



The IRIS Center Quarterly Report

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Administrative Progress Report:

Year 5 Extension

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Serving: Higher Education Faculty • PD Providers • Practicing Educators

Supporting the preparation of effective educators with the knowledge and skills to use evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for all students, especially struggling learners and those with disabilities.

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Quarterly Report April – June 2023 [Year 5 Extension]

Our Quarter At-A-Glance: The IRIS Center presents these quarterly reports as a narrative of our efforts and a detailed account of our work and progress. Below are just a few highlights from the previous three months. We invite you to read on for further details of all this and so much more.

- IRIS posted two modules for secondary-level educators, *Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors Parts 1 and 2*.
- An external review panel reviewed three more topic areas for our Information Brief Collection overhaul.
- COMPASS analyzed the data from the IRIS User Survey and provided a written summary.
- Ten modules and one case study unit were sent to Expert Review Panels, who provided quantitative and qualitative feedback.
- To prepare for upcoming evaluation of the number of colleges and universities with educator preparation programs that use IRIS, our list of institutes of higher education was updated.

PROJECT INFRASTRUCTURE: *IRIS is in the process of completing all activities and closing out accounts. This process will be completed by August 31, 2023, the end of the no-cost extension.*

IRIS 4 Finances: We have been steadfast in our efforts to reconcile and pay invoices as well as close out committed funds for IRIS 4. Services performed this quarter that required new commitments and subsequent payments are being closely monitored for accuracy and timeliness and should be reconciled by the end of the grant.

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, fundamental skill sheets, 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.*

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 high-quality IEPs, to name but a few.

⇒ **Classroom Behavior Management:** As part of the revision process of two popular modules, *Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors Parts 1 and 2*, we decided to expand this series. In addition to the two elementary versions that posted in July 2022, this quarter we posted a pair of modules for secondary-level educators. Although the main content for these modules was completed in July 2022, the required photo and video shoot was completed in the fall, and the post-production video editing was completed this quarter. Additionally, to increase the instructional effectiveness of the demonstration videos, we added commentary from Dr. Johanna Staubitz, a Vanderbilt University faculty member and director of Vanderbilt's applied behavior analysis (ABA) program, to the end of each video to point out salient student and teacher actions. The first module includes two series of videos: the first demonstrates the acting-out cycle with one student (Ava) and the second provides practice opportunities with a different student (Sam) related to the acting-out cycle. The second module includes videos of a teacher addressing student behavior using evidence-based strategies such as behavior-specific praise and active supervision. In all, these modules include 25 video clips.

Universal Design for Learning: Our module, *Universal Design for Learning: Creating a Learning Environment that Challenges and Engages All Students*, is currently under revision. The Implementation Specialists from CAST, who are responsible for revising the content to reflect changes to the UDL framework and incorporate principles around equity, delivered the content in late April. Now that the content has been received, the actual development of the module will occur as part of the IRIS 5 workscope.

⇒ **Progress Monitoring:** Our modules *Progress Monitoring: Mathematics* and *Progress Monitoring: Reading* are currently being updated to address feedback from Expert Reviewers. This quarter, IRIS staff conducted multiple follow-up Zoom meetings with one of the reviewers to further discuss and get clarification on the recommendations. In addition to adding updated research and expanding on the content, the IRIS team will develop a video and IRIS Information Brief to demonstrate and illustrate a method for evaluating progress monitoring data. We anticipate posting these updates to the module in early August, before the beginning of the fall semester, so as not to interrupt course assignments.

Fundamental Skill Sheets: *Practical and informative, Fundamental Skill Sheets offer educators quick primers (or reminders!) about discrete skills and practices indispensable to their role as effective classroom teachers.*

⇒ **Active Supervision:** IRIS is nearing the completion of the Active Supervision Fundamental Skill Sheet. This resource provides a comprehensive, yet concise review of active supervision, including what it is, what the research and resources say, steps for implementation, tips for implementation, and elementary and secondary implementation videos with both examples and nonexamples.

Information Briefs: These online resources developed by other programs and centers are collected and curated by IRIS as supplemental materials. Information briefs cover everything

from accommodations for students with disabilities to Universal Design for Learning and peer-assisted learning strategies.

⇒ **Collection Overhaul:** Our entire collection of more than 300 information briefs has been undergoing a significant overhaul, which includes removing older or outdated resources and adding more recent and relevant briefs. To make the task more manageable, we categorized briefs under topic areas for review by expert panels. Thirteen topic areas (Disability; Evidence-Based Practices; Early Childhood; Learning Strategies; Content Instruction; Reading, Literacy, and Language Arts; MTSS; Transition; Mathematics; Juvenile Justice; Differentiated Instruction; Accommodations; and IEPs) were reviewed in previous quarters. This quarter, reviewers completed their feedback for three additional topic areas (Assistive Technology, Behavior and Classroom Management, and Collaboration). Recommended briefs were added to the collection and outdated briefs were deleted. The remaining topic areas (Diversity, Related Services, School Improvement, Assessment), two of which are almost complete, will be reviewed under IRIS 5.

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

⇒ **IRIS Glossary:** This searchable glossary of definitions for the disability-related terms covered in many of our resources is currently undergoing revision. The revised content was delivered to IRIS in mid-December. We will complete the final editing and posting under IRIS 5. Once complete, we will share this resource with the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII).

⇒ **Spanish Translations:** This past quarter, we received translated content for the following modules. Those modules will be available on the IRIS Website early next quarter.

- *Inclusion of Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Supports in the General Education Classroom*
- *Addressing Challenging Behaviors (Part 1, Elementary): Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle*
- *Addressing Challenging Behaviors (Part 2, Elementary): Behavioral Strategies*
- *Addressing Challenging Behaviors (Part 1, Secondary): Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle*
- *Addressing Challenging Behaviors (Part 2, Secondary): Behavioral Strategies*

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.*

⇒ **IRIS User Survey:** In January, IRIS sent out a User Survey through our listserv, Website, and social media platforms. Our External Evaluator, Sarah Heinemeier of COMPASS Evaluation and Research, completed the data analyses and the report describing the findings this

quarter. In total, 964 individuals responded to the survey. Of these, 163 were faculty, 32 were professional development (PD) providers, and 769 were independent learners or other respondents. Below is a description of the types of information collected and a few highlights for each.

- ❖ Much like the Needs Assessment Survey conducted at the beginning of IRIS 4, this final survey asked users about desired resource topics, the type of resources they would like, and preferred ways to receive updates or information from IRIS. By collecting similar data, we will be able to determine shifts in desired products, the ways in which the resources are being used, and preferred means of dissemination across the five-year funding cycle.
 - The top topics ranked by respondents as areas in which that they wanted IRIS to develop *more* resources were classroom behavior management, accommodations, and differentiated instruction.
 - The top topics for which respondents indicated they wanted *new* resources were disability categories (e.g., information on specific disabilities, such as autism, learning disabilities, and emotional and behavior disorders); IEPs (e.g., process and content, goals); diversity, equity, and inclusion; and a write-in “other” category (e.g., assessment and data-based decision making, transition).
 - Respondents ranked the ways in which they want to receive updates from IRIS. The top preferences were email, newsletters, and the IRIS Website.
- ❖ Additionally, we asked respondents about their familiarity with and use of different IRIS resources and resource components (e.g., audios, videos, STAR sheets) to get a sense of what resources are the most relevant and useful.
 - More faculty (59%) reported being *very familiar* with IRIS resources than PD providers (16%) or independent learners (12%). However, 65% of PD providers and 41% of independent learners reported being *moderately familiar*, as did 33% of faculty.
 - Overall, more respondents reported using IRIS Modules (71%) than activities (36%) and case studies (27%). However, these percentages were greatly influenced by independent learners, who reported greater use of modules than other resources. When disaggregated, the data for faculty and PD providers revealed that a greater percentage of these groups were using activities (64% and 50%, respectively) and case studies (66% and 46%, respectively).
- ❖ The survey also collected demographic data as well as information about user roles and areas to ensure that we are meeting the needs of a diverse group of educators.
 - The largest group of respondents were experienced teachers (26%) followed

by college faculty (17%) and paraeducators (15%). Other respondents included early career teachers (7%), graduate students (6%), district level school personnel (6%), and other (5%).

- The largest group of respondents worked in special education (62%). Other areas of work included general education (34%) early childhood (15%), and early childhood special education (14%).

❖ Additionally, the survey collected information on the impact of IRIS.

- When asked the amount of time IRIS saves them when preparing a course or professional development activity, the average reported for faculty was 16 hours (ranging from 0-200) and approximately 7 hours (ranging from 0-40) for PD providers.
- Respondents were asked what they would do if IRIS resources were no longer available for use in courses or professional development activities. A few faculty members' responses are below.

- *"Honestly don't know what I would do. I've been using these for so long and I know there isn't anything else out there that comes close."*
- *"I would cry! I rely heavily on IRIS Center for planning and presenting instruction."*
- *"wring my hands in despair; cry, sob"*

⇒ **IHE List Update:** Each year, the IRIS Center calculates the percentage of institutes of higher education (IHE's) that use IRIS resources. To do that, we need a current list of colleges and universities that offer educator preparation programs. During the past quarter Deb Smith, an IRIS consultant and a former director of the IRIS Center, updated that list. During the update, she made sure to note historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and tribal colleges. This list will later be cross-referenced with the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to ensure that our list is complete. This database will then be used with data collected in 2022 to evaluate the use of IRIS resources in IHEs across the nation during the last year of IRIS 4 and to serve as a baseline for IRIS 5.

⇒ **Field-Testing:** This quarter, one faculty member completed field-testing the module *Addressing Challenging Behaviors (Part 1, Elementary): Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle* with 56 students. The faculty member and the students rated the quality, relevance, and usefulness of this module using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent). The faculty member rated all three of these qualities as 4.0. On average, the students rated the quality, relevance, and usefulness as 4.1, 4.5, and 4.4, respectively. Using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at All) to 5 (Extremely), the students also rated the extent to which their awareness of, knowledge of, and ability to use evidence-based practices (EBPs) increased, with ratings of 4.3, 4.4, and 4.3, respectively.

⇒ **Module Reviews:** This quarter, Expert Review panels—consisting of three subject matter experts—reviewed and offered feedback on 10 modules. The table below contains the cumulative average rating across all 10 modules for key traits. The ratings are based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Very Low (1) to Very High (5). That rating is followed by the range of averaged scores across the three Expert Reviewers for each of the modules.

Cumulative Average Module Ratings	
Quality	4.5 (range 3.7-5)
Relevance	4.9 (range 4.7-5)
Usefulness	4.7 (range 3.7-5)
Completeness of the information	4.5 (range 3.7-5)
Accuracy of the information	4.8 (range 4.3 -5)
Clarity of the information	4.5 (range 3.7-5)
Extent the module allows learners to gain a general understanding of the topic	4.6 (range 3.3-5)

Selected Expert Reviewer Feedback

“This is such an important topic. This module hits most of the highlights when I think about key points for pre-service students or current educators about engaging families of students with disabilities.”

Family Engagement: Collaborating with Families of Students with Disabilities

“Such rich video examples of the two students.”

Addressing Challenging Behaviors (Part 1, Secondary): Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle

“I like this module a lot and have assigned it in class. The more in-depth look at culture and the role that it plays in both behavior expectations and student behavior is particularly well done.”

Classroom Behavior Management (Part 1): Key Concepts and Foundational Practices

⇒ **Case Study Review:** An Expert Review panel also provided feedback on the case study *Encouraging Appropriate Behavior*. Reviewers answered the question “How easy would it be to incorporate this Case Study Unit into a college course or professional development activity?” on a scale of 1-5 (1=Very Difficult, 2= Difficult, 3=Moderately Easy, 4=Easy, 5=Very Easy). The table below contains the average rating for key items. The ratings are based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Very Low (1) to Very High (5).

Average Case Study Ratings

Quality	4.0
Relevance	4.3
Usefulness	4.7
Individual case study scenarios are engaging	4.7
Individual case study scenarios are clearly presented	4.0
Information in the STAR sheets is up-to-date	3.7
Information presented in STAR sheets is accurate	4.3
Information in STAR sheets is easy to understand	4.3

Selected Expert Reviewer Feedback

“The case study unit is excellent. It is easy to understand and use, and is visually appealing. The choices of strategies for managing behavior were appropriate and have a strong evidence base. The literature supporting the content is appropriate and well-cited. The cases provide substantial opportunities for grappling with how to address difficult behavior and include a range of problems teachers deal with every day.”

“Contingent instruction - loved this! What a great way to help teachers move away from using reprimands. Somehow this had more power when framed as "contingent instruction" rather than just as cueing or prompting. Prompting is so powerful but haven't been able to adequately communicate that to the teaching candidates I work with - I think this explanation of it will do the trick.”