



**Ignite!** Learning  
*Transforming Classroom Curriculum*

**Research Project - Research Report 2004-2005**

**Large Urban West  
Independent School District**

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY: DR. RANDALL BOONE & DR. KARLA KINGSLEY

REPORT SUMMARY AND GRAPHICS : AL GAVITO, MA  
HOUSTON CENTRAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

**Large Urban West School District (LUWSD):** This Large Urban West SD has a population of over three hundred thousand students. LUWSD School District students have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and ethics necessary to succeed academically and practice responsible citizenship, at a justifiable cost. Students meet state and federal guidelines as well as appropriate benchmarks for academic proficiency in all areas and all grade levels and pass the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE).

**Social Studies Department:** The mission of Social Studies education is to teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy. Social Studies teachers assist students in developing the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

## Ignite! Learning Pilot Project Findings

Researcher: Boone and Kingsley

**Program Description:** During the 2004–2005 school year, this School District partnered with Ignite! Learning to examine the effectiveness of social studies learning as a result of student utilization of the Ignite! Early American History software program to augment textbook and lecture materials for seventh grade middle school history students. The following research questions were addressed in this study.

**Research Question 1:** Is there a significant difference between pretest and posttest achievement scores for students who used the Ignite! Early American history program as compared to students who did not use the program?

There was a statistically significant positive effect on the overall achievement scores for students who used Ignite! Early American History program.

**Research Question 2:** Are there specific concepts represented on the pretest-posttest instrument for which students scored significantly higher than students who did not use the Ignite! program?

Students who used Ignite! history software showed increases in posttest scores for 42 of 50 questions or 84%, decrease in posttest scores for 7 of 50 questions or 14% and static posttest scores for one question. Specific concept information is available in the results section of this summary report.

**Research Question 3:** Is there a significant difference between pretest and posttest achievement scores between students identified as LEP who used the Ignite! Early American history program and LEP students who did not use the program?

Significance levels from t tests were 0.21 and 0.67 for the control and experimental groups respectively, indicating that the difference in improvement between the control and experimental group of LEP students was not significant.

**Research Question 4:** Is there a significant difference between pretest and posttest achievement scores between students identified as LD who used the Ignite! Early American History program and students with LD who did not use the program?

With only four students in the special education sample, it was not possible to draw conclusions or make inferences regarding the effect of the software.

### District Pilot Project Profile

- 4 middle school teachers
- 637 students
- 7th grade students

### Ignite! Learning Instructional Principles

- Covering the knowledge skills required by state academic standards
- Ensuring that students learn required materials within an integrated context
- Helping students understand the relevance of the material to their daily lives
- Provision of multiple assessment instruments of the material to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge
- Pairing print and media to address all learning styles

### Research Instruments

- Pre-Post 50 Item Test

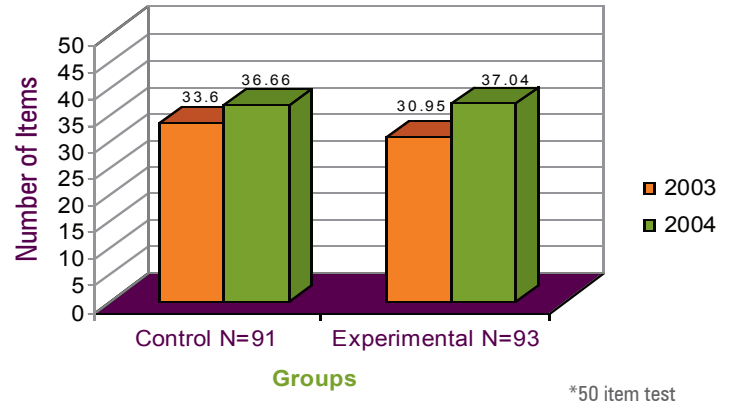
### Research Time Frame

- Fall and Spring Semesters of the 2004-05 academic school year.

**Research Question 1:** Is there a significant difference between pretest and posttest achievement scores for students who used the Ignite! Early American history program as compared to students who did not use the program?

Results indicate statistically significant positive effects on overall achievement scores for students who used Ignite! Early American History program. On a two-tailed t test of unequal variance,  $p=0.00$ , indicating a very high level of significance.

**Average Number of Items \* Passed on an American History Test**



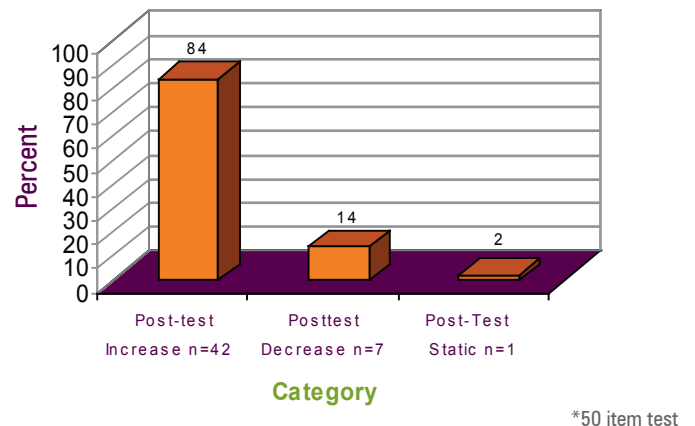
**Research Question 2:** Are there specific concepts represented on the pretest-posttest instrument for which students scored significantly higher than students who did not use the Ignite! program?

In summary, students who used Ignite! history software showed increases in posttest scores for 42 of 50 questions or 84%, decrease in posttest scores for 7 of 50 questions or 14% and static posttest scores for one question.

A review of the questions on the test revealed that student scores reflected the most improvement on questions related to specific battles that took place during the Civil War, such as the Battle of Gettysburg, Shiloh, and Richmond.

More moderate improvements were made on questions that were more inferential in nature, such as those asking why Southerners believed they had the right of secession from the Union, or what the main goal of the North was at the beginning of the civil war.

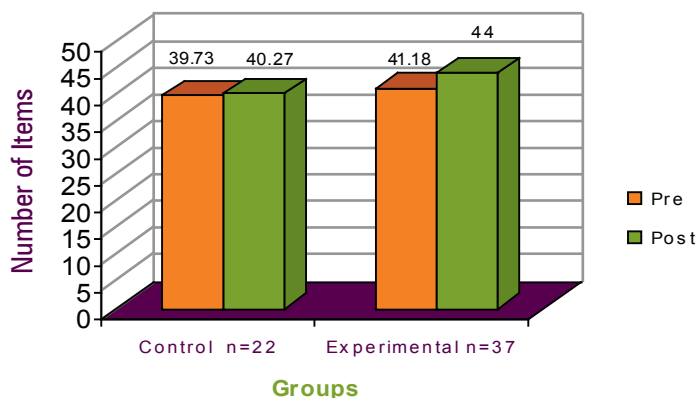
**Percent of Items Demonstrating Change from Pre to Post on an American History Test\***



**Research Question 3:** Is there a significant difference between pretest and posttest achievement scores between students identified as LEP who used the Ignite! Early American history program and LEP students who did not use the program?

Results indicate that significance levels from t tests were 0.21 and 0.67 for the control and experimental groups respectively, indicating that the difference in improvement between the control and experimental group of LEP students was not significant. The reason for low power or the fact that there was no significance may be due to the small sample size.

**Average Number of Items\* Passed on an American History Test by LEP Students**



**Research Question 4:** Is there a significant difference between pretest and posttest achievement scores between students identified as LD who used the Ignite! Early American History program and students with LD who did not use the program?

Only four students who participated in the study were identified as receiving special education services. With only four students in the special education sample, it was not possible to draw conclusions or make inferences regarding the effect of the software.

Population too small to run analysis.

## Summary

This study was designed and conducted in compliance with all criteria set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act's (2002) definition of Scientifically Based Research (SBR). While this research has clearly shown that use of Ignite! software produced a difference in student outcomes that was statistically significant, the question remains as to the real-world significance of those outcomes. Was the improvement for students who used Ignite! enough of an improvement to have affected their grade for the class (e.g., would the percentage of increase raise a student from a C to a B letter grade?) Was the improvement in outcomes for students who used Ignite! enough of an improvement for those students to have been aware of increased success in their studies? These are important questions that are not answered or answerable by this type of research.