iLit
Evidence of Effectiveness
A Summary of the Interim Results of the Longitudinal Randomized, Control Trial

First Year Results from California

Pearson *iLit* Summative Research

Pearson strongly believes that its programs should be proven through scientific research to increase student achievement. As such, it contracted with the independent research group Gatti Evaluation to conduct a longitudinal randomized, control trial of its *iLit* literacy program. This study was conducted in 7th grade classrooms over the 2013-14 school year and will continue with 8th grade classrooms during the 2014-15 school year. This report summary presents an excerpt of findings from the interim report, including: the evaluation design and methods, a description of program usage and implementation, student performance results, and a discussion of the findings for the first year of results from the California site. The full results of the report, *iLit 2013-15 Longitudinal Efficacy Study*, can be found on the Pearson Ed (www.pearsoned.com) website.

Study Design and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to assess the longitudinal effectiveness of the *iLit* literacy program in helping students attain critical literacy skills and to document usage and implementation of the *iLit* program. The study employed an experimental randomized, control trial research design. That is, students within each research school were *randomly assigned* to either use the *iLit* program with their students (also referred to as the "treatment" group) or to continue using their current school literacy program (also referred to as the "comparison" condition).

The study addressed the following overarching evaluation questions:

1. Do middle school students receiving core literacy instruction from the *iLit* program over the course of the initial and second school year of implementation demonstrate a significant improvement in achievement?
2. Do middle school students receiving core literacy

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instruction from the *iLit* program over the course of the initial and second school year of implementation demonstrate a significant improvement in achievement over otherwise similar students in classrooms using their current literacy programs and methods (i.e., not fully digital)?

3. Do students receiving *iLit* instruction demonstrate positive attitudes toward reading and literacy instruction?

4. How are teachers implementing the *iLit* program and how can this information inform program revisions and best practice?

5. How did teachers and students react to the *iLit* program?

Participants and Setting

Gatti Evaluation recruited six schools to participate in the study, including schools in AZ, CA, CO, MI, NJ and NY. The CA site included two teachers and 27 students. The study schools were members of public school districts located in suburban and urban areas. The study sample from CA demonstrated considerable variation in ethnicity and socioeconomic status as evidenced by eligibility for free or reduced lunch status. Figure 1 presents the CA school sample demographics broken out by *iLit* and comparison students.

Figure 1. California Site Demographics

	iLit		Comparison	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Caucasian	3	18%	1	10%
African-American	1	6%	1	10%
Hispanic	8	47%	6	60%
Other	5	29%	2	20%
ELL	1	6%	0	0%
Free/Reduced Lunch	11	65%	6	60%
Total	17	100%	10	100%

Measures

Multiple measures were used to assess student achievement, program implementation, and student attitudes.

Evaluators selected the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) to measure changes in student literacy skills because of its broad visibility and acceptance in the field and high technical merit. The GRADE is a standardized, norm-referenced assessment that is group- administered. It offers parallel forms, with Form A administered within one month of the start of school and Form B administered within one month of the conclusion of school. The GRADE is not a timed test, but generally takes 50 – 90 minutes to

complete. The GRADE offers an overall Literacy score, as well as four subtests: Vocabulary, Sentence Comprehension, Passage Comprehension, and Listening Comprehension. The GRADE was administered three times during the school year. Form A was administered in the fall and spring and Form B was administered mid-year.

In order to measure program implementation and teacher perceptions, evaluators collected data through observations, surveys, and interviews with literacy teachers. Literacy teachers (treatment and comparison) also completed weekly implementation logs. This information provided researchers with a detailed data source on what was occurring in treatment and comparison classrooms in terms of literacy instruction, and allowed researchers to identify areas of overlap in terms of content taught and activities. The biannual classroom observations and interviews or focus groups with classroom teachers provided critical insight into the nature of use and the effectiveness of the literacy materials used with treatment and comparison students.

Additionally, student academic attitude surveys were administered in the fall and spring of the study year. The survey was developed by Gatti Evaluation, and included questions related to general literacy attitude, confidence, motivation, and self-perceived aptitude.

Student Performance Results

Results for iLit Students
Students using *iLit* achieved gains in reading achievement after one year of program implementation. All *iLit* students in grade 7 experienced gains on the GRADE Total, the four subtests (i.e., Vocabulary, Sentence Comprehension, Listening Comprehension and Passage Comprehension), and on Total Comprehension. *Statistically significant* gains were seen for GRADE Overall Score (which combines reading comprehension and vocabulary, Vocabulary and Sentence Comprehension. (See Figure 2.)
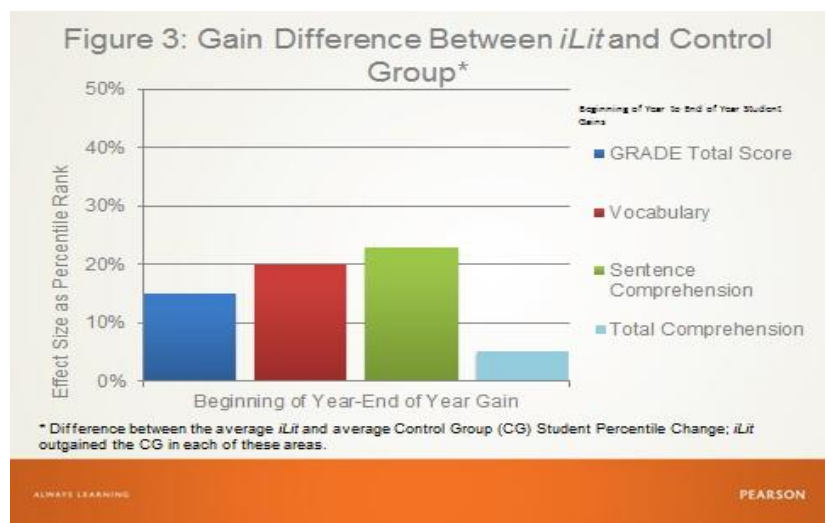
Gains are represented as percentile ranks for an *iLit* student scoring *above* the average baseline score. *iLit* students gained 30 percentiles on the GRADE Total Score and 35 percentiles on Vocabulary test after one year of using *iLit*. Additionally, *iLit* students gained 14 percentiles on the Total Comprehension test, 28 percentiles on the Sentence Comprehension subtest and 2 percentiles on the Passage Comprehension subtest.

Figure 2: *iLit* Students' Average Gains
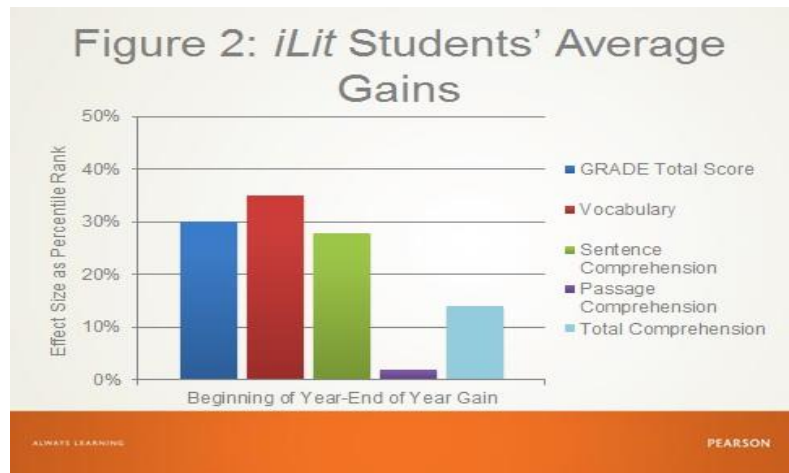
Results for iLit as Compared to Other Reading Programs

Evaluators conducted analyses to examine how *iLit* students performed in comparison to students using other reading programs. Results showed that 7th grade students using *iLit* made greater gains than their peers using other reading programs on the GRADE Overall Score and Vocabulary, Sentence Comprehension and Total Comprehension subtests. On the Sentence Comprehension subtest, *iLit* students *statistically significantly* outgained their comparison peers by the end of the year. (See Figure 3).

The average *iLit* student gained 15 percentiles more than the average comparison student on the GRADE Overall Score and gained 20 percentiles more than the average comparison student on the Vocabulary test. Additionally, the average *iLit* student gained 23 percentiles more than the average comparison student on the Sentence Comprehension subtest and gained 5 percentiles more than the average comparison student on their overall Comprehension scores.

Figure 3: Gain Difference Between *iLit* and Control Group*

* Difference between the average *iLit* and average Control Group (CG) Student Percentile Change; *iLit* outgained the CG in each of these areas.

iLit Implementation

The *iLit* teacher implemented the *iLit* program with high fidelity. The average daily implementation time of *iLit* was 87 minutes, and 73 full lessons were completed over the course of the school year.

Participant feedback

Student Attitudes

In addition to providing evidence of efficacy, Gatti Evaluation investigated other outcomes associated with use of the *iLit* program.

When *iLit* students were surveyed as to their opinions of the program, the majority demonstrated an overall positive attitude toward the *iLit* program. Several notable themes emerged, including; 76% of students preferred *iLit* to their previous English class, 65% reported English class was more interesting, and 71% wanted to continue using *iLit* next year.

Teacher Attitudes

The teacher response to the *iLit* program was overall positive. Specifically the teacher reported, *"I really enjoy teaching the iLit program. More importantly, my students love learning language arts using the app. They think it is so cool that we don't use paper!"*

The *iLit* teacher reported that *iLit* was a very impressive program and also very engaging for students. Additionally the *iLit* teacher reported that they would definitely recommend the *iLit* program to a colleague.

Conclusion

This study indicates that *iLit* is effective at significantly increasing student literacy achievement. The *iLit* teacher and students using *iLit* reported satisfaction with the program. In particular, the teacher found the program very engaging for students and would recommend *iLit* to colleagues. In sum, scientific research indicates that the *iLit* program is an effective and useful program for both teachers and students.

About Gatti Evaluation, Inc.

Gatti Evaluation was founded in 2003 to provide assistance in researching current topics in education and biomed. Gatti has extensive experience managing and consulting on large research projects for Fortune 500 companies and major academic institutions. Gatti researchers hold advanced degrees in Research Methods and Education. They also collaborate with numerous hand-picked, world-renowned researchers, practitioners, and academic research centers. Learn more at www.GattiEval.com.

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