

A STUDY OF THE TITLE
I PROGRAM

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An Abstract
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

by
Linda P. Hayes

May, 1980

ABSTRACT

The Stanford Achievement Test (1973) was used to evaluate the relative performance of fifth grade students in Dickson County in April of 1979. Of the total number of 435 students taking the test, 43 had been enrolled for a minimum of one year (maximum of three years) in the Title I Remedial Reading Program. Because the Title I Program in Dickson County offers remedial reading but no remedial math, it was hypothesized that Title I Reading scores should be equal to or significantly better than Math and Auditory scores for Title I students, and that no significant difference should exist among the three means for non-Title I students. A t-test was used to determine the relationship between Total Reading, Total Auditory, and Total Math scores of Title I students. The results revealed that Title I students scored significantly lower in Total Reading when compared with Total Auditory and Total Math. Another t-test was run on non-Title I students using the same subtests. No significant differences were found to exist among Total Reading, Total Auditory, and Total Math. Some interpretations and discussion are offered in an attempt to explain these findings.

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Paper written by Linda P. Hayes entitled "A Study of the Title I Program." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Education, with a major in Guidance and Counseling and a minor in Reading.

Darland E. Blair
Major Professor

Accepted for the Graduate Council:

William H. Ellis
Dean of the Graduate School

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1965, the United States Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I of the Act provides financial assistance to local school districts to expand and improve elementary and secondary school programs for educationally deprived children in low income areas. Organization of Title I encompasses three levels--federal, state, and local. It has been described as federally financed, state administered, and locally operated.

Title I is the largest Federal program providing aid to elementary and secondary education, and it is still growing. In school year 1978-1979, nearly five million children in over 14,000 school districts participated; that is, 90% of the country's school districts operated Title I programs at a cost of more than \$2 billion (Fromboluti, 1979). Within President Carter's 1981 budget of \$15.5 billion for the new Education Department, \$2.844 billion is designated for Title I payments. This is an increase of \$214 million for Title I over the 1980 fiscal year budget (Robinson, 1980).

School districts receive funds for Title I based on the economic conditions of the people who live there. At least 30% of the school district's children must be eligible for the free lunch program, and a fairly large percentage must be from families below the poverty level. It is obvious then that the intent of the Act is to assist children whose economic deprivation results in an educational deficiency. These

children are neither mentally retarded nor learning disabled; however, students who are selected for special compensatory programs are deficient in scholastic performance in reading as compared with their peers. The Title I Program is designed to narrow this gap (Federal Register, 1976).

In attempting to determine whether Title I has been effective in narrowing this gap of reading performance, evaluation has proved difficult because of varying methods of organization of data. House (1979) states that Title I evaluation procedures are lacking in uniformity, and he concludes that the available data indicate that no uniform evaluation process will ever be possible nationwide, so that individual programs can be compared. The studies that have been conducted have produced mixed results, and they vary widely, both in scope and quality.

From the earliest studies, doubts have been cast on the effectiveness of the Title I Program. In a broadly based study, Piccariello (1968) conducted an analysis of the reading achievement of 155,000 students from 189 Title I projects during the school year ending in June, 1967. Results of the analysis indicate that a child had only a 19% chance of a significant achievement gain, a 13% chance of a significant achievement loss, and a 68% chance of no change at all. Furthermore, the study indicates that the sample of observations is unrepresentative of projects because there was a higher than average investment in resources. Thus, more significant gains should be found in this study than in the more representative sample

of Title I projects.

In Ohio, evaluation of the 1977-1978 Title I Program by the Department of Education concluded that with only regular instruction in the classroom, a child would be expected to maintain a zero rate, that is, make no gains relative to his position with his classmates; however, second graders in Ohio who received Title I instruction in reading advanced at twice that rate (Title I in Ohio, 1978). It should be noted, however, that no information is provided as to the rate of advancement for non-Title I students that actually occurred in that particular school year.

In the New York State Annual Evaluation Report for the 1976-1977 Fiscal Year (1977), comparisons of the data presented indicate that participation of disadvantaged students in Title I programs prevented them from falling behind and even assisted them in catching up to their more advantaged peers. While this study presents some impressive statistics, such as using 49,000 upstate and 96,000 New York City pupils to obtain data, it readily admits that only hypothetical rates of gain were used for comparison with statistical data from the pretest and posttest of norm-referenced achievement tests. Thus it would be simple to adjust the hypothetical rates of gain to prove any desired result that the researcher selects.

The Title I Program in Georgia was evaluated by determining how well students had met objectives set forth in Title I criteria. According to the study, 57% of the participants in preschool activities, and 60% of the participants in reading

and mathematics activities met or exceeded program objectives (Moore & Jordan, 1978). However, it must be noted that local systems within the state selected their own testing instruments; thus, statewide gains were obtained for particular tests but not across tests. Also, the methods and devices used to measure learner needs were of varying strength. The three most widely used were standardized achievement tests, observation techniques, and sociometric techniques. Furthermore, while using a variety of tests to evaluate achievement in instructional activities, the tests were not identified. Finally, the objectives of the program, which were met or exceeded by 57% and 60% of the preschoolers and reading and math participants, respectively, were never fully defined in explicit terms.

A study of Title I in Rhode Island by Pasquale J. DeVito (1977) reveals positive results in reading and math over a two-year period, with the greater increase in improvement taking place during the first year. DeVito says that Title I students made significantly higher scores than would have been expected without Title I intervention, yet he gives no indication as to how he arrived at this expectancy. He attributes subsequent drops in achievement percentiles to forgetting due to lack of skill usage as well as crossing levels of the testing instrument; however, he offers no explanation as to whether these same factors influenced non-Title I students also.

In New York State, Title I Programs in the middle and junior high schools are deemed successful, according to Scott

(1978). However, it must be noted that Scott gave no statistical data to support this conclusion; instead, her entire work was based on interviews with principals, math teachers, reading teachers, helping teachers, and home-school teachers in two middle schools and two junior high schools in New York State.

An evaluation of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania School District for 1977-1978 by Davidoff (1978), indicates very sweeping results: Administrators and teachers have created favorable learning environments, have reversed some of the historic trends toward drastic pupil underachievement, and have increased parental participation. Davidoff draws these generalizations from the data he presents. According to the tables presented in his study, the percentage of pupils in Title I programs who scored below the 16th national percentile, indicating low achievement, has been substantially reduced since 1974. Reductions range from 5% in the 12th grade to 16% in the 10th grade. Yet, these facts appear to be too weak to support such sweeping results as Davidoff claims. Improvements at the 16th percentile are at best only a negligible amount of gain.

Finally, the St. Louis, Missouri Evaluation by House (1979) is presented for analysis. House states that he found significant differences in three of six statistical tests he ran on results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for Reading Comprehension and Arithmetic Subtests in grades four, six, and eight. In each case, Title I groups were found on the

lower end of the achievement continuum. House provides rather extensive data to support his conclusions.

Thus, evaluation of Title I nationwide is not uniform, conclusions vary widely, and data are often inappropriate for the interpretations given. For these reasons, evaluation is constantly in a state of flux, and the local education association must be the final judge--through whatever tools chosen--as to how to measure the achievement of Title I in its district.

The Dickson County Board of Education has been participating in the Title I program since its inception, with the program being devoted exclusively to remedial reading since 1974. This decision to exclude math from the program was based on a needs assessment which indicated that reading instruction was a more pressing concern.

Remedial procedures for overcoming the numerous kinds of reading deficiencies have been implemented in all seven elementary and middle schools in the county. Children in grades one through six at these seven schools are removed from the regular classroom setting for a 45-minute instructional period five days a week. This reading instruction is supplementary to and not a substitution for the children's classroom reading lesson. In Dickson County, children who repeat the first grade are eligible for Title I assistance in reading; however, the majority of participation in Title I is from second through sixth grade.

One aspect of the program is parental involvement. It

is hoped that including the parents in both the planning and implementation of the program will aid student interest and progress by promoting reinforcement and encouragement at home.

From the information obtained regarding the Title I Program in Dickson County, it appears that no objective evaluation has been conducted. Also, no pretest measure was used initially to assess gain in the program as opposed to gain in students not involved in Title I. Therefore, it would seem that the most obvious method of evaluation remaining was to assess the relative performance of students enrolled in the program. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to make that assessment. Using the Stanford Achievement Test as the measure of achievement, two hypotheses were devised: Title I Reading scores should be equal to or significantly better than Math and Auditory scores for Title I students, and no significant difference should exist among the three means for non-Title I students.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

The Stanford Achievement Test (1973) was used to evaluate the performance of 435 fifth graders in Dickson County Schools in April of 1979. Scores were obtained in Total Reading, Total Auditory, and Total Math. Of the students who took the test, 43 were Title I participants, and 392 were non-Title I.

A t-test was run to determine significance among reading, auditory, and math scores for the Title I students. Another t-test was run on the non-Title I students to determine significance among their reading, auditory, and math scores.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Results of the two t-tests are shown in the data presented in Tables 1 and 2. For Title I students (Table 1), the following interpretations were made: A significant difference was found between reading and auditory scores, with reading scores being lower; a significant difference was also found between reading and math scores, with reading scores being lower; and no significant difference was found between math and auditory scores.

With regard to non-Title I students (Table 2), no significant difference was found when comparing the reading, auditory, and math scores.

A scattergram of the scores of both Title I and non-Title I students was plotted (Appendix A). Scores of Title I students are circled so that their positions may be observed readily.

Table 1
Title I Students

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value
V2 (Reading)	139.0233	13.567	-3.62
V3 (Auditory)	147.8837	9.684	
V2 (Reading)	139.0233	13.567	-3.15
V4 (Math)	145.2093	10.831	
V3 (Auditory)	147.8837	9.684	1.32
V2 (Math)	145.2093	10.831	

Table 2
Non-Title I Students

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value
V2 (Reading)	158.3356	19.819	-0.29
V3 (Auditory)	158.5264	15.890	
V2 (Reading)	158.3356	19.819	0.04
V4 (Math)	158.3103	15.516	
V3 (Auditory)	158.5264	15.890	0.37
V4 (Math)	158.3103	15.516	

DISCUSSION

Results of the t-test on Title I students in Dickson County lead to the following conclusion: At the time the Stanford Achievement Test was administered in April, 1979, scores of the Title I students were lower in Total Reading as compared with their Total Auditory and Total Math scores.

Presumably, these students were low in reading initially because they were placed in the program based on an identified deficiency, and they were still identifiable as being deficient in that skill, reading, as compared with their peers. However, since all the available data are posttest materials only, and no pretest was administered, it cannot be concluded that Title I did not help the students. It can only be concluded that Title I was not successful in making up the deficiency, because the deficiency still exists.

In attempting to compare the study of the Dickson County Title I Program with those studies described earlier in the paper, it is obvious that one basic similarity exists, the lack of uniform evaluation of the program. The absence of pretest-posttest procedures is evident in the studies from all areas, including Dickson County. Some type of standardized achievement test, such as the Stanford Achievement Test used in Dickson County, should be used on a nationwide basis to obtain pretest and posttest scores for both Title I and non-Title I students. The scores could then be compared to assess actual achievement rather than the hypothetical rates

Report (1977) or the

scores that would have been expected without Title I remediation cited in DeVito's Rhode Island Report (1977).

Thus, while it is recognized that the program is extensive, well-intentioned, and well-financed, more research is needed on measures to evaluate Title I's total impact on its participants. It is not enough to claim that Title I has created favorable learning environments, reversed trends toward pupil underachievement, and increased parental participation (Davidoff, 1978). Significant improvement in reading performance should be the goal of the program. Once appropriate evaluation measures have been developed, then perhaps deficiencies in the program can be located and corrected, and statistical increases in pupil performance can be achieved.

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FILE	READ	(CREATION DATE = 03/27/80)	/MATH	(ACROSS) V4	
SCATTERGRAM OF	(DOWN) V2				
	90.65	103.95	117.25	130.55	143.85
217.00	+	+	+	+	+
203.70	+	+	+	+	+
190.40	+	+	+	+	+
177.10	+	+	+	+	+
163.80	+	+	+	+	+
150.50	+	+	+	+	+
137.20	+	+	+	+	+
123.90	+	+	+	+	+
110.60	+	+	+	+	+
97.30	+	+	+	+	+
84.00	+	+	+	+	+