



# IRISCENTER™

## **Administrative Progress Report:**

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## Quarterly Report April–June 2018 [Year 1/Quarter 2]

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The IRIS Center produces these quarterly reports as both a narrative of our efforts and a detailed account of our work and progress. This document represents the very latest activities of the IRIS Center. Read on for more information about everything that took place over the last three months.

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**PROJECT INFRASTRUCTURE:** *IRIS is engaged in a continuous effort to improve and expand the quality and reach of IRIS resources through ongoing infrastructure development and enhancement.*

- ⇒ **Year 1 Work Plan:** The IRIS work plan for Year 1 of this new project has been completed and approved by OSEP.
- ⇒ **IRIS Logo:** IRIS has finalized a new official logo. To better suit a wide range of resources—both online and otherwise (e.g., printed pamphlets and handouts)—we have developed both a vertical and horizontal version, the latter of which can be found on the cover sheet of this report.

**PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:** *IRIS develops online resources about evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices to help improve the education outcomes of all students, particularly struggling learners and those with disabilities. Created with the assistance of many of the top experts in their fields, IRIS resources—whether modules, case studies, CORE content units, or many others—are innovative, interactive, and practical for use in college and university coursework, by PD providers, and by teachers in today’s classrooms.*

- ⇒ **Product Development Process:** In order to determine IRIS resource topics and types for future development, IRIS has conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of our users—the first step in a multi-stage process of topic selection, development, and refinement that relies on the input and expertise of a wide variety of sources. According to the 969 needs assessment survey respondents, intensive intervention in classroom/behavior management, intensive intervention in reading, high-quality IEPs, and building the capacity of general education teachers to support students with disabilities were the top four preferred topics for new IRIS Modules. By special request from OSEP, our center is developing

a trio of modules about high-quality IEPs, which aligns with what respondents indicate as a need. Additional new product development will begin in earnest next year once topic and expert selection has been completed. For more on the results of the needs assessment and the modules on high-quality IEPs, see below.

**New Resources:** A new project cycle brings with it new concepts for effective resources about evidence-based practices as IRIS works to meet the evolving needs of educators in today's classrooms.

⇒ **Fundamental Skill Sheets (coming soon):** Practical and informative, our fundamental skill sheets will offer educators quick primers (or reminders) about discrete skills and practices indispensable to their role as effective classroom teachers. Fundamental skill sheets will cover everything from specific praise to proximity control, and will be carefully organized around a uniform set of sections, namely *What It Is*, *What the Research & Resources Say*, *Steps for Implementation*, *Tips for Implementation*, *Implementation Examples* (including demonstration videos of both correct and incorrect implementation), *Things To Keep in Mind*, and *References & Resources* for further study. Content and some of the videos for the fundamental skills sheets have already been completed, with more videos to come, with an emphasis on depicting realistic classroom environments and diverse individuals. We hope to post a number of fundamental skill sheets in the new quarter.

⇒ **CORE Content Units (coming soon):** Created with the assistance of top instructional experts in their fields, the IRIS CORE (Comprehensive, Organized, Reliable, Engaging) Content Units will be “deep dives” into effective practices like mathematics instruction for students with disabilities. As their name suggests, each CORE content unit will consist of multiple digital sections covering a series of topics, organized sequentially and scaffolded to provide a coherent course or training framework across an academic semester or professional development course. Further, each of these sections will cover discrete content and be flexible enough to be used either individually or in combination with other sections in the CORE content unit. These, in turn, can be complemented and supplemented with our other center resources. A CORE content unit on mathematics instruction for students with disabilities is currently in the early stages of development. Content experts for the first IRIS CORE Content Unit—Kim Paulsen, Paul Riccomini, David Allsopp, Sarah van Ingen, Sarah Powell, Brad Witzel, Tricia Strickland, and Diane Bryant—are already developing content, with Sarah Powell, Brad Witzel, and Tricia Strickland having delivered two units for our review; however, the posting of these units

has been postponed until Year 2 as we work on a trio of new modules about high-quality IEPs.

**Modules:** The signature resource of our center, IRIS Modules cover information about fundamental topics and evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices on a wide variety of topic areas, including classroom behavior management, MTSS/ RTI, and cultural and linguistic diversity, to name but a few.

- ⇒ **IEP Module Series:** By special request from OSEP, our center is developing a trio of modules about high-quality IEPs. The first of these will overview the fundamentals of high-quality IEPs, explaining their crucial role in the education of students with disabilities. The second module will detail the ins-and-outs of creating high-quality IEPs, align with the latest findings from [Andrew F.](#), and discuss how to use the IEP to guide instruction in the classroom. Finally, the third module is specifically designed with administrators and school leaders in mind, going further than the legal context in which high-quality IEPs are required and offering guidance on how to support school personnel in the development of high-quality IEPs. Draft outlines of the modules have been delivered to OSEP for review and approval. Lisa Küpper is developing the foundational module. Mitchell Yell is developing the second module, and David Bateman the third. We expect to be able to post the first two modules in the series simultaneously during the fourth quarter of this year.
- ⇒ **Module Revision:** IRIS is nearing completion on the revision of our *Accommodations: Instructional and Testing Supports for Students with Disabilities* module. The revision will include more information about selecting and implementing accommodations and evaluating whether they were effective for the student. This revision occurred due to the necessary revision of the micro-credential stack on accommodations (see below).

**IRIS Course/PD Activities:** Handy, focused resources for use as independent assignments or to promote classroom discussion, IRIS Course/PD Activities cover a diverse range of topics, including behavior management, language disorders, disability related language in federal law, and many others.

- ⇒ **Course/PD Activities Update:** IRIS is currently reviewing our course/PD activities collection (110 in all), which will undergo revision to change or remove outdated terminology and information. We hope to complete this task in the coming quarter.

**IRIS Online Tools:** From a glossary of terms related to disabilities to the IRIS Book and Film Tools to our Evidence-Based Practices Summaries, IRIS online tools are user-friendly, informative, and always growing.

- ⇒ **High-Leverage Practices Alignment Tool:** Developed by the Council for Exceptional Children and the CEEDAR Center, high-leverage practices (HLPs) are 22 essential special education techniques that all K-12 special education teachers should master for use across a variety of classroom circumstances. Our new HLP alignment tool identifies which IRIS resources provide information on HLPs, allowing users to organize their searches by topic area (i.e., assessment, collaboration, instruction, social/emotional/behavioral), product type (i.e., module or case study), strength of alignment (i.e., loosely, moderately, strongly), and content type (i.e., implementation, information). This tool was developed in collaboration with CEEDAR, whose team members reviewed select groups of our modules and case studies, determined the strength of alignment for each, and provided descriptions of how each resource aligns with the HLP in question.
- ⇒ **The IRIS Film Tool:** This tool represents an attempt to catalogue the representation of people with disabilities in motion pictures. Some 16 new films and film captions have been added to the tool during the past quarter. In the coming quarter, we will be adding MPAA rating information to the film descriptions.
- ⇒ **Video Vignettes & YouTube:** As part of our recent development of an IRIS YouTube channel featuring select videos from a number of our modules, those same video clips were also added to our online video vignette tool, allowing one more way for our users to access classroom demonstrations, informational segments, expert interviews, and more.

**DISSEMINATION:** IRIS disseminates news of its resources through a wide variety of means, both universal, targeted, and individualized. The IRIS Website, conference presentations and exhibition appearances, and a multi-part social media presence, all are key components in our plan to reach and communicate with IRIS consumers.

- ⇒ **Website:** IRIS has launched our updated and reorganized Website. Significantly revised and improved, the new IRIS site features enhanced navigation options; new resources and tools; and a clean, modern look. Among the new features is our recently unveiled HLP alignment tool, IRIS Stories, and streamlined professional development options. Consumer reviews thus far have been *extremely* positive and enthusiastic:

- ❖ “WOW!!! I LOVE the new look of the IRIS website!!! You all have done such a fantastic job! It is very clean and easy to navigate and looks terrific!!” – Clinical instructor/lecturer
- ❖ “New website looks amazing! You have put a lot of thought and effort in making it clean, bright and accessible. Thank you!” – Faculty member/program coordinator

- ⇒ **Dissemination Plan:** With the indispensable assistance of Kori Hamilton Biagas, IRIS Dissemination Workgroup Lead, we have finalized a multi-part dissemination plan covering everything from conference exhibition booths and presentations to a quarterly IRIS digital newsletter to a targeted social media campaign and other essential elements of IRIS dissemination efforts.
- ⇒ **Communications Plan:** With the initial dissemination plan complete, a subsequent communications plan will be developed to provide more detail on the various ways in which the release of information about newly posted resources will occur.
- ⇒ **IRIS on YouTube:** IRIS has uploaded a significant number of video clips from our Modules onto an updated and expanded IRIS YouTube channel, offering our users yet one more way to access those resources. Presented so that their intended context is fully explained and with a link to their module homepages, these videos cover everything from mathematics instruction to reading and language arts and more. Additions to the YouTube channel will continue throughout the coming quarter and beyond.
- ⇒ **Social Media Campaign:** IRIS continues to “scale up” our social media presence, with special emphasis on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and listserv notices via Constant Contact.
- ⇒ **The IRIS Newsletter:** A new element of our dissemination efforts, a periodic IRIS newsletter will be made available to members of our email listserv, some 10,000 IRIS users. The newsletter will contain updates on IRIS and our resources, features about the center itself, information about conference presentations and appearances, and relevant information about the work of our partners. The first newsletter will be available in the coming quarter.

**Presentation & Outreach Efforts:** Throughout the year, IRIS attends local, regional, and national conferences to present on our training and instructional resources and to keep audiences up-to-date on everything that is new with IRIS. Information about our recent presentations is below.

- ⇒ **IRIS & Teacher Preparation Programs:** In April, as part of our individualized dissemination effort, IRIS distributed information packets about our center and the IRIS resources to 153 institutions of higher education (IHEs) with state-approved general and special education teacher preparation programs. The programs at these IHEs were not yet using IRIS. These represent only 8% of such programs in the U.S.; the other 92% are already using IRIS resources.
- ⇒ **Ambassador Website walkthrough & training:** On June 11, IRIS held a virtual meeting with our IRIS Ambassadors to unveil and demonstrate our new Website. Highlighted were changes in the site's organization, as well as a demonstration of our new HLP alignment tool. Taking part in the meeting were Sally Barton-Arwood, Belmont University; Mary Little, University of Central Florida; Darcie Peterson, Utah State University; and Cammy Purper. Also present was our dissemination workgroup lead Kori Hamilton Biagas.
- ⇒ **Ambassador's Tool Kit:** IRIS has developed a tool kit for our IRIS Ambassadors, which currently includes four handouts and a general overview PowerPoint presentation. More handouts will be completed in the coming quarter as we continue to create resources for the tool kit.
- ⇒ **National Charter Schools (NCS) Conference:** On June 17-20, IRIS was on hand in the exhibition hall of the NCS Conference in Austin, Texas, where we highlighted IRIS online resources and PD options to an audience largely unfamiliar with our center.
- ⇒ **Florida IHE Summer Institute:** On June 19-20, IRIS Ambassador Mary Little presented on behalf of our center at the annual Florida IHE Summer Institute. The event was attended by some 65 participants, representing the state's institutes of higher education.
- ⇒ **OSEP Project Directors' Meeting:** In July, IRIS will take part in the annual OSEP Project Directors' Meeting in Washington, DC, where we will present on our latest resources, updated Website, and professional development options. In addition, IRIS will host a poster session to highlight new resources.

- ⇒ **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC):** A trio of presentations about IRIS resources has been accepted for inclusions in the CEC 2019 Convention and Expo, to be held January 29-February 2 in Indianapolis, Indiana. We will present on our new MTSS/RTI: Mathematics module, new resources, and professional development options. A fourth presentation is currently waitlisted. IRIS will also host a booth in the exhibition hall.
- ⇒ **Updated Presentation Materials:** IRIS has also revisited and revised some of our key presentation materials, including two of the banners we display in exhibition hall appearances. These will likely be sent out for printing early in the new quarter, at which point we will also begin revising our six IRIS brochures with updated information about the new IRIS Center and the IRIS resources.
- ⇒ **Building Bridges Conference (special mention):** Though not paid for out of IRIS funds, our center contributed to the Building Bridges Conference, held in Belize City, through: 1) a paper in the Conference Proceedings, 2) a poster session, and 3) a presentation. The Belizean government's Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, and Culture and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas' College of Education partnered to bring together colleagues from Belize, Australia, and the United States. The overarching purpose of the conference was to share ways to increase usage of evidence-based practices in inclusive classroom settings. Presenters and participants came from across the United States, New South Wales, and from all education districts in Belize. Almost 200 participants attended the conference.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:** *IRIS works to increase the capacity of teacher preparation programs to expand the range of resources about evidence-based practices (EBPs) in their courses and program curricula, state and local education agencies as well as PD providers to deliver effective professional development, and independent learners to enhance their knowledge and skills regarding EBPs.*

- ⇒ **Micro-Credentials:** In collaboration with Digital Promise/Bloomboard, IRIS offers a "stack" of micro-credentials (MCs). These focused PD units allow educators to learn and gain mastery of discrete instructional practices. Quality control measures established by Digital Promise/Bloomboard require that each micro-credential must first be field tested by 50 teachers—for a total of 200 teachers for the entirety of our "stack." IRIS is already in the process of reviewing and grading micro-credentials incoming from teachers nationwide, as well as those specifically recruited by Joe Morgan (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) in Clark

County, Nevada, with whom we have formed a partnership for this purpose.

- ❖ **IRIS & Digital Promise:** Digital Promise will soon launch its own, separate micro-credentials platform. We have finalized the major revisions to the content of our micro-credentials accordingly. This new content will be available in July for Digital Promise.
  - ❖ **IRIS & Bloomboard:** With the separation of the Digital Promise and Bloomboard platforms, Bloomboard is moving in a different direction and revising the format of their MCs. We are awaiting the new template to revise accordingly so that IRIS MC stacks can be offered on both platforms.
- ⇒ **Navigation Videos:** An updated and revised Website requires updated navigation videos. These brief video tutorials help our visitors to navigate our Website, use the IRIS Resource Locator, navigate our modules, and explore our various professional development options. A new Website navigation video has been completed and is now available. Other revised videos will be added in the coming quarter.
- ⇒ **The IRIS Strategic Plan:** IRIS is currently working with a consultant to develop a strategic plan to increase the use of our School & District Platform and PD certificates for teachers.

**EVALUATION:** *The IRIS evaluation plan is designed to yield information to guide project activities and to assess whether our goals, objectives, and outcomes have been achieved. Formative and summative data are used to monitor project implementation procedures.*

- ⇒ **Logic Model:** IRIS collaborated with the Center to Improve Program and Project Performance (CIP3) on the development of an IRIS logic model. A “final draft” has been agreed on and was included with the updated Evaluation Plan sent to CIP3 for review.
- ⇒ **Evaluation Plan:** IRIS continues to collaborate with CIP3 on our evaluation plan, which will be our primary roadmap for guiding and monitoring the success of IRIS goals and objectives. Substantial progress has been made and a draft of the plan was sent to CIP3 for review at the end of June. We await their feedback.
- ⇒ **Needs Assessment:** The IRIS comprehensive needs assessment survey has been completed. We sought information from IRIS users about preferred resource development, methods of engagement (e.g., social

media or email listservs), user professional roles and areas of focus, and more. As mentioned above, the 969 people who responded to the survey rated intensive intervention in classroom/behavior management, intensive intervention in reading, high-quality IEPs, and building the capacity of general education teachers to support students with disabilities as the top four topics of need.

- ⇒ **The IRIS Master List:** IRIS is in the final stages of developing a list of state-approved teacher preparation programs throughout the United States. This list will be used to set the baseline for the number and percentage of programs in which IRIS resources are used. Deb Smith, formerly of IRIS@CGU, is coordinating this effort.
- ⇒ **Implementation Projects:** The upcoming IRIS Implementation Projects evaluation initiative is designed to gather summative data regarding our resources' effectiveness to increase the capacity of current and future educators to use evidence-based practices. To accomplish this, our center will request proposals from those who wish to help us evaluate how well IRIS resources help to produce knowledge-acquisition or proficient classroom application of EBPs by current and future educators. We originally proposed two rounds of four studies each that will be selected through a competitive review process, though this may change as we continue to work with CIP3 to finalize the evaluation plan. Deb Smith is leading this effort and has created a draft version of the process for further review.

**Module Feedback:** The IRIS Module Feedback Form, an online survey, asks respondents to rate our modules' quality, relevance, and usefulness on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest rating). This quarter there were 869 respondents to this survey. **Table 1** (below) summarizes descriptive information about the respondents. **Table 2** presents the respondents' overall ratings of the IRIS Modules for quality, relevance, and usefulness. Finally, we asked respondents to describe their area of work or study. **Table 3** summarizes their responses to this question.

**Table 1**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Graduate Student</b>	320
<b>Experienced Teacher</b>	215
<b>College Student</b>	171
<b>New Teacher</b>	79
<b>Other (e.g., parent)</b>	36
<b>School Leader</b>	23
<b>College Faculty</b>	12
<b>Data missing</b>	9
<b>PD Provider</b>	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>869</b>

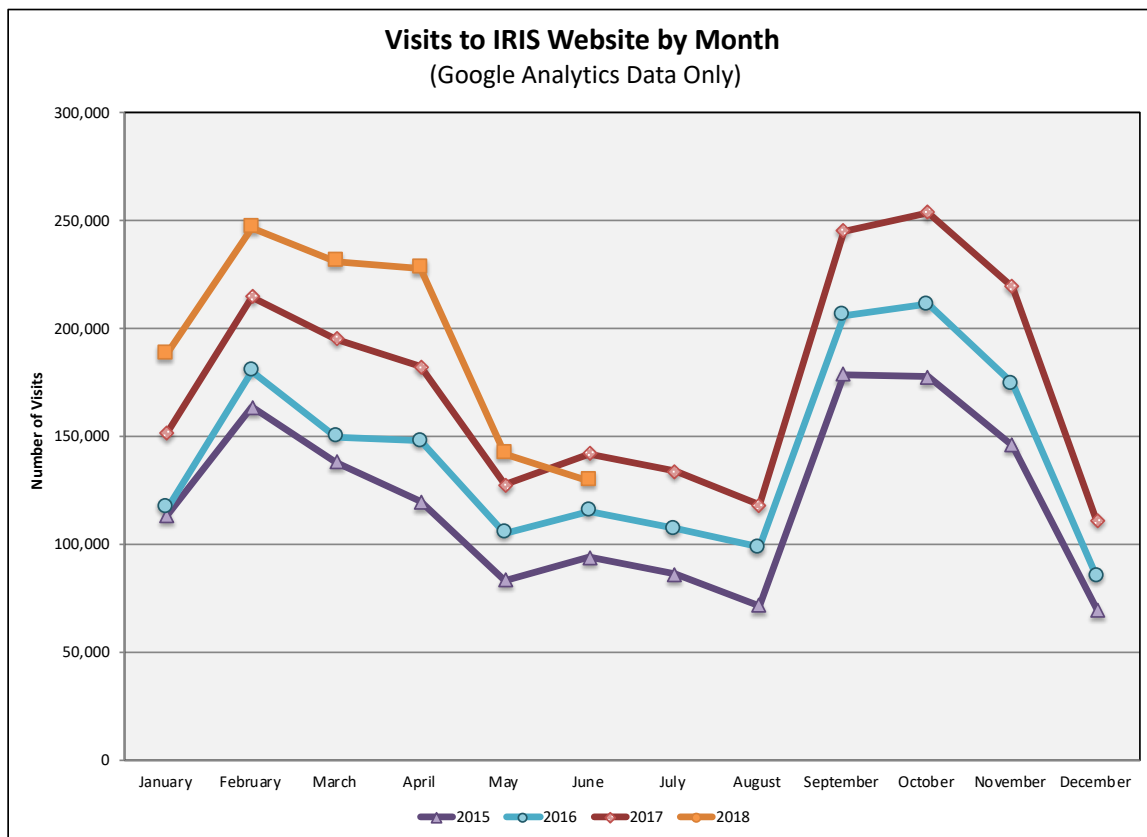
**Table 2**

<b>Mean Ratings</b>	
<b>Quality</b>	4.5
<b>Relevance</b>	4.5
<b>Usefulness</b>	4.5

**Table 3**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>General education</b>	312
<b>Special education</b>	295
<b>Early childhood education</b>	107
<b>Other</b>	101
<b>Early childhood special education</b>	29
<b>Data missing</b>	15
<b>Early intervention services</b>	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>869</b>

**Website User Data:** There were 499,567 visits to the Website this quarter, an increase of 10.7% compared to the same quarter last year. For the first time since 2013, the number of visits to the Website did not maintain its increasing trend. There were fewer visits to the Website in June 2018 than there were in June 2017. IRIS staff is examining this data to determine what factors might have led to these lower numbers (e.g., Google Analytics “code drops” with the launch of the new Website).



**COLLABORATION & WORKGROUP ACTIVITIES:** *IRIS works in collaboration with other national centers, nationally recognized education experts, and our own IRIS Ambassadors and Workgroups to improve our ability to develop resources, disseminate information about all things IRIS, and offer technical assistance and training.*

- ⇒ **HLP Videos:** IRIS continued to collaborate with CEEDAR, CEC, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, CCSSO, and OSEP as they develop a series of videos on high-leverage practices (HLPs), providing guidance and feedback on the production side of the process. Five videos are set for a soft launch in early July, with universal access available at the end of July.

- ⇒ **National Center for Leadership in Intensive Intervention (NCLII):** IRIS continues to collaborate with the National Center for Leadership in Intensive Intervention (NCLII). Through this proposed partnership, NCLII doctoral students will develop and pilot courses about intensive interventions. In turn, IRIS will post the syllabi from those courses on our Website as part of our Sample Syllabi collection. These efforts will continue into the coming quarter and beyond.
- ⇒ **National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII):** During the upcoming Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC, IRIS will consult with the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) to discuss a potential collaboration related to a module on intensive intervention in reading, a topic identified through our needs assessment process.
- ⇒ **CEEDAR:** To develop our new HLP alignment tool, IRIS collaborated with the CEEDAR Center, whose team members reviewed select groups of our modules and case studies, determined the strength of alignment for each, and provided descriptions of how each resource aligns with the HLP in question.

**PERSONNEL:** *See this space for notes and information on new or outgoing IRIS personnel.*

- ⇒ **Resource Developer:** Tanya Collins assumed this role on June 4, 2018. Ms. Collins will support the development of new resources within the center, work with content experts, write and review instructional resources, and present at conferences both locally and nationwide. She brings to IRIS an impressive array of experience that includes working with state systems, professional development, and instructional design.
- ⇒ **Spanish Translator:** IRIS bids farewell to our in-house Spanish translator Kadiri Vaquer. We welcome her replacement, David Vita.