations, or the implementation of sustained and intensive supports and instruction. It is for this reason—or for the reason that, in many cases, they received their doctoral training long before the current “information explosion”—many college faculty are simply unprepared to translate current research into their course content. PD providers, too, have a pressing need for current and validated resources. It is through personnel preparation and professional development that the IRIS Center aims to answer both of these challenges.

Major Findings and Outcomes

Below is a description of the Center’s achievements during its first two years, as well as a discussion of the improvements made to originally proposed activities with a goal toward enhancing their outcomes or offering more relevant services and products. Following the *Outcomes by Objectives* section, we describe the process that has evolved to develop and refine these products and services, and discuss the important lessons that we have learned through it. Our hope is that by reading these pages you will recognize—as we have come to—that though the effort is more complex than originally anticipated, it holds out a greater promise, one of making a difference in the preparation of school personnel and an impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Outcomes by objectives. The findings and outcomes of the IRIS Center are presented as they relate to the objectives and activities outlined in the original proposal and in Section 1 of the Briefing Book. Following highlights of the overarching activities that support the achievement of each objective, we will explain the outcomes of these activities and describe how the IRIS effort has evolved.

Objective 1: Identify needs and existing resources.

Overarching Activities: inform the work through consumer focus groups, reviews of texts and literature, surveys of constituents, continuous feedback loops through meetings of consumers and stakeholders

1-1 Identify challenges, gaps, and needs

Findings/ Outcomes:

Textbook analyses. Seventy-eight college textbooks in six pre-service training areas were analyzed to determine how many of 19 relevant topic areas (e.g., accommodations, assessment, IDEA ’04, diversity, universal design for learning [UDL]) they included. The data below clearly indicate that supplemental resources are needed to complement textbooks on important topics relating to the appropriate education

of students with disabilities:

- RTI (0%)
- UDL (0%)
- related services (1%)
- IDEA '04 (1%)
- accommodations (3%)
- assistive technology (3%)
- differentiated instruction (12%)
- learning strategies (5%)
- early childhood (8%)
- math (8%)
- school improvement (9%)
- transition (9%)
- content instruction (12%)

Web survey: During two weeks in September, some 332 respondents—182 of whom were college faculty—took part in the IRIS Center’s Web survey (see *Appendix C* for more details). According to these respondents, the top five areas of need are:

- learning strategies
- differentiated instruction
- RTI
- assessment
- behavior

1-2 Review and identify existing resources

Findings/ Outcomes: At the beginning of IRIS II, external consultants reviewed the 80 information briefs posted during IRIS I. Only the most current, relevant, and highest-quality briefs were left on-line. New briefs from extant sources (e.g., members of the TA&D network) were subsequently added to the collection and likewise reviewed by external consultants, bringing the total to 250.

IRIS staff members also continually consult the Proposed Product Advisory Board to determine whether other relevant resources are available through the OSEP TA&D Network. They seek out pre-existing products focusing on topics that the IRIS needs-assessment process has indicated are of interest to IRIS consumers. The staff also monitors topics and resources under development.

Additionally, the IRIS *STAR Legacy* Module and case study development process typically reveals additional resources to share with consumers. Links to existing resources and references are included in every IRIS Module.

1-3 Collaborate with OSEP and its funded centers

Findings/ Outcomes: OSEP staff receive drafts of key content (e.g., RTI), offer input, and brainstorm content options. Collaboration with OSEP-funded Centers is ongoing and contributes to the quality of IRIS Modules. For example, the PACER Center staff developed the content and reviewed the *Collaborating with Families* module, while representatives from the National Center for Research on Learning Disabilities and the newly funded RTI Center supported *RTI: A Closer Look at Tier 3*. Other centers (e.g., the Personnel Center, the IDEA Partnership) actively promote IRIS materials in their work with the states, and collaboration with the IRIS Center has been a requirement of several OSEP-sponsored RFPs in the last year.

1-4 Inform work through needs assessment and feedback process

Findings/ Outcomes: Feedback from the Web survey, textbook analyses, and focus groups and interviews (see **Objective 3**) will help determine what materials will be developed during the next three years. New materials are field tested and reaction from that process incorporated. Likewise, response to the Web site’s accessibility and interface features is used to refine and improve the Center’s Web

site.

Objective 2: Establish a group of advisors to guide the project.

Overarching Activities: establish and meet with the three advisory board groups, consult with technical advisors

Findings/ Outcomes: Members of the Advisory Board are key to the project’s success. In Year 1 the Steering Committee on Implementation and Design met in Washington, DC. In Year 2 it met in Nashville, Tennessee. In addition, three other groups guide the work of the Center: the Executive Committee of Partners, the Executive Committee of Related Service Providers, and Technical Advisors. To speed up the input process, the Executive Committee of Related Service Providers meeting—originally scheduled for Year 2—was moved ahead to Year 1. The counsel of these groups has proved invaluable: The Steering Committee has offered guidance on Web site design and topic selection; a series of information briefs on related services is being developed in response to needs identified by the Executive Committee of Related Service Providers; increased collaboration opportunities are due to the efforts of the Executive Committee of Partners; and Web site accessibility enhancements were undertaken based on advice from IRIS Technical Advisors.

Objective 3: Conduct focus groups and structured interviews.

Overarching Activities: identify the needs of relevant groups, including faculty, practitioners, pre-service trainees (i.e., college students preparing to be educators), professional development providers, parents, and other stakeholders

Findings/ Outcomes: Judy Smith-Davis (IRIS-East) held focus groups and individual interviews with 107 participants from 36 states and included faculty, school practitioners, parents, SIG and other PD coordinators, pre-service trainees, and members of the advisory boards. Participants offered their perspectives on the needs of school leaders, general educators, special educators, and related services providers. Participants also ranked the SPP indicators they felt were most in need of supporting materials. The top-ranked indicators across all groups are:

- differentiating instruction
- improving instruction in the content areas
- school-wide problem solving and collaborative methods for early intervening
- clarifying the general education teacher’s role in the instruction of students with disabilities in the classroom
- culturally responsive instruction
- developing a welcoming and inclusive school environment

A need for certain materials was consistently expressed across all groups:

- behavior
- disabilities
- collaboration
- assistive technology

Objective 4: Develop modules and materials.

Overarching Activities: identify, create, and revise an array of enhancement materials, tied to SPP indicators when appropriate; translate content into Web-based interactive modules via the *STAR Legacy* model

4-1 Collect and make available extant resources identified in Objective 1

Findings/ Outcomes: See the outcomes above for resources discussed in **Objective 1-2**.

4-2 Develop a categorized list of needed materials identified through Objectives 1 and 2

Findings/ Outcomes: At least ten new modules are scheduled for development during Years 3 through 5. Consumer input and the IRIS input-feedback process has yielded this ranking of module topics:

1. differentiated instruction
2. math instruction
3. PBIS
4. strategies for teaching English Language Learners
5. universal design for learning
6. collaboration among school professionals
7. instructional leadership
8. secondary reading instruction
9. an overview of assistive technology
10. accommodations for students with disabilities
11. an overview of related services

4-3 Revise existing and develop new modules

Findings/ Outcomes: The work for Years 1 and 2 outlined in the IRIS proposal specified the development of four new modules, the revision of six existing ones, the creation of two new case studies, and the construction of five new activities. Module revisions were necessary because, in many cases, the original content was out-dated and the modules themselves in need of reformatting and adjustments based on student engagement. The following products were developed during Years 1 and 2; those in purple are currently being developed and should be posted by September (the end of Year 2).

Table 2.1. IRIS Resource Development

<i>New Modules (4)</i>	<i>Revised Modules (6)</i>	<i>Case Studies (2)</i>	<i>Activities (5)</i>
Collaboration with Families	CSR: A Reading Comprehension Strategy	Four Spanish case studies	11 Spanish Activities
RTI: A Closer Look at Tier 3	Serving Students with Visual Impairments: The Importance of Collaboration	RTI Progress Monitoring	Happy Feet: Movie assignment on learning disabilities
RTI: Considerations for School Leaders	Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies: Grades 2–6	Writing Strategies	Understanding BICS and CALP
Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies: High School	Using Learning Strategies: Instruction to Enhance Student Learning	RTI: Data-based Decision Making	Campus Accessibility Exercises
Spanish versions of six modules	Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies: K–1		Students Served Through IDEA: Changes Over Time
	The Pre-referral Process		FBA: Determining Behavioral Reinforcers

Objective 5: Disseminate modules and materials; deliver technical assistance to encourage use and ensure fidelity

Overarching Activities: deliver modules and materials via the Web site, develop a menu of dissemination vehicles, provide consumers with technical assistance delivered through a variety of formats to ensure use of materials and fidelity to the *STAR Legacy* format

5-1 Provide materials via the Web site

Findings/ Outcomes: All IRIS materials are freely available on the Web site. The site's revised navigation system (see **Objective 4**) is more intuitive and offers greater accessibility for individuals with disabilities (e.g., closed captioning on all movies in addition to transcripts, text files for navigation systems with pull-down menus). During the Summer/ Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 semesters, the IRIS Web site hosted some 614,712 visitors.

5-2 Continue partnership with Pearson Publishing

Findings/ Outcomes: The partnership with Pearson Publishing continues to be extremely beneficial to the Center. Pearson actively promotes IRIS products in all of its education texts (3.3 million in the upcoming year), on *MyEducationLab* (its online learning resources), and on various instructors' and texts' Web sites. Students who use *MyEducationLab* are not included in the Web site count above. Pearson also provided 78 texts for use in the textbook analysis.

5-3 Provide dissemination, training, and TA to constituent groups

Findings/ Outcomes: Dissemination, training, and technical assistance are ongoing, via phone calls or emails to individuals requesting assistance. Promotional materials (e.g., brochure, presentation display, handouts) have been revised or redesigned. A Web tour is now available, 15 of which have been conducted to date. Information about IRIS has been presented during 21 local, state, and national meetings and conferences. (Note: The actual number of presentations is higher. IRIS participants and Experts often present information about the Center's resources at no cost to the project and do not necessarily report these activities to IRIS-West or Central). To date, in addition to the pilot, IRIS Experts have conducted three seminars for faculty and PD providers; more are scheduled for the coming months.

5-4 Implement a Training-of-Experts approach

Findings/ Outcomes: As part of the scaling-up effort, a Coaching Model was and continues to be implemented through IRIS-West. During Year 1, IRIS-West began developing the IRIS Expert Training Program. A considerable array of materials to use at IRIS-events was developed (see **Objective 4**). During Year 2, a pilot faculty seminar was held to test the seminar format, and one workshop was also piloted. The agenda and materials for these two types of IRIS-events were revised. Subsequently, two groups of IRIS Experts are now prepared to conduct these events on behalf of the Center.

5-5 Develop an approach to scale up across states and regions

Findings/ Outcomes: Scaling-up activities are on schedule. For the first 18 months of the project, three states (CA, UT, and TN) were named in the proposal for the initial phase of scaling-up activities. State-wide implementation continues in CA as new venues, Experts, partnerships, and materials are tested. IRIS Modules are also widely used in TN, in no small part due to the Center's collaboration with the TN SIG and heavily promoted by the TN DOE. IRIS materials are also widely used at both of the large state institutions in Utah (Utah State University and University of Utah), where faculty participated in

two research studies about IRIS Modules' effects on college students' learning outcomes. Phase 2 of scaling-up activities is underway with IRIS awareness presentations, workshops, and seminars already being held, scheduled, or planned in regions of the Phase 1 states (MT, AZ, NV, NM, ND, and NC). In addition, a special seminar is being planned for the Tribal Colleges in Spring 2009. John Copenhaver, a member of the IRIS Steering Committee and Director of the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRC), has been invaluable to this effort and has provided models about how to replicate dissemination across the nation with the assistance of the RRCs.

Objective 6: Conduct a comprehensive evaluation.

Overarching Activities: field test and pilot materials, modules, and services; survey users about materials' effectiveness; assess learner outcomes; determine viability of various outcome measures; evaluate impact through Web site usage; evaluate partnerships

Findings/ Outcomes: All new materials are piloted; official field testing has occurred on one module to date. Preliminary results from a study of learner outcomes (funded with a Steppingstones technology grant) indicate that college students learn from the modules, even when they are completed with little or no instructor oversight (e.g., as homework). Web site usage continues to climb, with 580,334 visitors to the IRIS site in 2007, compared to 499,567 in 2006. Our partnership with Pearson Publishing continues to be profitable. Finally, a pilot study will be initiated in fall 2008 that will attempt to link public school student outcomes to teacher knowledge gained through use of an IRIS Module.

Objective 7: Manage the project effectively and efficiently.

Overarching Activities: ensure cost effectiveness, collaborate with OSEP, coordinate work between sites, maintain timeline, ensure delivery of proposed products

Findings/ Outcomes: Expenses are tracked and reviewed regularly, and accounts are kept up to date. All expenditures are within budget limits. Work is carefully coordinated with OSEP and between the three IRIS sites. Staff at the sites communicate regularly and discuss the work scope via conference calls, individual phone calls, and emails. During the Web site revision, we held weekly conference calls to discuss layout, design, function, and accessibility issues. The co-principal investigators communicate on a daily basis and have face-to-face meetings approximately every two months. IRIS-Central staff members have attended four training events hosted by IRIS-West to provide support and stay abreast of the CGU team's activities.

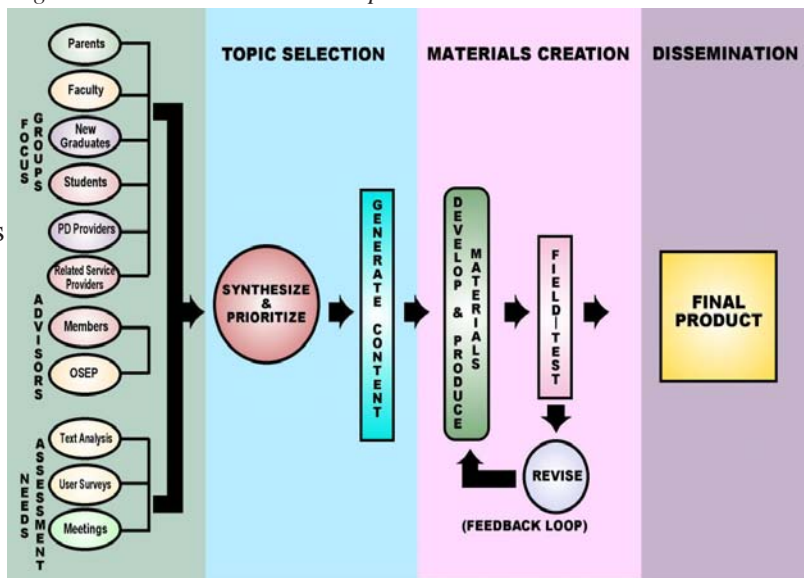
Products and Publications

Product development process: The IRIS team continues to use the product development process outlined in the original proposal. Input from constituent groups, focus group members, and reviewers has created a feedback cycle of reviewing and editing. A similar system is used to develop, test, and refine materials used by IRIS Experts in training venues.

Description of Products and Accomplishments

The IRIS Center, in its first two years of

Figure 2.1. IRIS Resource Development



funding, has produced a wide array of training enhancement materials on diverse topics, including three new *STAR Legacy* Modules, Spanish translations of six modules, revisions of six older *STAR Legacy* Modules, two new case study units, Spanish translations of four case study units, 11 Spanish activities, and five new activities. Additional products and materials include an online dictionary, a Web resource directory, a film search tool, a media search tool, and a podcast that explains how to navigate an IRIS Module. Although IRIS materials are available in a number of formats, including on paper and on CD, the Center’s primary vehicle for disseminating its products is its Web site.

A brief description of products and services follows.

Products

STAR Legacy Modules. The *STAR Legacy* learning cycle, researched and developed by cognitive psychologists at the Learning Technology Center at Vanderbilt University, provides a framework for challenge-based, interactive IRIS *STAR Legacy* Modules. IRIS *STAR Legacy* Modules are designed for use in a variety of instructional arrangements. College faculty use the modules during class sessions, as homework assignments, or in variations of in-class, group activity, and homework, or individual activity.

For PD activities, IRIS Modules are used much as they are for college students: as group/ workshop activities and as independent learning activities in which a discussion concludes the module activity. We recommend you view the IRIS podcast “How to Navigate an IRIS Module,” available at http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/media/module_nav.html for more information on the five components of the *STAR Legacy* learning cycle: the *Challenge, Initial Thoughts, Perspectives and Resources, Assessment, and Wrap Up*. Table 2.2 details those IRIS *STAR Legacy* Modules developed or revised during Years 1 and 2, as well as modules translated into Spanish.

Table 2.2. IRIS II Modules

Module	Annotation
Collaboration with Families Status: <i>New</i>	This module highlights the diversity of families and addresses the factors that school personnel should understand about working with the families of children with disabilities.
Serving Students with Visual Impairments: The Importance of Collaboration Status: <i>Revised</i>	This module underscores the importance of the general education teacher’s collaborating with professionals and other individuals knowledgeable about the needs of students with visual disabilities.
PALS: K–1 Status: <i>Revised</i> <i>Available end of Summer 2008</i>	This module, a revision of the K-PALS section of <i>See Jane Read: Teaching Reading to Young Children of Varying Disabilities</i> , highlights a peer tutoring strategy, PALS. By working in pairs, students have many opportunities to practice reading aloud.
PALS: 2–6 Status: <i>Revised</i>	This module, a revision of the PALS section of <i>The Reading Blues: Strategies to Help Upper-Elementary Students Move from Struggle to Success</i> , highlights a peer tutoring strategy, PALS for grades 2–6.

Table 2.2. IRIS II Modules (Cont.)

<i>Module</i>	<i>Annotation</i>
<p>PALS: High School Status: <i>New</i> Available end of Summer 2008</p>	<p>This module highlights the PALS strategy for older students, who must comprehend more complicated text passages. PALS helps students grasp the big ideas of a passage, such as the main ideas or characters.</p>
<i>Spanish Module</i>	<i>English Version</i>
<p>Accediendo al Currículo de Educación General: Consideraciones para la Inclusión de Estudiantes con Discapacidades</p>	<p><i>Accessing the General Education Curriculum: Inclusion Considerations for Students with Disabilities</i></p>
<p>Evaluación en el Salón de Clases (Primera Parte): Una Introducción al Seguimiento del Rendimiento Académico en el Salón de Clases</p>	<p><i>Classroom Assessment (Part 1): An Introduction to Monitoring Academic Achievement in the Classroom</i></p>
<p>¿Quién Está a Cargo? Desarrollando un Sistema Comprehensivo del Manejo de la Conducta</p>	<p><i>Who's in Charge? Developing a Comprehensive Behavior Management System</i></p>
<p>¿Qué Es lo que Ve Usted? Percepciones de Discapacidades</p>	<p><i>What Do You See? Perceptions of Disability</i></p>
<p>Uso de las Estrategias de Aprendizaje: Instrucción para Mejorar el Aprendizaje de los Estudiantes</p>	<p><i>Using Learning Strategies: Instruction to Enhance Student Learning</i></p>

Case Studies. IRIS case study units include multiple cases as well as several STAR (Strategies And Resources) sheets that describe a well-researched strategy and list additional research and resources that learners can consult for more information. The scenarios in each unit are divided into three levels, each of which includes two or more cases:

- Level A – gathering information
- Level B – analyzing the information
- Level C – synthesizing the information

The table below outlines the case study units developed during Year 2.

Table 2.3. IRIS Case Study Units

<i>Case Study</i>	<i>Annotation</i>
<p>RTI: Progress Monitoring <i>Available end of Summer 2008</i></p>	<p>This case study details the important facets of progress monitoring, including the administration and scoring of probes as well as the graphing of student progress. It can serve as a companion to the module <i>RTI (Part 2): Assessment</i>.</p>
<p>RTI: Data-Based Decision Making <i>Available end of Summer 2008</i></p>	<p>This case study provides information about how to examine a student’s progress monitoring data to determine whether the student is responding adequately or whether the student would benefit from more intense intervention. It can serve as a companion to the modules <i>RTI (Part 2): Assessment</i> and <i>RTI (Part 4): Putting It All Together</i>.</p>
<p>Writing Strategies: Help for Struggling Writers <i>Available end of Summer 2008</i></p>	<p>This case study offers information about writing strategies that will benefit students who struggle with written expression, helping them to feel less anxious or frustrated when faced with a writing assignment.</p>
<i>Spanish Case Study</i>	<i>English Version</i>
Lectura Temprana	<i>Early Reading</i>
Arreglo Eficaz del Salón de Clases	<i>Effective Room Arrangement</i>
Promover el Comportamiento Apropiado	<i>Encouraging Appropriate Behavior</i>
Normas Y Expectativas	<i>Norms and Expectations</i>

Other products available through the IRIS Web site have undergone considerable revisions. Brief summaries of these improvements follow.

Information Briefs. As discussed earlier in Section 2, a thorough revision of the information briefs is complete, and they are now available through the IRIS Resource Locator.

Activities. Disability-related activities are added to this frequently updated section of the Web site. Designed for use in discussion or small-group activities, they can also be used as homework activities, and include book or film reviews that address such issues as the portrayal of individuals with disabilities in literature or film, changes in disability categories over time, disability simulations, or relevant issues in the news. Eleven of the most popular activities have been translated into Spanish.

Web Resource Directory. An annotated database of online resources, the IRIS Web Resource Directory lists approximately 200 Web sites with information on special education and disability resources from professional agencies and organizations, federally sponsored projects and centers, and IRIS partners.

Online Dictionary. The IRIS Online Dictionary has been fully updated and revised. An expansive (and expanding) glossary of terms related to the field of special education, this index of more than 700 entries (from “504 plan” to “zero tolerance”) has been edited and re-written for style and consistency. A cross-referencing feature designed to allow users quicker and more efficient navigation from one term to the next has been installed.

Film Search Tool. This database contains approximately 500 films that portray characters with disabilities. It is searchable by disability, title, and year of release. The database is updated annually.

Professional Standards. This page (nested under the “Instructors” button) is undergoing a significant revision and will provide information on how each IRIS Module and case study addresses the following standards and indicators:

- CEC standards
- INTASC standards
- NCATE standards
- SPP indicators

Podcasts. These brief audio and video segments were added to the workscope in Year 2 based on three issues:

- 1) A need was felt for a Web-based overview to explain how to navigate an IRIS Module without requiring interested parties to attend a training or meeting.
- 2) Participants in the guided Web tours had expressed interest in a self-paced online version.
- 3) The project has collected dozens of hours of audio interviews with experts, but typically only uses a small portion of those interviews in the modules. It only makes sense to make more of that audio available to learners as podcasts to supplement the module content.

At present, the Center has produced one video podcast on navigating modules. Four others are under development. Posting of the expanded audio will begin in Year 3.

Outreach, Technical Assistance, and Training Services

IRIS-West, housed at Claremont Graduate University in California, coordinates the delivery of IRIS events and the materials used to support this array of awareness and training activities. Since the development of the IRIS proposal, our services have expanded in type and intensity as a result of consumer input and demand for IRIS outreach services.

Presentation and Training Vehicles

1-Hour Awareness Presentations. PowerPoint templates and a number of presentations are available to IRIS staff and IRIS Experts. These resources are available in the Trainers’ Section of the IRIS Web site, which is pass-coded with access only to our approved Experts.

Guided Web Tours. Individually designed to meet the needs of their participants, the 1-hour IRIS Web

Tour utilizes teleconferencing to highlight the various resources available through The IRIS Center’s Web site. Participants follow along using their own computers at their local sites. From November 2007 to June 2008, IRIS West conducted 13 such tours, including several to OSEP-funded 325T Projects.

Self-paced Web Tours. In response to requests for “on-demand” Web Tours, IRIS-West is developing the scripts and templates for a series of IRIS “Spotlights” that will introduce IRIS consumers to various aspects of the resources that might otherwise be missed. The series will include short—15 minutes or less—presentations. These Spotlights can be used at awareness presentations, meetings, conferences, and teleconferences. They will also be posted on the IRIS Web site.

Webinars. The first IRIS Webinar, about RTI, will be conducted in partnership with WestEd, a non-profit research, development, and service agency devoted to increasing education within schools, families, and communities. This partnership with WestEd gives IRIS three distinct advantages: **1.)** WestEd’s work reaches over 14,000 professionals at the state, district, school, and individual levels across the nation, providing IRIS with many new potential PD users. **2.)** WestEd has extensive experience developing and conducting Webinars for national audiences. Through a collaborative partnership IRIS receives national exposure and proven technology at no cost to the project. **3.)** The only costs to the project are those of the IRIS Expert who is working with WestEd to develop the Webinar content; all of the remaining costs for the Webinar will be borne by WestEd and one of its projects, Schools Moving Up. This Webinar’s products (audio, PowerPoints, online discussion questions) will be posted on both the IRIS and WestEd Web sites as a resource for others.

2–3 Hour Workshops. Affectionately referred to by IRIS-West staff as “Let’s do lunch,” IRIS Workshops are typically delivered on college campuses and are interactive work sessions through which faculty members align their syllabi with IRIS resources. One purpose is to allow college faculty time to collaborate and coordinate the integration of IRIS Modules, case studies, and resources to avoid redundancy of resource use. IRIS-West staff developed and field tested the workshop content at a California State University campus. The template and materials are available to IRIS Experts through the Trainers’ section of the IRIS Web site. Since their development last spring, two additional workshops have been delivered with several more scheduled for the beginning of the upcoming academic year.

Faculty Seminars. These day-and-a-half-long events, described in the IRIS proposal, are the basic training vehicles from which other training services have emerged. Faculty seminars bring college faculty and PD providers together for an intensive and interactive IRIS experience. Participants learn how to navigate all the resources on the Web site, work with their own syllabi, and develop program outlines to infuse IRIS resources across a curriculum. The materials for Experts are posted at the “Trainers” section of the IRIS Web site. These events are hosted and supported by IRIS-West and delivered by IRIS Experts. Between January and July 2008, three faculty seminars have been held (i.e., Claremont, San Diego, and Chico Hot Springs). Six seminars are slated for the 2008–2009 academic year.

Lessons Learned

Over the past two years, we’ve learned a great deal about developing and disseminating training enhancement materials and resources, providing outreach services, and scaling up the use of IRIS Modules. Below are some lessons learned over the past two years.

Collaborate with the Right People: The original IRIS proposal outlined a plan to involve the OSEP-

funded RRC Network. We recognized that this network and the key change-agents involved would be invaluable to the outreach and scaling-up efforts for IRIS II. However, we underestimated the difference that one person can make facilitating that work. In particular, John Copenhaver, Director of the Mountain Plains RRC, has opened doors to states in his region. He was key to the leveraging of resources between the State of Montana and IRIS, allowing for the sharing of costs of the Montana IRIS Faculty Seminar, where every college in that state was represented with a pair of faculty who worked to embed IRIS resources into the syllabi for the 2008–2009 courses. The Montana experience serves as a model for other states, not only in the Mountain Plains region but also across the nation.

Change Takes Time: One example of the need for patience is our CalStateTEACH (CST) story. Part of the California State University (CSU) system and its system-wide (statewide) teacher preparation program, CST provides an alternative to earning a multiple-subject (general education elementary) teaching credential. The program is entirely field-based, and teacher candidates share ideas through Web-oriented “class discussions.” Indeed, much of the course content is delivered online. Teacher-interns receive professional feedback through on-site coaching and meet face-to-face with one another and their supervisors three times a year. In fall 2006, the IRIS-West team was invited to partner with CST and explore how IRIS materials might be integrated into the CST program, which seemed a natural fit. Both partners were excited about the possibilities and looked forward to quick implementation. IRIS-West staff conducted a curriculum audit for CST and prepared recommendations, yet there was no communication from CST to IRIS for a prolonged period. IRIS staff incorrectly thought that CST was no longer interested in our resources. In reality, it took more than a year to revise the CST curricula to include IRIS materials. The first set of changes was implemented for Term 1 curricula and piloted for Term 4 curricula in January 2008. Additional revisions were made for the May 2008 and September 2008 term starts. CST, with assistance from IRIS-West, will provide faculty in-service on these changes and the implementation of IRIS Modules in fall 2008. The impact of this program is huge, as it enrolls more than 800 teacher-interns every year. The curriculum can now be used as a national model for others to follow

Take Things in Stride/ Be Prepared: At IRIS, we’ve learned that some eventualities are so unusual that they cannot be anticipated. For example, in December 2007 an updated version of the free software program QuickTime was released. Unbeknownst to us, this version no longer supported Flash, the software with which all IRIS movies are built. When our clients downloaded the new version of QuickTime, they were no longer able to play IRIS movies. The IRIS tech team sent a warning out on the listserv and brainstormed with other “techies” from across the nation who were also scrambling to address the situation. They found a solution and reformatted more than 100 movies posted on the IRIS Web site—all within a span of two or three days. Such a situation could not have been anticipated, yet staff members were able to take it in stride.

The IRIS-West staff, too, has learned to “Be Prepared.” For example, at the first faculty seminar, the IRIS staff was setting up the hotel meeting room only to find that it had just *two* electrical outlets. With more than 20 laptop computers that needed to be powered for almost two days of work, a solution needed to be found immediately. Every extension cord in the hotel was quickly called into service, and henceforth the boxes containing participants’ workbooks and other materials shipped to faculty seminars include power strips and extension cords, whether they end up being needed or not. The staff has also learned that it is important to ask a prospective hotel’s manager about wireless Internet service; a very desirable location once had to be eliminated because the city had no cell service. Regardless, as a precaution, IRIS Web site CDs are prepared for every meeting just in case service goes down.

Barriers and Challenges

Beyond the challenges inherent in any complex undertaking, we have faced some true dilemmas. We prefer, however, to think about the Center's challenges as *STAR Legacy* Challenges; merely scenarios to learn and problems to solve. In this section, rather than discussing "barriers," we invite you to think with us about some of the more engaging challenges and issues that have emerged since the project's inception.

Challenge 1: Web site revision

Sources of the Challenge: One of the major undertakings of this project was to revise the IRIS Web site for better accessibility, an improved method for finding materials, and a more logical organization of topics and strands. The old IRIS I Web site resource page contained links to separate pages for each of the materials (i.e., modules, case studies, information briefs, activities), requiring consumers to work through four different Web pages to find all of the materials on a particular topic. We initially believed that the site revision could be accomplished fairly easily, with some small changes to its cosmetic and surface features. However, once we began the revision, we quickly learned that what was called for was a complete overhaul. This effort took months. All faculty seminars and trainings sponsored by IRIS-West were dependent on the Web site being finished; as the revision dragged on, these activities were postponed. The Web site revisions also cut into the first year's product development timeline.

Strategies for Solving the Challenge: A systematic process was developed for the Web site revision. We started with a sample site, developed by NASA, that helped educators search for materials. Next came a series of Monday conference calls between the three IRIS sites, with some of our technical advisors included on key calls to advise us on accessibility issues. Our tech team then designed mockups of the site, based on the feedback. Mockups were distributed to team members, who reviewed them and came to the following Monday's meeting to discuss the changes. This process continued throughout much of spring 2007.

Progress: The Web site revision included a completely redesigned Resources page, including an IRIS Resource Locator (IRL). The IRL is a site search engine that allows the user to locate materials by topic (e.g., Accommodations, Behavior, School Improvement) and type (e.g., module, case study). Users need no longer be overwhelmed by a long list of materials and can see all the IRIS materials on a topic at a glance. We worked with our Technical Advisors to develop a text version of the IRL, accessible to those who use JAWS and other screen readers and similar programs. (Note: Even NASA's site does not have this type of accessibility, something we discovered when we contacted them with technical questions). A new Film Search Tool allows users to search for films by disability type; a Module Media Search Tool can locate specific media (for example, for those who might want to show a certain video clip but can't remember in which module it appeared) on the IRIS site. The Web Resource Directory was streamlined and made easier to use. The Online Dictionary was revised and its programming updated to allow links within each definition. The IRIS I version of the "Faculty" page was updated to "Instructors" and new resources added. One huge endeavor was the addition of the password-protected Trainers section, for use by IRIS Experts as they provide training and dissemination to districts, state departments, and IHEs across the country. The section contains sample agendas for three training venues, five PowerPoint presentations (with four additional links to slides that are updated every semester to reflect Web visitor data), 14 handouts for participants, and 19 additional supports for trainers (e.g., a *Challenge* movie for different types of seminars, troubleshooting tips, Web tour scripts, sign-in sheets,

evaluation forms). Finally, closed captioning was added to all IRIS videos, for audiences with hearing disorders.

Challenge 2: Development of trainers' materials

Sources of the Challenge: The original intention was to provide IRIS Experts one template for PowerPoints and other materials they may need to lead seminars and workshops and to make awareness presentations. However, IRIS Gurus (who train our Experts) and IRIS Experts provided unanimous input that what was needed instead was an array of presentation materials to use or to revise for a particular venue.

Strategies for Solving the Challenge: Although more time was needed to prepare such training resources for the ever-growing array of services, the materials were developed using feedback from IRIS Gurus who had used the materials in their courses and conducted trainings and presentations on IRIS's behalf.

Progress in the Solving Challenge: These materials (described above) are available through the only restricted section of the IRIS Web site. Experts receive a username and password once they have attended an IRIS Expert training.

Challenge 3: "Workscope creep"

Sources of the Challenge: As IRIS materials become more popular, we often have opportunities to develop materials or engage in activities that extend our workscope, even if ever so slightly. For example, although our proposal clearly lays out the number and types of resources to be developed over a five-year period, we often receive requests from our partners for additional materials.

Similarly, we receive requests for presentations and trainings that are outside our workscope (e.g., trainings for teachers in a school or district, rather than for its PD providers). In other cases, because required collaboration with IRIS has been written into the RFPs of other OSEP-funded centers, they have made requests of us (serving on advisory boards, conducting trainings, developing materials) that would significantly affect our available time, resources, and budget. Because many of these requests seem (initially) to be minor, it is all-too easy to agree to fulfill what we believe to be a simple request, only to later find that it has become a "lunch eater."

Strategies for Solving the Challenge: This subject has come up during both of our annual Steering Committee meetings. Our Board members have helped us devise several solutions to these challenges, the most helpful being to ask, "What benefit does this have for IRIS?" and then, "What will we have to give up in order to accomplish this new request?"

Progress in Solving the Challenge: Keeping the Board's advice in mind, we often remind one another of the two questions above, and seriously contemplate all opportunities. For example, as we undertook the work of developing our podcasts, we found ourselves faced with a choice: video or audio? Audio podcasts would be a relatively easy addition to our resources, whereas video podcasts take significantly more time to create. However, that effort might be validated if it enabled users to more effectively use our modules or navigate our Web site.

Having contacted OSEP for more specific guidance as to the types of collaboration it has in mind when IRIS is written into an RFP, we are now able to explain to proposal writers what services or materials we can and cannot provide. We carefully weigh any such requests, and though we still are uncomfortable saying no (we are, after all, a technical assistance provider), we now do so with greater regularity

when appeals fall outside our specified workscope. Finally, there are times when we have been able to use our growing bank of IRIS Experts to handle requests for trainings and presentations on our behalf.

Challenge 4: Learning about professional development providers

Sources of the Challenge: The RFA for the IRIS Center specified that the new work should address the activities of both college and university faculty and of PD providers. This is an enormous task, particularly when one considers the vast number of individual PD providers working in schools. Of course, the Web site's resources are free both in terms of cost and availability for anyone who wants to use them; however, providing training for the entire potential PD audience would prove a considerable drain on the project's resources, both fiscal and personnel.

Strategies for Solving the Challenge: The Center staff has learned that a substantial amount of PD services are vetted, coordinated, and provided through states (e.g., SIGS and SPDGS), county offices, and state-approved new-teacher induction programs. The IRIS Advisory Board guided the solution of the associated dilemmas by insisting that the Center target those groups.

Progress in Solving the Challenge: With assistance from the RRC Network and the funded SIG/SPDG projects, strategies for reaching out to PD coordinators are being made. Web tours for these groups of professionals have been delivered and will be a continuing activity for IRIS-West. Finally, the new vehicle of Webinars target PD providers (see details of the new partnership with WestEd above).

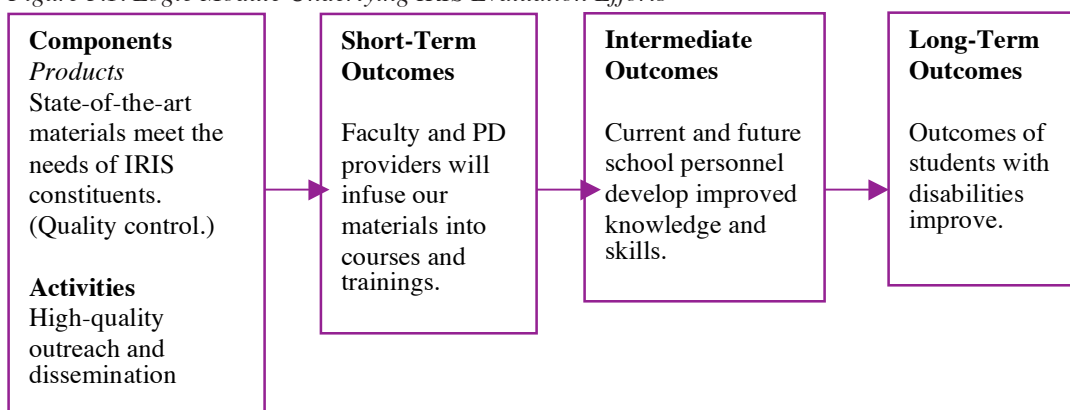
SECTION 3: EVALUATION DATA

Oddly enough—though this section of the Briefing Book is set aside for a description of our evaluation plan—the RFP to which we responded required no such specific evaluation plan. We did, however, include in our proposal our logic model and specific outcomes to measure each activity. These you will find below.

The Center’s broad objective, to develop high-quality resources for use in pre-service and professional development settings, in turn, acts as an umbrella for a number of more-targeted aspirations: identifying existing materials and resources, conducting focus groups and structured interviews, developing modules and materials, and disseminating the resources and providing technical assistance. Whereas our primary expectation is that current and future teachers who have been trained with IRIS resources will be better prepared to serve the needs of students with disabilities, the ultimate outcome is that the learning and behavioral outcomes of students with disabilities—who will be taught by the IRIS-trained professionals—will be improved.

Figure 3.1 displays the logic model of IRIS’s project activities and the intermediate and final outcomes that guide the Center’s evaluation efforts. The first component involves the development of high-quality products and outreach activities— materials that are subsequently incorporated into college courses and professional development trainings. The use of IRIS training enhancement materials by current and future education professionals is expected to promote improvements in their knowledge skills in evidence-based practices for working with students with disabilities. These intermediate outcomes should lead to one or more long-term outcomes consistent with IRIS’s primary purposes—namely, improved outcomes for students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

Figure 3.1. Logic Module Underlying IRIS Evaluation Efforts



Major Findings and Outcomes

Quality control is a key component of the product development and outreach processes. In the former, content is provided by researchers of data-based practices, thus assuring authenticity. As materials are developed, they undergo rounds of edits and revisions from IRIS staff members, who conduct further research to validate the content. IRIS resources are also subject to review. Nationally recognized authorities evaluate case study sets. Modules are reviewed by the experts who provided the original content, in turn offering feedback on the accuracy of IRIS’s translation and layout of their material. A similar process is employed in the development of training materials and activities, to ensure the highest quality in our outreach services.

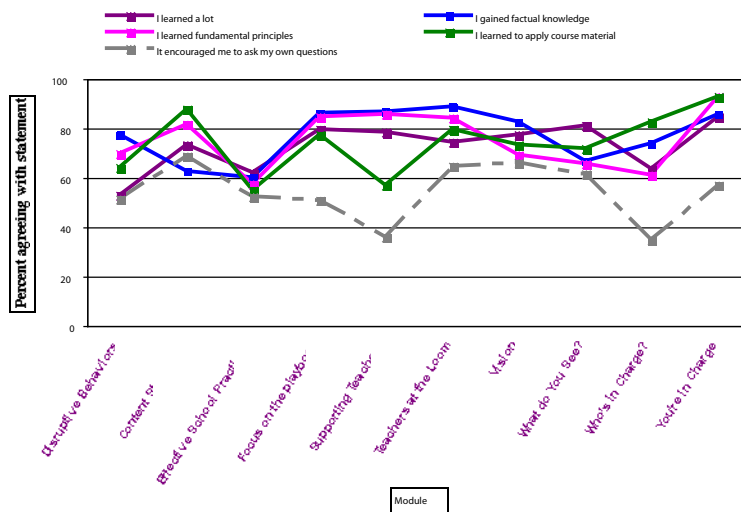
Evaluation activity summary. In line with this logic model and the IRIS goal and objectives, comprehensive project evaluation was designed to control quality and includes these activities:

- (1) Field test and pilot modules and materials.
- (2) Survey faculty and PD providers about materials’ effectiveness.
- (3) Evaluate impact by monitoring fine details of Web site usage.
- (4) Evaluate partnerships with and promotion of IRIS products by textbook publishers.
- (5) Assess learner outcomes regarding modules.
- (6) Determine the viability and cost-effectiveness of a variety of outcome measures.

Each of these six evaluation activities is discussed in more detail below.

Field testing. IRIS Modules are field tested by the faculty and college students who use them (and we have plans for field testing with professional development providers and their trainees). During this testing, instructors and students who have used a module in a class complete individual surveys designed to examine their experiences. Student respondents rate the module on how well the technological components of the module worked, how much they learned from the module, how well the module content prepared them for their future job responsibilities, and how well the module reflected real-life scenarios. Faculty respondents also rate how well the technological components of the module worked, how accurate and up-to-date the module content was and how well it was presented, how much they believed their students learned from the module, and how well the module content prepared students for their future job responsibilities. Because field testing is a time-intensive process, the majority of the modules field tested during IRIS II were developed under IRIS I. Field testing was completed for one module developed under the auspices of IRIS II, *Serving Students with Visual Impairments*, a revision of the *Focus on the Playbook* module. *Serving Students with Visual Impairments* was field tested in one college course; the faculty member gave the module high marks, felt that the students learned a lot, and indicated that she would continue to use the module in that class in the future. Students indicated that there was a hyperlink within the module that many found difficult to find—a design issue that, thanks to field-test feedback, was fixed immediately. Of course, response from a single class does not offer us enough information to report here. However, substantial field testing was completed on modules during IRIS I; data shown in Figure 3.2 (taken from 898 students at five universities) illustrate students’ typical satisfaction with the IRIS Modules. Given that the Center’s development process has improved, it can be assumed that field-test data for IRIS II materials will be similar to those illustrated here, if not better.

Figure 3.2. Self-reports on Selected Outcomes from Module



Data gathered from students and faculty are quite similar to those collected by John Bransford and his colleagues on the NIH-funded VaNTH project at Stanford University and at the University of Washington (Harris, Martin, Roselli, & Cordray, 2006; PT3 Group at Vanderbilt, 2003; Roselli & Brophy, 2003). In all cases:

- Students indicated that they prefer learning through modules that incorporate HPL theory and use technology as the delivery system.
- Students indicated that they believe they learn more using this instructional approach than through the traditional college-lecture format.
- Faculty believed that their students did learn more through the HPL approach and they liked teaching using the interactive Web-based modules.

Survey faculty and PD providers. Participants at IRIS-sponsored events are asked to rate several factors on a five-point Likert scale (specifically, the meeting’s components, facilities, materials, etc.), provide open-ended answers on what they perceive to be the general strengths and weaknesses of the meeting, and offer an overall ranking for the event. The IRIS Center, in turn, uses this feedback and further suggestions from attendees to revise and improve our outreach and dissemination activities. Feedback from these meetings is also used to improve IRIS products. A sample evaluation report, from the Faculty Seminar held in Chico Hot Springs, Montana, can be found in Appendix C.

Table 3.1 shows the overall ratings of the IRIS-sponsored meetings held to date. (In those few instances when no overall rating was requested, a “No Data” notation appears.) All of our meetings have received high ratings (4.1 or higher on the aforementioned Likert scale), and two of them received perfect marks. A few sample comments from meeting evaluations are included here:

- “Exceptionally well organized—by people who know teaching.”
- “Beautiful materials. Keep it up!”
- “Wish all university faculty knew about this.”
- “Thank you for an excellent tool!”
- “Excellent training and collaboration. Never a dull moment.”

Activity	Overall Rating	% Who Rated as Excellent
1. IRIS-West Scaling-Up Meeting, TED Conference, 11/06	4.8	75
2. Executive Committee of Partners Meeting, 12/06	No data*	No data
3. Focus Group of Parents, 01/07	No data*	No data
4. CalState TEACH Meeting, 2/07	4.1	63
5. Web Tour, 3/07	No data*	95*
6. CalState TETF Meeting, 3/07	4.3	47
7. Preservice SP Faculty, 4/07	4.8	67
8. Executive Committee of Related Service Providers Meeting, 05/07	4.6	40
9. IRIS Center Board Meeting, 6/07	4.9	80
10. Special Education Director Intern Mtg.	4.9	95
11. IRIS Presentation, Dominguez Hills, 10/07	No Data*	No Data
12. Expert Planning Meeting, 10/07	5	100
13. Pilot Seminar, 10/07	4.7	70
14. Expert Training, Claremont, 1/08	5	100
15. Focus Group of Parents on K–12 Education General Education, 1/08	No Data*	No Data
16. Faculty Seminar, La Jolla, 3/08	4.8	86
17. Faculty Seminar, Chico Hot Springs, 5/08	4.7	74
18. RTI Presentation, Kern County, 5/08	No Data*	No Data
19. IRIS Center Board Meeting, 6/08	4.6	66

Table 3.1. Summary Evaluations

Evaluate Web site use. The IRIS Center’s staff tracks the Web site visitor data each month and consolidates the information to represent semester-long periods.

Figure 3.3 displays the growth in the number of visitors to the IRIS Web site from fall 2004 to spring 2008 (the beginning of IRIS II is marked with a red dot). In 2007 there were 580,334 visitors to the IRIS Web site, compared to 499,567 in 2006. In spring 2008 there were 225,616 visitors, compared to 191,238 in spring 2007.

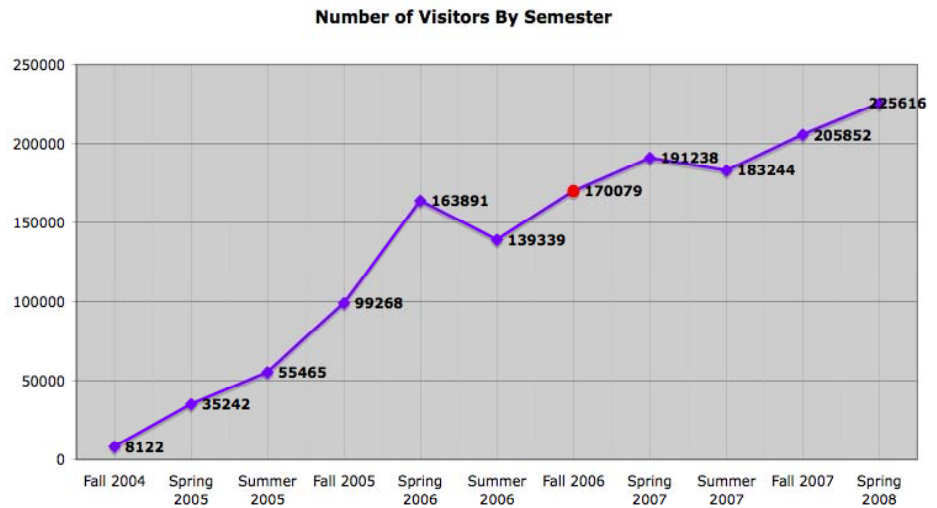
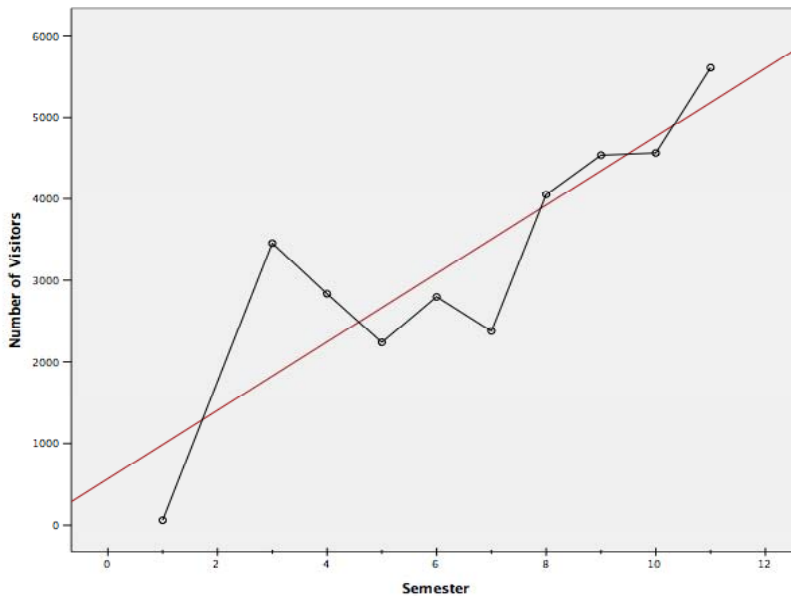


Figure 3.3. Visitors per semester

Here an observer might inquire, “How do you know the growth in users is not due simply to the increased number of materials posted on the Web site over the years?” To answer this question, we tracked the number of visitors to one of our early modules, *Who’s in Charge?*, over time (see Figure 3.4). These data demonstrate the same steady rise in the number of visitors to this module as can be seen in our semester data, indicating that, indeed, more people are coming to the site as opposed to the increase in visitors being the result of an increase in available materials.

Figure 3.4. Who’s in Charge? Use Over Time



Additional information is worthy of consideration. It is of some interest that nine of the top ten modules (Table 3.2) address issues related to either behavior management or RTI. While resources on behavior have always been heavily used, it is reassuring to see that materials on current topics (i.e., RTI) are in great demand. It now seems clear that the Center’s collaboration with the TN SIG, which resulted in the RTI module series, has brought a lot of visitors to the IRIS site.

Table 3.2. Top 10 Modules Used in 2008 (Jan.–June)

Rank	Module Name	Number of Visitors
1	RTI (Part 1): Overview	13,451
2	Who's in Charge? Developing a Comprehensive Behavior Management System	7,831
3	Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors (Part 1)	6,168
4	RTI (Part 3): Reading Instruction	5,838
5	Classroom Assessment (Part 1)	5,727
6	You're in Charge! Developing Your Own Comprehensive Behavior Management Plan	5,225
7	RTI (Part 2): Assessment	4,747
8	What Do You See?	3,936
9	RTI (Part 4): Putting It All Together	3,637
10	Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors (Part 2)	3,387

One way to measure the impact of a Web site is to discover how many other Web sites link to its resources. In the Spring 2008 semester, 454 other Web sites provided visitors with a direct link to the IRIS site, resulting in 45% of our Web site volume. Of these 454, 166 are college and university course-related sites, 91 are organization sites, 40 are school system sites, 16 are state or federal government sites, and the remainder are a miscellaneous collection of blogs, professional development-related sites, and others. Some of the largest referring organizations include Pearson Publishing (an indication of the effectiveness of that partnership), the National Center on Response to Intervention, the National Center for Learning Disabilities, and the Center on Instruction.

The largest referring domain listed in Table 3.3 below is Blackboard, a course-management software tool used by many colleges and universities. College instructors can post links to materials (such as IRIS resources) and can even post the *Initial Thoughts* questions from modules online, to which the students respond. The fifth entry, the Education Service Center in Texas, clearly indicates that IRIS materials are being used in professional development, as well as in higher education. IRIS partnerships are represented in the Top Ten (Pearson Publishing, CalStateTEACH), as are other OSEP-funded projects.

Although there was a significant, sustained effort during IRIS I to increase use among colleges and universities (the IRIS Implementation Sites), we are also interested in use at universities at which we have conducted no outreach or training activities. Two universities, for example, Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) and the University of West Florida (UWF), have apparently infused IRIS materials into their coursework. We find that SEMO faculty assign all types of IRIS resources; modules, activities, and case study sets. A first glance at the data indicates that UWF faculty have thus far assigned only modules, though it is possible that case studies, activities, and info briefs may have been printed down once and duplicated there.

Table 3.3. Top 10 Referring Domains in 2008 (Jan. – June)

Rank	Referring Domain	Number of Visitors
1	blackboard.com (Blackboard)	3,041
2	ablongman.com (Pearson Higher Education)	2,100
3	semo.edu (Southeast Missouri State University)	1,878
4	uwf.edu (University of West Florida)	1,804
5	esc20.net (Education Service Center, Region 20, Texas)	1,766
6	calstateteach.net (CalStateTEACH)	1,660
7	byu.edu (Brigham Young University)	997
8	rti4success.org (National Center on Response to Intervention)	977
9	ncl.org (National Center for Learning Disabilities)	895
10	prenhall.com (Pearson Higher Education)	819

We also collect information on the search terms used to locate our materials. Please note in Table 3.4 below that seven of the top ten search terms used by Web users to access our materials incorporate some form of “iris.” We are pleased that education professionals are purposely seeking our site.

Table 3.4. Top 10 Search Terms in 2008 (Jan.–June 2008)

Rank	Search Term	Number of Visitors
1	muscular dystrophy	3,355
2	iris center	2,528
3	duchenne muscular dystrophy	2,405
4	duchenne	1,083
5	iris Peabody	613
6	iris Vanderbilt	529
7	the iris center	370
8	iris modules	241
9	iris module	216
10	iris center Vanderbilt	215

Taken together, the data described in this section indicate that we have met and continue to meet our short-term evaluation goal that college faculty and PD providers use our materials.

Evaluate publishing partnership. Because data relevant to the publishing partnership have been discussed in prior sections, we will summarize them here. IRIS originally developed a partnership with Allyn & Bacon (A&B), a subsidiary of Pearson Publishing, the world’s largest education publishing company. Through the A&B partnership, IRIS materials were featured on *MyLabSchool* (MLS), A&B’s online learning environment developed to supplement their course textbooks. IRIS was also included in MLS Integration Guides—which are positioned in the front matter of instructor editions of key textbooks—in MLS activities in selected texts, on A&B’s companion Web sites, and in faculty supplements in key course areas. A&B recorded 31,000 username and password activations for *MyLabSchool* during its 2007 fiscal year; these data are not included in the Web site data listed above.

Recently, Pearson underwent a merger of two of its subsidiaries—A&B and Merrill—immediately doubling the consumer exposure opportunities for IRIS, as our materials are now included in the Merrill-published texts. IRIS materials are now included in *MyEducationLab* (the Pearson equivalent of *MyLabSchool*) and in course-specific sites in:

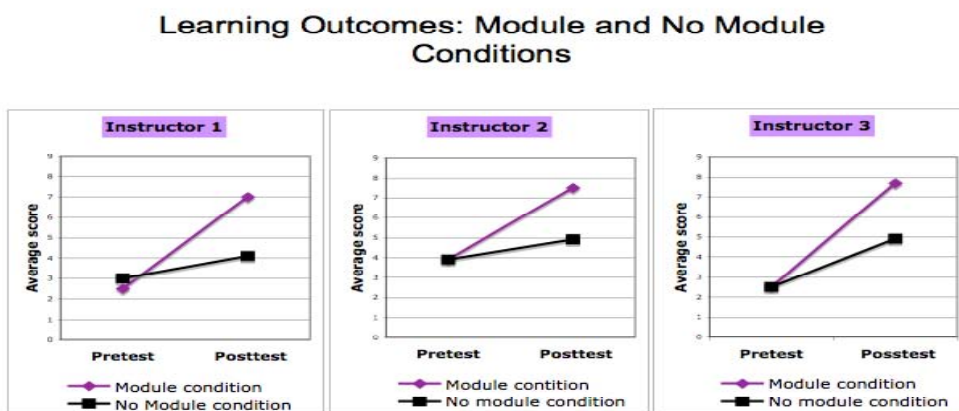
- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| General methods | Science methods | Social studies methods |
| Language arts | Literacy methods | English Language Learners |
| Classroom management | Intro/ foundations of education | Early childhood education |
| Special education | | |

Pearson anticipates shipping 3.3 million textbooks to education students during its 2009 fiscal year (that number does not take into account the used-book market). IRIS materials continue to be featured in those texts. Pearson representative Virginia Lanigan sits on our Steering Committee and relays information about IRIS materials used on the Pearson site back to the Center. The following quotation is from a college professor who teaches a content area reading course and uses the IRIS materials on Pearson’s site: “These are excellent materials and effective in that they’re focused, succinct, and based on realistic issues in the classroom. They’re pitched right for preservice teachers, giving them an appropriate amount of information to understand the context and the dilemma.”

On final bit of data: The Web referral numbers shown above (Table 3.3) indicate that Pearson is one of our top referrers.

Assess learner outcomes. The third type of outcome evaluated by the IRIS Center, classified as an intermediate outcome, is whether education professionals learn from the modules. During IRIS I, we conducted a pilot study at a large, urban university to test the effectiveness of using an IRIS Module to teach course content on making instructional accommodations for students with visual disabilities. In an introductory class with multiple sections offered each quarter, three instructors taught their courses *without* the IRIS Module and then taught the course *with* the IRIS Module. A total of 620 students were involved across these sections and two conditions. Students in each condition were administered a pretest and posttest, which involved a scenario in which a teacher found that her incoming class would include two students with visual disabilities. Responding to this scenario involved applying to this hypothetical situation content covered by the text or the module. For each instructor, the average posttest score for students who viewed the module was significantly higher than that for students who did not view the module (see Figure 3.5). The average effect size—an indicator of the magnitude of the difference between the two conditions—was 1.08, which can be interpreted as a large effect. We consider this evidence that modules, when used as course supplements, enhance learning outcomes for college students.

Figure 3.5. Learning Outcomes

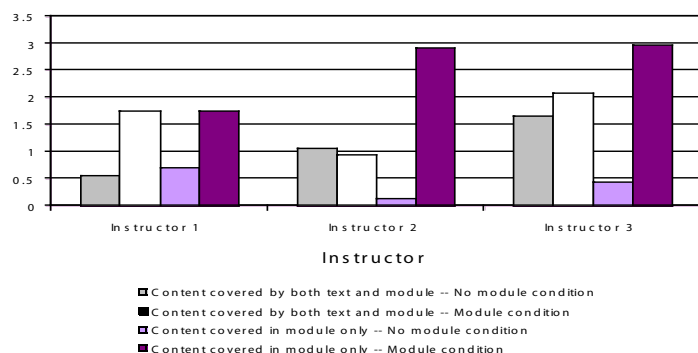


Because the module contained content common to both the module and the text and content that was unique to the module, we also looked at students’ responses, based on the content that was reflected (common versus unique). Positive gains in learning occurred for both types of content. Further, for two of the three instructors, the gains exhibited were significantly larger for students who viewed the module with respect to both types of content (see Figure 3.6 below). This suggests that the effectiveness of modules may be in both reinforcing material presented in textbooks and in infusing this material with new and additional content.

A second study, funded by a Steppingstones grant that overlapped IRIS I and IRIS II, was conducted to determine whether the strength of the HPL components of a module impact student learning. A total of 480 students were involved across multiple course sections and two conditions. This study is still in progress, but preliminary results, from low and medium strength HPL conditions, reinforce the earlier study that students do indeed learn from the modules. Posttest scores were higher than pretest scores in both conditions. However, no differences in student learning were found related to condition, the strength of HPL. One interpretation of this finding is that students learn the content of the modules with and without educational support from their instructors. This indicates that educators can use modules

Figure 3.6. Average Gain in Learning

Average Gain in Learning from Pre- to Posttest:
Content Covered by Module Only and by Both
Module and Text



the effect on a teacher’s classroom instruction of the use of an IRIS Module during preservice training. Rather than try to build a model of the variety of influences that may impact a classroom teacher’s performance, the IRIS Center has chosen to look for direct links between the module used by teacher interns (teachers currently working on their certification while employed in classrooms), the strategies it describes to get students to regulate their own behavior (specifically, assignment completion), and the percent of completed assignments classroom students turn in. This study is slated to begin in fall 2008 with interns from Claremont Graduate University.

Summary of Why Project Director Believes the Project Has Been Significant or Effective

When discussing our project’s effectiveness, one member of our Steering Committee sagely commented, “In the end, the big question is, ‘Are people visiting the Web site, and are they using the materials?’” The answer to that question is a resounding “Yes!” Below are a few points that, we think, clearly demonstrate the success of the IRIS program.

- Web visitor data show continual, steady, increase in use, with over half a million visitors in 2007, and over 225,000 visitors during the most recent single semester, Spring 2008.
- The number of Web visitors per month averaged 56,400 during spring 2008. These monthly numbers are impressive when one considers that the entire membership of the Council for Exceptional Children is approximately 45,000, total subscriptions to *Exceptional Children* is nearly 50,000, and those to *Intervention in School and Clinic* some 1,800.
- Professionals, organizations, and agencies in the education field think highly enough of our materials to refer professionals from their Web sites to ours. Referring organizations include other OSEP-funded projects, universities, state education agencies, local school districts, and professional organizations. These tend to be some of the most discriminating consumers in our field.

Evidence of Project Effectiveness

We believe that the information and data supplied above provide ample evidence that the project has been effective. Furthermore, the project is completing its activities on schedule and is operating within

effectively in a variety of ways, for example in distance learning courses.

Determine viability of outcomes measures for impact on students with disabilities. One variable of particular importance to the IRIS Center is whether current and future school personnel who use the materials increase their knowledge and efficacy regarding teaching students with disabilities. The fourth, long-term outcome that the IRIS center would like to pursue is the effect on classroom students when teachers have been exposed to the IRIS Center’s modules. A study currently in the design stage will attempt to discern

budget. We believe that OSEP’s confidence in our products is confirmed by its requirement that its 325T projects (funded to improve the quality of preservice teacher preparation at colleges and universities) must use IRIS materials in their training programs.

Evidence of Target Audience Satisfaction

Field-test data indicate that college students find the modules to be highly useful. Comments from student and faculty field testers as well as those sent via email from people who use the IRIS materials have been overwhelmingly and consistently positive.

Discussion of Progress Toward OSEP Priorities Delineated in the RFA

The RFP included the following requirements: (a) Identify needs and existing resources; (b) Conduct focus group interviews; (c) Develop pre-service training and professional development modules; (d) Disseminate pre-service training and professional development modules and provide targeted technical assistance; (e) Conduct a comprehensive project evaluation; (f) Establish an advisory board.

When we developed the IRIS II proposal, we converted these priorities into the project’s activities. Our progress on these OSEP Priorities/ IRIS activities has been covered in great detail in Section 2 of this Briefing Book, showing that we have achieved (a), (b), and (f). Work will continue on (c), (d), and (e) throughout the remainder of the project.

SECTION 4: PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

In this section of the Briefing Book, we will outline how we plan to accomplish our remaining work during the final three years of the current funding period. First, we shall offer a description of the proposed activities and outcomes. Next, we will suggest a rationale for our proposed future activities. Finally, we will discuss what funding is available to carry out these proposed activities.

Description of Proposed Activities and Anticipated Outcomes

Proposed Activities. Table 4.1 summarizes the product development and outreach activities planned for Years 3, 4, and 5. Please note that we have listed the minimum number of products and activities planned for those years; in actuality, we anticipate those numbers to be slightly higher. We have included titles for new and revised modules for Year 3, some of which are already under development. A brief discussion of these activities follows the table.

<i>New Modules</i>	<i>Revised Modules</i>	<i>Other Resources</i>	<i>Trainings/ Seminars</i>
Year 3			
(1) Functional Behavioral Assessment (2) An Overview of Related Services (3) Universal Design for Learning	(1) Teachers at the Loom (2) Teaching and Learning in New Mexico	2 case studies 5 activities	(1) 3 1½-day seminars a. CAL State Teach b. CSU faculty and others (Northern CA) c. CSU faculty and others (Southern CA) (2) 5 state-wide faculty/ PD seminars (3) 1–2 Webinars (4) Web tours on demand (12–15)
Year 4			
4 modules	2 revisions	5 activities	Minimum of 6 state-wide meetings, 1–2 Webinars, Web tours
Year 5			
3 modules	1 revision	5 activities	Minimum of 6 state-wide meetings, 1–2 Webinars, Web tours

Table 4.1. Proposed Activities

Two of the new module topics—*An Overview of Related Services* and *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*—we selected based on feedback from the needs assessment process. UDL is the logical first module in a series that will also cover differentiated instruction and accommodations. Because there are currently no IRIS materials on this topic, and—according to our Executive Committee of Related Service Providers—very little on the topic anywhere else, the related services module was also selected for Year 3. *Functional Behavioral Assessment* is a module that has been repeatedly put on hold over several years but for which we have already developed content, thanks to Dr. Kathleen Lane, a nationally recognized expert in the field. We will begin development on a fourth new module, *Instructional Leadership*, during summer 2009 (which is still our fiscal Year 3), at which time Dr. Pearl Sims will be available to develop the content. At least one of the case studies and several of the activities slated for Year 3—and focusing on educational leadership—will also be developed by Dr. Sims at that time.

Module and case study topics for the Years 4 and 5 will include topics selected through the needs assessment process, selected by our Steering Committee, and approved by OSEP. In addition to those topics listed above, top-ranked content for future modules included high-quality math instruction, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), strategies for teaching English Language Learners (ELLs), an overview of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), collaboration between professionals who work with students with disabilities, secondary reading instruction, an overview of assistive technology, and an overview of accommodations for students with disabilities. We are aware, of course, that our production schedule must remain flexible and open to requests for additional content. Were the Center to receive many requests for materials on a particularly timely topic—for example, standards-based IEPs—we would bring that information to our Steering Committee and OSEP, and could rearrange the materials queue to meet the demand for materials. As always, the product development schedule will be based upon the availability of experts to create the required content.

At least six statewide outreach, dissemination, and scaling-up meetings are planned for each fiscal year, along with one or two Webinars, and Web tours as requested. Given that we conduct at least one Web tour per month, we anticipate a minimum of 12 to 15 tours per year, numbers that do not include the 11 to 12 awareness presentations that IRIS staff conduct per year at national meetings and conferences, nor the presentations conducted by our trainers at the local and state levels. In Year 3, we will also conduct at least three additional trainings, for CalStateTEACH faculty and for faculty in the California State University System (which produces 10% of our nation’s teachers). Professional development providers will also attend the CSU trainings. Meanwhile, plans are in place for a separate training for Tribal College faculty, to occur in spring 2009. In Section 2 of this Briefing book, we discussed the development of an evolving array of outreach options in response to consumer needs. For example, we initially intended to hold regional meetings during the second phase of our scaling-up plan and that we would cover the expense of flying attendees to a central location. Based on what we’ve learned so far, however, we determined that statewide trainings are more practical. This is so, we believe, for a number of reasons:

- Attendees are able to work together to match IRIS materials to that state’s training and certification requirements.
- Promotion of the meeting through the state increases awareness of the materials and further encourages attendance.
- The expense of driving to a location in-state—even factoring in the present high cost of gasoline—is still nevertheless far less than that of an airfare.
- Costs are shared by IRIS and state agencies.

Through the efforts of John Copenhaver, several more statewide trainings are planned in the Mountain Plains RRC territory, all with some financial support from other agencies. Similar events are also taking shape in other regions of the country. So, although we can guarantee a minimum of six trainings in Years 4 and 5, in actuality we anticipate that a greater number will take place, thanks to our collaboration with various partners. As we train more trainers and learn more efficient means of leveraging our resources, the number of trainings will continue to increase. The Webinars could prove to be a more effective means of reaching PD providers; analysis of the first few Webinars that we conduct will provide us with the information needed to determine how best to utilize that option.

Although we have seen our official needs assessment process to completion, we will maintain contact with those agencies and organizations with whom we have established partnerships, to gain access to key content experts and to enhance our dissemination efforts. In Year 3, we will meet with our Executive Committee of Related Service Providers and our Executive Committee of Partners in order to maintain our information feedback loop on how to better serve professionals from their respective constituent groups. More specifically, Judy Smith-Davis will continue her work with members of the Executive Committee of Related Service Providers on a project that evolved from their feedback. The results of the needs assessment process and our ongoing discussions with related service providers revealed that many educators and administrators possess only a global understanding of the various roles and activities that related services contribute to inclusive education. In response, Dr. Smith-Davis is working with these representatives to improve this knowledge base through a series of fact sheets. These fact sheets will clarify specific roles, activities, and implementation strategies across nine related services for working with and supporting K–12 general educators, special educators, and school leaders. This is a new activity, approved by our Steering Committee—with the caution to beware of “work-cope creep.” The fact sheets will be developed by Dr. Smith-Davis as part of her existing partnership role, will incur no additional costs, and will fit well within our existing information briefs product line. Information from the developed knowledge base will also be included in IRIS Modules when appropriate.

Anticipated Outcomes. As the work of the IRIS Center continues to unfold, we become increasingly excited about its impact. Over the next three years, we anticipate that:

- A greater number of college instructors will use our resources in their courses.
- More professional development providers will use our resources when conducting inservice trainings.
- A larger number of state departments and school districts will link to our resources.
- College students who initially learned about our site through their Pearson-published texts or *MyEducationLab* experiences will continue to use the site when they become school professionals.
- The number of Web site visitors will increase to at least 700,000 per year.

It is also our belief that the work we are currently finishing up under our Steppingstones grant will continue to validate the use of IRIS’s *STAR Legacy* Modules by adult learners, and verify their effectiveness in teaching content when used in a variety of ways in college courses. Finally, we look forward to the outcomes of the pilot study that will investigate the transference of teachers’ knowledge and skills to the improved outcomes of students with disabilities in the classroom setting.

Rationale for Proposed Activities

The activities outlined in this Briefing Book are consistent with those in our original proposal and approved by our Steering Committee and OSEP. The projected resource topics are the result of a comprehensive needs assessment process that sought out the input and views of hundreds of professionals from general education, special education, educational leadership, and related services. It is our belief that the activities proposed herein accurately reflect the project's primary mission: to provide resources for pre-service and professional development activities, to better prepare current and future educators to meet the needs of students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

Funding Availability

As indicated above, the unspent funds from the Year 1 budget have been carried forward to Year 2, and we anticipate that they will be exhausted by the end of Year 3. The funded, annual budget of \$1,350,000 for Years 3, 4, and 5 will be devoted to the completion of the activities outlined above. Although we originally planned to conduct approximately five IRIS-sponsored trainings and meetings per year, we now predict that number will increase to a minimum of six, exclusive of additional Webinars and Web tours. The increase in trainings is due to the unexpected leveraging of resources for statewide trainings for which state departments cover at least a portion (and, in some cases, all) of the expense. Because in those circumstances IRIS is responsible only for trainers' expenses and the cost of materials, the Center is able to conduct more trainings than was originally budgeted for.

Final Words

We are confident that the Center is exceeding expectations. The quality of the IRIS Center's resources and services is of the highest standard, thanks to the knowledge of our nationally-recognized content experts, the continual review and revision incorporated into the development process, and the outstanding skills of the IRIS Experts who conduct our trainings and seminars. Educators who use the materials indicate exceptional satisfaction. Students respond that they not only enjoy using the materials but also learn a great deal from them. Our stakeholders actively promote IRIS resources with their constituent groups. Indeed, we have learned that once a listserv message announces a new resource posting, that information is immediately forwarded throughout the national disability and advocacy community. IRIS materials continue to garner worldwide attention; during the first week of August, we received requests for instructor passwords from professionals in Korea and the Philippines.

Though the work outlined in our original proposal was exceptionally ambitious, the IRIS Center's team anticipates bringing it all to completion. We anticipate, too, that, as governmental policymakers work to ensure that educators are better prepared to meet the needs of all students, the demand for products will only increase. A second, equally intense demand may arise for materials that are more specific to the needs of what may be considered the "top-tier students," those in an academic or behavioral three-tiered system who have the most intense needs. We look forward to the satisfaction of a job well done, to partnerships forged and strengthened over time and through cooperation, and to continued opportunities to help bring to fruition—even in some small way—the promise of a fair and equal education for children who for too long were asked to do without.