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ABSTRACT

This is an evaluation report of ESEA Title I programs in St. Louis, Missouri which maintains that despite the decline in funds, St. Louis' Title I children held their own. In 1970, these students scored about two months higher on achievement tests than they had in 1966. The fact that Title I students are not losing ground is considered a significant achievement. Each report included in this evaluation has two sections. The "Program Summary" section describes the objectives of the program and its basic procedures for achieving the objectives; it also summarizes the evaluation. The second section, the "Monitor's Report," is intended for readers with more interest in the details of the evaluation; it views the problems and progress of the project against the backdrop of the previous year's evaluation, and projects new priorities for the coming year. Some of the programs include: (1) addition of remedial teachers to elementary schools; (2) setting up multi-media study-learning resource centers; (3) making available cheap cold lunches; and, (4) opening of Lincoln Opportunity High School for students suspended from regular high school programs. [Because of the contrast on a few pages of the original document, information about the contact, number of participants, time, staff, and cost of the program given on these pages may not be as clearly legible as the rest of the document.] (Editor/JW)

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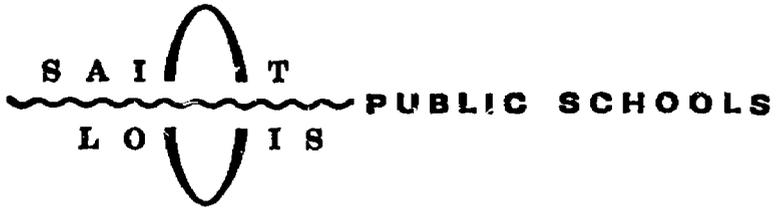
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November, 1970

Clyde C. Miller
Acting Superintendent

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PREFACE

In the four years of Title I, the amount of funds provided St. Louis has decreased from \$5.2 millions in 1966 to \$5.1 millions in 1970. In the years between 1966 and 1970, there was even less money from Title I. The \$5.1 million allocated in 1970 was able to purchase less than the same amount had purchased in 1966. State support has fallen off: St. Louis was denied \$3 million by the defeat of the 1970 State income tax referendum. The decline in the city's student population brings with it a decline in State aid. Depressed property values in the city produce fewer local dollars each year. Since 1966, the number of children on ADC in St. Louis has nearly doubled. There were 22,000 ADC children in 1966 and 42,000 in 1970. While the need for expanding successful educational programs grows, the resources for supporting the programs decline.

The Federal government has introduced and will enforce the principle of accountability in Title I programs. St. Louis has no quarrel with accountability in principle. Accountability is an old and familiar concept, as stern and basic as the maxims that appear from time to time in this report. Title I gives public funds to produce results in the learning of disadvantaged children, and it is only reasonable that a school be judged on its performance. The St. Louis Title I projects are developing performance criteria. This report candidly reflects St. Louis's willingness to be judged by the learning it produces with children.

Accountability works two ways, however. When demands for performance are made, resources for meeting the demands must be supplied also. Despite the decline in funds and the increase in numbers of disadvantaged children, St. Louis's Title I children have held their own.

Poverty is an accepted predictor of learning disability: when numbers of poor children increase, we expect to see achievement in basic skills decline. That has not happened. Actually, in 1970, Title I students scored about two months higher on achievement tests than they had in 1966. The fact that Title I students are not losing ground is no cause for jubilation, but it is a significant achievement, considering the task.

Each report in this volume has two sections. The "Program Summary" section describes the objectives of the program and its basic procedures for achieving the objectives. It also summarizes the evaluation. The first section should be

suitable for readers who have only a general interest in the project. The second section, the "Monitor's Report," is intended for readers with more interest in the details of the evaluation. The "Monitor's Report" views the problems and progress of the project against the backdrop of the previous year's evaluation, and it projects new priorities for the coming year.

The reason for having a report like this is to communicate with people who have an interest in the projects and the schools. That is a broader audience than most reports assume: it includes not just government officials and researchers who get paid to read reports; it includes the people in the schools and parents too. The effort and good will of teachers, principals, and parents often make the difference between a project that fails and one that succeeds. If school people and parents are clearly and directly informed of the programs, more effort and more good will may follow.

We thank the students, their teachers and principals, and other administrators who gave us information and cooperation during the evaluation.

We especially acknowledge Gordon H. White's contribution to this report. His help with measurement and evaluation designs, and his skillful management of computer operations were vital services. Emily Bever helped analyze, digest and communicate much of the data in the report. Madeline Coran helped with some editing and the graphics. David Mahan and Elaine Afton offered reactions and perspectives that were helpful.

ROOMS OF TWENTY

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The Title I Rooms of Twenty program provides special help for low achieving elementary school children. Specially trained teachers provide instruction in the basic skills of reading, language, and arithmetic for classes limited to no more than twenty children. In these smaller classes, teachers can give individualized help, focusing on the particular needs of each child.

Students in the R/20 classes are referred by teachers and principals in the Title I schools. The students must have an IQ no lower than 80 and be a year or more below grade level in the basic skills as measured by standardized tests. The main objective of the program is to improve the students' skills to the point that they can succeed in the regular classrooms. An important secondary goal is to help the children grow in self-confidence, to help them overcome feelings of defeat and frustration.

The 1968-69 evaluation provided some detailed and functional information that could be used to generate improvements in the program. All of the R/20 classes were ranked according to the average learning rate of the class, and the twenty highest classes were compared to the lowest twenty. Attitudes and behaviors of teachers, students, and principals in the two groups were identified. All the variables were subjected to factor analysis.

The findings were, perhaps, predictable. The rooms in which the students had the higher learning rates more nearly fulfilled the aims of the program. There was open communication between the principals and teachers. Both principals and teachers thought the program was valuable, and the teachers were proud to be teachers of problem learners. The teachers' relationship with their students were responsive and warm. They integrated materials and outside resources into their program. Teachers worked closely with parents. Their students liked being in Rooms of Twenty. The less successful rooms did not show those characteristics. The 1968-69 evaluation concluded as follows:

The information we have gathered will be given to the teachers and principals in the R/20. The data and its significance will be carefully explained to them. . . . The findings can become a guide for a program to train effective teachers for inner-city children. The information from this study can be used as the guideline for an in-service program.

Much of the 1969-70 evaluation was planned by the participants in cooperation with the project evaluator and was intended to follow up the issues raised in the previous year's evaluation--to assess the changes that resulted from the '68-'69 evaluation. In addition, the '69-'70 evaluation examines (1) achievement gains as measured by the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Metropolitan Achievement Tests, (2) frequency distributions in basic skill test results, (3) the average learning rates, and (4) student attendance. Another part of the evaluation examines achievement scores of a random sample of students who were in the R/20 program during the 1968-69 school year; the purpose was to see how well former R/20 students do when they return to regular classes. Last, the evaluation presents the achievement scores of the classrooms from which four or more R/20 students were removed during 1969-70.

The evaluation revealed that the R/20 staff had been successful both in identifying program areas in need of immediate changes and in making some specific improvements. Achievement gains for middle unit R/20 pupils were only slightly greater in 1969-70 (8.0 months gain in 10.0 months) than they had been in the previous year (7.9 months). The tests used with primary R/20 were inappropriate for over-aged students, so there is no accurate picture of those pupils' achievement.

Achievement scores for a random sample of former R/20 students suggested that the benefits of the program may be more apparent after the children return to regular classrooms. Also, average achievement gains of classes from which R/20 students had been removed was 12.5 months in the 10 month school year. The attendance data is equally encouraging for the program: the R/20 students attend school more regularly than any other group of students in St. Louis--elementary or secondary, Title I or non-Title I.

MONITOR'S REPORT

The 1968-69 evaluation, unlike previous evaluations, pointed up the variance in the learning rates of R/20 classes and offered evidence of the connection between student achievement and effective teaching. In that respect, the evaluation challenged the teachers to improve instruction, to become accountable for their students' learning.

At the same time, the evaluation provided an occasion for the project personnel to point out constraints that impair their teaching and that help explain the variance in the performance of R/20 classes. It also offered an opportunity for them to express their eagerness to find ways to improve their teaching.

The personnel in the program were willing to accept full responsibility for improving instruction; but before that request became reasonable, some unnecessary constraints had to be removed.

As consequences of the evaluation last year, five basic changes were made in the R/20 program:

A. Many teachers suggested that a reason for their students' not making satisfactory gains on tests of basic skills was that teachers were being expected to teach the students science, social studies, geography, etc. The students enter the R/20 program because they are behind grade level in basic skills achievement, but when they are returned to regular classrooms, they are assumed to have had the same subject matter backgrounds as other students. The obligation had been imposed for providing the regular curriculum in addition to intensive remedial work in basic skills.

That issue has been clarified: the obligation of the Rooms of Twenty is for instruction in basic skills only. Course work or activities related to other matters will be used only to reinforce or enrich the basic skills instruction.

B. Guidelines for the R/20 program also require that students have IQ's of 80 or above. Because of insufficient special education facilities, a number of children who should have been assigned to special education have been assigned to Rooms of Twenty. That guideline has been fully enforced: no students are assigned to Rooms of Twenty who have IQ's below 80.

C. Decentralization has resulted in considerable variance in R/20 policies from district to district. If there is to be comparison of student performance from class to class across the system, the policies under which the classes operate must be uniform. To achieve that end, a supervisor has been appointed to coordinate the project and to provide support to the R/20 teachers.

D. R/20 teachers, supervising teachers, supervisors, and some members from the Local Advisory Committee revised the grade card used in the program. The new grade card reports the actual performance level of each child in reading, language, and arithmetic. It does not indicate failure, nor does it compare performances of the children. The card was ready for use in the fall of 1970 and will be evaluated by the teachers at the end of the current school year.

E. An effect of the 1968-69 evaluation was to hold up as models the teaching of the top achieving R/20 teachers. The consequence was a rather exasperated plea for communication within the program and for in-service training. The teachers wanted to learn ways to improve their teaching, to learn how

the more successful teachers achieve their results. In the fall of 1970, teachers and supervisors planned an in-service training program for R/20 teachers. Four Saturday training sessions were presented by teachers and supervisors with special skills in teaching reading, language, and arithmetic. More in-service is planned.

A less tangible recent effect within the program is an atmosphere of renewed pride in the Rooms of Twenty. The teachers report that their morale is higher than it has been, and attendance at voluntary meetings and training sessions is exceptionally good. The teachers, principals, and supervisors have all participated actively in making decisions about the project and in planning the evaluation. The practicality of the evaluation, the assumption of distinct responsibilities by R/20 staff, and the responsiveness of the administration may help account for the higher morale in the program.

The evaluation for the past school year included analysis of data related to pupil achievement. Figure 1 shows that middle unit R/20 pupils made a composite gain of 8.0 months in the 10 month school year. This is only a slight increase over the 7.9 month gain during the previous school year. It is significant, however, that the projected gain has increased each year since the program started.

Teachers in the R/20 program have suggested that it may not be totally realistic to expect great gains during the time that pupils are in the program, since it usually takes a student almost a full semester to develop confidence and to become motivated. In response to that suggestion, the evaluation examined the gain R/20 students make after they returned to the regular classroom. A random sample of former R/20 students now in regular classrooms (grades 5 through 7) was selected. The projected gain in ten months, as measured by the ITBS, tends to bear out the hypothesis suggested by the R/20 teachers. (See Figure 2.) 5th and 7th graders have gained more than 10 months in ten months, and 6th graders gained 8.8 months in 10 months. The typical R/20 student was gaining less than 7 months in 10 before entering the program. Future evaluation of the program will include follow-up data to show how well R/20 students do after they have returned to regular classrooms and how well they do in relation to their performance before they went into the R/20 program.

The R/20 program for primary unit students has been handicapped by the lack of an appropriate achievement test. A primary form ITBS will soon be made available, but currently the Metropolitan Primary II Achievement Test is used in the program. The Metropolitan is inappropriate for the many R/20 primary children who are over-age. The test is designed for younger children, and older pupils' scores cluster together at the high range. The students score high on the pre-test, but they

Figure 1

PROJECTED GAIN IN 10 MONTHS ON
IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

FOR ROOMS OF TWENTY, MIDDLE UNIT
1969 - 70

(899 Students Present for Both Pre- and Post-Tests)

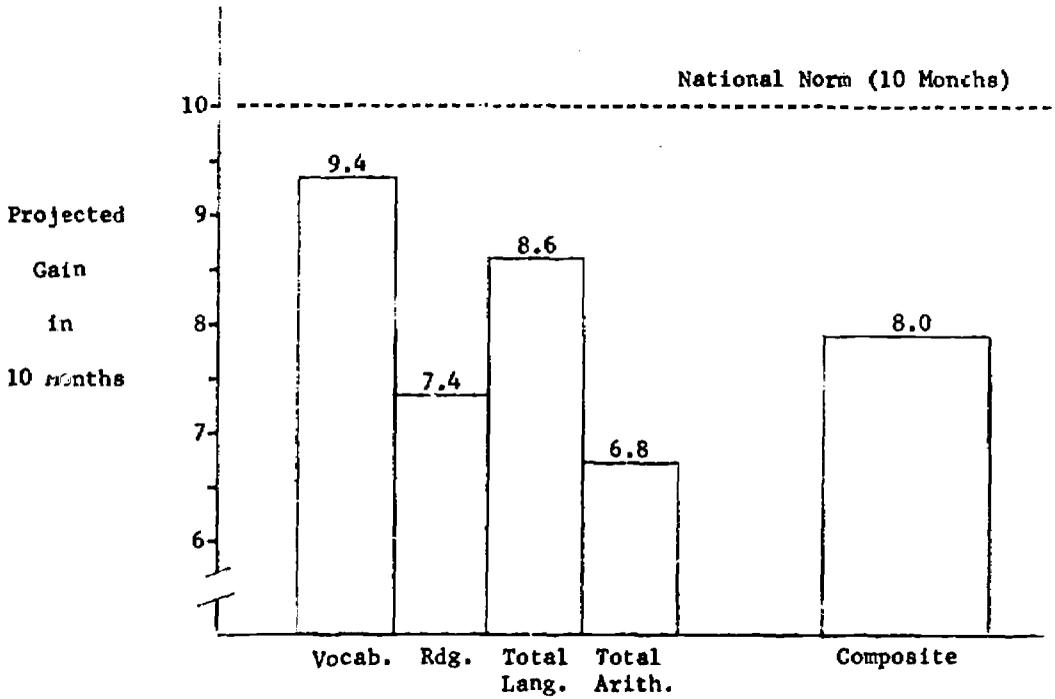


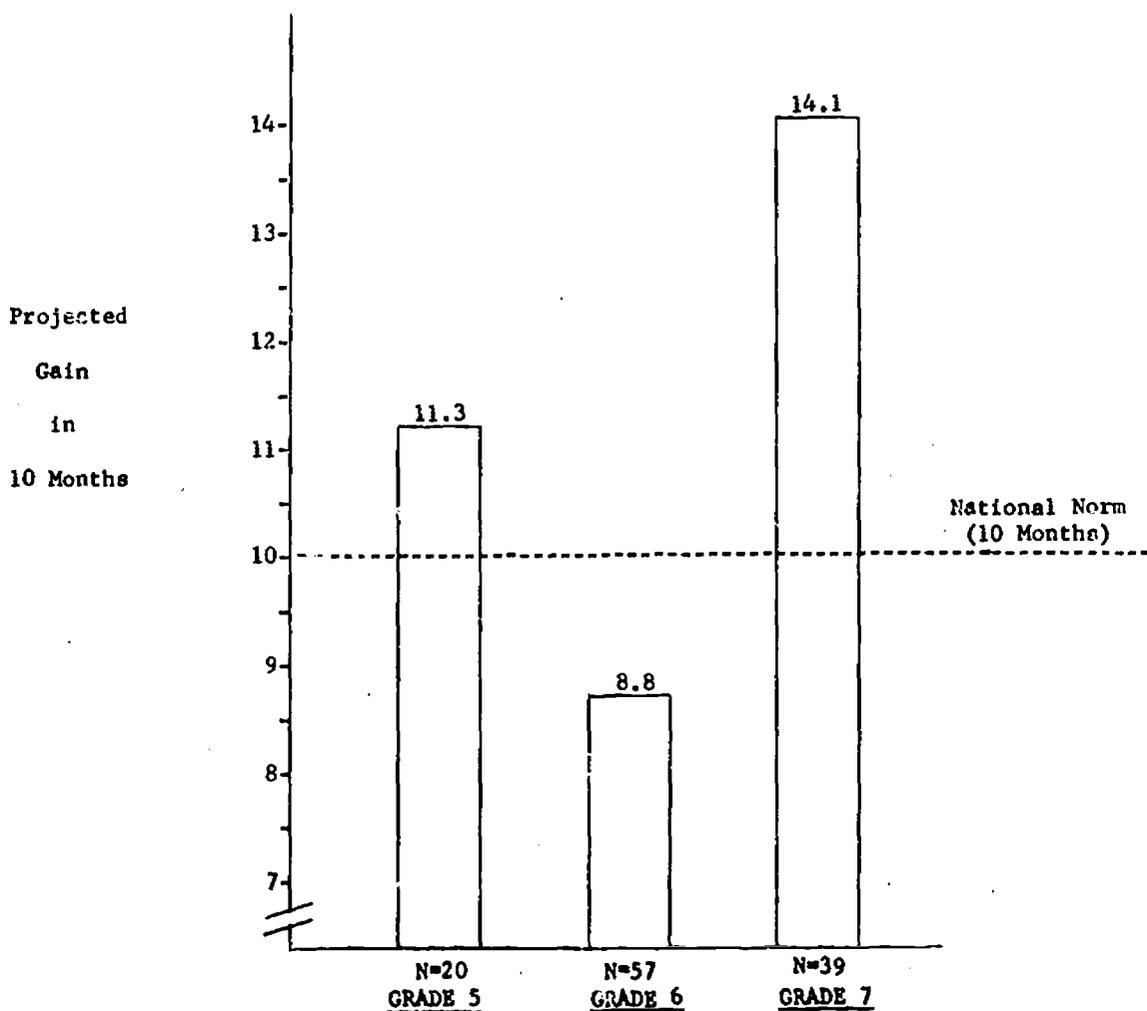
Figure 2

PROJECTED GAIN IN 10 MONTHS ON COMPOSITE SCORES,
IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

FOR A RANDOM SAMPLE OF STUDENTS IN ROOMS OF TWENTY DURING 1968 - 69

1969 - 70

(Students Present for Both Pre- and Post-Tests)



score about the same on the post-test. The Metropolitan simply does not discriminate finely between the achievement of students in the high range. Consequently, we accept the test results in Table I with considerable reservation.

Table I

ALL TITLE I ROOMS OF TWENTY (PRIMARY UNIT)
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TESTS
1969-70

N=404	G.E. <u>Pre-Test</u>	G.E. <u>Post-Test</u>	Gain in 6 1/2 <u>Months</u>	Projected Gain in <u>10 Months</u>
Word Knowledge	3.00	3.56	5.6	8.6
Word Discrimination	2.70	3.06	3.6	5.5
Reading	2.81	3.18	3.7	5.7
Arithmetic	2.96	3.35	3.9	6.0
Composite	2.83	3.25	4.2	6.5

Teachers in regular classrooms have often commented that the learning situation improves when slow learners are removed and placed in remedial or special classes. Table II shows the achievement of classrooms from which four or more slow learning pupils had been removed and assigned to R/20 classes. The table shows that the average projected gain, over the 10 month school year, for 27 such classrooms was 12.5 months. Any number of variables, of course, could be responsible for the sizeable gain reflected by the 27 classrooms.